

Linda Nathan, Editor of  
*Australian Wood Review*

Writes Candidly about Disaster Preparedness

*From Sharp & to the Point*

#8-2019

**A**s part of my exploration on how woodworkers prepare their shops for emergencies, and because I know Australia has been suffering both drought and wildfires, I reached out to Linda Nathan, editor of *Australian Wood Review* for the past 27 years, and a wood carver. Linda's reply hit close to home for us in California, yet with Linda's customary practicality and heart, her reply also encompasses what each of us around the world faces or fears. — Linda at Hock Tools

**Linda Nathan's Reply to Question  
about Shop Preparedness**

Any preparation seems ridiculously inadequate in the face of the horror our media has relayed of late. Orange ember-filled skies, walls of fire, people leaving homes at the behest of emergency warnings only to return to the charred remains of their lives, and the smoke that even now blankets regions and cities on the eastern seaboard of Australia.

Ninety-seven per cent of New South Wales is in drought and conditions are also dire in Queensland and Western Australia. It is so dry. Today, November 19, a 'catastrophic' fire rating, like the ones recently issued in NSW, was placed on areas in South Australia. Today, November 19, 50 fires continue to burn in NSW, and many elsewhere in this continent. Today, the news tells us that a thick blanket of smoke lies over Sydney and that the greater Sydney area has a 'poor quality' air rating meaning those with heart and lung problems in particular are advised to stay indoors. In this country we have a brave and wonderful army of people. Our firefighters are largely volunteers. At the start of the fire season I wonder how these incredible people can sustain their efforts when they too have homes, jobs and employers.



Linda Nathan, Editor, *Australian Wood Review*.



**Dry as a bone. A forest filled with eucalypt and corymbia provides this view from Linda and Raf Nathan's workshop in Queensland, Australia. Linda loves this view from her shop , "we are very lucky to be able to open a big roll-a-door that gives us a beautiful view and plenty of fresh air."**

We read the news about Californian wildfires (we call them bushfires here) and shudder. I hope to never experience such a calamity in person. Our house and workshop in south-east Queensland are surrounded by beautiful and highly combustible native eucalypts and corymbias. We're at the top of a slope, not good in a fire situation. All our structures are made of timber, of course! Our workshop is full of all the combustible things that woodworkers love and need, and oodles of offcuts, of course!

You asked what our fire preparations were? Aside from installing fire extinguishers, we have cleared leaf litter from the garden and around the house. The roof gutters were cleared not too long ago. We're not on mains water here so if a fire truck turned up they would (hopefully) use the one and a half tanks of water we have. The dam is quite low and muddy looking at the moment but we have just bought a new petrol pump and installed lines to bring water up from a small lower dam.

A fire plan includes packing overnight bags with a few essentials and documents. My hand carving tools are in the house. We've talked about what we'd grab. The chain-saw blade has been sharpened in case we need to cut through a fallen log to get off



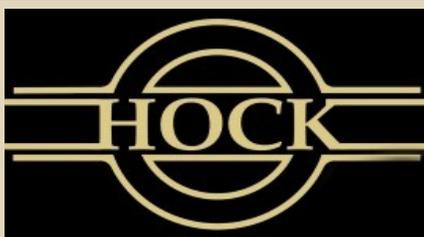
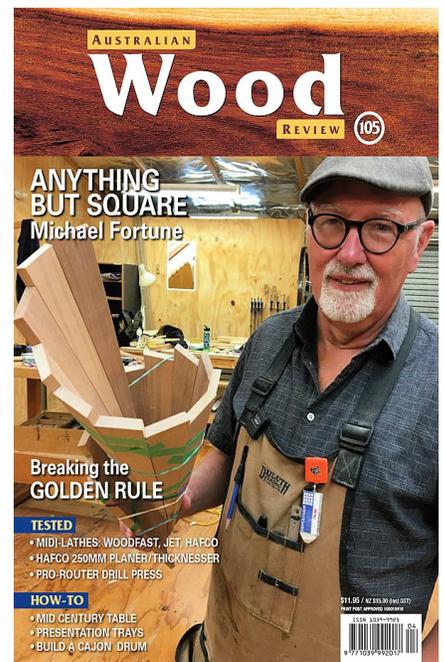
**Any woodworker can relate to a favorite tool or set of tools. These are Linda Nathan's favorite carving tools.**

possessions, and all their memories, and to those who now remain in fear and on constant standby. I would not have written about my own situation if I hadn't been asked because we're okay here, but so many are not.

the block (we have a fire track as well as a driveway). We believe we are insured. Put all this together and the reality still is that if it comes to the crunch and a fire comes through we'll probably lose the lot.

My heart goes out to people who have lost family members, live-stock, houses,

**Right: Cover of December 2019 issue of Australian Wood Review, including Anything but Square; Breaking the Golden Rule by Michael For-**



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