

HEADING TO THE NEXT CHAPTER FOR WOODWORKER WEST

It is with great reluctance that I must announce that Pam and I have made the hard decision to step back from operating *Woodworker West*.

Where We've Been

For 36 years, we have maintained a publishing schedule of producing a timely bi-monthly magazine, missing only one issue over the Covid shutdown (it is hard to be an event-oriented publication when there are no events).

Originally, it was founded as the *Southern California Woodworker* to promote the old *Southern California Woodworking Conference* and other local Southern California woodworking events. In the Fall of 1987, a pile of flyers were left on a table at *The Woodworking Show* in Pomona, CA, which produced hundreds of mail-in subscriptions, and local woodworking stores and lumber suppliers showed interest in advertising. Thus, a publication was born.

The first small-format issue of 16 black & white pages printed on high-quality tan paper stock was produced in January, 1988. As interest developed beyond Southern California, the name was changed to *Woodworker West*. It grew in size, content, coverage, and color, as readership expanded across the U.S. and even internationally. We take pride in helping organize several woodworking clubs, sponsoring awards at woodworking competitions, and serving on organizational and educational advisory boards.

Over this time, the woodworking market has certainly evolved. The major change was the demise of the local independent retailer. The emergence of the Internet and national chain expansion proved too much competition for many of the small shops, as well as several of the older owners passing away.

Even the traveling woodworking shows in the West no longer exist. They helped create community, as well as a chance for face time with consumers to gain new subscribers and complete renewals. As for publishing, rising printing and postal costs (especially since Covid) and shrinking advertising budgets have dramatically unraveled the economic model for print.

Time to Step Down

Up to this point, we have weathered these external forces, however, Pam & I can no longer ignore the factors of aging. As with others of the boomer generation, we can't do all that we have done before, nor are we as efficient. Moreover, household health issues are becoming increasing time consuming. Luckily in the past, Pam and I, and the dog, were able to alternate health concerns for continuous fulfillment our responsibilities. More recently, we accommodated these constraints, by reducing the scope of this publication to a more manageable size.

As we look towards 2024, we realize maintaining this venture is no longer doable. Attending to personal care and squeezing in

some other pursuits makes continuation of *Woodworker West*, in its current format, not practical.

We have been in conversations with other parties about taking over operations. It certainly can use some new energy and a fresh perspective. I don't want to seem like an old fogey, but most everyone that attracted me to this field originally have either retired themselves or passed away. Given the recent timing of our decision, there is nothing to confirm, at this point, about transition; so much needs to be sorted out. Hopefully, this will be resolved, and legacy of *Woodworker West* will continue in some form.

On a Personal Note

This magazine has been part of my identity, so it has been hard to step away. It has provided a creative outlet, in contrast to the more administrative tasks of my "real" profit producing businesses. For Pam, it provided another direction to channel her artistic abilities. She has emerged from tinkering with the few machines in the garage to becoming an award-winning woodworker herself. And I would be remiss not to credit this magazine for being indirectly responsible for our marriage—thanks to an introduction and encouragement by turned wood artist **Merryll Saylan**.

The magazine also has enriched our lives by providing opportunities to meet many, many talented craftsman—both in woodworking and other craft media. Writing profiles has given me in-depth insights into other people's journeys in life and a greater appreciation of what they have created and accomplished.

As well, there was a variety of experiences that we otherwise wouldn't likely been exposed. Attending *Antique Roadshow* and *World Wood Day*, immediately come to mind. I would have also said **Sam Maloof's** opening at the Smithsonian in 2001, but 9/11 derailed those travel plans as we were leaving for the airport to fly to Washington, D.C. And, our home is filled with various objects of handcraftmanship.

Throughout this adventure, we have developed many life-long personal relationships, though sadly many have passed. It is fitting that an **Ian Kirby** article in this final issue, as he has been a valuable contributor to this publication for much of its 36 years. Pam and I cherish all of you and look forward to continuing our friendships for many years to come.

In the meantime, we want to thank all the subscribers, advertisers, and content providers that have supported us over these years. We will keep you informed of our eventual decisions. We hope to still participate in woodworking events, as Pam will continue to craft furniture. And who knows, I may apply the vast knowledge that I have accumulated into actually making something. I'm just not sure if Pam will share her shop space.

Ron Goldman
Publisher



First issue, January, 1988