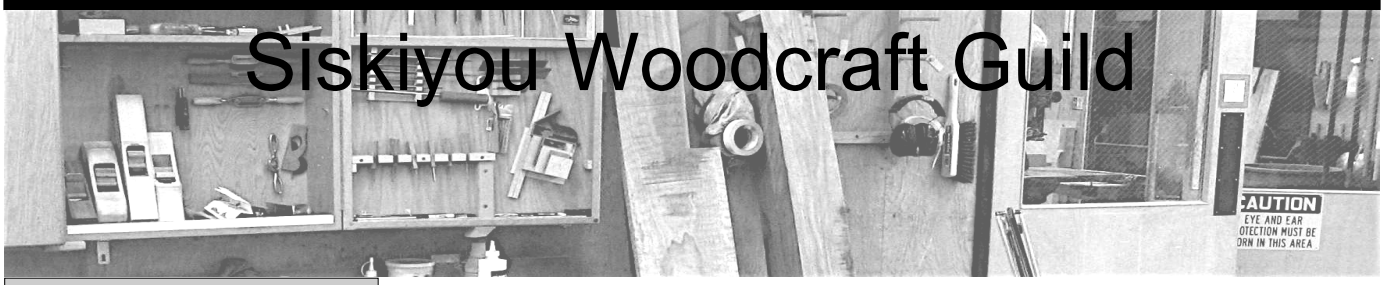
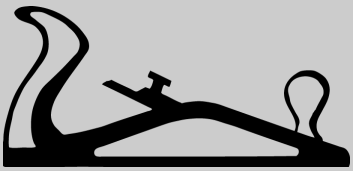
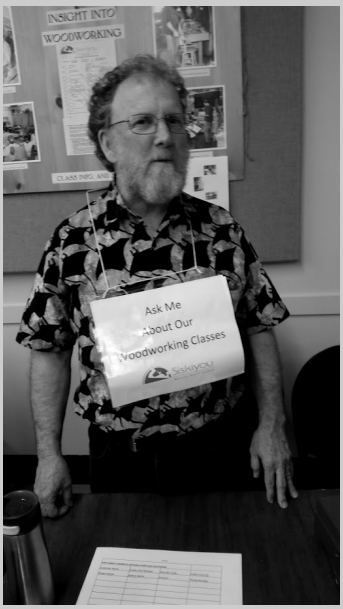
# Siskiyou Woodcraft Guild



## SHOP CHATS

Shop-Chats are our method of getting together during the year to see what other members are doing and how they go about it. Exploring other shops can often reveal ways to improve one's own shop. We try to find new locations and/or new members to have us over for a visit so that we have 'fresh' shops to tour. We hope to 'explore' your work, hear tool opinions, and tips for getting 'it' done right. Sharing snacks and stories allows us to learn more about our skilled members.




Our new Insight Class Coordinator David Stan advertising at the 2017 Thanksgiving Woodworking Show. And MANY thanks to Dan Fischer for his volunteer work as our previous Class Coordinator.

## Message from the President

Hello Fellow Woodsmiths,

Most importantly let me tell you that the SWG seems to be in very good 'health' these days. The officers still get along well and are able to take care of the regular operational tasks. The Steering Committee consists of experienced and knowledgeable participants who have steadily assisted our members to network, get discounts, and guide our connections with our local community. The new webmaster, Jeff Roberts, has done a great job to modernize our website. Go to www.siskiyouwoodcraftguild.org on any internet accessible device and we hope you find it easier to browse. Also, a 'Thank You' to David Stan who has taken on the Insight Class Coordinator position and is already busy organizing the classes and student roster. The Class Coordinator handles scheduling and registration. He has plenty of educational experience and a dedication to woodworking.

The show continued to be successful at the Hay-Patton Rehearsal Center location by being the second best sales ever at just over $20K during the 3 days. The prior year, 2016, was our top year breaking the $30K ceiling. It is truly a wonderful wooden event beyond just the $ales and I hope you were able to experience the community feeling of this tradition. So much to see. So many inspired and skilled craftspeople to meet. Remember those figures don't include the follow up work that is generated!

This stirs up a topic for me which is focused towards our showing members yet has an impact on us all. It's about quality, value, and pricing of our often unique work - especially at the show. Before I stick my-foot-in-my-mouth, I must clarify that the SWG has NO policy or method to help or regulate how folks price what they make.

Here is an example from this year's show to set the stage: A 2 person slab bench with matching back sold for $350. The craftsman had been lowering the price over a few years but finally decided to drop the price well below the $500 level. Some lucky person took home this artful endeavor for less than 'wholesale'. At $50 minimum for materials, that leaves $300 for construction and finish work. If you want to get even $20 hours for your time, that's only paying for 15 hours. Consider adding shop costs, show fee, 5% of sales, travel expenses, and loss of 'work' time, etc. to this equation.

OK, let's go back in time, some 38 years ago: When the SWG formed by way of some small meeting (12 or less) most of the members were woodworking as their profession. They wanted a way to connect with the community and spread the idea that quality work was available locally. By presenting our show (and sale) of woodworking and explaining the difference between custom creations and manufactured items we hoped to educate people to the process and cost of this type of work. The hope being that this understanding would confirm the value of these often unique and heirloom pieces. Now-a-days our thriving SWG is quite diverse and includes folks with all kinds of talent, a variety of interests, and reasons to build. This is good and creates a wonderful membership spectrum.

Now back to the show topic: Let's consider that also on display in our wood-guy's booth is a new-ish piece that's priced at $950. I wonder how

visitors will perceive the price discrepancy between these two beautifully crafted furnishings. Is there something counter-productive about under selling one item while trying to get full price for something else? Can most visitors tell if this work has been to 10 shows or just one? I do understand the value in making a sale to move inventory. Yet, I also want clients to recognize (and pay for) a realistic price for design-and-build creations. It's difficult to create a standard pricing equation, especially in this web-world of purchasing options. But it is worth reflecting on the effect which our own pricing variations may have.

Shall we add to our list of concerns the 'cutting board' price war or the turned object proliferation? There are numerous choices of both at our show to choose from and a wide range of pricing, often reflecting complexity or uniqueness. How we design and complete our work should not be under-valued by the final figure we stick on it. It's important that we price appropriately and realistically to help clarify the true costs of building, displaying and selling. Even those members who show just to display their skills and accomplishments should try to keep prices in line with what the effort entails. We have already made our work relatively affordable at shows by cutting out the 'middle-man'. Offering a buyer a small discount may be helpful to seal-the-deal - maybe 5% to 10% but not 20% to 50+%.

We all know that building furniture and other refined pieces is time consuming, often requiring a lot of tools and special set-ups. These products might be considered luxury items or regarded as quality investments. We attempt to NOT be competitors (making similar things for less). Rather, we focus on the cooperative aspects of networking and 'marketing' together while developing skills to display our individual talents. The thought here is to help others understand and value the work it takes to make beautiful wooden products. This is an on-going topic of discussion and the hope in reviewing it is to encourage us to be careful about how we 'sell' our creations.

Have a sharp and safe 2018***!***

***- Tom Phillips***

***Here is a seller's response (slightly edited for use here):***

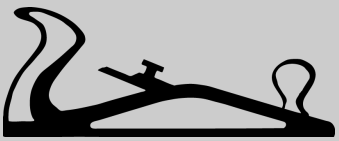
"...As to our conversation and your guild letter... I make things to sell and at times they don't. So I discount them to where they do sell. Then I have to decide if I am still willing to make them for that price. That answer is usually no. I know my larger pieces just don't fit in with everyone's furnishings. At times that's a pain. I made an almost normal piece this year. Was well received and commented on as well. Did not sell however. Time to do something different, hence the s--- b---. Even tho my w--- b---s and t---s have been my best sellers for some 20 years, those sales have slowed down. I understand where you are coming from and I agree with your argument. It should (continue to) be an interesting conversation apart from other guild activities..."

## SWG 2018 Activity

**•Annual General Meeting:**
Sat. Feb. 3rd from 10:00 am ~ noon.
At the AHS shop on Eastern corner of Siskiyou Blvd. and Morse St. in Ashland. This is our biggest gathering of members during the year. We hope to fill the room and let people introduce themselves and assist us in 'putting a face' to the many names on our SWG list. This year's activities will be presented and planned for. Election of the Officers and Steering Committee will be held. Seating, coffee, and muffins will be available. Bring your checkbook or $30 to get your 2018 membership card (at the discount price if you pay before March 1st).

**•Insight Into Woodworking:**
Teachers' meeting and dinner will be on Tues. Feb. 20th at Brent's home starting at 5pm. Classes start in March. First night location is at John Jory's shop.

**•ShopChats:**
These simple tours allow members to connect and learn about some new projects, methods, and tools. We are looking to have new places to gather at so don't be shy. There will be a signup sheet at the AGM to help develop our ShopChat schedule for the year or you can contact Tom to set up a date. Final dates and places will be announced in a postcard, by e-mail, and listed on our website.



## OUR MISSION

The Siskiyou Woodcraft Guild is a regional association of woodworkers encouraging a wide range of skills, knowledge, and interests. Our mission is to offer fellowship by providing networking among our members. We value the principles and practices of fine woodworking by encouraging technical discussion and development. We promote an appreciation of quality workmanship to the general public by providing access to our products, experience, and design expertise through shows, classes, and other events.

### 2018 OFFICERS

President
Tom Phillips

Treasurer
Jens Sehm

Secretary
Herbert Edwin Harris III

Webmaster
Jeff Roberts

Steering Committee
Tom Phillips, Jay Treiger, Brent Poulton, Wayne Tarris, Jens Selm, Will Sears, Dan Fischer, Eric Olson, Herbert Edwin Harris III, Jeff Roberts

REMINDERS: Please send contact information updates to Herb Harris. To save on mailing costs, notify Herb if you wish to receive only e-copies of our mailings.