

## ***Northwest Woodworkers Association***

# ***THE SAWDUST NEWS***



October 2018

An association for woodworkers of all skill levels to share their common interest

## ***The Next Meeting***

***Note: Due to the Thanksgiving holiday, there will be no meeting in November***

**Date: December 6, 2018 at 6:30 PM**

**Location: Rockler Woodworking – Northgate  
832 NE Northgate Way  
Seattle, WA 98125**

**Program Highlight: Woodworking Design and Furniture Building  
Speaker: Matt Kenney (<https://www.mekwoodworks.com/>)**

## ***October 2018 Meeting Highlights***

***Meeting Photos by Scott Wilson***

***Meeting Notes by Tim Newsome***

The **October 2018** meeting of the **Northwest Woodworkers Association** was held on **Thursday, October 25, 2018** at the **Slab Art Studio**, in Seattle. We want to express our appreciation to **Mr. Eric Holder** and **Ms. June Rugh** for hosting and providing an informative tour of their facility.



Eleven members, including two new members, attended this interesting and informative meeting. **Steering Committee Member, Don Beacom**, conducted the meeting.

## Show 'N' Tell



**Don Beacom** showed us an interesting slide show illustrating an innovative way to store his extensive collection of clamps, noting that storage space for things like clamps is at a premium in his small shop – a common problem for a lot of us! **Don** explained that this overhead clamp storage concept was inspired by an article in **Woodsmith** magazine.

<http://www.woodsmithtips.com/2014/07/17/overhead-clamp-rack/>

As suggested in the article, **Don** used lengths of PVC pipe mounted in overhead racks suspended from his shop ceiling to hold the clamps.



To further take advantage of the space saving storage, **Don** mounted a second set of clamp holding tubes underneath the first set, noting that the lower set was just high enough to allow him to walk underneath.



As a further enhancement of the original design, he installed vertical slats between the tubes to hold the clamp heads upright, keeping them from flopping over and getting tangled – great idea, **Don!**



**Tom Howorth** showed photos of a beautiful **Maloof** style rocking chair he had recently completed. This stunning piece was fashioned from **Walnut** and **Maple**. He noted that he had made another similar rocking chair that took him 11 months to complete. But he said he beat that record with this one, which took him **only 5 years**.....!



**Tom** explained that he had taken a week-long class in Port Townsend conducted by **Charles Brock** to prepare himself for this project. He noted that there was a lot of sculpting and sanding to form the pleasing contours of the chair. He said he used an angle grinder for the rough shaping and then a lot of work with files and rasps.

**Tom** noted that he built several jigs and aids to enable building this rocker, including ones for clamping the laminated rockers, holding the legs at the correct angle to the rockers, and paper patterns transferred to plywood to shape the seat.

He said he plans to sell this piece, noting that similar pieces are for sale on **Etsy** for **\$3K to \$8K**. Our host, **Eric Holder** recommended that he price it at **\$8K**. We hope his sale is a success!

**Tom** also showed us a photo of a unique turned wooden pen incorporating decorative hardware that made it look like a .45 caliber bullet. The pen insert was extended/retracted via a mechanism made to simulate the bolt on the chamber of a rifle. He also showed a photo of a 3D printed plastic case for the pen designed to look like a gun case.

He also showed photos of some improved storage provisions he made for his workbench, employing trays instead of drawers – an idea inspired by watching the **Wood Whisperer**.



**Tim Newsome** displayed some photos of an improved switch enclosure he made for his table saw, and a saw till implementing a first time use of pocket hole construction. He also asked about the possible causes of his bandsaw blade oscillating inward and outward. It was suggested that perhaps the bearings in his top wheel could need replacing.

**Tim** also enquired of the group advice on applying shellac to minimize or eliminate brush strokes. Suggestions from the group included using a foam brush, diluting the shellac about 50% with denatured alcohol, using a natural hair or synthetic **Taklon** brush, and applying several thin coats with judicious sanding between coats.

## **Program Highlight** **Slab Art Studio Tour**

**Eric Holder**, owner and artisan, and **June Rugh**, CCO of the **Slab Art Studio** in Seattle hosted an entertaining and informative meeting at their facility in Seattle.



**Eric** noted that he grew up in Japan and was intrigued watching the local monks building temples, silently, in accordance with their beliefs. He said he saw his first slab table in a monastery and fell in love with the Japanese culture, craft, and woodworking. He said that the Japanese culture is a significant part of the artistry portrayed by his creations. Involvement with the community is also one of his core principles.



He explained that his business is deeply involved in salvaging local trees, using contacts with a cadre of local arborists, construction companies, and others to locate and recycle this valuable, irreplaceable resource. He noted that many of the trees they recycle come from areas damaged by windstorms, landslides, etc. He also explained that most of the specimen trees in the local area are cataloged by arborists and are monitored regularly regarding their condition, health, insect damage, etc..

He said that harvesting these trees usually requires highly skilled methods and equipment and knowledgeable people. Many of the trees are located on sloped hillsides, substantially increasing the difficulty of equipment access and salvaging methods.

He said they can process trees up to 6 1/2 feet in diameter, using a custom chainsaw powered by a VW engine. He noted that wherever possible they mill the trees on site to make the reclaimed wooden slabs more manageable. This method also substantially reduces the difficulty in capturing and disposing of the waste materials, much of which they can reduce into products that can be used for mulch or landscaping material in the area where the tree grew. He said they try to utilize as much as possible from the trees, noting that local woodworkers and wood turners are delighted to receive usable limbs they can turn or make into projects. Portable band mills are employed wherever possible to mill the trees where they are felled. They also prefer to dry the slabs in the area where the tree was processed, noting that the drying process is a lengthy process, typically requiring one year of drying time for each inch of slab thickness.

**Eric** noted that **Walnut** is one of the most sought-after wood species, but many other local species such as **Cedar**, **Douglas Fir**, **Hemlock**, and others also yield beautiful slabs that can be processed into spectacular tables, furniture, and other decorative items.

He noted that the customer usually decides whether to leave the bark on a slab or remove it. He said that in winter, the trees shrink, and the bark tends to stay on, but in summer, the trees expand, causing the bark to come off as the slab dries.

**Eric** said that he uses a variety of finishes for his slab tables, but prefers a custom mixture of beeswax and linseed oil, although sometimes he uses only beeswax. He also recommends the food safe wax products from **Kerfs.com** ([www.kerfs.com](http://www.kerfs.com)).

Many beautiful slabs and slab tables were on display in the **Slab Art Studio** showroom, showcasing many of the local wood species.





**Eric** also noted that they offer different styles, materials, and colors for their slab table legs. Both wood and metal leg assemblies are available as customer options.

## **Notes from the Editor**



This was a rare opportunity to see a phase of woodworking that we normally don't encounter. Going to woodworking store and viewing boards of various wood species pales in comparison to seeing huge slabs, both lengthwise and transverse, that really represent the magnificent trees from which much of our woodworking stock is milled.

It is really gratifying to learn that there are individuals like **Eric Holder** and others that really care about the health of the trees in our local area and develop innovative ways to preserve and harvest this rich resource and recycle it into treasured wood products that would enhance any home or commercial space.

As woodworkers, we deeply appreciate the thought, creativeness, design, and quality of the products produced by the **Slab Art Studio**. This was an inspirational tour and presentation. Thanks, **Eric** and **June**, for taking the time to host our meeting and make this a truly memorable evening.

Happy and Safe Woodworking,

Paul

# **Northwest Woodworkers Association Sponsors**

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If you have a woodworking-related problem, question, comment, or item that may be of interest to the membership, we encourage you to contact any of the above individuals. We will endeavor to connect you with someone who can help.

In addition, please visit our website: <https://www.nwoodworkers.org>