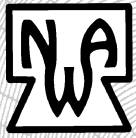


WOODWORKERS NEWS



Northeastern
Woodworkers
Association

March 2006, Vol. 15, Number 3

Let's Get the Show on the Road!!

SHOWCASE 2006

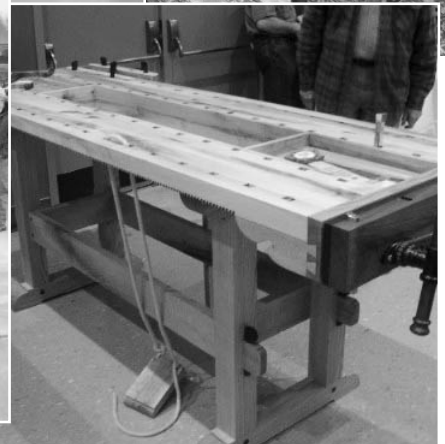
March 25-26, 2006

Saratoga Springs Civic Center

Have you:

- Finished your project for display?
- Sent in your display entry form?
- Volunteered to Work at Showcase?
- Put up *Showcase 2006* posters in local 'hotspots'?

The Northeast's biggest and best volunteer woodworking show depends on YOU for success.



March NWA Meeting to Feature Roy Underhill

*7 pm Thursday, March 9, 2006
Shaker Heritage Society Meeting House
Albany-Shaker Road, Albany
(near Albany airport)*

Roy Underhill, star of the PBS television program "The Woodwright Shop" will be the speaker at the March 9, 2006 NWA meeting. He will also present a two-day program the following Friday and Saturday, March 10 and 11. The regular March meeting will be held at the Shaker facility as usual and the Friday and Saturday program will be held at the Stillwater Community Center Auditorium in Stillwater, NY.

This will be an exceptionally interesting program that you do not want to miss.



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UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED, PHONE
NUMBERS ARE IN AREA CODE 518

From the President

- Ken Evans

John Michne has resigned his position as NWA president for reasons related to health. All of us thank John for his work and support of NWA and we wish him and his family all the best. John will still be involved with NWA in several areas of volunteerism including the construction of the cedar strip canoe that he and his crew have been working on for the last several months.

As vice president, it is my responsibility to assume the duties of president. I know I can depend on your help and support as I learn my way.

This is always an exciting time for NWA with *Showcase* just around the corner and everyone gearing up for the event, but it is also an exciting time as NWA sets up a workshop in rented space in the Stillwater Community Center just off Rts. 4 and 32 in Stillwater, NY.

NWA has already held classes in this new facility including several turners' "Learn n Turn" sessions. A toy making class started on Feb. 15 with much more planned including a stool making class, some scroll sawing classes, and a host of classes on machine usage and woodworking techniques that are still under discussion. If there is a class you would like to see offered by someone else, or if there is a class you might like to offer and feel qualified to teach please let me know.

Like most volunteer organizations, NWA is always looking for workers. At present, we need:

1. Someone to set up and operate a short Powerpoint style presentation at regular meetings that shows the monthly activities of NWA and NWA members.
2. A publications committee chairperson. We need someone to head the committee that decides what NWA publications to have, to help the Web masters obtain the right material for the web sites, and to produce brochures telling prospective members about NWA and generally making certain that we have written material that can be used to tell the world more about NWA.
3. An NWA historian. Frequently we need to find out when something was done, what was done, who did it, what the reaction was to an NWA program or event. Currently, the material that would provide those answers is not being collected in one place and sometimes has even been lost.
4. Assistants at the Stillwater shop. For all of the classes held at Stillwater, NWA members will be needed to help the instructor, provide assistance for the students and help make certain that all operations are carried out safely.

If you are able to help in any of these roles, or have thoughts about other things that you would like to see happen and are willing to help bring about, please contact me at (518) 753-7759 or kevans1@nycap.rr.com. 🐾

More Volunteers Needed

- Guy Garrett

Response to the last e-mail was encouraging, and we now have about 175 volunteers for *Showcase 2006*. If you have not volunteered, please sign up. We need all the help we can get.

The following volunteers are still needed:

Door Hosts - 19

Unlimited number of floor hosts to protect the exhibits, give directions, etc.

Lecture assistants - 14

Membership - 9

Raffle - 10

Sawmill Assistants - 9

Set-up and take-down - multitudes

Ticket sales - 14 (No tickets, no showee)

Please sign up early so that we can plan assignments. Remember only volunteers get into the show free and are eligible for prizes. Besides, you do not want to be the only NWA member who did not volunteer for *Showcase 2006* and missed out on meeting a group of nice people.

To volunteer or find out more information, please contact me at (518) 287-1220 or garrettg@midtel.net. 🐾



The cedar strip canoe for the Showcase raffle is really taking shape. Final sanding of the outside of the hull is completed.



The fiberglass cloth is wet out with epoxy. Note the gloves and Tyvek suits.



Hull raised off the forms, and the first look at the inside.

Fiske Fund News

- Joe Kennedy

The Fiske Fund Committee has recently approved three grants. Wayne Evancoe will be taking a class with David Ellsworth, and Duane Henry and Chris Knite will be taking a Windsor chair making class with Michael Dunbar.

At this time we have three applications in the pipeline. Pat McCord and Gerry O'Brien will be taking a hand tool techniques class with Garrett Hack in late February and early March. Ralph Herrmann will be taking an advanced bird carving class with Floyd Scholz in October.

Remember that you can submit your application well in advance of a class as well as just before the class. The sooner you submit, the sooner it can be reviewed. In any event, don't wait until the class has commenced before submitting an application. 🐾

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 an iMac G5, duplicated by Shipmates, and mailed to more than 1,000 addresses.



Your next issue of **Woodworkers News** will be published in early April.

Copy deadline: March 15
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Designer



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www.woodworker.org
www.nwawoodworkingshow.org

Website Editor
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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. Webmaster - Justin Rohrer
rohrej@woodworker.org

The second site operates from January 1 to May 30 and carries specific information about SHOWCASE.



**NORTHEASTERN
WOODWORKERS ASSOCIATION**
P.O. BOX 246
Rexford, New York 12148

CHAPTER NEWS

Mid-Hudson Chapter News

- Wally Cook

Got Bugs?

The Mid-Hudson Valley Woodworkers participated in a contest to raise money for the building fund for the Hurley Heritage Society Museum. The museum is housed in a 1700s stone house in the Main St. Historic district and was visited by more than 1,500 people last year. To assist the effort to replace the roof at the museum, the Mid-Hudson Woodworkers created whimsical folk art garden bugs to be auctioned at the Heritage Society dinner in May.

The wooden bugs were mounted on a rod and were intended for an outdoor garden. Bugs could be flat board construction, turned or carved, and colorful paint or finishes were encouraged!

Thirteen entries were displayed and all were remarkably different. Popular vote determined the winners, including:

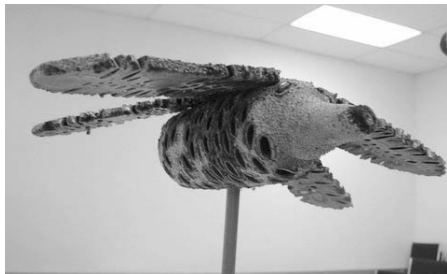
First Place: Jim Zitz -- Banksia Pod Aviator
Runner-up: Carl Ford III -- Grasshopper
Second Runner-up: Dap Cole -- Lady Bug



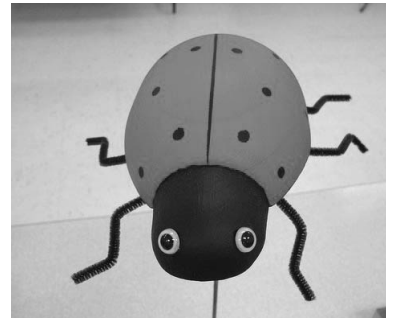
The Col. Jonathan Elmendorf house in Hurley serves as the Hurley Heritage Museum



Carl's Grasshopper



The winner! Turned Banksia pod by Jim Zitz



Dap's Lady Bug

Mid-Hudson Annual Dinner:

The Annual Dinner will be held on Friday, April 7 at the Twin lakes resort in Hurley. Cost is \$25.00 per person. Once again, Kathy Powell and her team are working on the world class raffle items for the event and there will be entertainment. If you are interested in purchasing tickets, please call Joe Benkert at (845) 331-3811.

Sacandaga Chapter News

- Gary Spencer

Gary Ratajczak presented an outstanding February program on pocket hole joinery by demonstrating the "Kreg Jig". He showed the group three different pocket hole jigs made by Kreg and also demonstrated a highly efficient home made professional jig.

On March 8 our program will be devoted to the topic of "The Intarsia of LaVerne Teaney". This program will further explore a skill-centered artistry that the chapter has been interested in for several years. Don't miss this program!

On April 12th our program will feature a past President of the Chapter, Kirk Hardenburg, who will discuss "Dust Collection in the Shop". This topic should be of value to all who have a shop of any size.

The Chapter is hard at work making two projects for the NWA Showcase. We have met several times at two different members' shops in order to finish in time for the show. One shop group is making an outdoor glider using white cedar while the other shop group is making a by 30"x 72" work bench out of ash & maple with wenge, red heart, yellowheart and walnut trim. Both groups are about 80 % finished and the projects will be up for raffle at Showcase. They will be exhibited at the Sacandaga Chapter tables at the show.

Our regular monthly meetings are the second Wednesday of each month and begin at 7:00 P.M. at Mayfield High School woodshop. The Sacandaga Chapter meetings are open to all, and light refreshments are served. Remember we have door prizes at every meeting but you do have to be present to win. Come on out!

For additional information or directions contact:

Joe Artikuski - 883-4036 • Mike Kratky - 863-2821 or • Gary Spencer - 863-6433

C L A S S E S F E E D S

For Sale: Stanley 55 plane, complete including original box and instruction booklet. Early 1920's \$575.00 contact David Anspacher at 731-6090

EXHIBIT ENTRY FORM

NWA SHOWCASE - MARCH 25-26, 2006

NAME: _____ PHONE: _____

ADDRESS: _____

EMAIL: _____

Member: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Fee: \$10 per entry

No Fee for Members

\$ _____ Enclosed

\$ _____ (Office use only)

ENTRY DEADLINE: March 22nd. Any received after that date will not be eligible for competition, but display only. Please refer to the entry rules page 2.

PLEASE FILL IN THE FOLLOWING FORM COMPLETELY

NOTE: Display labels are made in advance using the information you provide below. Those labels will be waiting for you when you bring in your entry on March 24th. No entries permitted after 7:00PM

<u>ENTRY CATEGORY</u> (State category, give brief description of your item, list types of woods and finish used)	<u>For Judging</u> (only one per category)	<u>For Display Only</u> (unlimited - as space allows)	<u>Display Preferences</u>		<u>Space Needed</u> Square feet
			Floor	Table	
Example: Adirondack Furniture; Hall Table. White & yellow birch, tiger maple top. Lacquer finish.	X		X		18
Example: Accessory; Jewelry box. Mahogany. Poly.		X		X	2
Example: Novice; Mission Bookcase. Oak. Shellac.	X		X		8
#1					
#2					
#3					
#4					
#5					
#6					
#7					

(see page 6 for entry rules)

WHAT: NWA SHOWCASE 2006 (www.nwawoodworkingshow.org)
WHERE: Saratoga City Center & Prime Hotel: Saratoga Springs, NY 12866
WHEN: 10-5 Saturday and Sunday; March 25-26, 2006

EXHIBIT HALL ENTRY CATEGORIES

- Adirondack furniture and accessories
- Furniture 1: Tables, beds
- Furniture 2: Cases, cabinets, desks
- Furniture 3: Chairs
- Accessories: Clocks, boxes, desk top pieces
- Toys/Miniatures: Play things, models
- Turning 1: Segmented
- Turning 2: Bowls, plates, platters
- Turning 3: Stemmed, hollow forms, vases, lidded, all others
- Carving: Representational, conceptual, decorative
- Inlay, Intarsia, Marquetry
- Scroll sawing
- Novice: Beginning woodworker under the age of 16 or less than 2 years experience.
- Other: Fixtures, shop equipment, cooperage, musical instruments, any piece not fitting into the above categories.

ENTRY RULES FOR EXHIBIT HALL

- Entry forms must be received by March 22nd to be eligible for competition, any late entries will be entered for display only.
- All exhibit items must be delivered to the City Center no later than 7:00 PM, Friday March 24th. No exceptions.
- Exhibits are not to be removed from the floor before 5PM Sunday and must be picked up between 5&7 PM that day.
- You may exhibit any number of pieces in more than one category, but only one piece for judging per category.
- Award winning pieces from a previous Showcase event are not eligible for competition, but may be entered for display.
- There must be at least three entrants in a category for an entry to be judged. The judges and the committee reserve the right to re-categorize an item for judging that may be misrepresented.
- Beginning woodworkers may enter as Novices as often as they wish until age 16. At age 16 and older, they and beginners with less than two years experience may enter as a Novice only once. Novice entries are based on the honor system.
- We request that you minimize your time with your exhibit(s) during show hours to avoid congestion.
- The exhibit hall is not a commercial area, no price tags or literature other than small business cards will be allowed.
- The **Professional Gallery** is located between the Exhibit Hall and the Prime Hotel, it is for those who derive their living from woodworking or those who want to solicit their work. It has its own distinct awards, but is also eligible for the prestigious Peoples Choice Award. You may also enter in the exhibit hall, but for display purposes only.
- For the **Professional Gallery**, please contact Herm Finkbeiner: Email hfinkbei@nycap.rr.com or phone (518) 371-9145.

***AWARDS**

Peoples Choice Plaque: One, any entry Professional or Exhibit Hall.
Best of Show Purple Ribbon**: One, any entry, Exhibit Hall area only.
First Place Blue Ribbon: One each category.
Second Place Red Ribbon: One each category.
Third Place White Ribbon: One each category.
Honorable Mention: Green Ribbon, any category(s).

*Decisions of the judges are final. At the discretion of the judges, some awards may not be given.

**Best of Show winner name is also engraved into the "NWA Honor Roll" plaque displayed at Curtis Lumber.

PLEASE SEND ENTRY FORM(S) TO:
Northeastern Woodworkers Association

Box 246

Rexford, NY 12148

For additional information: Larry Zinn, Showcase Chairman (518)583-1277, lrzn@aol.com
Mike Kratky, Judging Chairman (518)863-2821, theinspector@frontiernet.net

Wood of the Month^{© 2006}

- Ron DeWitt

Northern Red Oak (*Quercus rubra*) L. A Deciduous Hardwood Fagaceae - Beech Family

As a tree, the botanical family that includes the oaks began about 90 million years ago, probably in Asia. Evolutionary studies suggest the first *Quercus* appeared in Southeast Asia around 60 million years ago.

The northern red oak is a member of a very large conglomeration of trees; the *Quercus* genus is now variously estimated at about 500 species worldwide, depending on who's counting. Fold in the tan oaks of the genus *Lithocarpus* and the number increases by 100 to 200. Further increasing the numbers (and confusion) is the fact that the oaks are an incestuous lot, commonly hybridizing among one another.

All oaks today are found in the Northern Hemisphere except for a few outcasts in Columbia and Indonesia. Of the 68 species indigenous to North America, 58 are found in the U.S. These oaks are generally "simplified" into two groups; the white oaks that include the white, chestnut and the live oaks, and the red oaks that also include the willow oaks.

The northern red oak (*Quercus rubra*) is the most cold-loving and widely distributed oak in North America. It ranges from Nova Scotia and the northern tip of Maine across southern Canada to Minnesota, and south into Oklahoma, Alabama and Georgia. A notable exception to this range is the central Adirondack Mountains of New York where it gets too cold.

Northern red oak may be called red oak, gray oak, eastern red oak, mountain red oak or common red oak. It grows well in a variety of soil conditions doing best in deep, well-drained loam in any topographic position. Not very fussy in climatic requirements, it only seems to avoid extreme cold. The northern red oak freely associates with a number of other forest species including beech, ash, birch, maple, cherry, white pine and hemlock as well as white oak. It may also be found in pure stands. Average age for mature trees is about 100, but they may live for 450 years.

Open grown northern red oak is a rapid-growing, medium-sized tree, typically 70-90 feet with a diameter of 1-3 feet, occasionally to 4 feet. The trunk or stem is straight, supporting a broad, symmetrical, rounded crown of heavy radial branches and an upright lead shoot. Forest-growing trees have taller clear stems and smaller crowns, sometimes reaching 150 feet with 6 foot diameters. The oaks tend toward large, deep taproots. A record northern red oak, reported in Monroe County, NY, is 80' x 10' 9" diameter with a spread of 102'.

On young trees, bark of this red oak is dark gray and smooth. As the tree matures the bark becomes grooved by wide, shallow, dark furrows that are separated mostly by unbroken, long, flat, silvery-gray ridges. Uniformity of the furrows and ridges in the bark results in a very neat appearance.

Leaves, on 1"-2" stalks, are 4"-8" long with a wedge-shaped base and 7-9 lobes. The leaf is generally oval in shape. The lobes are separated by v-shaped, round-bottomed notches, tapering from base to tip, the larger bearing several bristle-tipped teeth. Upper surfaces of the leaf are dull green on top, pale underneath with tufts of hairs on the lower vein joints. Leaves turn rich red in autumn. Dead leaves may cling to the branches through winter.



Tannin in the leaves makes them very durable and resistant to compo sting.

Red oaks are monoecious; male and female flowers are produced on the same tree. Male flowers are in the form of multiple 4"-5" pendulous catkins; female flowers are tiny and inconspicuous. "Spin-drift" pollen from catkins of neighboring trees fertilizes the female flowers.

The fruit of any oak is an acorn or nut. Its shape is quite variable, generally unique to each species. This oak's large acorn is about an inch long and wide. They usually hang in pairs from short stalks. The saucer-shaped cap encloses about a quarter of the nut. Acorns of the red oaks ripen in the autumn of their second year. A red oak will usually produce first fruit at about 25 years of age, but won't produce abundantly until about age 50. It will then bear good crops irregularly at 2-5 year intervals. A 12" tree may produce 14,000 acorns in a year and a million in its lifetime.

Red oak is a ring-porous hardwood. Earlywood pores are quite large, distinct to the naked eye, solitary, occurring in up to four rows. Tyloses are usually absent. Latewood pores are also solitary, not numerous, distinct with a hand lens and occur in radial lines. Rays are up to an inch high, of two widths. Narrow very numerous rays are one or two cells wide, easily seen with a hand lens. Wide rays, many fewer, may be 30 or more cells wide, conspicuous to the naked eye.

Earlywood is light tan to almost white, up to 2" wide. Heartwood is pinkish to light reddish-brown. Growth rings are quite conspicuous, typical of the ring-porous hardwoods. Transition from earlywood to latewood can vary from gradual to rather abrupt, usually well defined by the earlywood pores. Wood of the various oaks of the red oak group cannot be reliably separated.

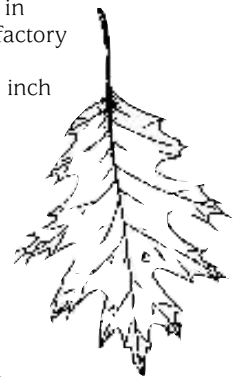
Northern red oak wood is classified as strong, heavy and hard with a sp. gr. of 0.68 and weight of 44 lb. cu. ft., at 12% M.C. It is usually straight grained, coarse textured, pleasingly figured, strong in bending and high in crushing and shock resistance. It is rated satisfactory in steam bending.

Red oak dries quickly, about one year per inch of thickness, but requires special attention to minimize a great tendency to warp, check or split. End sealing is helpful. Careful stacking with many (dry) stickers and lots of weight on top of the stack will reduce degrade. A rain shelter will eliminate water staining. Iron must be kept away from green oak to prevent metal staining. Shrink from green condition to oven dry is high at 14.7% of volume, 8.9% tangentially and 4.2% radially. Some dimensional change is to be expected in service.

Northern red oak has good to excellent machining qualities and works well with hand tools if grain direction is respected. It finishes nicely to smooth, polished surfaces. Carbide tooling is recommended as the wood has some dulling effect. Fasteners hold well but pre-drilling is necessary to avoid splitting. Gluing requires careful control with good adhesives. Unless treated this wood is not durable when exposed to soil, weather or moisture. Wood has no characteristic taste or odor.

Red oak stains uniformly and readily accepts all finishes except paint. The large earlywood pores require filling to achieve fine finishes. Try a quick rub of wet steel wool to highlight the grain. Typical of the red oaks, this wood can be fumed (carefully) with ammonia to produce rich dark brown-black surface staining. Worth noting...figure can be very different between flat-sawn and quarter-sawn surfaces. Boards for a project should be carefully selected to avoid undesirable matches at joint lines.

Tannin content in red oak results in some toxicity that can cause skin, nasal passage, eye and lung irritation. Appropriate precautions are well advised.



Continued on Page 10

NWA Mid-Hudson Special Interest Groups: News and Notes

- *Wally Cook*

Kaatskill Woodturners

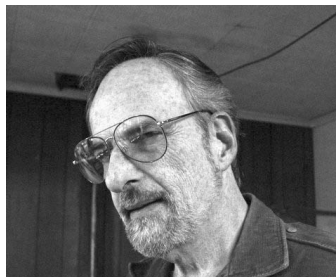
Matt Clark presented thin wall hollowing at the February 8th meeting. Look for a handout summary on the Mid-Hudson website at www.midhudsonwoodworkers.org.

Giles Gilson will be a featured presenter for a workshop series beginning in April. Giles will discuss *Techniques in Fine Finishing*. The first one-day seminar will cover preparation of wood surfaces applicable to a variety of woodworking crafts, furniture making, woodturning, carving and more.

The session is planned at the NWA Barn on the Opdahl property in Hurley from 9 am to 4 pm on April 1st. There will be a \$35 fee for the session. Further information is available from Joe Kennedy at (845) 473-1598 or JKenn2333@aol.com, or consult the website at www.midhudsonwoodworkers.org.

Mid-Hudson Scrollers

Beginning March 2 the Scrollers will resume meeting on the first Thursday of the month at the NWA Barn. They will continue working through the Scrolling project book and may focus on preparing items for the Annual NWA Mid-Hudson Dinner. For further information contact Bob Boisvert at (845) 298-0454 or greenwd1@verizon.net 🐾



Giles Gilson



Giles will discuss preparation for fine finishing techniques

Woods Walk Planned for Spring

- *Mike Kratky*

In coordination with the Southern Adirondack Forest Owners Association, the anticipation of spring and the goals of the NWA, a woods walk is planned for Saturday, May 20th at John Sullivan's Kipp Mountain Tree Farm overlooking Loon Lake in Chestertown. There will be a timber harvest in process at the time of the woods walk, and a sawmill operation and solar kiln to view as well. For hiking enthusiasts, there's also a very scenic hike to a cliff overlooking Loon Lake. John also has a functional workshop where he makes rustic lamps.

More details will follow as spring approaches. Those interested in participating can send an email to me at theinspector@frontiernet.net or look for a sign up sheet at future NWA meetings. 🐾

Toy Making Class begins at Stillwater

- *Herm Finkbeiner*

Ten members started the Toy Making Class at the NWA Stillwater shop on Wednesday, Feb. 15. In the morning Warren Stoker led the group through the details of three different projects, including a jumping frog, a five-part train and a race car. During the afternoon each of the participants got started building their first choice. Warren was ably assisted by Ken Evans and Herm Finkbeiner...help he easily could have done without.



Sue Sorenson and Louie Andrews wait for Darrell Welch to finish with the oscillating spindle sander. Marv Spinner gets advice from Bart Chabot while Wayne Distin ponders.

Alden Witham Woodworking Class

- *Herm Finkbeiner*

As we hope everyone knows, NWA subsidizes tuition for certain woodworking classes offered by members.

With his son Steve, Alden Witham sets up the antique power tools as a part of Woodworkers Showcase, and has offered very successful classes several times in the past. He has now scheduled two for this Spring.

On Friday and Saturday, April 7-8 Alden is teaching a course *Make a Traditional Shaving Horse*. The cost for the class is \$150 plus \$135 for materials. NWA will subsidize the cost to extent of \$75 so the cost to the student is \$75 for tuition plus \$135 for materials. The class is a tremendous bargain since she or he will leave with a shaving horse, a much neglected woodworking tool. Shaving horses have multiple uses especially in working green wood. To learn more about them see: <http://www.greenwoodworking.com/shorse.htm>

Then on Friday and Saturday, April 21-22, 2006 he will be teaching a class on *Build a Shaker-Style Chair*. Tuition for the two-day class is \$150 plus \$100 for materials. NWA will subsidize \$75 of the tuition. Thus, the cost of the class to the student is only \$75 plus a materials fee of \$100. The student saves \$75 and goes home with a completed chair.

So bring your lunch and your hand tools and join Alden for these two-day workshops. Alden will provide all the wood, the tools if you need them, and every bit of instruction required to send you home with a finished project, a feeling of accomplishment, lots of good information and fond memories.

Students should call Alden at (518) 284-2040 for details and further information. Registration is limited to the first five persons who send in a check. Send a \$210 check for the shaving horse class and/or a \$175 check for the Shaker Chair, made out to NWA, to Herm Finkbeiner at 492 Riverview Road, Rexford, NY 12148. Herm can be contacted at (518) 371-9145.

There have been several classes in the past and invariably they have received great reviews by those who have taken them. 🐾

A Pilgrimage to Alta Loma

- Kitty Scharl

Many woodworkers make beautiful furniture. Sam Maloof makes beautiful furniture that is timeless. Form follows function in his chairs with the simple elegance of an Einsteinian equation.

I haven't made a chair yet, but when I first began thinking about the possibility, almost immediately I turned to Sam Maloof's design and joinery for inspiration. When I discovered information about a class at his workshop in Alta Loma, California it didn't take me long to decide to go.

Although a tour of his southern California house was part of the Saturday workshop, I flew into Las Vegas on Wednesday in order to take advantage of the Thursday tour as well. After all, this was a sort of pilgrimage, and after so many years of admiration from afar, I wanted plenty of time to experience all that was possible about this man's life and work. Heading south toward California, I drove through the kitsch of downtown Las Vegas and was relieved when I finally had a good view of the desert landscape...albeit through a parade of billboards sticking up incongruously out of the flat terrain. But they too ended after a while and all of the openness and spare beauty of the Mojave Desert was mine to enjoy. At 63, with gray hairs and wrinkles proliferating, I have gradually become aware of my impending "old lady" status. But driving along Route 15 in my little white rental Pontiac with Kate Wolf singing "Here in California" from the CD player, I decided that it definitely wasn't too late in life for a small adventure.

Foothills Boulevard (Route 66) follows the base of the San Gabriel Mountains for miles and miles...and all the chain stores make several repetitions along its length. But the mountains are always in sight, mitigating the commercialism to some degree. I turned north from Foothills onto Vineyard, then onto Hidden Farm Road at exactly noon on Thursday (the time the gardens became open to the public). The Maloof compound, sitting high up on a hill, was immediately recognizable by the abundance of lemon trees and the redwood structures with their blue metal roofs. When I finally located the bookstore/gallery I asked about the tours and offered the information that I would be attending the Saturday workshop but had come a couple of days early in order to spend a few extra hours in this wonderful place. At the moment I was the only visitor. I received a sincerely friendly welcome and was given a diagram of the property and invited to tour the gardens. There were actually two



houses...the old residence that Sam had built over many decades that was open to the public and now operated by the Sam and Alfreda Maloof Foundation for Arts and Crafts...and the new private residence. I started down the path pointed out to me and tried to take in every detail; the scent of eucalyptus trees, hummingbirds darting among shrubs that bloom in February, the lemon trees heavy with fruit and the architectural elements of the two houses and many out buildings. I even saw Sam some distance away climbing slowly (after all, he is 90 years old) up some stairs. His appearance is as distinctive as that of his furniture. The path led around both the old and the new residences and when I found myself in front of the open gate to the private residence I hesitated. But after coming all the way across the country expressly for the purpose of absorbing *everything* about this place and not seeing a sign anywhere declaring PRIVATE RESIDENCE, I determined I would

walk through and apologize profusely if someone should discover my presence.

The first house tour that day was at 1 pm. After my garden walk I got to the bookstore/gallery a little early, paid and was asked to have a seat since a video would be shown first. As I waited, the phone rang and the nice lady who had greeted me answered and said, "Yes, she's here waiting for a house tour...and she will also be here on Saturday for the workshop." My heart sank and I immediately thought, "Oh no, what if Sam had seen me walking around outside his house and was annoyed. Perhaps he'll be irritated with me during the workshop and my whole trip will be ruined!" But then the video started and I couldn't think any more about it.

The old residence was a wonderful place...a small core added onto room by room over many decades and full of Sam's furniture, with most of the pieces

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Wood of the month...

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Acorns have been a primary food source for Native Americans as well as some early Americans. The nuts were removed from their husks, boiled in water to remove the bitterness and then ground into flour for bread. Acorns remain a vital food source for many animals, domestic and wild.

Galls, a hollow, insect-induced growth common on oak leaves and twigs, were dried to produce a high-quality black ink. Fluid drawn from fresh galls was drunk as a sweet treat.

Abundant glucosides in red oak provided many astringent, early health remedies from bark collected in spring. The astringency constricted capillaries to reduce blood flow. Wounds, burns, sores, boils and hemorrhoids were treated with bark poultices or tea. Bark tea also relieved diarrhea, stomach distress and menstrual cramps. Bark infusions were gargled for a sore throat and bundles of leaves were used with soap to cleanse the body. These cures are not recommended today because of the high tannic acid content of the bark!

Northern red oak is reputedly the most widely used and commercially most important domestic hardwood in the U.S. It is used for charcoal, dry cooperage, sliced veneer, interior paneling, sashes, doors, trim, dimensional lumber, general millwork and plywood. It is also used for farm equipment, truck and trailer beds, handles, pallets, boxes, crates, paper pulp and firewood. It is popular for steam bending, flooring, furniture, especially desks, tables, chairs and cabinets and for caskets. Great quantities of oak were cut for the bark to obtain tannin for leather processing.

The oaks attract many kinds of insects, but few do much harm. Gypsy moths can defoliate a tree, mortally wounding it only after several successive years of infestation. Heart rot occasionally damages the wood and shortens the life of a tree, usually after an injury of some kind.

The northern red oak, commonly used for reforestation projects, transplants easily in its first few years. Much admired for its handsome form and rugged appearance, it is frequently planted as an ornamental.

This oak, the preferred species of red oak, is in good supply. Lumber is readily available at retail outlets or local mills. Price fluctuates with a number of factors--the economy, U.S. dollar strength, export demand, season, transportation costs, etc. Locally red oak is available for about \$3.50 bd. ft. in 100-foot lots of 4/4 random widths and lengths. 🐾



NWA volunteers are making 50 table centerpieces for a Hole In The Woods fund raising dinner.

Wood Definition

- Ron DeWitt

Medium Density Fiberboard (MDF) - A high strength composite particleboard of uniform density, made from heavy hardwood residue.

Wood waste is steamed before passing through a refiner to reduce it to a uniform fibrous form. Waterproof liquid resin is blended through the fiber at a rate of about 10% of the weight of the board. The mass is leveled and hot-pressed.

MDF is produced in various lengths, widths and thickness or in molded shapes. Most goes to the furniture business in place of solid wood, plywood or fiberboard.

Wood Questions

Q. Which member of the grass family (*Poaceae*) produces "poor man's timber," now gaining popularity for quality flooring, furniture and house wares.



A. Bamboo. Some of its numerous species produce plants 100 feet tall and 1 foot d.b.h. Sliced and laminated they produce strong, durable material easily machined, stained and finished.

To the editor:

I am a member of the Mid-Hudson Chapter and I like the Wood of the Month column. I have a question for Mr. DeWitt. I have some cross sections (disks) of red cedar that were recently cut. They are still wet to the touch. I would like to make tabletops and clocks from them. Will they check? If so, can I prevent this from happening? I intend to use a clear finish later. Bill Stamm

Ron DeWitt replies:

The general assumption should be that crosscut disks of any wood species will check and there isn't anything that will prevent it. If they don't check immediately they will check later, even years later.

Several factors do reduce the likelihood of wood checking. The lower the percent of dimensional change from a green to a dry wood condition, and the lower the density of the wood, the lower the risk and degree of checking. Least likely to check are red cedar, white cedar, redwood, catalpa, buckthorn and butter-nut.

To help stabilize your red cedar slices, cut them with the bark on while the wood is still green. Cut the slices as close to parallel with the grain as your projects will allow. Immediately give both surfaces a thorough coat of end-seal, stand them on edge with adequate air circulation and allow them to dry for a year. Discard the checked pieces and work with the sound ones. Remove the bark at that time. Apply your finish to all surfaces.

My experience with PEG is quite limited. It should give more reliable results, but is expensive, messy and inhibits some finishes.

Red cedar is toxic to some individuals causing irritation to the skin and nasal passages and serious eye problems. Take appropriate precautions.

New NWA Members

- Pam Cook

Welcome to NWA to our newest members. We hope that you enjoy belonging to NWA and participating in the many activities that are available.

Dave Skinner	Bonnie Skinner	Pattersonville, NY
Dan Chouiniere		Waterford, NY
Karen Aune		Kingston, NY
Pat Rowe	Scott Bey	Frank Hogan
Steven Matott		Stone Ridge, NY
Ron Mapstone		West Chazy, NY
Yo LaBarge		Stone Ridge, NY
Bob Rosakranse		East Greenbush, NY
		Accord, NY
		Toni dePenuela

Lucy Gordon		Ballston Lake, NY
Ric Shiels	Lizabeth Shiels	Ruby, NY
Albany, NY		
Joe Zeh		Worthington, MA
Claire Burnham		Albany NY
Bill Gutek		Hyde Park, NY
Cliff Danke		Golversville, NY
Valatie, NY		

A Pilgrimage...

Continued from Page 9

familiar from the photos in his books. And here also were all the whimsically shaped door latches and the spiral staircase made from dunnage and the collections of arts and crafts of all sorts. Sam encourages artists and crafts people by buying works, lots of works, and his wife Alfreda had been Director of Arts and Crafts at the Indian School in Santa Fe, New Mexico at one time and she had collected both American and Mexican pottery and artifacts. I left reluctantly, in awe of the magnitude of this man's life work. I recalled my "trespassing" with some feeling of unease.

The class on Saturday took place in Sam's workshop, relatively modest for someone who has received a MacArthur Genius award, except for the bandsaw which was huge (some Italian name I didn't recognize), with a 1/4" blade and no fence (and no slot for one) in sight. Wooden patterns, distinctive root like shapes in all sizes, hung in great numbers on both sides of the room along the tops of the walls. When he appeared Sam apologized for his restricted mobility...he had twisted his knee the day before and was having some difficulty getting around. He talked about his life and woodworking and how his old house had been moved to the present location a few years ago when the state decided to put a freeway through his property. He then asked the participants to introduce themselves, tell what their work was and where they were from. There were about 25 of us...all but two from California (only one professional woodworker), a guy from Seattle and I from New York. I was much relieved that there was no hint of irritation towards me, and he was even delighted that I had come from so far away. Then Sam showed us a number of chairs in various stages of completion and discussed and answered questions about his joinery. Next he demonstrated how he roughs out a rocking chair arm freehand on the bandsaw, with all its graceful *three dimensional curves*, from a thick block of walnut marked with a couple of scribbly white guide lines, warning us all the while to never use a bandsaw in such a manner. Naturally there were many alluringly shaped scraps, and at one point he picked one up and said that someone had recently asked him for one, mounted it on a block and made an instant sculpture. After the bandsaw work was complete he used a variety of rasps to round edges and emphasize the curves. The hunk of walnut was now very definitely a Sam Maloof rocking chair arm. Then I thought I heard him say in his quiet low voice that I could have it. I was sure I hadn't understood him correctly, but he went rummaging around in a box of scraps and pulled out a hunk of walnut and asked his assistant if he would please make it into a block and mount the arm on it for me.

The new house (private residence) was an opportunity for Sam to design a space for himself and his new wife, Beverly.

His first wife, who passed way a few years ago and to whom he is still devoted, was given total credit for his success as a woodworker: "Without Alfreda's support and encouragement, I *never* would have achieved what I did." The old house was built in conjunction with her over a lifetime. The new house is just as impressive...natural redwood siding, various levels of Scandinavian blue metal roofs and balconies everywhere. Inside light poured through the beautifully framed windows, spaces soared, and Sam's elegant furniture was everywhere. There was even another almost identically designed spiral staircase. And this house too was overflowing with arts and crafts made by those whom Sam continues to encourage with his purchases. A Porsche Boxster convertible sat in the garage, top down. Clearly I had something to aspire to in the way of vehicles as well as woodworking craftsmanship.

Close to a million board feet of wood is stored in out buildings, some kiln dried and some air-drying. People call him regularly to take down trees. It saves them money, and they get to imagine their dying old walnut being turned into a bunch of Maloof rocking chairs. Of course he also purchases wood from professional sources. The enormous quantity of gorgeous wood left all 25 of us shaking our heads.

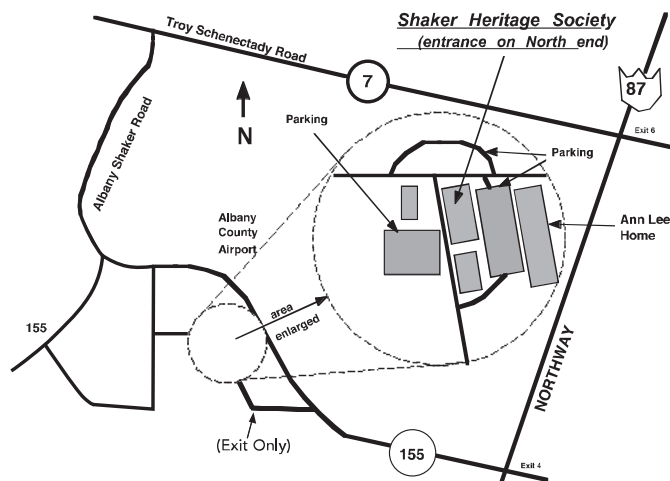
Back in the workshop, we were brought around to the sites for the various stages of the furniture crafting process. Sam still rough cuts all of the chair and table parts and does the joinery, but his three assistants do the finish work. Mike, the assistant present on that occasion, said the workshop could be described as an "abrasive" one, with most of the finishing work being done with rasps and various types of sanding implements. There is no reluctance to use power tools, and no discussion of hand planes or chisels whatsoever. Rockler now sells both the finishes Sam developed. He uses the one with varnish first, and finishes with the one containing beeswax.

Sam Maloof is a completely self-taught woodworker, and I particularly appreciated his creative and unorthodox approach not only to design but to joinery as well. This was truly intelligent design! Before we all said goodbye, at Sam's beckoning Mike produced the rocking chair arm now mounted on the block. After signing it, Sam gave it to me as promised.

The rewards of my pilgrimage to Alta Loma were many. I had learned a creative approach to chair joinery, I had feasted my eyes on the beauty that was everywhere in Sam Maloof's world, I had gotten to see and touch the life's work of a wood-working icon and I had been inspired to reach for a higher level of accomplishment. The more tangible reward was now packed securely in my suitcase. On the long ride back through the desert, I was happy to be alone with my thoughts. 🐪



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



NEXT MEETING:

Thursday, March 9th, 7 pm.
Shaker Heritage Society Meeting House
Albany-Shaker Road, Albany
(near Albany airport)

GENERAL MEETINGS AND SPECIAL EVENTS

- March 9-10-11, 2006 – Woodworking Weekend
Thursday evening, Roy Underhill of the PBS Series
"The Woodwright's Shop"
Friday, Saturday – Workshops, Sears Colonie Center
- March 25-26, Showcase 2006 –
Saratoga Springs Civic Center
- April 13, 2006 – General Meeting
Shaker Meeting Hall, 7:00 pm
John Alexander on "Working Green Wood to Furniture"
- May 11, 2006 – General Meeting
Shaker Meeting Hall, 7:00 pm
Woodcarving by Mid-Hudson and Albany Groups
- June, 2006 - NO MEETING
- July 23, 2006 - NWA Picnic
Jonesville Fire Station
- August, 2006 - NO MEETING

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

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGs)

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), and are held at the Curtis Lumber conference room on Route 67, Ballston Spa. 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 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month at the Clifton Park Senior Center from 6:30 pm to 9:00 pm. Sessions are intended for every NWA member who is interested in carving, from beginners to those wanting to learn a new technique. No reservations are necessary, just show up! Contact Bill McCormack, 233-7260.

Scroller's Guild - Meets the third Wednesday of each month at Woodcraft, Latham. Beginners' session starts at 5:30 followed by a general meeting at 6:15. Contact Tom O'Donnell (518) 581-1167 or todonne3@nycap.rr.com.

Kaatskill Woodturners - Meets the second Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m. at the Opdahl property in Hurley. Contact George Norton, (845) 331-1705.

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.