

# SOUTH BAY WOODWORKERS' NEWS

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## Presidents Column

By Jay Perrine

**W**oodworker's Trip



to Japan.

I had the opportunity to travel to Japan in early April and visited a slab table 'factory' and two Japanese hand woodworking tool makers.

The slab table business produces table tops for a half a dozen well-appointed retail stores in Japan. The business name is Atelier Mokuba (Atelier is French for Workshop, and Mokuba means slab table). They import logs from around the world which are cut on a large lumber-mill quality band saw and then dried for 2-3 years. Next the slabs arrive at the little factory I was visiting and each slab is first placed in a high pressure press for an entire day, but with two interesting twists. First interesting approach is that STEAM is introduced under high pressure. Then microwaves are introduced. This process flattens the slabs. Cutting, sanding and spraying a finish after pressure machine treatment was accomplished at this workshop following standard procedures we see at other similar places in the US.

I was fortunate to visit two craftsmen and these visits were arranged by Ko (and his father) at Hida Tool on Ashby

Avenue in Berkeley. My first visit that day was to a Japanese hand wood saw maker. After forging a blank he sits barefoot at a very low workstation with a metal scraping tool which closely resembles a drawknife except he is producing a thinner metal blade. No wonder the saws can command such a high price. After preparing the saw blanks he switches to machines for the tooth cutting and kerf setting. He has dedicated machines to cut and set the teeth (two machines employed as each machine in each direction as the teeth resemble sharks teeth). The saw maker also demonstrated to me how he re-sharpens and adjusts a used saw sent to him for sharpening. His demonstration including resetting the teeth and removing stresses in the flat portion of the blade. I was most impressed with his hand-to-eye coordination in setting the teeth of the saw he was resharpening because I could NOT see which individual tooth his special hammer was hitting with each rapid soft blow - very impressive.

My next visit was to a wood plane blade maker. I watched him forge, weld the harder steel to the soft steel and using a mechanical sledge hammer to shape the red hot metal and then stamp out a blank. Unfortunately, I didn't get to see him shape or sharpen the blanks but I was able to buy one of his completed planes.

Each craftsman exhibited a high level of skill and produced great products despite working alone and having to maintain many machines in an oily and somewhat dark environment. Many more machines were employed in the production than I had envisioned. I had mostly seen pictures of chisel and plane blade makers in a blacksmith setting and though not automated they have many machine tools. I went to Japan thinking that the makers of these Japanese hand tools were nearly extinct (all aged like 75-90) and was caught off-guard that each of the two craftsmen were middle-aged. After returning home I did go to Hida Tools and thanked Ko for making the arrangements and presented him with a gift. He seemed pleased with my gift but I was more pleased with my experiences visiting the craftsman in Japan.

## April Program:

**Dennis Yamamoto** made an entry door, but he had to make a torsion box first to ensure that he had a flat surface upon which to construct the door. The plans for the box came from Jaime Buxton who is a member of the Bay Area Woodworkers Association. Both the outside skins and inside egg crate members are made from 1/4 inch Baltic birch. He used 1/2 inch hard maple for the outside frame. During the glue-up process, he peppered the skins with pin nails to make sure the box stayed flat.

This larger than usual entry door measures 84 X 38 X 2 inches and made from mahogany and highly striped, book-matched redwood veneers. The redwood came from a large squared section of log that measured about 2 by 1.5 by 5 feet long that was cut into 2 inch thick slabs

on a Woodmiser band mill. Dennis made tall fences for his bandsaw to resaw the slabs to the proper thickness.

The mahogany veneer is glued to a core of Weyerhaeuser's laminated strand board (LSL) that made up the stiles and rails. The panels of figured redwood are glued to a core of medium density overlay (MDO) material. He used Titebond III for both the torsion box and the door.

Dennis used a Emtek mortise lock, a Pemko auto door sweep, and because of the weight of the door, four ballbearing hinges.

## SHOW AND TELL

**Tom Kenyon** took on a tough new learning experience by duplicating Tom Lohman's loop bowl making process. The method starts with two identically glued up boards of contrasting wood. After running the boards through the drum sander, he cuts rings from each board. The rings are then stacked and glued by taking alternate rings from each board. The difficult part of this method is assuring that the pattern lines up exactly from one ring to the next. This method produces two bowls.



**Chuck Aring** brought in another Maloof style black walnut chair that he called a "mama bear chair". The back splats are positioned closer together compared to the original because Chuck felt that he was going to fall through. To keep from having to cut the back rail from four inch material, he cut the front curve and then glued the off-cut to the back.

The finish Chuck used consists of one part paint thinner, one part boiled linseed oil, and two parts polyurethane. He wet sanded only the first coat of finish. Subsequent coats are applied then the residue is completely wiped off after ten minutes followed by the wiping off of any left over residue every few hours.



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Furniture Society is having their annual conference in San Francisco from Thursday, June 13 through June 16. The venue is the Dogpatch Studios, 991 Tennessee St., San Francisco, Ca. 94107. Go to [www.furnsoc.org](http://www.furnsoc.org) for more details.

The summer program at The Krenov School of Woodworking will offer two classes this year. The tools and techniques class designated as wod-70A, Introduction to woodworking, will be offered from June 4 through June 22. Create a wall cabinet is labeled wod-70B, Introduction to woodworking II, will be offered from June 25 to July 13. Both classes are headed up by Jim Birdlong and the cost of the classes are smaller than they used to be. For more information, visit [www.thekrenovschool.org](http://www.thekrenovschool.org)

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<b>Program Committees</b>	
<b>Date</b>	<b>Members</b>
January 23	Tom Kenyon LeRoy Nelson
February 27	Tom Gaston
March 27	Tracie Johnston Ed Vincent
April 24	Jeff Lucanc Dennis Yamamoto
May 22	Don McKell Leroy Nelson
June 26	Bob Koningsberg Richard Winslow
July 24	Allen Glesser Ron Gerard
August 28	Bill Henzel Larry Schwarcz
September 25	Mike Papa Richard Sprague
October 23	Todd Johnson Tom Kenyon
November 27	Bill Sprague Larry Patulia
December	Officers
Contact Richard Winslow for any changes to the committee schedule	

### Next Program Committee

Please take the ice chest home after the meeting

### Refreshment Suggestions

#### Variety of Soft Drinks

Water, Regular, Diet, Caffeine-Free,  
Juices

Varied Snacks: Donuts, Cookies, Chips,  
Nuts