WOODWORKERS NEWS
Northeastern Woodworkers Association
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NWA Crafters Build Ten Half Moon Models for Historic Cherry Hill

By Susan McDermott

Students participating

Historic Cherry Hill

Education Director, Shawna Reilly, approached the NWA Crafters through the NWA website after she and her Education Assistant, Meghan Willis discovered our Crafters' community service projects. The women asked if the Crafters would build ten Half Moon boats for a 34-foot game board which depicts the Hudson River from NYC to Albany with specific 18th Century ports.

The game is called "The Hudson River Trading Program" and teaches fourth and fifth graders the history of trading on the Hudson based on Philip Van Rensselaer's account books held by the Cherry Hill's historical records collection. Reilly and Willis have transported the game board and ships to classes at Colonie, Clifton Park, and Albany middle schools for several years. The eager participation of students had battered the old boats. Thus, the need for sturdy Half Moon designs to replace the plastic hulled, paint worn ones.

The general public can see the game board and ships on the Fourth of July at the **Schuyler Mansion**, the Harvest Fair at Fort Crailo, and August Community Day at Cherry Hill.

Shawna Reilly (left), Meghan Willis (center), and Crafters' organizer, Julia Shei

Boat detail

NWA Crafters assembled behind their finished boats.

OFFICERS

Some recent position changes are not yet reflected

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(temporarily filled by VP)

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Stan Blanchard Offers a Class for Beginning Turners

By Susan McDermott

Stan explains wood features.

Six weeks ago, Stan began a weekly class for six beginning wood turners. Every Wednesday from 2:00 to 4:00 PM (or longer), Stan and Jimmy Benn met the class for a brief lecture, questions and answers, demonstrations, and hands-on turning. The class practiced sharpening their turning tools, shaping blanks, turning curved surfaces, making spindles with beads and coves, cutting various tenons to secure work pieces, push and pull strokes for the insides of bowls, and smoothing surfaces with finer cuts.

Stan and Jimmy watched the participants for safe practices and correct tool usage. The pictures below show the last lesson given, bowl turning. Stan plans to teach another series of classes for beginners in the near future. Watch for the announcement and register fast!

Stan shows a dangerous bowl blank good for firewood.

Stan prepared bowl blanks with reverse tenons for the class

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The challenge of rough wood grain

Jimmy Benn assists Stan.

Stan makes quick work of a blank to demonstrate tool positioning and movement.

The Making of an Acoustic Guitar

by Camille Wing

When I retired in 2017, after 32 years of teaching music, I began my woodworking hobby in earnest. I have always found joy in making things out of wood, such a satisfying medium. I began putting together a workshop but had no idea where it would lead me. I took courses in woodworking to avail myself of standard practices. Having played guitar for most of my life and majoring in guitar in college, it seemed a natural progression in my education to take the plunge and build a guitar.

I was looking for an old school luthier and found one in George Morris founder of Vermont Instruments. With over 40 years of experience building and teaching others to build guitars, he was a perfect choice.

Before arriving, I had chosen the size of guitar and the materials that I wanted for the top and sides of the guitar. I chose a OOO size, Torrefied Sitka Spruce for my top and Walnut for the back and sides. Torrefaction is the process of baking the woods used in the construction of the guitar, most often the top. This process is typically done with high-quality pieces of wood such as Adirondack Spruce or Sitka. The pieces of wood are placed into an oven or kiln and then heated to around.

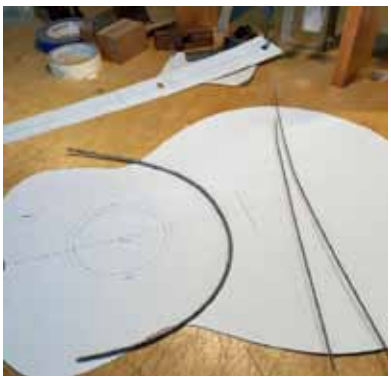
We constructed the body and the neck of the guitar simultaneously, but for the purposes of this article, I'll talk about them separately.

The Body

The first woodworking task is to glue the halves of the top and back plates together. These are book-matched faces. The joint between the halves should be in the middle of the pair so that each half appears as a mirror image of the other. The center line is planned so that there is no void when held up to a light source.

Clamp for gluing the pieces of top and back.

An important aspect of the process is to make an accurate poster board template of your guitar and fretboard. This template is used over and over again to create the dimensions of the guitar, especially the fretboard, which will determine how well and in tune the guitar plays.



Poster board template

My Rosette inlay was herringbone with 2 thin complementary pieces. After finding the right depth and diameter for the inlay the pieces were glued in place with Titebond and a card scraper was used to level with the top of the guitar.

My Rosette

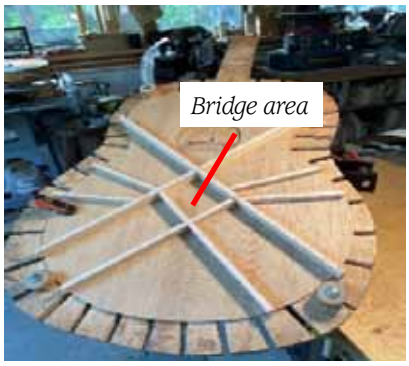
The Top plate is ready for a sound hole. The circle jig is used for this purpose. Position it so the ¼" down-spiral it bit will leave at least 1/8" of wood between the cut edge of the sound hole and the rosette. Using the bandsaw, the body shape is cut exactly on the traced line, leaving no overhang. We are now ready for the braces.

The Top plate

Braces are light, stiff pieces of wood glued to the inside of the Top and Back plates of the guitar to enhance the acoustic response and provide structural integrity. After a discussion of the different patterns used for this purpose, we used the most popular design, the so-called X-brace design. The energy entering the Top

plate at the bridge radiates outwards in all directions. As energy travels through the wood some is absorbed and the rest passed on. Braces provide very efficient highways for distributing energy (sound) over the entire area of the Top, especially when they connect the source of the energy (the bridge) with the far corners of the plate. Their acoustic usefulness is maximized by locating some part of each brace near the bridge area so that energy can be directed radially through as much of the Top as possible.

Braces



The braces are clamped into a go-deck. This is a table-like structure. One side is flat and when reversed, the other side has a radius to accommodate the slight curve of the back of the guitar when clamping. Each rod (made of the same material as kite braces) exerts 5 pounds of pressure. It is a wonderful way to clamp equally across the braces. These braces are eventually shaved down toward the edges to lighten weight.

Top

Back

The Sides are made of wood that is thin enough to bend, but thick enough to provide a strong framework for the Top and Back. My laminated sides consisted of two layers (inside maple veneer and the outside walnut). Once the sides are bent to the desired shape, epoxy is used to glue the two halves together. These are then clamped into a lamination mold to dry overnight. Linings are bent to side shape and glued for more stability.

Bending sides with water and heater.

Lamination mold

Inside Maple and outside Walnut sides in the desired shape!

The linings are glued to the sides of the guitar with more Titebond and lots of clamps.

We were ready to start on the multi-day process to prepare to glue sides to top and back. For the bolt-on neck, this meant a number of steps designed to get the neck block on the inside of the guitar to line up with the neck itself and bolt on straight. You also need to prepare

Cutaway for neck

the sides for gluing, making one side flat and true, for the top, and the other curved to match the back curvature. Finally, you chisel away at your braces to make room for the sides and a perfect fit. At this point it's starting to look like a guitar!

Body block for connecting the neck.

The slot for the saddle (a piece of bone that raises the string slightly above the bridge) is routed out with a jig designed for that purpose, once the bridge is attached to the top of the guitar. The placement of the bridge is involved and complicated, so I will not go into that in this article. The bridge started out as a thick chunk of walnut and is shaped by hand with a rasp and other shaping tools.

The bone saddle will go here.

The Neck

The neck is cut from a big mahogany chunk going from 3/4 to 7/16 inches. The style we did was cut at a 15 degree angle on the fat end using the bandsaw, then planed and glued together to make the headstock (where the strings and tuners go). We used the bolt on method of attaching the neck to the body of the guitar as opposed to the glue on method. So, a tenon is cut at the back of the neck block.

We next began shaping the heel block. That's the piece of wood that attaches the neck to the body. In the bolt-on neck, there are two pieces – one glued to the neck and one glued inside the body. The piece on the outside is the heel and usually gets a carving treatment for both aesthetics and playability on the upper frets. There are a variety of designs here, but the basic idea is to have a smooth transition from the neck to the heel.

George showing us the goal!

My first heel cut on the neck block. This is done on the bandsaw

Tenon for attaching to body block.

A groove is routed for the tension rod that will be inserted into the neck.

I drew on lines for the shape. Let the rasping begin!!

Taking shape!

After much rasping, card scraping, sanding the final neck shape has been accomplished.

Holes are drilled at the correct spacing to allow for the machine heads to turn without interference.

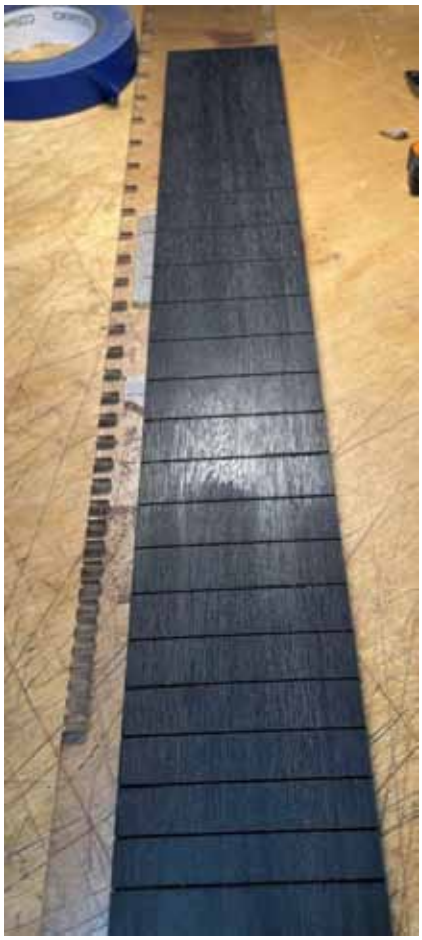
The Fingerboard

My fingerboard was made out of Royal Blackwood which is purple heart dyed black. We started out with a rectangular piece and then used double sided tape to attach it to a jig designed to cut the correctly spaced slots for the fret bars. The jig works similar to a box jig, the pin on the fence fits into each slot, the jig is passed across the specialized blade then the pin moves to the next slot. This is done until all the frets are cut. Pretty quick and painless!

The fingerboard also has a radius of 12 at

Pin on fence fits into each slot in turn then it is passed over the specialty blade.

Fret board material is attached to jig with 2 sided tape.



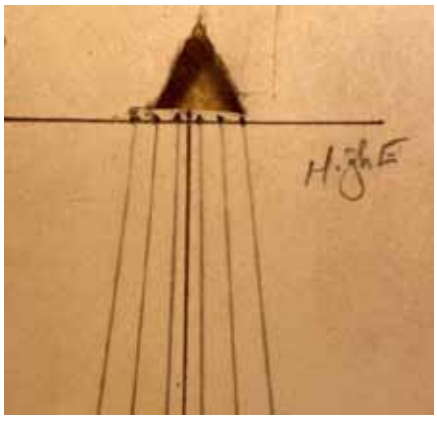
Fret slots completed!!

The fingerboard edge is tapered according to the posterboard template.

the nut end and a 16 degree radius at the end that closest to the body of the guitar. This is achieved with a plane and once close with a hand sander that has been formed according to these specifications. The fingerboard is then attached to the neck with Titebond.

The fret material is on a roll. It is hammered into the slots and cut as we go. The ends will then be filed to get a smooth feel when the guitar is being played. The height is also a consideration we address as we go.

The nut is made of bone. It is shaped according to the radius of the neck and the diagram to the left dictates the placement of the slots for the strings.



Setting up the action of the guitar (the distance between the stings and the neck, the placement of the saddle in the bridge and adjusting the intonation of the guitar is a process that would need more time to explain then there is room for here.

Thickness files for making grooves in the nut

Finishing the Guitar

This was done with many thin coats of shellac and then many thin coats of Tru-Oil, a product used on gun stocks. We finished the top of the guitar in the shop and back and sides were my project once I got home.

It was a wonderful feeling to go through all the steps we went through in the 2 weeks of long days in the shop to stringing up my guitar for the first time and hearing what it sounded like. I don't know if I will ever make another guitar, but I will always treasure my experience and always have my guitar as a memory of it.

"Member's Woodworking Tricks"

Submitted by Charlie James

I make these bench stops out of scrap and replace them as needed. Quick, easy, adjustable and out of the way at the end of my bench. Two threaded hangers, two washers and two internal threaded knobs. I make the slots at a 45-degree angle, so it stays in place while I tighten the knobs

Classifieds

We have rough cut random width and length lumber mostly 4/4 to 8/4 thick from common (rustic) to select/ fas. Common cherry, Fas/select red oak, fas/select hard maple, 6/4 soft/hard maple short 5' and shorter quarter/rift sawn for resaw for 2 pcs drawer box sides. A several 16/4 curly soft maple and 12/4 tight red knot planks and 12/4 ash short 5' and shorter planks. Old barn siding and reclaimed lumber in Douglas fir and pine. 4/4 rustic ash, hickory, soft/hard maple and red oak. Buy 300 bdft lot minimum. Can buy whole a pile of lumber for partly discount. kronau@aol.com (518) 813- 8528.

A former NWA member in Albany County is downsizing and is selling their **kiln dried, planned walnut lumber**. There is approximately 300bf of black walnut 4/4 - 6/4 x 6" - 18" wide x 7' - 9' long. The seller would like to sell the lumber as a single lot and at $7/bf. Seller contact information withheld at their request. Please contact Lee Hilt for details. 518 698-3751.

I would like to share an **extensive exotic lumber and veneer** sale currently ongoing, with fellow NWA members…giving you further pricing discounts to already lower than any nationally posted prices. For easiest access: go to CRAIGSLIST, and under materials, search for: exotic hardwood lumber. You may also reach out to me directly. Ralph Johnson, (518) 419-1159, ralphjoh@gmail.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:** Steve Vanderzee, 518-727-6511 or stevevdz@msn.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:** Pam Bucci at 518-429-6440 or woolglass2@gmail.com

Kaatskill Woodturners - Also an AAW Chapter. Meets on the second Saturday of the month at the Hurley Reformed Church, 11 Main St. Hurley, NY 12443. Contact Wally Cook at 845-338-2193 or 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 518-674-4171or 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 at97 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 dbalch1@nycap.rr.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 518-429-6581for 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 fourth 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