

WOODWORKERS NEWS



Northeastern
Woodworkers
Association

December 2020, Vol. 29, Number 10

January Meeting

Mother of Pearl Inlay Techniques

Thursday, January 14, 2021 7:00 PM

Shaker Heritage Society Meetinghouse

Albany-Shaker Road, Albany, NY

Guest Speaker: Raymond Puffer

Mother of Pearl (MOP) inlays are commonly used to enhance the appearance of many wooden items, ranging from musical instruments to jewelry, jewelry boxes, and furniture. This demonstration will cover MOP inlay materials, preparation of inlays, sources of supply, the tools used, and the inlay process. The item used for the demonstration will be a typical ring box.



Ring box



Banjo peg head

What is the Crafters SIG Doing for the Holidays?

By Susan McDermott

Stop in the NWA Learning Center any Tuesday or Saturday morning 9 AM to noon, and you will see members busy with many projects. Volunteers are currently making items for the Shaker Meetinghouse Holiday Crafts Fair. We have an attractive booth among the large crafts displays that fill the large meetinghouse. Brea Barthel made the signage for the booth, and Pam Curtis arranged the display which will be replenished regularly as items are sold. The items are all handcrafted by NWA members.

The Crafters contribute materials and their labor to make small toys and items that will be sold at the meetinghouse NWA booth, and the income will be put in the NWA budget for essential expenses such as rent and insurance. The newsletter invites all members to inform the NWA community of how they can help generate income to sustain our organization's shop in this difficult COVID time. If you belong to a SIG, ask the leader how you can contribute. Every donation of money, materials, and volunteerism is very welcome.



NWA holiday booth at the Shaker Meetinghouse



Rick Bird builds small totes



Tote assembled



Jerry Verner makes toy trucks and race cars



NWA booth



Jon Bennett, Peter Lawler, and Don Cooke (left to right) build logging trucks



New member Don Reeb sketches small trucks



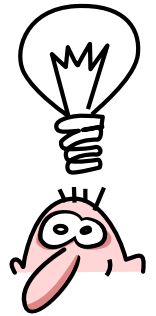
Dick Flanders gifts an oversized shirt to a Crafter.



Juliana Shei makes small red oak boxes with walnut pins to pivot top

The new monthly “MEMBER’S WOODWORKING TRICKS” column is here!

The newsletter is starting a special column to invite members to contribute suggestions and woodworking tips for publication. The first column below is a sample of how YOU, as a member can contribute your skills to our members with your ideas. If the idea came from a video or magazine or the Internet, be sure to credit that source. We hope this column will continue monthly, but it is up to our NWA members to make it happen!



Have you discovered a new trick when you are working on your project? Perhaps you have tried a tip that you read in a magazine worked surprisingly well for you? Some tips and tricks that you do not think are special may save others many headaches. Why not share your tips with your fellow members?

Send your trick to for a chance to win a special gift including items created by the Crafters SIG. The article should be no more than one typed page (or less), includes the source of information if there is one, and a picture if possible.

Eraser as a sanding block by Juliana Shei

If you are like me, you probably bought your first black rubber sanding block (see picture) at the local Home Depot. I used that for several months and found the center of the block became convex. I bought a different style, then another one, and another, even tried a piece of scrap wood, but I was not happy with any of them. When I was searching YouTube on sanding and finishing, I saw a video by Chris in Highline Guitars using erasers as sanding blocks.

[Click here](#) to view the video.

Sanding my box surface using small eraser I found in my desk drawer, and using pieces of different grit sandpaper, the finished box now has smooth shiny surface with less sanding effort. I bought bigger erasers for larger surfaces. I will always use eraser sanding blocks for all my sanding.



Juliana's sanding block collection. Three sizes of erasers she uses on the right.

Flattening a Wooden Slab with a Router Demonstration Given on October 18, 2020

By Susan McDermott

Michael Donovan was invited by the Northeastern Woodworkers Association, in cooperation with the Shaker Heritage Society, to use the Shaker Pavilion to set up his Woodpeckers Slab Flattening Mill Pro. This equipment represents a considerable investment. [Click here](#) for the Woodpecker's website. Dave Mobley introduced Michael and expressed thanks to the NWA members who volunteered in setting up seating, power lines, cameras, and the raffle table. Michael expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to give the demonstration he intended for the cancelled Showcase 2020.

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Michael's business, Legend Woodcrafts, benefits from his investment as he can make beautiful natural edge table tops from rough wooden slabs using a router mounted to the slab flattening mill instead of a planer. The advantage of his method is an entire single slab can be flattened with less tear-out and use wider slabs that a planer could not accommodate.

He first demonstrated the setup of his Woodpeckers Slab Flattening Mill Pro system. He explained details such as how to properly support and hold down the wood and answered members' many questions about the operation as he assembled and adjusted the rails and extensions and set the router. About 35 NWA members attended the event and were seated out of doors with masks and six feet of social distance. A camera and large screen monitor focused on the operation for closer viewing as Michael made passes on the slab. Each pass cut 1/16 of an inch on the high spots of the slab.

Michael buys his air dried and kiln dried slabs from the Amish (Ivan Wagler) in Fultonville, NY.

Michael's router was a 3HP Festool OF 2200-watt plunge router which is powerful enough to cut very hard woods with big bits. The very aggressive bit Michael used was a 2-inch Whiteside Spoilboard Surfacing 1/2" shank bit. He levelled the

3 and 3/8" thick slab with shims. He suggested playing cards can be used as shims as they are 1/10,000" thick and can be stacked to desired level. He secured the slab with four forked pins screwed to the plywood table. He then made cuts on the push stroke, working on the slab from right to left across the width of the wood. Our NWA cameraman, Stephen Brown, made a video of the entire process. [Click here](#) for 12 photos of the demonstration.

Lee Hilt's generator saved the day! Michael's set up needed simultaneous electrical power for the router, dust collector and Festool vacuum (at least 18 amps total) and cutting the high spots put more



Michael Donovan



Two walnut slabs

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



Your next issue of
Woodworkers News

will be published
in early January

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The slab flattening set up

demand on the electric supply that the Shaker circuit board could not sustain. Lee's 8500 watts generator at peak kept the show on the road for the duration of the hour and one-half demonstration.

Raffle winners of the Woodpeckers Tee shirt, square, and note pads for drafting were Ron Wager, Kara Stoliky, and Susan McDermott. The lucky winner of the two flattened slabs at the end of the demonstration was Bill Stolis.

Michael can be contacted for any questions, comments or work orders at michael@legendwoodcrafts.com or at 518-951-4185.

NWA Lumber Sale

By Lee Hilt, Chair of the NWA Auction and Online Sales

October 17 was our second and final pick up day for Sale #3. Things went very well. Sale #3 was scheduled to end on October 21, 2020. The plan is to hold off on any added sales until spring 2021. Here is a wrap-up of the three online sales and the folks who need to be recognized for their help with the events.

NWA conducted three Online Sales in the fall of 2020 in place of the annual Lumber Auction which could not be held due to COVID-19 restrictions. The items sold and sales dates were as follows:

- NWA Power Tool Online Sale #1 8/1/2020 - 8/19/2020.
- NWA Small Power & Hand Tool Online Sale #2 9/12/2020 - 9/23/2020
- NWA Lumber Online Sale #3 10/4/2020 – 10/21/2020.

The online sale format was a new undertaking for NWA and involved an enormous amount of detailed work as well as several days of heavy lifting to prepare sale items stored in the Shaker Barn. Each item was identified and photographed with a corresponding brief written description. The dozens and dozens of items were assigned a price based on past sales and market price and edited for electronic

posting. All items were formatted and posted online to allow for the NWA members to view and purchase as desired.

The two walnut slabs from a Union College tree that graced the campus for 200 years were bought by David Collinge, an employee of that college.

The overall process was a tremendous success and raised some much-needed revenue for NWA and the Fiske Fund. Special thanks to the NWA Lumber & Tool Auction/Online Sale Committee, without whose help, the sales would not have been possible.

- Juliana Shei – Fiske Fund Treasurer
- Susan McDermott
- Andy Moss – Webmaster
- Austin Spang
- Charlie Goddard
- Dave Mobley
- Jon Bennett
- Jon Cochran
- Richard Flanders
- Rick Bird
- Robert Stevens
- Woody Bowler



Volunteer prepares the lumber for the online sale



Picking up lumber purchased in online sale are: Reg Lilly (left), Dick Flanders, David Collinge (third from left) and Lee Hilt.

A Visit to the Burden Iron Works Museum:

An interview with Executive Director Michael P. Barrett

By Susan McDermott

One of our NWA members is the knowledgeable historian and lecturer for the Hudson Mohawk Industrial Gateway who gives tours of the Burden Iron Works Museum located at One East Industrial Parkway in Troy, NY.

I asked him to explain the early history of the lumber industry prior to the iron works. Fascinating are the great iron industries of Henry Burden and Erastus Corning, but the local wood industries of the 1600's to 1800's is of greater relevance to NWA readers.

Michael was gracious and generous to give this editor a specific talk and tour for the benefit of our members. But this article cannot do justice to the remarkable history and artifacts of the Burden Iron Works Museum. Please arrange a visit when Michael can lead you through with a most entertaining and instructive tour. He is passionate and encyclopedic in the history of Troy's early industries.

Because the maritime European nations had all but decimated their own forests of hardwood and conifer by the fifteenth century, Henry Hudson's "discovery" of the vast timber resources along the river banks as he sailed from the Atlantic up to today's Albany region would eventually transform both the Netherlands and Britain's great navies. Robert

Juet sailed with Henry Hudson in 1609 and kept a journal of his voyages. Despite what you may think that you learned in your elementary school texts, Juet notes almost off-handedly that the Natives are clothed in rich furs, but

what he stresses are the incredible trees that could hit 40' in circumference (12.5 feet in diameter!). He may well have observed the white oaks that would provide excellent ship timber and planking. (Southern live oaks' natural bends in their limbs made naturally curved ship knees and keel joints



One of three molten iron ladles

and became much sought after in the ship building industry.) Cedars, chestnuts, and black oaks were perfect for the underwater portion of the ships – due to their impermeability to liquids, shock resistance, strength, natural durability, and decay-resistant properties. (Wikipedia). The straight towering (200') white pines of New England and the Maritimes would become ships' masts. Within a few decades of European colonization, boat and ship building and lumber exports to the continental powers became one of America's major industries. The Mill Stream in today's City of Rensselaer was the first sawmill (c. 1640) on the east side of the river, and the first recorded sawmill in Albany was on the Normanskill in 1654, although there must have been earlier mills.

Troy's first recorded sawmill of 1659 was located on the Wynantskill (where the South End Tavern was located.) Dozens of other mills were located almost everywhere that there was a sufficient fall of water to power a wheel, and thus a blade.

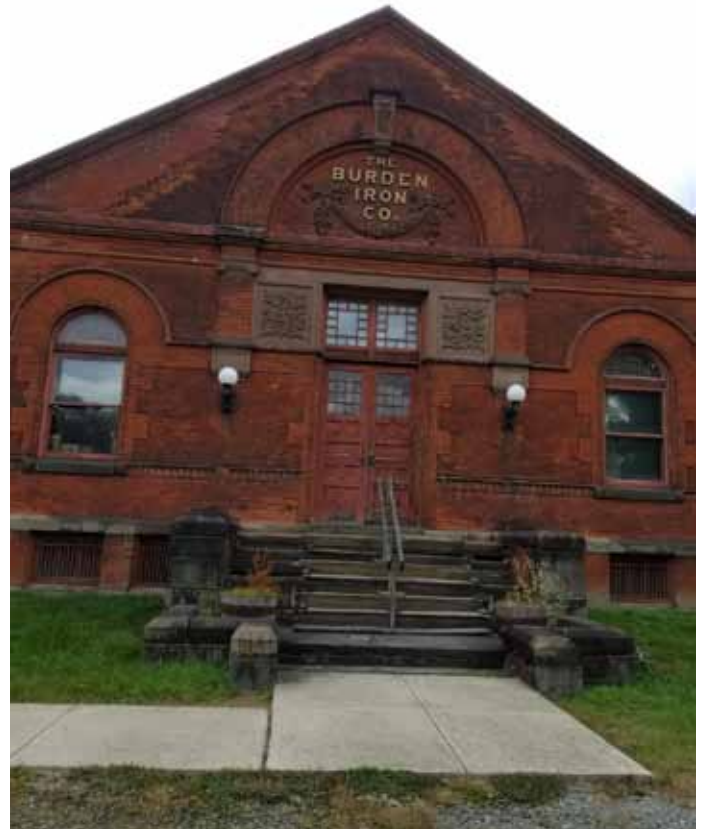
A very important off-shoot of the lumbering business was the production of pot ash, and the much more refined pearl ash. Pot ash was the water-soluble potassium salts that were derived by leaching water through wood ash created by burning the less desirable branches and chip debris from lumbering. As much as 10 % of the weight of the ash could be recovered as potassium, which was highly valued as fertilizer and in making bleach and soap, due to the high lye content. Pearl ash was a more refined version of pot ash and was formed by baking the pot ash to remove impurities. The fine white powder remaining behind was widely used as a leavening agent in quick breads before the development of baking powder and was instrumental in glass and china production. Probably most important, after 1828 it was used in alkalizing cocoa powder into the first version of "Dutch chocolate."

Another huge business involving wood was the charcoal production industry. The hill towns around the upper Hudson Valley in the period of 1790 to 1870 used hardwoods to make the very high-grade charcoal to fuel the iron furnaces of the area. Wood burns because the oxygen is being combusted, but there is a problem in that the unburned oxygen tends to bind to other elements, and that extraneous binding is very detrimental to a number of processes. Charcoal has had the oxygen and other volatiles in the wood slowly burned out and that resulting pure carbon charcoal burns in an oxygen free "reducing" fire that is absolutely crucial for production in the local iron and steel, copper (Massachusetts) and glass industries.

As part of the Erie Canal (1817- '25) project, the Champlain Canal of 1823 linked Albany-Troy to the great timber supplies (and iron ores)



A mockup of the interior when it was the office of Burden Iron Works



The Museum

of the Adirondacks and allowed transportation of lumber east and west 363 miles as far as Lake Erie. Albany was widely considered to be the lumber shipping capital of the east coast for much of the mid-19th century. As the Champlain Canal ended at Troy, and much of the Erie Canal traffic entered and exited at "the Troy sidecut," Troy became a major shipping

and manufacturing center. According to the 1840 Federal Census, Troy had become the fourth wealthiest city (on a per capita basis) in America. A goodly portion of that wealth came because of the movement of timber wood and assorted wood products through the lumber yards of the Capital District.

There is much more to this story, but one must visit the museum to appreciate the rich history of Troy. Call the museum for an appointment for a guided tour 518-274-5267. Wear a mask and limit the number of people you bring. The museum is spacious to allow social distancing. [Click here](#) to view the museum website.

The NWA Newsletter editor thanks Michael for the personal tour and the content of this article.

NWA Book of the Month Highlight

By Wally Carpenter

NWA was blessed over the years with talented writers such as Ron Dewitt and his monthly series of articles focusing on a specific family of trees. Since his passing a few years ago, I have missed seeing a monthly article in our newsletter that focuses on a topic which may interest our members at large. While I simply don't have the skill set to attempt continuing Ron's legacy related to wood species, I have collected a number of woodworking related books through time and 2020 has given me the opportunity to revisit several books and authors I have enjoyed. I would like to share some highlights from books which are special to me.

So, learning from Ron's desire to teach us about species of wood through a monthly article, I will attempt to replicate the idea with some very interesting books focused on woodworking. I would like to offer my thoughts on what I consider some of the best woodworking books available to us.

To begin, I am admittedly biased toward furniture and violin making and have a reasonable set of books in these areas. I would ask that any of you who have interests in other woodworking disciplines to take the challenge of sharing authors who have influenced your woodworking skills. I am certain our NWA Newsletter Editor would be delighted to place your review under the same heading of *NWA Book of the Month* and a "by-line" with your name!

This being my first attempt at a monthly book highlights (not a book review) article, let me begin this process with a very well-known author and woodworker, James Krenov.

I am aware of six books attributed to him as the author. His first book, *A Cabinet Maker's Notebook*, is the one I will begin with. I have posted all six book titles at the end of this article in the event you would like to read more from him.

As a bit of background about the author, his School of the Redwoods has long been a source of some of the best studio woodworkers in the US for decades. Several of us have personally benefited from being taught by his students over the past few years. It must be stated that when Krenov speaks of being a cabinet maker, he is speaking of fine furniture grade artisan cabinets and not the typical plywood framed carcasses one sees in the kitchen or bathrooms. This book contains pearls of wisdom from a person who spent his life learning and teaching his craft.

His first book was written in an autobiographical style without a contents page. There is a heading of sorts for transitions of thought by a bold text for the first line. It is easy to adjust to this as you read along. His style of writing is much like having a series of conversations on varied aspects of his relationship with the art and craftsmanship of wood.

In telling his story you begin to understand his relationship with the craft and with the lumber itself. I found quite by accident that myself and many others of our group share or perhaps grown into that same relationship as Krenov. It is looking at a slab or bundle of wood and determining what the wood needs to become. As he points out, much effort has already been taken to present the lumber into

your hands to be enhanced with your skills. Krenov believed it was the craftsman's role to match the wood with what it would become.

He writes almost philosophically in terms many of us understand yet sometimes do not want to admit. On page 59, he tells of how he once gave little thought to purchasing wood that he knew he could not use for 4 years and more recently gives pause to actually using it. As he said, "I am sad, not at the thought of getting old, but because I might miss such a lovely wood."

On pages 66-67 he tells a wonderful story relating his experiences blending power tooling with hand work. At the end he says, "*You and I have come this far together.... Thank you, machine – and goodbye. I am going to do the rest without you. Because I have those beautiful tools. Because with them in my hands I know better what I want to say, and how to say it my way – not yours.*"

There is so much more I could share but I will close with Krenov stating the following from page 125: "*Wood has its integrity, elusive but definable. Wood is vulnerable; it can be spoiled by a single wrong movement of the tool. It has textures, luster, rhythms – but only the patient hand and seeing eye can coax these forth. Never inert, wood has a will of its own, the seasonal breathing of which can split rocks and burst walls.*"

In conclusion, if you share Krenov's philosophy you will very much enjoy reading this and other books he has authored. Published in 1976, it rings as true today as then. Please take the opportunity to enjoy his story.

All of James Krenov's Books:

- (1976). *A Cabinetmaker's Notebook*. Studio Vista. ISBN 0-289-70754-4.
- (1977). *The Fine Art of Cabinetmaking*. Studio Vista. ISBN 0-289-70797-8.
- (1979). *The Impractical Cabinetmaker*. Van Norstrand Reinhold. ISBN 0-442-24558-0.
- (1981). *James Krenov: Worker in Wood*. Van Norstrand Reinhold. ISBN 0-442-26336-8.
- Krenov; Janofsky (2000). *With Wakened Hands*. ISBN 1-892836-06-8.
- Krenov; Finck (2005). *Making and Mastering Wood Planes*. Sterling. ISBN 1-4027-2022-X.

Classifieds

For sale: Jet Drum Sander

Model:10-20Plus. stock#628900.

Everything in picture included, hardly used.

\$450.00

Contact Don Poletto 518 434 8844.



Wanted:

Camp Pattersonville (Camppattersonville.org) is seeking a volunteer to coordinate a woodworking project for our campers for the summer of 2021. The camp provides simple tools and supplies. Volunteer responsibilities include meeting with staff sometime the last week of June to Instruct them on the steps for supervising this project.

Things that have been made in the past include simple nightstands, wooden lamps, wooden toolboxes, wooden garbage pails. Stools, birdhouses. Volunteers would need to train the counselors initially for three hours or so and then return once a week for an hour or so to check on the projects. Please Contact Tammy Mills at tmills@nycap.rr.com for more information.

January Meeting

Thursday, January 14, 2021 7:00 PM
Shaker Heritage Society Meetinghouse
Albany-Shaker Road, Albany, NY

2021 MONTHLY MEETINGS*

Unless noted otherwise, held at the Shaker Meetinghouse
on the Second Thursdays at 7:00 PM

For meeting cancellation information,
Charlie Goddard 370-0388

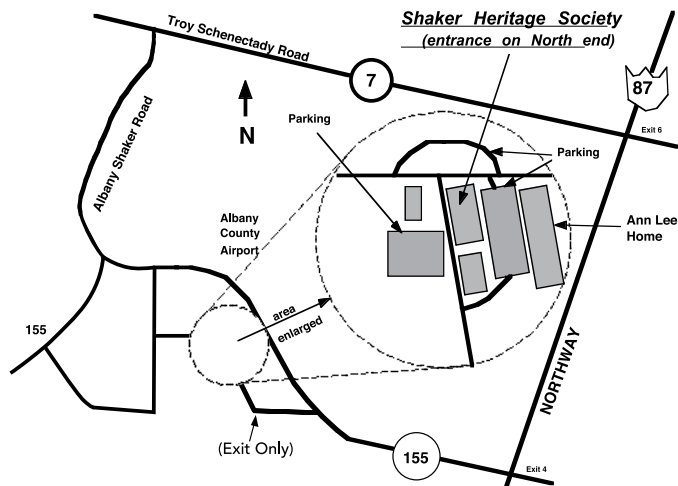
February 11 TBA

March 11 TBA

April 8 TBA

May 13 TBA Election of NWA officers

*To be updated with additional information



SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGs):

Please note meetings will commence at
our new location at 97 Railroad Avenue.

Adirondack Woodturners Association (AWA) - The AWA is active throughout the year. **General** Meetings are held the first Wednesday of the month (except in January and July when it is the second Wednesday), at the NWA Learning Center located at 97 Railroad Avenue, Colonie, NY from 5:30 PM to 8:45 PM. **Contact:** Kevin Ramsey Cell 518-769-9665 or kmrammer@yahoo.com

Spindle and Pen Turners - Meets Mondays 5:30 PM - 8:45 PM. Contact: Pam Bucci at 518-429-6440 or woolglass2@gmail.com Wednesday "Learn and Turn" sessions occur on all other Wednesdays at the NWA Learning Center. These sessions run 5:30 PM to 8:45 PM. www.adirondackwoodturners.com **Contact:** Kevin Ramsey Cell 518-769-9665 or kmrammer@yahoo.com

Kaatskill Woodturners - Second Saturday mornings at 9:00 AM at the Opdahl property in Hurley, NY. **Contact:** Wally Cook at wally.cook@gmail.com

NWA Crafters - Meet Tuesdays and Saturdays 9:00 AM to noon. They provide public service woodworking for various charitable organizations, including the Double H Hole in the Woods camp for children and the GE Toy Modifications Group, and the Make A Wish Foundation. Sharing information, fellowship, and relating experiences are a major part of these sessions. **Contact:** Wayne Distin at 518-674-4171 or wdistin@nycap.rr.com, Ken Evans at 518-281-0779 or kevans1@nycap.rr.com, or John Heimke at heimkj@sage.edu for more information.

The NWA Wood Carvers SIG - Meet Thursdays 5:00-8:30 PM all year at the NWA Learning Center located at 97 Railroad Avenue, Colonie, NY. The goal is to promote the art of wood carving and to have a good time doing it. The only prerequisite is a desire to carve while making new friends. Wood, tools, and patterns are available. **Contact:** Diane Balch at 518-885-9899 or signs@balchsigns.com

Hand Tool SIG - Meets on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month at 7:00-9:00 PM in the Herm Finkbeiner Education Center at 97 Railroad Avenue, Colonie, NY. **Contact:** Dave Parkis at 518-429-6581 for further details: dparkis@nycap.rr.com

Scrollers SIG - Meets every Monday and Wednesday 6 to 8:30 PM. Contact Pam Bucci woodglass2@gmail.com 518-429-6440 (for Mondays) Kay McCampbell kmcccampbell@nycap.rr.com 518-371-9608

CHAPTERS

NWA Mid-Hudson - The chapter meets at 7:30 PM on the third Thursday, except July, at the Hurley Reformed Church. The Church is just off the Hurley exit from Rte. 209. Right at the exit, right at the stop sign and left into the Church parking area. **Contact:** midhudsonwoodworkers.org Jim Lee, President - (845)382-6045