

WOODWORKERS NEWS



Northeastern
Woodworkers
Association

October 2013, Vol. 22, Number 8

October Meeting

Thursday, October 10, 7:00 pm

*Shaker Heritage Society Meeting House
Heritage Lane, Albany NY*

Carl Borst on Woodcarving

By George Rutledge

Our October meeting will feature a presentation on Woodcarving from Carl Borst of Rotterdam. Now some of you may be saying to yourselves, "What happened to the Sharpening Program?" The good folks at Norton had a scheduling conflict and they will be with us at the January meeting. Now, rest assured that whether you are a carver or not, you will find Mr. Borst both entertaining and informative.

Carl is one of the area's most prolific and talented Carvers with an international reputation and he's taught at many venues including The Northeastern Woodcarvers Roundup, The Lake Placid Woodcarvers Experience and The Woodcarvers Retreat of New England. He is perhaps best known for his caricatures which display his great skill and deep understanding of anatomy and best of all, his sly wit. No one trick pony, Carl has contributed several animals to the Adirondack Carousel in Saranac Lake, done Marine Carving for the recently completed Dutch replica ship Onrust and he excels at realistic relief and three dimensional carving.

Personally, I find Carl's own story as inspirational as the work he produces. His carvings belie the fact that he took up the Art later in life for to look at them one would surely think he's been at it since the days of his youth. If you attended Carl's presentation to the Wood Carvers SIG last January at Mustang Drive, you know what I'm talking about and if you weren't there this is your chance to find out what you missed.

Don't forget to bring something for the Instant Gallery. All levels and types of work are not just welcome but greatly desired. The NWA is about nothing if not about sharing. 🐾

The Banjomen

By Ken Evans

I was watching Johnny Carson one late night before I retired and one of his guests was a gentleman comedian named George Segal. Mr. Segal had his banjo with him and played it briefly for Johnny and Johnny's audience. It seems George was learning to play the banjo at age 65. I turned to my wife and announced, "I will take up the banjo when I retire!"

Well, several years passed and in 2001, I retired! It took a few more years, but one day I said to my wife, "Its time to begin playing the banjo!" "Wonderful", she said, "There is a banjo in the back bedroom closet!"
Hmmmmmm, I had lived in this house for 25 years and did not know this.

I informed my wife that my second choice of instrument was a violin. She

informed me there was also a violin next to the banjo. Now, I know every piece of wood and every tool in my workshop, but apparently, I know very little about the contents of my house! Well, within about two weeks, I had purchased a banjo — you guessed it — at a YARD SALE. Now, I had two banjos. Next thing was to buy a banjo book so I could learn to play. Well the Earl Scruggs Five String Banjo book was recommended and so I purchased it from a local music store. I read this book cover to cover, and still could not play those banjos!

BUT! Chapter 12 of this famous book was titled "How to Build a Banjo". Now, we are talking! It was obvious from Chapter 12 that banjos are made of wood and lots of metal and they are made mostly ON THE WOODLATHE! This simple fact set in stone the realization that I would not only learn to play this instrument, but I would also learn to make them. After all, I was a woodworker, and pretty good with a wood lathe. It was becoming obvious, at least to me, I was made for the banjo. To make a long story short, let me say I made six (6) banjos. I made three from kits to get the idea, and three from scratch for a total of six. I bought two from a music store so I could take them apart and see how they worked and how



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The Banjomen

Continued from Cover

they were put together. Including the one from the yard sale and the one in the closet, I wound up with 10 banjos. Yes, my wife knows this and I still have a happy home, although she did recently tell me to remove them from the living room. I did!

Having been a teacher for 34 years in my practice life, I approach most situations in my real life from the standpoint of how would you teach this or that subject or process to other people so they too could benefit from the knowledge. This was my approach to banjo building also. I constantly looked to how I would pass the information I was learning along to others who were interested.

In 2011 three NWA members and I decided we would each build a banjo. We met for four hours each week for about 8 months in my shop in Valley Falls and each of us made a very nice five string banjo of the five string resonator type. I chronicled this 8 month saga in a blog on the BANJOHANGOUT on the internet. The Banjohangout is a website www.banjohangout.org where 70,000 + banjo enthusiasts from all over the world meet to discuss all aspects banjo. From the many styles of playing, to the many styles of banjos, to collecting banjos, to banjo jokes, to making banjos, to repairing banjos, all are talked about on the banjohangout. Each week after our meeting to work on the banjos, I would place pictures and descriptions of what was accomplished on out four banjos on the banjo hangout for all to see and read. Over 10,000 Banjo Hangout members weekly followed the saga of our banjo making adventure. These banjo enthusiasts devoured every cut of wood we made, every jig we made and used, how we finished the banjos, the parts we used, and awaited the final pictures of the finished banjos.

In my mind this entire adventure was simply practice and preparation for what was to come in the NWA education program at the NWA learning Center on Mustang Drive.

Recently in 2013, I decided it was time to offer all of NWA a banjo making class where one could make a five string open back or resonator type banjo. Two of the NWA members who had previously made a banjo in my shop in 2011 were interested so I figured there would be, maybe, a total of three or four others who would apply to take the class. This would make a class size of five or six. This would be good and I would feel satisfied if we got this turnout.

Within several days of making the announcement of the class, we had 9 NWA members signed up to take the class. Within a few days more there were 12 NWA members signed up for the banjo making class. The thought occurred to me, this many banjos in upstate New York could make us the bluegrass capital of the world. Ok, this was enough. I was very happy, but the job of teaching this class was growing in difficulty and responsibility. It seemed that 12 were going to be the class size! That was until I got an email from a gentleman in WESTCHESTER COUNTY, NY.

It seems Tysen is a member of the Banjohangout. I had already started the new blog about this new banjo building class and Tysen had read the blog and decided this was for him. Tysen's dedication to learning how to make a banjo was such that he was willing to drive two and a half hours from Westchester County to our shop and two and a half hours back home to attend a three hour class in banjo making. This he was willing to do twice a month. If he could not attend the class as a student, he was willing to just come and audit the class to watch and not make a banjo.

How can one deny this enthusiasm for learning something. I said yes to Tysen, and the banjo making class size soared to 13. Six of the original 12 banjo makers hired a banjo teacher to teach them how to play the banjo. This banjo playing class meets from 9:30 AM to 12:30 PM on the days when the banjo building class meets from 1PM to 4PM twice a month. This group also meets at the NWA Shop. Tysen decided, he too, should join the banjo playing class. The numbers now became thirteen in the builder's class and seven in the playing class. Two Friday's per month, life rarely gets better for a banjo enthusiast in upstate New York than at the NWA Learning Center. Other people heard about the lessons and those taking banjo lessons grew to 11. Some of the members of the banjo playing group did not have a banjo and would not until their banjo was finished. This is where all those banjos I have

The Banjomen

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came in handy. Three of the members of the group are learning to play on banjos under loan from me.

It is likely the banjo building group will need to meet for nearly a year to complete this many banjos. This is an enormous commitment and will require real dedication to the process. We met two Fridays a month and banjo parts formed from wood in the NWA Learning Center. Each member of the building class also paid between \$400 and \$600 for the metal parts for their particular banjo. Enthusiasm was running high and we were all having fun building and playing.

The first banjo was finished in late July of 2013 and there were others not far behind. We were, in fact, way ahead of my predicted schedule of one year. Then the NWA SHOP MOVE OCCURRED and the class ground to a halt. I was able to get a few guys to my shop for some simple tasks, but basically the class was on hold until the NEW NWA shop is functioning on Solar Drive in Clifton Park.

As I am writing this article, we are still in a holding pattern and NWA has announced a new BANJO MAKING CLASS –BANJO MAKING 2 which will begin in September. I really do not know where they are coming from, but BANJO MAKING 2 had 12 new members within days of its announcement. AND, seven of those from Banjo Making 1 wanted to take the Banjo Making 2 class. That's 17 students in Banjo Making 2. I have visions of the NWA BANJO BAND!

We are all having FUN making banjos and learning to play them. As you may know, comedian Steve Martin has a group called, "Men with Banjos who know how to make them"! We will be "Men with Banjos who know how to MAKE them"! This kind of FUN and LEARNING is what NWA is all about. Join us!

After getting into this musical instrument building, it occurred to me we have many in NWA who build wooden musical instruments—guitars, violins, flutes, dulcimers, penny whistles, and now banjos. Why not have a musical instrument building Special Interest Group. So, I have asked the NWA Board to allow us to form such a SIG. If you are interested in joining such a Special Interest Group, contact me (518 753 7759).

Let's play some music on Instruments we have built. It will not then be a band, but the NWA ORCHESTRA! 🎵

Sheet Goods and Veneers - A follow up to our September monthly meeting

By Charlie Goddard

We were treated to an intensely data filled evening on plywoods, MDF, and Veneers at our September Monthly NWA meeting at Shaker House in Albany. Ken Stefanik of Premium Plywood Products and Ben Barrett of Berkshire Veneer shared their many years of knowledge with us and provided insightful ideas of how we might use something other than the typical box store sheet goods.

We were impressed by some of the new products available including premium plywood which is surfaced with a thin 1/8inch of MDF on both sides which is superior to either MDF or plywood. This product has the structural integrity of plywood while eliminating the potential telegraphing of plywood through the current thin veneers.

Ben shared with us the broad range of veneers available in large and small quantities through his business near Great Barrington, Ma. I am certain several of us will be making a trip to Berkshire Veneer before the end of this year.

While Premium Plywood Products is more of a wholesale distribution business, Ken welcomes us to purchase directly. He also shared that any of the local businesses such as Curtis Lumber will gladly order premium sheet goods from Ken's business ensuring we get the best products possible.

I hope we all walked away from this meeting with more working knowledge of what premium sheet goods mean and how to obtain them.

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. The newsletter is available online at www.woodworker.org



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CHAPTER NEWS

Mid Hudson Chapter

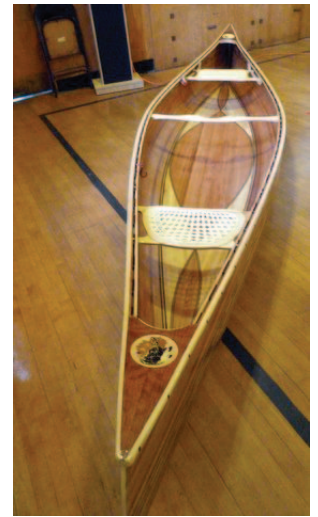
By Wally Cook

Paddlecraft: John VanBuren provided a presentation on making paddles for canoe or kayak. Typically, the focus is on size and paddle shape and the steps necessary for glue-up, shaping, and finishing:

1. **Decide on Size:** Typically, paddle length is between chin and eyes. If you are in the back of a canoe, a longer paddle may be needed. A style of paddle that John likes is the Greenland paddle which is approximately 7 feet long with slim blades.
2. **Decide on Blade and Handle Shape:** Greenland paddles have small shoulders, which provides less drag and is less tiring to the paddler. Generally, the sharper the edge of the blade, the quieter the paddle. It is considered bad form to grasp the edges of someone's paddles – the thin blade edges may break.
3. **Glue-up:** The shaft is the heart of the paddle. Glue the shaft first. Materials for shafts are dimensional lumber like 1x2 furring strips; while blades can be constructed of cutoffs from other projects. Traditional wood is western red cedar for Greenland style paddles. Some feather lights have balsa wood cores. When gluing keep hardwoods on the outside, including the tip; this increases the strength of the paddle. Some blades are reinforced with fiberglass cloth. Handle pieces are glued last. Glues that John recommends are Gorilla glue, Titebond III and high quality epoxies like West Systems G Flex. G Flex is great because it fills gaps. John cautions to stay away from lower end glues like 5 min epoxy. Keep in mind that epoxy is like grease – a jig can help keep pieces in line while gluing. Gluing multiple laminations is easier if they are stacked using small holes and dowels for registration. Dowels made of thin wood cooking skewers work well.
4. **Shaping:** Put centerlines on all four faces and shape to them. Shape the surfaces of the blades first, then the shaft, and finally the handle thickness. John uses planes, drawknives, spoke shaves, rasps, cpaddle sandpaper and files. Power tools are not necessary. Clamps and sandpaper are necessary.
5. **Finishing:** sand, then finish with choice of various finishes: tung oil or marine varnishes are recommended. If you use epoxies, look for spar varnishes which contain iron oxide and absorb UV rays



John VanBuren discusses paddle building



Canoe built over the course of 14 months by the NWA class



The Greenland blade (top) is slimmer than a normal blade (bottom)

Chapter Picnic: A good time was had despite some cool gusty winds at the West Hurley Park. Approximately 45 members attended the picnic. Joe Benkert made the sausage, which was the best to date. The covered dishes were excellent as well. Thanks to all those who attended -- and particular thanks to Fred and Lorraine DuBois for their work in setting up the event.



Members enjoy the chapter picnic at the West Hurley Park

CHAPTER NEWS

Sacandaga Chapter

By Gary Spencer

The October 9th meeting for the Sacandaga Chapter will feature Don Williams, who is feature editor for the Leader Herald Newspaper in Goversville NY. His presentation will be unusual and should be a very Interesting topic called "Tools and Tales".

Don has for years written about life in the Adirondacks and this presentation continues that interest but will

focus on tools that were in use by our forefathers in the Adirondacks many, many years ago. Sounds like a great program to me!

We will have show and tell and 50/50 as usual, so let's have a good turnout for a very interesting man.

Our regular monthly Chapter meetings are the second Wednesday of each month and begin 7:00 P.M. Our next regular meeting will be October 9th, 2013. We will meet at our shop at 55 2nd Avenue, Mayfield, NY. Come visit.

Jim Hopkins – 725-7322 • Don Wilson – 883-3698
Gary Spencer – 863-6433

KWA Chapter News

By Wally Cook

Jewelry: The theme of the October 19 Mid-Hudson Chapter Show will be jewelry and associated projects (e.g., jewelry boxes, ring holders). As a consequence, Steve Sherman led a discussion of adornment projects for woodturners in preparation for the show.

Woodturning lends itself to an array of adornments, such as rings, pendants, beads, brooches, scarf pins, hairpins, earrings, bracelets, cuffs, and bangles. Steve showed pieces under construction focusing on design and finishing suggestions. His emphasis was on the use of epoxy and CA finishing, particularly in combination with plastic polish.

In addition to design considerations, Steve demonstrated the making of bangles (fixed inside diameter bracelets). One approach is to form a cylinder between centers; rechuck in a spigot chuck to allow end grain hollowing. Hollow a small amount of the cylinder, forming the bangle shape on the rim of the cylinder. The inside diameter of the rim should be planned: bangles come in standard sizes defined either by

inside diameter or inside circumference (e.g., 7.25", 7.5", 8.0", 8.5", etc.). There are websites which provide sizing aides -- www.goldpalace.com/page/GPJI/MEASUREMENT. Check the size used by the intended receiver of your gift. Once the inside circumference or diameter is achieved, the bangle can be parted off the cylinder. Steve uses a re-ground kitchen knife as a parting tool. He chooses a knife with a profile featuring a stiffer spine tapering to the cutting edge; the end is re-ground in the fashion of a standard parting tool.

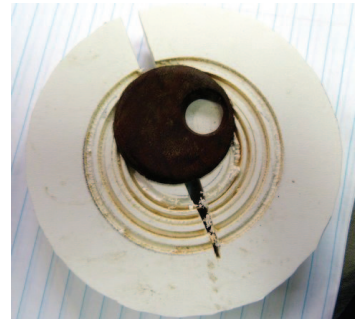
The bangle must then be remounted on a chuck, using a protective surface to avoid marring the inside surface – Steve uses sections of a motorcycle inner tube. The edges are sanded and finished. Another method is to use a metal substrate, such as provided by The Bangleguy Products – see the Bangle Video Part 4: *Sizing the Inside Diameter* YouTube video from Wildwood Designs: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nui9PUdX0Uk.



Woodturning lends itself to a variety of adornment projects



A bangle formed from a cylinder (right) and parted off (left)



Bill Thiry made a jig from pvc lumber to hold an off center pendant



Steve Sherman leads the discussion about adornment projects

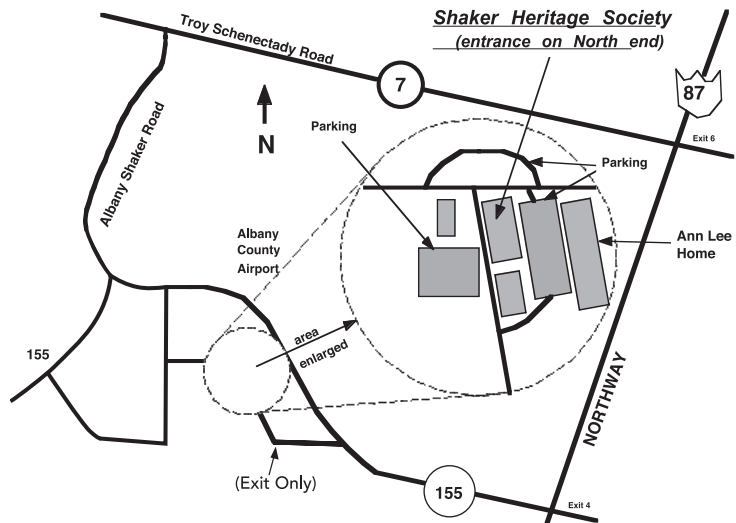
CLASSIFIEDS

For Sale

Ibex bending iron, for bending sides of violin, viola, guitar, and cello. Includes stainless steel backing strap for difficult bends. \$100. John Michne, 371-6690.



Northeastern Woodworkers Association
P.O. Box 246
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October Meeting

Thursday, October 10, 7:00 pm

Shaker Heritage Society Meeting House

Heritage Lane, Albany NY

GENERAL MEETINGS AND SPECIAL EVENTS

For meeting cancellation
information,
call Ken Evans 753-7759
or Charlie Goddard 370-0388

October 10, 2013

Carl Borst "Carving"

November 14, 2013

Doug Stowe "Fiske Lecture"
at the Clifton Park
Senior Center

December 12, 2013

Family Night at the Clifton Park
Senior Center

January 9, 2014

Norton Industries "Stone Sharpening"

February 13, 2014

"Men with Musical Instruments who
know how to make them"

March 13, 2014

Tom Osborne "Machine Applications"

April 10, 2014

Garrett Hack "TBA"

May 8, 2014

Mid Hudson "TBA"
Election of Officers

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGs)

Adirondack Woodturners Association (AWA) - The AWA is active throughout the year. Meetings are held the first Wednesday of the month (except in January and July when it is the second Wednesday), and are held at the NWA Learning Center located at 15 Solar Drive, Clifton Park, NY from 6:30 PM to 9:00PM.

Wednesday "Learn and Turn" sessions occur on all other Wednesdays at the NWA Learning Center. These sessions run 6pm-9pm. www.adirondackwoodturners.com **Contact:** Ken Evans, 518-753-7759 or kevans1@nycap.rr.com

Scroller's Guild - Meets on the first and third Thursday of the month at the NWA Learning Center located at 15 Solar Drive, Clifton Park, NY. A beginner's session starts at 6:30 PM followed by a general meeting at 7:00 PM. **Contact:** Jeanne Aldous at AMJAMt2@aol.com or Barbara Nottke at scroller87@aol.com or 869-6268.

Kaatskill Woodturners - Meets the second Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m. at the Opdahl property in Hurley, NY. **Contact:** Matt Clark, (845) 454-9387.

NWA Crafters - Meets every Saturday and Tuesday, from 9:00 am until noon at the NWA Learning Center located at 15 Solar Drive, Clifton Park, NY. The Crafters provide public service woodworking for various charitable organizations, including the Double H Hole in the Woods camp for children and the GE Elfuns toy modifications group, and the Make A Wish Foundation. Sharing information, fellowship, and relating experiences are a major part of these sessions. **Contact:** Dave Axton (518) 237-6942, daxton@nycap.rr.com, Wayne Distin (518) 674-4171, wdistin@nycap.rr.com Steve Schoenberg (518-371-1260), sschoen1@nycap.rr.com for more information.

The NWA Wood Carvers SIG - Meet each Thursday at 5:30 p.m. until 9 p.m. all year except the 2nd Thursday of each month at the NWA Learning Center located at 15 Solar Drive, Clifton Park, NY. Programs are determined at the previous weekly sessions. Discussions start at 7PM. The goal is to promote the art of Wood Carving. Individual private sessions are available Wednesday evenings by appointment. Wood, tools, and patterns are available. **Contact:** Ray Gannon. LoRayG@Gmail.com

CHAPTERS

NWA Mid-Hudson - The chapter meets at 7:30 p.m. on the third Thursday, except July and August, at the Hurley Reformed Church. The Church is just off the the Hurley exit from Rte. 209. Right at the exit, right at the stop sign and left into the Church parking area. **Contact:** Pete Chast, pchast@francomm.com.

NWA Sacandaga - The chapter meets at 7 p.m. on the Second Wednesday of each month at 55 Second Avenue, Mayfield, NY. **Contact:** Gary Spencer, 518-863-6433.