

## Judging ( SawDust Article )

Being a judge for many of the SAW sponsored contest, SAW came to me and asked for help on training other judges. Over the years we have tried many methods, but I have developed this method as being the fairest and best way to judge a contest. In the beginning I started this with some pictures and descriptions of what I look for in a project. Now this has been turned into a video that SAW will send to any contest host, in high resolution. The video is also available to watch on the SAW web site in low or medium resolution. This video is available on the SAW web, <http://www.saw-online.com/Events/contest.htm>, site under the Events tab, Saw Contest, and then Contest Judging. There will be additional questions and answers on the web page as they are asked. Many times this will be a clarification of what to look for. All SAW Contest judges would be asked to follow this guideline, to put more consistency in the contest judging across the county.

It sounds like at the Branson Picnic I will be giving a seminar on judging. At this time I do not know how this is going to be set up. The main reason for the seminar is to get more people qualified to be a judge for a contest. But I am hearing from many scrollers that they would like to attend the seminar just to learn what the judges are looking for in a project. I would like to see this seminar open for anyone to attend, but the people who are planning on becoming judges would sit in the front and be able to ask question. Those who were attending just for information would sit to the back and just observe, given an opportunity to ask question only if time permits.

Now you are still probably asking what should a judge be looking for. The first thing a judge has to be able to do is to forget what they like. This is a contest on the quality of the project, not on the appeal the project has to a judge. It is easy for a judge to get into the rut of liking wildlife for example, so no project without wildlife will be on their scorecard. That is not acceptable, they need to forget what they like and go strictly by the quality of the project, no matter what the theme of the project is.

So what are they looking for in a project? First is the quality of the cuts. Are the lines and curves uniform or straight? A close look at and joints, are they tight and uniform? And the finish is it smooth and even? Sounds easy don't it?

Some may be wondering just how picky are they really going to get on this stuff. With the quality of the work that has been entered in the contest lately, VERY PICKY. Judging quality is difficult. But the judges will pick the piece up and examine it closely. Looking for any over cut, or any sign of fuzz on the project. That one over cut or fuzz left on the piece can be the difference. The piece will be held at different angles to the light to look for consistency in the finish across the whole project. The finish will be felt across the whole project. I know at one contest a speck of dust felt in a finish was the deciding factor between two projects. It's that close.

Just about all of the entries in a contest, I would be proud to have displayed in my home. But when it comes to judging for the best quality it really gets tough. Another hard part is looking at something like the Dome clock and trying to compare it to a simple cutting. Again size does not matter, it is the quality of the workmanship that makes the difference. The Dome clock could have over cuts and bad joints all over it, you have to look at the detail. Now for Scrollers Choice award the Dome clock may win hands down, but that award is more on the overall “wow” factor of a project to the public, they are not looking at the detail.

The contest is trying to award ribbons to the best of the best we could say. They are looking for that project without any flaws anywhere on the project. When someone wins a ribbon at a SAW Contest, you know they have put some pride, time, and effort into the project. That project is something to be very proud of.