

2022 Conference



Len Brackett

While traveling through Japan in the 1970s, Len Brackett serendipitously met an abbot at a temple in Kyoto. After uncovering Len's interest in carpentry, the abbot connected him with a group of very skilled and gentle local craftsmen. He spent the next 5 years apprenticing alongside them: a body of knowledge accumulated over centuries by craftsmen who habitually refine every element of their trade isn't picked up easily.

Upon his return to America in 1976, Len began a new study: adapting this architecture to meet western expectations. At [East Wind \(Higashi Kaze\)](#), Len uses traditional Japanese techniques to build comfortable, contemporary houses. His goal is to merge the quality and feel of traditional Japanese architecture with the basic comforts we've all come to expect in a modern home.

John Abrams

For 35 years, [South Mountain Company](#) has been a worker-owned business. Founder and CEO John Abrams writes that when he started South Mountain 49 years ago, "the whole concept of business was, to me, in the late sixties and seventies, antithetical to my sense of myself. What drove me was design, and building, and community, not business."

In the half-century since founding the design-build company, John has devoted himself to creating, nurturing, and growing South Mountain and a variety of public initiatives, mostly related to affordable housing.

John is a co-founder of Building Energy Bottom Lines, a network of more than 60 architecture and construction businesses in the Northeast. His writings include his book *Companies We Keep: Employee Ownership and the Business of Community and Place* (2008).

Tom Bodett

Tom Bodett is a writer, craftsman, and president of [HatchSpace](#), a community-supported facility dedicated to preserving the artistry of woodworkers. Tom is the author of numerous books and his work has appeared in a variety of newspapers and magazines. He got his start in radio through his local station, KBBI, where he contributed commentaries about life in Homer, Alaska. In 1984, he made his national debut on *All Things Considered* after NPR chose to play the commentaries he submitted on the popular news program. His voice has been heard on programs as varied as *Saturday Night Live*, *National Geographic Explorer*, and Ken Burns documentaries. Throughout his career, Tom has continued to contribute to NPR and is a regular panelist on the popular news-based quiz show "*Wait, Wait...Don't Tell Me!*"

Tom's love of woodworking and the 40-year pursuit of ever-elusive perfection has produced his most fulfilling creations. As he winds down his publishing and entertainment career the importance of craftsmanship, and the joy it adds to his life, compels him to make more dust and shelves and fewer dust-covered books on the shelf.

