

WOODWORKERS NEWS



Northeastern
Woodworkers
Association

June 2004, Vol. 13, Number 5

Making A Shaker Chair With Hand Tools

- William Van Brunt

On Saturday and Sunday, April 17 & 18, five intrepid woodworkers put aside their power tools, packed up their chisels and block planes and headed off to Sharon Springs to attend Alden Witham's "Make a Shaker Chair with Hand Tools" class. We spent two long days starting at 8:00 am (and ending as late as 9:00 pm) making a traditional Shaker chair. While it proved to be a challenge, there was always time for laughs, for swapping woodworking knowledge and making new friends. In addition to completing a Shaker chair we all went home with plenty of skinned knuckles and sore muscles by the end of the weekend. But our energy levels were maintained on both days by the yummy home-baked snacks provided by Alden's daughter-in-law.

The chairs were made from green cherry (cut the previous week) for the legs and well-seasoned (like for about 80 years) cherry for the spindles. Alden had made our job easier by having already cut and shaped the legs and spindles into rough octagons, but we still had a lot of work to do in smoothing and tapering them. All the work was done using a drawknife, block planes, spoke shaves, and scrapers. The legs and spindles were held in bench-top shaving horses of Alden's design, which used, of all things, bungee cords to hold the work pieces in place. Not traditional Shaker, but hey, they worked!

Once the eight sides were smooth we tapered the bottom of the rear legs and turned the finial at the top. At every step in the process, Alden first provided instruction, then a demonstration and finally any necessary

personal attention. Although this was the first time several of the students had used a lathe, everyone was successful and had a good time.

The next step was bending the rear legs using a steamer. Taking the simple-is-better approach, Alden used a hollowed log you might have seen at the *Showcase* as the steamer. Combined with a bending jig designed by Alden, everyone had steam bent the rear legs of their chair and secured them into a holding jig by the end of the day on Saturday. Five tired woodworkers then hit the road for a well-earned nights rest.

Bright and early Sunday morning we drilled the holes in the legs for the spindles. Drilling with a brace and bit in green cherry reawakened some sore muscles from planing the legs the day before. Thankfully, Alden had made all the jigs to hold the legs in the proper position with clear markings to indicate where the holes needed to be bored. Working together with a colleague, we each managed to get the 16 holes bored into the front and rear legs in the proper direction and location. No mean accomplishment, I might add, considering that the front legs are splayed a few degrees and the chair has a backward rake for the sake of appearance.

Next came the mortises for the back slats. Alden clearly demonstrated how to mark and chisel out the mortises by hand, and once again, the position and proper angle of the mortises were marked on the jig. After the demonstration, everyone got busy hand cutting the



A completed chair made by John Hodgson.

Continued on Page 3

NWA Annual Picnic - Save The Date!

The Annual NWA Picnic will be held on July 25th at the Jonesville Fire Station No.1 in Clifton Park. Mark your calendar and plan on a fun afternoon with other NWA members and their families. Details will appear in the July newsletter.

OFFICERS

President - Pat McCord 439-1232

ptmccord@mybizz.net

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jmichne@nycap.rr.com

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725-1997

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NUMBERS ARE IN AREA CODE 518

From the President

- Pat McCord

As this program year winds down, planning for the upcoming year has already begun. Vice President and Program Chair John Michne and the Program Committee have lined up some exciting programs.

Last year the turners put together a very successful "Turning Symposium", attendance at the Woodworking Weekend doubled from the previous year and Showcase 2004 was another outstanding success, all thanks to the efforts of NWA volunteers. With your help, we're hoping to expand both the Turning Symposium and Woodworking Weekend into major events.

As NWA continues to grow, it will be important to maintain our focus on our mission of education, to provide quality programming, to increase the active involvement of more members and to further promote woodworking. All are urged to participate and take advantage of the many opportunities in the coming year.

Volunteering benefits everyone.... as a volunteer you get to know more NWA members and add to the success of our activities. Everyone in NWA benefits by being able to enjoy more and improved programming. So please think seriously about becoming part of the volunteer team that is the core of NWA and help make the upcoming year a great one. 🐶

Annual Lumber and Tool Auction

- Charlie Goddard

We need items for our annual auction to be held September 25, 2004 at the Shaker Barn. If you have lumber or tools to donate please let me know. So far we have walnut, walnut and walnut. We need tools and other species of lumber. If you do not want to donate the full value we can share the proceeds. Since the money from the auction goes into the Fiske Fund for grants, donated items are fully tax deductible. This is the major source of funding for the Fund. Please do not wait until the week of the auction to donate and get the items to the barn. We can use the back part of the barn for year-round auction item storage. 🐶



The NWA officers for 2004/2005 include (from left) Dale Swann, Treasurer; Pat McCord, President; Kitty Scharl, Secretary; John Michne, Vice President.

Making A Shaker Chair With Hand Tools...

Continued from Page 1

four mortises with a hand chisel and mallet. No routers allowed in this class!

Along about Sunday afternoon the time came to assemble our chair frames, but not without a few mishaps. Even with three of us working on putting the first side of my chair together, we managed to put it together backwards. That little "oops" taught us that the chairs can be taken apart, though it isn't easy.

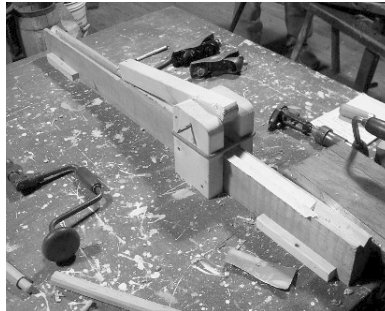
Once the chair frame was assembled then came the unnerving process of twisting it into shape until all four legs sat squarely on the floor. Once again, Alden's calm guidance and especially his forceful demonstration gave us all the courage to wrestle our chairs into shape. It was not without some trepidation, however, that we all leaned into our chairs with a block of wood under the offending leg. This was not the time for an "oops" which would spoil two long days work.

Completing the woodworking portion of the process, the two back slats were cut to size and shape from 3/8" stock and fitted to the mortises. The steamer was then fired up again so we could bend the slats and insert them into the rear legs. Finally, a twisted string "clamp" was put on the chair to hold the slats until the bend "set".

Those students who were a little faster in completing their chair now began weaving the traditional seat from canvas tape.

Alden had a broad selection of tape in different colors from the gift shop of the Shaker Hancock Village. We each chose the colors that we liked, and began installing the seat. Inserted between the two levels of the tape is "the cushion." The cushion is made from a cotton bag stuffed with the shavings made when we tapered the legs and spindles on Saturday. Talk about recycling!

It was a great fun weekend and we actually took a chair home with us at the end of the day on Sunday. Now the challenge is for us to "solo" by making another chair in our own shops. 🐿



Only hand tools are used in Alden Witham's Shaker chair classes.



A leg that is a little off can be corrected with the appropriate technique.



The assembly of a chair is made easier with several sets of hands.



The featured speaker at the May meeting was award-winning turner Keith Tompkins. Keith is demonstrating how to properly align segments prior to joining and turning.

WOODWORKERS NEWS is published by the Northeastern Woodworkers Association for its members. The Association's aim is to provide a common meeting ground for lovers of woodworking who want to know more about wood and the techniques for forming it. The newsletter is published monthly. It is assembled in QuarkXPress 5.0 on a Macintosh G4, duplicated by Shipmates, and mailed to more than 700 addresses.



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NWA maintains two websites,
the first noted here
operates continuously.
We also offer selected
links to other sites of interest
to our membership.
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The second site operates from
January 1 to May 30
and carries specific
information about SHOWCASE.
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WOODWORKERS ASSOCIATION**
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Response To Lee Hilt's Problem Cherry Lumber

- Craig and Ron DeWitt

Cherry is considered a user-friendly wood, easy to dry, easy to work and finish, attractive, durable and quite stable in service. Although reaction stresses sometimes occur in wood from trees that were leaning or growing on steep hillsides, Lee's problem seems to be a result of excess moisture in the wood.

Air dried lumber in an unconditioned shed or that is carefully covered outdoors for a year (or 10 years) reaches a wood moisture content (MC) near the equilibrium moisture content (EMC) of about 11.5 to 14 percent in the Albany area.

In January, air in the unheated shop may be at 20° F and 50 % relative humidity (RH). Warmed to 65° F the RH drops to about 15 %. EMC of wood in that environment would be only about 3.5 % Air-dried lumber, brought in from the shed, will give up moisture. Any machined surfaces or worse yet, clean-cut ends that remove end seal will lose moisture quickly. This will produce large moisture differentials (and internal stresses) throughout the boards. The result will be warping and checking.

Before working this wood it should be brought inside and stickered in a conditioned area with a constant environment that is as similar as practical to that where the finished item will be used. Stabilization may take several weeks. Slower is better. The wood is stable or at equilibrium when MC stops changing. This can be determined with a moisture meter or by checking the weight of a sample. The wood is stable when the weight stops changing.

Hardwood lumber for furniture should be dried to a "working range" of 8 to 12 % percent MC.

A loaner moisture meter is available from the NWA Tool Crib.

Some Helpful Definitions

Equilibrium Moisture Content (EMC) - The moisture content at which wood neither gains nor loses moisture when surrounded by air at a given relative humidity and temperature.

Moisture Content (MC) - The weight of water or moisture in wood, expressed as a percentage of the wood's oven-dry weight. Wood at 12 % MC weighs 112 % of its oven-dry weight.

Relative Humidity (RH) - The ratio of the amount of water vapor present in the air to that which the air would hold at saturation at the same temperature. 🐾



Charlie Goddard presents the Showcase 2004 "Peoples' Choice Award" to John Michne at the May meeting for his Adirondack guide boat. The boat also won Best In Show and 1st Place in the "Other" Category.

Chess Set Competition

- Charlie Goddard

The Wharton Esherick Museum is sponsoring a juried Woodworking Competition and Exhibition September 12 through December 31, 2004. The theme is Chess Sets, which may be carved, turned or made using any other technique, the size of a conventional chess set. Cash prizes will be awarded. Sets may be sold with a 30 % commission for the Museum.

Slides and entry forms must be received by July 1, 2004.

Further information and copies of the entry form are available from Charlie Goddard or by contacting the Wharton Esherick Museum at (610) 644-5822. 🐾

CLASSIFIEDS

Any member may run an ad or ads in the Classifieds on a one- or two-time basis at no charge. Arrangements for a repeat ad should be made with the editor, observing publication deadlines which are noted in the side-bar on page two of each issue of the newsletter. At the discretion of the editor, non-members may run a free one-time ad in the Classifieds if the content is of appropriate interest to NWA members. Classified ads are considered to be a service to the NWA membership.

Hardwood lumber for sale, price negotiable. All lumber is rough cut for random width and length, and well dried in barn.

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CHAPTER NEWS

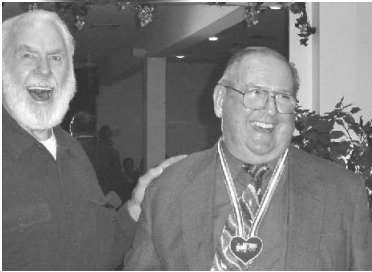
Mid Hudson Chapter News

- Wally Cook

The NWA Mid-Hudson Chapter held its Third Annual Recognition Banquet on April 23 at Twin Lakes. Bill Reynolds was the honoree for 2004. His sustained work helped to start and nurture the growth of the Mid-Hudson Chapter, now 99 members strong. Bill has held a variety of posts in the organization, and has demonstrated a dedicated and generous spirit. Unfortunately, necessary surgery prevented Bill from attending the dinner, but his daughter Barbara and grandson Trevor represented him with style. Folks will be happy to note that Bill is recuperating well and can't wait to get back to making hummers.



This year's banquet answered the question: how do you mix a love for woodworking and a love for music? The answer, of course, is invite Eric Marczak! Eric demonstrated a variety of handmade wooden flutes, using each of a dozen instruments to play Native American and Slavic folk tunes. Eric performed some of his original compositions as well. Both the workmanship on the instruments and his craft as a musician were clearly obvious; he was great!

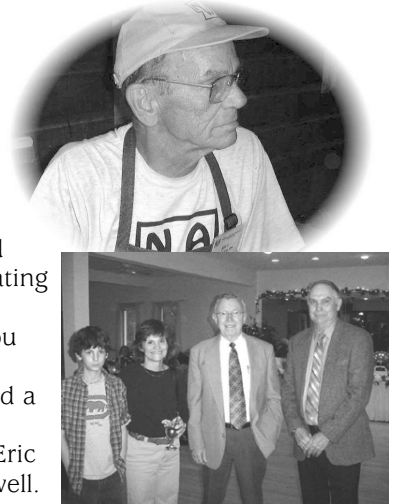


The banquet was also an opportunity to recognize Deeds of Dubious Distinction. Dap Cole presided over this part of the program as we celebrated the achievements of George Norton, Ron Mower, and Jay van Vranken. Dap presented George with a paperweight containing the first quarter George ever spent (a recent event, according to Dap). Ron Mower earned an NWA Permission Slip to freely disseminate sawdust throughout his workshop, laundry room, and house entry-ways. Jay van Vranken was inducted into the purple heart society, based on his mishap at Showcase - dangerous duty at the Toy Factory! The award winners are

congratulated on their courage - it's a long walk to the front of the room when Dap calls your name.

Many of the members brought handmade objects as prizes for the evening raffle. Kathy Powell enticed quite a number of entries this year, so the drawing was extensive. However, lulled by Eric's blissful flute, the attendees had considerable trouble correctly reading their ticket numbers. Joe Mikesch did a yeoman's job of acting as the raffle emcee, and reportedly was still announcing ticket winners long after everyone had gone home.

All in all, over eighty NWA members and their guests enjoyed a very fine tribute to Bill Reynolds and a wonderful evening thanks to the work of Kathy Powell, George Norton, Bernie O'Malley, and Joe Mikesch. Thanks, folks!



Book Review

-Ron DeWitt

The Commercial Woods of Africa by Peter Phongphaew is a descriptive, full-color guide to the most commonly available woods of Africa. After an overview of timber production and trends the book provides a profile of each of 90 species from abura to zebrano. A color photo, botanical, commercial and local names, habitat, tree and wood descriptions, applications and a table of mechanical properties are provided for each.

Although describing only a small portion of the 2,500 or so trees of Africa it does provide good, pertinent information on the most commercially important ones. This is a good reference for the wood student or the serious user of imported woods. A copy is recommended for the NWA library.

The author owns a timber consulting firm...Global Exotic Hardwoods in the U.S. The 206 page hardcover book, published in 2003, sells for a pricey \$49.95. Available from Linden Publishing, Tel: 1-800-345-4447 or www.lindenpub.com. 🐾

Woodworking Courses

- Charlie Goddard

*Connecticut Valley School of Woodworking,
Manchester CT*

The school has announced its Spring and Summer schedule. Courses include furniture making, cabinet making, turning, sharpening, finishing, carving, kayak making and furniture restoration. For more information, go to www.schoolofwoodworking.com, or call (860) 647-0303.

Shelburne Craft School, Shelburne, VT

Courses this summer include hand planes, turning, design, bandsaw boxes and curved surfaces. Among the instructors are Garrett Hack and Al Stirt. The school also has courses in ceramics, fine arts, metal and fiber. For more information, go to www.shelburnecraftschool.org or call (802) 985-3648. 🐾

Northeastern Woodworkers Association Referral List

Name	Address	Phone/ email	Specialty
Anspacher, David	12924 Route 9W W.Coxsackie NY 12192	518-859-4368	Upholstery, Refinishing, Repair, Restoration, Parts Made
Evans, Ken	2062 NY 67 Valley Falls NY 12185	518-753-7759 kevans1@nycap.rr.com	Turning
Flaws, Donald	353 Taber Rd Berne NY 12023	518-872-1615	Furniture Refinishing (no chairs)
Harris, John	18 DeGroot Rd Ft. Edward NY 12828	518-747-2521 reprote@capital.net	Cabinets, Chairs
Hilt, Lee	4 Sharon Dr Albany NY 12205	518-452-5701	Custom Lumber Sawing with Woodmizer HD 40 Portable Mill
Kratky, Marion	PO Box 902 Northville NY 12134	518-863-2621 marionk@frontiernet.net	Oil Paintings on Wood or Canvas, Scenic or Structures (Camps, etc)
Kratky, Mike	PO Box 902 Northville NY 12134	518-863-2621 518-863-8800 inspectr@frontiernet.net	Electrical Insp/Consult., Home & Environ. Insp/Consult., Woodworking Shop Consult.
Kronau, Michael	PO Box 100 Postenkill NY 12140	(see below) kronau@aol.com	Custom Furniture & Cabinetry, Architectural Woodwork"
McKinney, Martin	48 Homestead St Albany, NY 12203	518-489-5359 MartinM316@aol.com	Carpentry, Woodworking, Remodeling, Roofing, Windows, Doors & More
Pell, Clark	336 County Route 61 Coxsackie NY 12192	518-731-2475 cepell@msn.com	Marquetry
Remis, Richard & Stephen	1067 Niskayuna Rd. Niskayuna, NY 12309	518-785-7795	Repair Chairs. Tables, etc.
Robinson, Pete	24 Dalton Rd Scotia NY 12302	518-372-7804 PLRCAB@aol.com	Custom Furniture, Cigar Humidors

For Michael Kronau call 1-800-421-1220 and ask the relay operator for 518-283-2920TDD

Frequently NWA receives inquiries from the public or from its members asking who can perform specific woodworking tasks. For example, we have been asked who can refinish a table, make a new part for a piece of furniture, make a bookcase, repair a table leg, cane a chair, etc. The board of directors discussed the issue and decided to establish a list that can be used for such referrals. Such a list has been used successfully by the San Diego Woodworkers Association. In fact, they post the list on their website (www.sdfwa.org/craftsman.htm) and make it available at their woodworking show.

To date, only 11 people have asked to be included. If you would like to have your name added to the list please complete the following form and return it to: Referral List, NWA, PO Box 246, Rexford NY 12148.

Also, please respond to the questions concerning distribution of the list. The initial list will be made available only to our members. Based upon the responses to the questions below and experience in using the list within NWA, the list may be distributed more widely at a later date. Those who indicate that the list should not be distributed publicly will be given an opportunity to remove their names before such distribution. Though the initial list will not be distributed publicly, it will be used to answer inquiries received by NWA from the public.

Name: _____ Business Name: _____

Address: _____ Zip: _____ Email Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Business: Full Time _____ Part Time _____ By Appointment _____

Describe Specialty: _____

Should the list be made available to NWA members only? Yes ___ No ___

Should the referral list be made available on the website? Yes ___ No ___

Should the referral list be made available at Showcase or other public events? Yes ___ No ___

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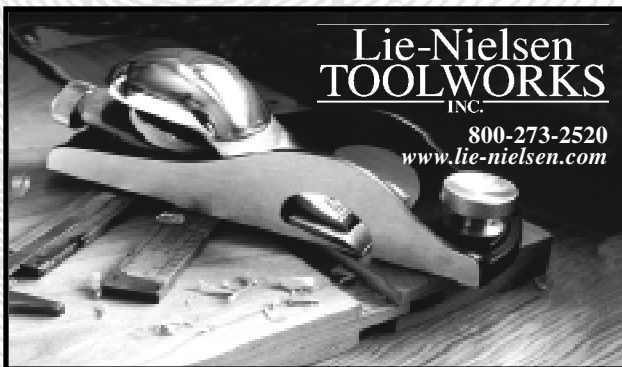


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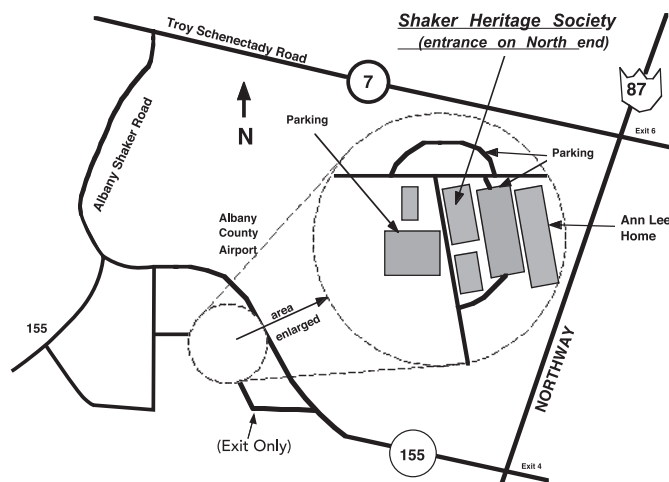
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Fax: 802-843-2274

Email: trade@vermontel.net



Northeastern Woodworkers Association
P.O. Box 246
Rexford, New York 12148-0246



NEXT MEETING:

7:00 p.m. Thursday, September 9, 2004
Shaker Heritage Society Meeting House
Albany-Shaker Road, Albany
(near Albany airport)

CALENDAR 2004

July 25, 2004

NWA Annual Picnic
Jonesville Fire Station No.1
in Clifton Park.

GENERAL MEETINGS
AND SPECIAL EVENTS

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGs)

Meetings are held at the Curtis Lumber Company conference room on Route 67, Ballston Spa. Details of specific events will be carried in the newsletter.

Adirondack Woodturners Association - The AWA is active throughout the year. Meetings are every first Wednesday of the month (except in January and July when it is the second Wednesday). Beginners' sessions begin at 6 pm; the main program at 6:30 pm. Saturday "Learn and Turn" sessions are also scheduled.

www.adirondackwoodturners.org

Contact: Ken Evans, 753-7759 or Kevans1@nycap.rr.com

Carver's Guild - Meets second and fourth Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. Contact Bill McCormack, 233-7260.

Scroller's Guild - Meets the third Wednesday of each month at 6 p.m. at Woodcraft, Latham. Contact Will Charbonneau, 371-3709 or wcharbol@nycap.rr.com

CHAPTERS

NWA Mid-Hudson -The chapter meets at 7:30 p.m. on the third Thursday, except July and August, at the Central Hudson Electric Company Community Center, Route 28, Kingston. Contact: Joe Mikesch, (845) 687-4285

NWA Sacandaga - The chapter meets at 7 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month at Mayfield High School in the woodworking shop. Park by the section of the building that protrudes further into the parking lot and enter the nearest of the (5) doors. Contact: Gary Spencer, 863-6433.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS