

# Council Member Woehleke's furniture-making skills take the word 'hobby' to a whole new level



Photos Vera Kochan

Steve Woehleke stands in front of his crafted built-in (floor-to-ceiling) closet and drawers made from alderwood.

By Vera Kochan

Thanks to a 2010 house fire that damaged the attic above his garage, Moraga Town Council Member Steve Woehleke could consider it a fortuitous accident because during the rebuild he extended the space 10 feet, giving him extra room for a furniture-making workshop.

Woehleke's skills as a carpenter first took root during his high school wood shop days and became more serious after college. He estimates that he's been turning out pieces for 40 years. His furniture is all done in straight lines. "I'm an engineer, and we're prone to doing things like that — straight lines."

His early examples were bookshelves and things that he calls "simple pieces." Other than learning the rudimentary skills in high school, Woehleke is self-taught. He has gone on to create an entry table for his foyer, a built-in (floor-to-ceiling) closet with drawers and mirrors for his daughter's room, a hope chest, several bookcases, a coffee table, a TV entertainment cabinet, an indoor accent chair, and so much more. While he typically makes his furniture for per-

sonal/family use, Woehleke has donated pieces for charitable silent auctions.

Several of Woehleke's pieces are made from repurposed redwood, once part of a backyard deck, as is evidenced by the nail holes strategically incorporated into his works to become part of the design. "I favor reusing redwood because it can be recycled, which is good for the environment, and it's a soft wood. It's also rot-resistant and termite-resistant." He has also worked with cherrywood, alderwood, and white oak, to name a few, adding, "I like to get my wood from MacBeath Hardwood in Berkeley. They're a good supplier for hardwood. The best hardwoods come east of the Mississippi."

"I do things on an opportunistic basis," Woehleke stated when talking about design. "I plan and execute."

Asked if there was anything on his bucket list that he'd like to make, Woehleke replied, "My intent is to broaden my woodworking to include curved wood. It's very difficult, because you have to bend the wood by getting it wet and steaming it."

Each of Woehleke's pieces are crafted with attention to detail. They are not only utilitarian, they are attractive and made to stand the test of time.



Foyer entry table (Shaker style) cherrywood



Coffee table made from repurposed redwood and trimmed with cherrywood

## Property owners reminded to meet exterior hazard and fuel break requirements

By Jennifer Wake

The official start of fire season begins June 1, and the Moraga-Orinda Fire District is reminding property owners about the need to adhere to Moraga-Orinda Ordinances 23.03 and 23.04 by focusing on fire abatement strategies in the three zones surrounding homes.

Zone 0 extends from 0 to 5 feet from any structure, attached deck, or outbuilding on the parcel and requires the

most stringent wildfire fuel reduction. Zone 1, referred to as the Lean, Clean, and Green Zone, extends from 5 feet to 30 feet from any structure or attached deck, or from 5 feet from the structure or attached deck to the property line, whichever is closer. And Zone 2, the Reduced Fuel Zone, extends from 30 feet to 100 feet from any structure or attached deck, or from 30 feet from the structure or attached deck to the property line, whichever is closer.

Requirements include re-

moving all combustible ground cover such as mulch and bark within 2 feet of all structures; creating 1-foot vertical clearance from foliage to ground for any plants within 2 feet of the structure; removing all dead or dying trees, hazardous vegetation, and/or rubbish; removing or cutting grasses to height less than 3 inches; removing any Monterey pine or Eucalyptus located within 5 feet of a structure or attached decks; and removing all tree branches that are within 6 vertical feet of the roof, and more.

For a complete list of abatement requirements, visit [www.mofd.org/our-district/fuels-mitigation-fire-prevention/annual-abatement-requirements](http://www.mofd.org/our-district/fuels-mitigation-fire-prevention/annual-abatement-requirements)

## Summer Bike Challenge

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The challenge is funded by the Contra Costa Transportation Authority and the Bay Area Air Quality Management District.

The Challenge is free to all who register and also offers prizes such as gift cards and an iPad Grand Prize. Go to: [511contracosta.org/sbc](http://511contracosta.org/sbc) to register, and follow the instructions. Participating cities and towns will list several Challenge Square Destinations such as Moraga's Saint Mary's College, the Farmers' Market and Campolindo High School, to name a few. Some of Orinda's Destinations include Theatre Square, the Community Center, and the BART Station. On the list for Lafayette are the Lafayette Reservoir, any grocery store, and the Lafayette Library.

Every game has rules, as does the Summer Bike Challenge. Take a selfie of you and your bike at your favorite Challenge Square Destination making sure that the destination is clearly visible in the photo. Email the selfie to: [sbc@511cc.org](mailto:sbc@511cc.org). Include in the

email the photo's location, your hometown, the cyclist's name, age and school (optional). If you're playing the challenge as a couple or family you must include information about each person pictured. Participation is not limited to just bikes. Anyone can also play while using a scooter or an e-bike. If for any reason a participant cannot bike to certain squares, a substitute can be submitted. Just follow the same submission rules. Each cyclist can earn one e-gift card for the summer (either \$10 Starbucks, \$10 Jamba Juice, or \$10 Amazon).

The Challenge begins June 1 and runs through Aug. 31. There are three specific dates in Moraga when additional prizes for pedaling cyclists are offered. On June 14, between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m., bike to the Moraga Commons Park for a free ice cream gift card. On June 28, between 2 and 4 p.m., at the Hacienda de Las Flores, earn a free Starbucks gift card, and on July 12, between 2 and 4 p.m., at the Moraga Library earn another free Starbucks gift card. Just look for the "511CC" table.

Participants are reminded by 511 Contra Costa to practice bicycle safety at all times — not just during the Challenge. Ring your bell or call out before passing, use hand signals when turning, obey signals and signs, ride on the right side of the road, and always wear a helmet.

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