

Member Profile

Roger W. McCoy

Member since 1980

I was born in 1954 in Bakersfield, California. My Dad was transferred to Fresno when I was 12 and I graduated from McLane High School in 1972. I ran cross country and played baseball and basketball in high school, and then basketball at both Fresno City College and Fresno State. I had very little interest in academics while playing basketball, and subsequently had to spend several years attending night classes while working full time to finally graduate with a B.S. in Business Administration in 1980 (I like to think I was on the "10-year Plan" and finished two years early). While attending college, I worked at the Smugglers' Inn Hotel where I met my soul mate Renee'. We were married in 1979 and have two grown sons.

After graduating from Fresno State, I started a career in government finance that included five years with the City of Fresno Finance Department, ten years with the Fresno County Auditor-Controller/Treasurer's Office, and eighteen years with the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District. At the Air District I was the Director of Administrative Services responsible for the Finance, General Services, and Administrative Support Departments. I retired from the Air District in November of 2009.

I've had a passion for woodworking as far back as I can remember. Unfortunately, I had no one in my family to pass on knowledge, skills, and tools. I took wood shop classes in junior high school, but was unable to take any in high school and never felt like I had even the most basic woodworking skills. Soon after getting married I purchased a Craftsman table saw. It is a major miracle I didn't injure myself or someone else due to my ignorance of how to safely use it. In 1979, I had the good fortune of meeting Ben Douglas through work, and when I mentioned something about woodworking, he was on me like a Pit Bull biting your leg. He insisted I attend a meeting of the SJFWA (Ben was President of the Club at that time) and he would not take "no" for an answer. My first meeting was at Seldon Kempton's shop in Kingsburg and I was immediately hooked. It was so refreshing to be around other woodworkers who knew so much and were so willing to share their knowledge without making you feel stupid when you asked a question. I joined the Club in 1990 and have been a member ever since. I have previously served many years on the Board and several terms as a Vice President.

While my knowledge of woodworking grew significantly as a result of joining the SJFWA, I still felt I was lacking many of the basic skills one acquires through school shop classes. In 2004 I began attending classes at the Woodworker Academy in Alameda on weekends and vacation time. Over a four-year period, I took fifteen classes ranging from one to six days in length that gave me a great foundation of basic to intermediate woodworking skills, but more importantly, gave me the knowledge needed to pursue woodworking in a safe manner. The Woodworker Academy succumbed to the 2008 recession and I discovered William Ng Woodworks in Anaheim. During 2010/11, I attended five classes ranging from two to seven days. Also during 2010, I attended three summer classes at the College of the Redwoods Woodworking Program lasting a total of seven weeks. This was a life-changing experience and it convinced me I wanted to attend their full nine-month program. I applied for, and was accepted, into the 2011/12 year class. After completing the nine-month program, I stayed for a four-week summer class in 2012.

After returning from my year at the College of the Redwoods, I knew I could never be happy with my past situation of sharing my woodworking passion with two cars parked in my shop (actually our two-car garage). It took almost two years and most of my kid's inheritance, but I now have a great space to pursue my passion thanks to a nearly 1,200 square foot addition to our house. My dream is to spend the rest of my life making

things from wood (with a lot of golf & tennis mixed in), and hopefully, sharing my hard-earned knowledge with as many people as possible in the same spirit as the members I met at my first SJFWA meeting.

