

WOODWORKERS NEWS



Northeastern
Woodworkers
Association

December 2022, Vol. 31, Number 10

November Meeting

Wood Grain: Tricks and Treats

How to enhance your furniture
with the selection of wood grain

Thursday, November 17, 2022 7:00 PM

The Learning Center

Railroad Avenue, Albany, NY

Presented by Wally Carpenter

Wally begins with a story of sitting in a Showcase classroom listening to John Reed Fox (extremely accomplished woodworker) talking about having to buy logs of walnut and ultimately only using 50% of the lumber in making furniture. If you are still buying lumber from big box stores, you can imagine the impact such a statement would have on humble woodworking hobbyists.

By following a few simple techniques of reading the lumber grain lines, matching wood for color, etc., making sample pieces with less expensive lumber of similar grain lines, you can take your pieces from average to exceptional. Wally will share what he has learned and experienced over the years that will hopefully improve your own woodworking skills.

Come join us November 17 at 7PM, at the Learning Center on Railroad Avenue, for an interesting and enlightening discussion of enhancing your next piece by choosing the right board.



Gus Mueller trains for the Lumberjack Olympics. (See the real story inside on page 6).

Newsletter Editor Wanted

This newsletter is the favorite part of membership for many of our members. We are looking for someone who would like to be a meaningful part of the NWA's success – as our Newsletter Editor - with just a few hours of your time each month. Our members write and submit the articles. They always do it timely (seriously). Add an occasional comma and perhaps a complementary adjective and forward it to Beth Keays, our very talented professional publisher. And two days later, Beth sends back the flawless newsletter you are currently reading. The newsletter editor will have a free hand in enhancing the newsletter with editorial freedom. Sounds good? Want to help? Just send Irv Stephens an email and you are hired!

NWA Participates in SHS Holiday Market

By *Linda Reiss*

NWA has an attractive and well-stocked booth for the third year at the Shaker Holiday Market which is held every year at the Shaker Heritage Society Museum adjacent to the Albany International Airport. NWA is one of more than 50 vendors featuring handmade pottery, fiber work, artisan foods and more, including several vendors who have wooden products. Items for sale at the market seem to be of greater craftsmanship each year so booth space is increasingly competitive. It goes without saying that our booth is always welcomed and anticipated by SHS!



Thank you to every SIG and many individuals who worked on items for the booth and special thanks to the NWA Crafters and Juliana Shea for their extra effort. Some of you are still busy it seems as we have wonderful things still showing up in the conference room to be added to our booth. Holiday items such as ornaments are particularly attractive right now. (Note—if it seems like your donated items are just idling away at the shop, we have to make an advance appointment to add items to our booth which sometimes takes a while to schedule.)

Once set up, The Shaker Heritage volunteers take care of overhead, sale transactions and security for which they retain a percentage of sales. Our booth was a busy spot last year with 230 items sold for which we netted over \$2,000. While we don't get detailed sales information until the market closes, we've had to restock our booth already and expect that we'll have another successful season. The Market runs from early October through December 18 so if you get a chance, stop over for some holiday shopping and do some brainstorming on what we else we might add to entice those shoppers!

Reminder: Showcase is Coming!

We will be celebrating our 30th Annual Showcase Event along with the ever popular Totally Turning Symposium at the Saratoga City Center and Saratoga Hilton Hotel and Conference Center. All this will happen March 25th-26th, 2023.

As you all know there is a tremendous workload leading up to and returning from the events which can only happen with the efforts from all of you, your friends, and families.

Want to know who to contact? If you have served before, simply contact the co-chair in charge of the area you worked. Otherwise, please contact our new Volunteer Coordinator, Learay Rayburn-Silvia, email: justmom@nycap.rr.com. If you are looking to take on a bigger role, simply contact me, Wally Carpenter, email: nwa.showcase.chair@gmail.com or our future Showcase chair, Irv Stephens, email: nwa.showcase.chair2@gmail.com.

Guitar Making with Hand Tools

By Alan Mapes

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Making an acoustic guitar all with hand tools - at an instrument maker's shop (Macica Workshop) only 10 minutes from my house - how could I not do this? There was a price to consider, but it was a good bit less than the cost of a new Martin D-18, the quintessential folk/bluegrass/country guitar that the project would be patterned after.

Lord knows, I did not need another guitar, but I can't seem to stop building them. The prospect of learning hand tool skills and becoming more independent as an instrument builder was the key that pulled me over the edge.

My first guitar build was in an NWA class with Bill Sterling in 2013. It was Bill's first ever guitar making class and he gave students the choice of building a dreadnought or an OM model (C.F. Martin styles). I chose to build a rosewood dreadnought. He started us out with a quote from his first instructor, Dave Nichols, that went something like "...with good materials and reasonable care in the construction, you will come out with a good sounding guitar - making it beautiful at the same time is a whole other thing."

Given a few cosmetic booboo's, I did come out with a great sounding instrument - quite amazingly so. I've continued building after that first experience, with materials and help from Bill. I've moved into doing more of the building operations at my home shop, but still depend on Bill for a number of things - cutting the rosette



Mahogany sides steam-bent into the form.



Interior detail before the back is glued on, showing the scalloped top braces, kerfing around the side edges and the end blocks.

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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channels around the sound hole, bending the side wood, cutting binding channels, preparing neck blanks, and cutting the mortice and tenon neck joint that joins the neck and body.

With the Martin Macica class, we did all that by hand, and learned new hand tool techniques

along the way. Here are some of the highlights from the course:

- Using a hand plane to true the edges of the top and back panel halves in preparation for gluing them together.

- Using a hand plane to cut a radius on the top and back braces ("flat top" guitars are not really flat on top or back). Each thin brace was pressed into the curved jig and clamped, then the surface was planed flat. When the piece was released, it sprung back into a perfect radius.

- Making accurate cuts with hand saws, including the use of a "knife wall". The ultimate was cutting the compound dovetail joint connecting the neck and body.

- Cutting channels for the sound hole rosette. I made a ring of walnut veneer, accompanied by rings of black/white/black purfling inside and outside of it. Circle cuts were made on each edge of a channel, then the wood inside was chipped out in small pieces. The two purfling channels were only .040" wide.

- Cutting binding channels by hand with a purfling cutter and a marking gauge with a cutting disc on it. My hand was stiff for several days after that operation.

- Bending fret wire into a curve to match the fingerboard, not as most builders do it with the \$175 bender from StewMac, but by pulling it at an angle through a hole in a piece of scrap board. Many steps were done without the usual expensive luthier's tools, but in simpler ways with skill and patience.



Hand-cut compound dovetail where the neck will attach.



Using a plumb bob to true the neck to the body.

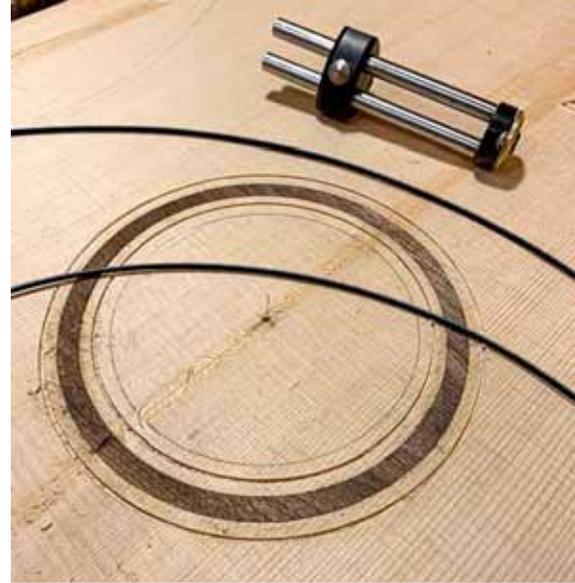
Learning to develop and trust our hand tool skills was a huge part of the process.

Martin and we three students spent something like 24 days in his shop, 2 days a week, 4 hours at a time, totaling over 90 hours. Over the course of those evenings, we got to share a good bit of our experiences. Discussions ranged far and wide as we worked, mostly related to instruments and music. A variety of bluegrass music drifted from a player in the corner of the shop, often featuring Martin's favorite, the late bluegrass guitarist Tony Rice. Frequently as we worked, Martin would pick up one of his hand-made mandolins or guitars from its hanger on the shop wall and break into a fast bluegrass instrumental. Each of us students would bring in an instrument to show on occasion, and also got to try out Martin's fine instruments. This sharing process added a great deal to the course.

So how did the guitars come out? I have not seen the final state of the other two instruments, but when I last saw them, they were looking really good. As for mine, I really love the sound, the feel and the volume of my guitar. I compare it to my three year old C.F. Martin & Co. D-18 (a really fine guitar). They are both made from similar materials and to similar specs. I can't quite match the fret board feel of the commercial guitar, its frets surfaced with a \$250,000 computer driven Plek machine, but mine plays very nicely and I like the sound better. Mine will put out a bit more volume when you hit it hard, and has more overtones in the sound spectrum.

In my book, looks are not the most important factor with a guitar - it's the sound and ease of playing that count. I got a video clip of Marty playing my guitar when it was first strung up and the action set up: <https://youtu.be/08Fs5-VVuHg>

I just sold the D-18, since the Macica Workshop guitar has happily taken its place. Many thanks to the NWA Fisk Fund for supporting me in this project.



Rosette rings around the sound hole were cut with this tool and chipped out in small pieces. A ring of walnut veneer is inset and purfling is ready to go in the smaller channels.



Gluing on the fingerboard and bridge.

Machine Knowledgeable (MK) Level Training Classes Survey

Ray Puffer, Machine Qualification Committee Chair

In the near future a survey will be sent to all NWA members to determine the level of interest in MK level training classes for Table Saws, Compound Miter Saws, Jointer, Thickness Planer, Band Saw, Drill Press, Sanders, and Router Table. We urge everyone to complete this survey as soon as possible. The survey results will be helpful in scheduling classes, and for registering members in those classes. Feedback from our test runs of the training classes has been very positive.

Volunteers Are a Valuable Part of Sawmilling

By Lee Hilt, Lumber and Tool Auction Chair

It is often said the strength of any volunteer organization is in its members. This was certainly true during a recent sawmilling event at a camp located on Sacandaga Lake.

The camp property owner – Barbara Phillips, had two large cheery tress felled a month ago and wanted to see the wood go to a good cause. Barbara knew a few club members and one in particular – Jon Cochran, put her in contact with me. One thing lead to another and



Gus Mueller, Bob Volk, Ray Puffer, Don Reiss, and Jon Cochran.

sawmilling dates were scheduled. Over a two day period in late October, and with a crew of five volunteers the first day and four on the second, we managed to saw a small mountain of logs into 1,438bf of 4/4 & 8/4 lumber. The second day ended with the four truckloads being stickered in two large stacks in the Shaker Barn.

Thanks to the sawmill crew:

Bill Volk	Don Reiss
Gus Mueller	Jon Cochran
Ray Puffer	Steve VanDerzee

Special thanks to the following for the use of their trucks and time to transport and store the lumber on Wednesday.

Don Reiss
Gus Mueller
Jon Cochran

Finally, this event has also proved once again how NWA receives the majority of our lumber and equipment donations from interactions our members have with others. Many donors have items to donate and only need a member to simply inform them of NWA as a possible place to make such donations. Feel free to share my contact info with anyone you think may be interested in donating. NWA is a qualified 501(c)(3) for charitable contributions and our Fiske



Gus Mueller, Ray Puffer, Don Reiss, and Jon Cochran.

Fund Treasurer, Juliana Shei, provides a written Donor Letter for all donations.

Lee Hilt
518 698-3751
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A Mountain of Cherry logs waiting to be cut.

President's Message

The Season of Celebration

By Irv Stephens

December, as you may know, has the most religious and other festivals that are celebrated in some fashion around the world. With that in mind, here's hoping that you all have occasion to share some time together with others during this period of otherwise colder temperatures and long nights...

If you remember, in September's Newsletter we tried to acknowledge and thank members who over the past year have supported NWA either by donating tools & lumber or contributed their time and talent to help with many other NWA activities. A few were specifically named, but most were only be thanked collectively for their individual efforts.

Now, it's time to recognize individuals who during the last fiscal year, FY Sept. 2021 - Aug. 2022, supported NWA with monetary donations; and that is why there is listing of these donors in this newsletter. NWA, obviously, needs and benefits from all these personal efforts, and those efforts that keep the spirit of volunteerism strong. - Stay safe & keep woodworking, Irv Stephens

NWA Donors for FY 21-22

Below is a listing of NWA friends and members who made monetary donations to its General Funds of the organization between Sept. 1, 2021 and Aug. 31, 2022. Such support in conjunction with donations of materials, time and service keep NWA strong and healthy.

Walter Addicks
Diane Balch
Richard Bird
Thomas Barone
Helana Callard
Peter Chast
Anne Cook
Mark DeNat
Wayne Distin
Rich Duval
Ivan Fermon
Richard Flanders
Mary Gillespie
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Raymond Puffer
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William Rogers
Sharon and Steve Schoenberg
Juliana and Shen Shei
Richard C. Snyder
H. Austin Spang
Irving Stephens
Adam C. Stewart
Verena Takekoshi
Harold Vanslyke
John B. & Marjorie P. Waldman
in memory of Peter Cowie
Philip Walton
Tom Weir
Stephen C. Woodard

Hand Tools Sig Held Five Sharpening Sessions

By *Juliana Shei*

Every woodworker must sharpen his/her tools sooner or later. Some are intimidated and procrastinate learning the skill until it comes to the point they consider buying a new set of tools. Once mustering up courage to learn sharpening, you be amazed how easy it is to cut the mortise, gauge the relief, and pare that last bit of wood off to make a perfect joint.

The Hand Tool Special Interest Group (SIG) sponsored a series of sharpening workshops to help the NWA members learn this fundamental skill. The first session was focused on sharpening basic “flat” tools such as chisels and planes. In the second session the focus was on carving tools that are typically smaller and curved. In the third session, various jigs available in the market were introduced to help sharpen challenging tools that have very narrow or skewed blades, as well as sharpening card scrapers. The fourth session was dedicated to sharpening turning tools that is different from sharpening hand tools. The last session, sharpening hand saws was demonstrated, followed by participants’ hands-on practices

The Hand Tool SIG thanks all presenters, Dave Parkis, Scott Oliver, Ernie Balch, Ray Puffer, Don Orr, Aaron Smith, and Juliana Shei. They are all volunteers who were willing to share their knowledge and passion for woodworking with our members.

The Hand Tool SIG welcomes suggestions for future topics. Contact Dave Parkis dparkis@nycap.rr.com or Juliana Shei fftreasurer@yahoo.com.

Sharpening Turning Tools Parts I and II

By *Susan McDermott*

The Hand Tools session held on October 18, 2022, was in two parts. Part I was Ray Puffer demonstrating sharpening specific tools for face plating, hollow turning, and bowl turning. Part II was Don Orr sharpening spindle turning tools.

Ray Puffer turns about 200 bowls a year. This former engineer and teacher has considerable knowledge of woods, metals, geometric designs, and their calculations. He explained that fifty years ago when he started



Ray Puffer instructs sharpening turning tools for bowls.

turning, turning tools were made of carbon steel which showered red sparks when sharpened. If the steel got too hot, it would lose its temper and will not hold a sharp edge. High speed steel (M2) is much more resistant to overheating and produces a few white sparks when sharpened. Powdered metals are a more advanced form of steel, consisting of blended metal alloys processed into a fine grain-like powder to achieve particular characteristics of durability, resistance to abrasion and corrosion, requiring less maintenance (www.westernsintering.com). Cryogenic steels are heat treated in liquid nitrogen at minus 310 degrees F and are extremely durable. Carbide cutting tools have high wear resistance at high speeds, are more economical as they last longer than steel.

Turning tools are sharpened for durability, not sharpness. Wood turning tools take on a lot of stress by cutting miles of wood before resharpening. Always wear a mask so as not to inhale metal particles. Run the grinding

wheel at 1725 rpms, slow for carbon steel. Use aluminum oxide or silicon carbide (80 and 120 grit wheels (softer stones for harder steels



Low speed grinder with CBN wheels.

and harder stones for softer steels). When the stones get cupped from use, they must be dressed to restore roundness. Use a diamond point dresser (\$12 on Amazon). CBN wheels do not need dressing and will last a lifetime.



Ray sharpening a gouge using a Wolverine sharpening jig. Hold the tool and jig as shown for better control, not by the end of the handle.



Close up of Wolverine jig.

Skews are sharp but not durable. A coarser wheel puts a serrated edge on the tool (80grit) for durability. A finer wheel (120 grit) makes the tool sharper. The scraper (see photo) has a bevel slightly less than 90 degrees for face plate and spindle turning. The box scraper is held handle up, blade down at a negative angle to the wood. When sharpening, keep the tool flat on the rest. Ray will touch up tools with a diamond hone.

Bowl gauges have a 40-to-55-degree bevel, whatever works best for you. A Raptor set up tool can be adjusted from 35 to 50 degrees in 5-degree increments used for Wolverine grinding jig system (see photo).

Note: Ray will be presenting Sharpening I at the January (11th) AWA meeting, and Don Orr will present Sharpening II at the February AWA meeting.

The second part of the sharpening demonstration was conducted by Don Orr who touched up the edges of spindle gouges and scrapers. Don emphasized wearing masks and goggles as wood and steel dust can float in the air. Don explained spindle roughing gouges are not for bowls. Just touch up the edge to sharpen it. Do not grind it! Always sharpen your tools before they get dull. Sparks



Don Orr instructs gouge sharpening.



Spindle roughing gouge.

flying over the edge of the tool signal the sharpening is done. Scrapers are 65 degrees, on the grinder's tool rest in relation to the wheel. Skews inherently sharpen themselves while cutting.

Don described three types of skews (a round, a rectangular, and an oval skew), which do peeling cuts, planing cuts, and V-cuts. They have two beveled edges and an angled blade with long shafts and large handles.

Spindle gouges with a shallow channel are sharpened 35 to 45 degrees and are used to cut across end grain.

Learn a light touch on the lathe. Scraping tools need a burr. Soft woods require a larger burr than hardwoods. Cutting tools do not require a burr.

CBN cards are credit card shaped hones to touch up (180 grit on one side, 220 on the other). They can be purchased for \$20 from woodturnerswonders.com



Don's parting tool.



Smooth off the edges of the shaft for smoother movement along the lathe's tool rest.

More Woodworking Education Classes in the Works

By Dave Mobley, Interim Education Chair

After the events of the past couple of years disrupted our NWA education program, we're in the process of rebuilding. The Education Committee has recently welcomed several new talented committee members, and the team is working to organize more woodworking classes for our membership.

The Education team is using information gleaned from NWA member surveys to design the types of classes you've told us you want. We are looking to provide learning sessions at various skill levels – fundamental, intermediate, and advanced. Recognizing that we always have members joining who are new to woodworking, we're especially focusing on courses that cover the fundamentals of woodworking. We expect fundamental courses will always be in demand, so we'll seek to offer them on a repeating cycle.

It will take a little while to organize the full set of courses we hope to offer, but we'll be rolling out courses as soon as we can. Be on the lookout for course announcements in your email. You can take advantage of the new online registration process the Education team has recently implemented. By following a link in the announcement email for each course offered, you can register and pay course fees (if applicable) online.

If you have specific suggestions for course topics, feel free to email them to me at nwasearch1@gmail.com. And if you'd like to help with our education courses, please email me about that, too.

Education is at the heart of NWA's mission, and the Education team looks forward to creating more opportunities to learn about woodworking together.

Center for Disabilities Services is Restarting Their Woodshop

By Wayne Distin

The Center for Disabilities Services is looking to restart their woodshop operations at their Glenville, NY facility which has been closed since the pandemic started.

The Center for Disabilities Services is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit like NWA. They look to provide opportunities for the people they support that lead to independent lifestyles and contribute to more productive, happier enriched lives. They provide services to individuals with over 300 different diagnoses some of which have are Cerebral Palsy, developmental disabilities and Autism Spectrum disorders to name a few.

Some NWA members had previously helped with the woodshop operations and assisted individuals in assembling simple products like bird houses, cutting boards, small shelves, etc.

They are searching for a person to evaluate the woodworking machinery, assist in recruiting volunteers and make suggestions to restart the program. If you are interested or want more information, please contact Mark Lyons of the Center for Disabilities Services at 518-469-1846 or email to melyons@nycap.rr.com.



SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

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 and Bowl Turning 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:** Maxwell Ferris at maxwellferris@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 - KWA SIG no longer meets the second Saturday of the month. KWA plans a January meeting to establish a schedule for 2022 and to hold elections for officers. 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 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:** Steve VanDerZee stevevdz@msn.com

CHAPTERS

NWA Mid-Hudson - Presently The chapter meets on Zoom and at in-person meetings on the first Thursday of the month at 7:30 PM except the month of July. Meetings are at the Hudson River Maritime Museum located at 50 Rondout Landing, Kingston NY 12401. **Contact:** midhudsonwoodworkers.org Bill Sterling, President - 845-532-3754 wster1156@aol.com