

# WOODWORKERS NEWS



Northeastern  
Woodworkers  
Association

March 2026, Vol. 35, Number 3

## A Message from the President

It feels like Winter is slowly slipping away. The everlasting mantle of snow has peeled back a bit. I am sure we will get more white stuff before Spring, but there's hope.

If you noticed, there was no missive from me last month. I just had nothing to contribute. This month, however, I would like to bring up nominations. I really need some volunteers here. So far no one has responded to my email to the leadership, except for one lone soul to put their hat in the ring, so this is my appeal to the entire membership.

As I am sure you are aware, it has always been difficult to get people to come forward when it comes to both the Nominating Committee and Board positions. For a robust leadership, it is important for the Board and the Nominating Committee to include a good cross section of NWA members. To further this, I am reaching out to the NWA's membership to ask for suggestions and recommendations to be considered by the Nominating Committee, who will have the responsibility of selecting the final slate of nominated candidates for the upcoming election. Nominating Committee members will be appointed by me, per the bylaws, and will be announced in the coming month. Feel free to make suggestions for both the potential candidates as well as the Nominating Committee. Especially the Nominating Committee.

The following board positions that will be open for the upcoming term. Others may be added as information changes.

- President—Open position
- Immediate Past President—Will not be filled. Instead there will be an additional Member at Large, per the bylaws.
- Recording Secretary—Open position
- Member at Large—Open positions

In friendship and sawdust,  
Kay

## Showcase Yard & Magnetic Car Signs

*By Diane Balch*

The Showcase yard signs and magnetic car signs are now available. The dates have been updated to March 28 & 29, and the proper website: [www.woodworker.org](http://www.woodworker.org). They are in the shop at 97 Railroad Ave, Albany, inside the front door on the right.

For the magnetic signs wipe/wash off any dirt before applying. For the yard signs, if the ground is still frozen or hard use a long drill bit in a battery-powered drill and drill 2 holes.

Diane Balch  
(518) 338-5637  
[Dbalch1@nycap.rr.com](mailto:Dbalch1@nycap.rr.com)

## OFFICERS

*Some recent position changes are not yet reflected*

**President** - Open

**Vice President/Program Chair**  
Roy Richardson

**Recording Secretary** - open

**Treasurer** - Alan Hayes

**Executive Secretary** - Vacant



## NWA BOARD MEMBERS

Mid-Hudson Rep: Pete Chast  
Board Members at Large:  
Open Positions



## Mid-Hudson Chapter

Bill Sterling, President  
Rich Cerruto, Vice President  
Patsy Boisvert, Treasurer  
Phil Dudek, Secretary



## CHAIR/CONTACT PERSONS

### Auction and Hospitality

Lee Hilt,  
nwauction1@gmail.com

### Education

Chair - Chuck Thorne,  
nwasearch1@gmail.com  
Registrar - Frank Necaie,  
nwaeducation1@gmail.com

### Fiske Fund Committee

Constituted as of October 28, 2025

Chair: Robert Fleury

Bob DelSignore  
John Kingsley  
Jim Lefebvre  
Steven Mapes  
Nick Piedmont

### Historian

Wayne Distin

### Library

Susan Hill

### LCOC

Ray Puffer

### Membership

David Peterson,  
nwa.membership@woodworker.org

### Newsletter Editor

John Michne,  
jmichne1@nycap.rr.com

### Publicity

John Olenik

### Showcase Chair

Dave Rustin,  
nwa.showcase.chair2@gmail.com

### Totally Turning Chair

Todd Gunter

# KWA News – Two Heirloom Chess Sets

*By Wally Cook*

Alex Rabinovich is new to the NWA, but not to woodworking. Alex taught for 25 years in the NYC school system, then for five years in



*The white Staunton style pieces are made from maple and walnut from a piece of furniture.*

Japan as an English as a Second Language (ESL) instructor, followed by 24 years with the NYC DOE. However, during that time, he worked on making furniture and other hands-on carpentry.

Last year, he decided to reproduce a family chess set as a special gift for his two sons. The set was a store-bought Staunton style, used to teach the boys the game of chess. His grown sons now live in Honolulu and Japan – and all share good memories of chess adventures.

Of course, the challenges of woodturning an exact duplicate of any chess set are daunting, but Alex compounded the challenge by copying the original set – twice and making two extra queens per set! He approached the project by customizing a beading chisel and jigs to cut the bishop's miter and the castle.

The walnut pieces were made from a repurposed sofa; the white pieces are maple. Alex parted off sixty-eight pieces of steel rod for the weighted bottoms. Alex also made two boxes of tiger maple to house the chess sets.

All told, two sets took about six months to build. They have just been mailed out to Honolulu and Japan – a special moment for Alex and his boys!



*A custom scraper was used to finish detail on the bishop.*



*Alex built a special router jig to cut the crenellations for the rook.*

## 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](http://www.woodworker.org)



Your next issue of **Woodworkers News**

will be published

in early April

Submissions are due by the 15th of each month

John Michne, Editor

[jmichne1@nycap.rr.com](mailto:jmichne1@nycap.rr.com)

Elizabeth Keays Graphic Artist

Designer



### WEBSITE

[www.woodworker.org](http://www.woodworker.org)

Webmaster: Andy Moss

[nwa.webmaster@woodworker.org](mailto:nwa.webmaster@woodworker.org)



**NORTHEASTERN  
WOODWORKERS ASSOCIATION**

P.O. BOX 246

Rexford, New York 12148

[NEWoodwork@yahoo.com](mailto:NEWoodwork@yahoo.com)



*The last piece to be completed was also the most difficult.*



*Steel rod was used to weight the bottom of each piece.*



*A felt cutter makes a crisp edge for the bottom.*



*Two beautiful tiger maple boxes with dovetailed joints house each set.*



*A display of all the pieces fills the board.*

# Scot Oliver Demonstrates Iron and Chisel Sharpening

By Susan McDermott; photos by Hope Konecny

Tuesday night's Hand Tools session on February 3 accommodated an audience of twenty-five observers as Scott Oliver delivered a well prepared and comprehensive two-hour lesson in sharpening. Scot is resourceful in keeping costs down while achieving excellent results. His method for sharpening should be easy, repeatable, and have satisfactory results. He advises woodworkers to have a space in their shop dedicated to sharpening, and to sharpen often and quickly.

He defines "sharp" as a zero radius where the two planes of a blade meet to a point. Once you learn to sharpen a chisel, you can sharpen any cutting tool. All purchased chisels (even the best) require polishing their backs and sharpening their bevels before use. Scott recommended Christopher Schwarz's [Sharpen This](#), and you can download his book as a PDF for free. Christopher says pick one system of sharpening and stick with it for a year to get good and consistent results.

Readers can also get a free booklet on sharpening from Lee Valley - [Sharpening By Hand: A Woodworker's Resource Guide](#). This 24-page booklet can be mailed to you upon request. Get their online catalogue at [leevalley.com](http://leevalley.com).

Scot addressed the sharpening media. Grit numbers, be it abrasive papers, water stones, oil stones, or diamond plates, are not consistent among manufacturers. The best way to measure grit is in microns. Seventy microns is the width of a single human hair. A spider's web is 2 to 3 microns.

The three steps to sharpening (after polishing the back of a blade) are:

- Grinding or shaping and flattening (268 to 41-micron grit) the blade.
- Honing the blade to zero radius (40 to 11 microns - see grit chart).
- Polishing with a leather strop to remove scratches.

Try this link to view and print out Lee Valley's [Grit Charts](#)

Scot displayed six systems of sharpening:

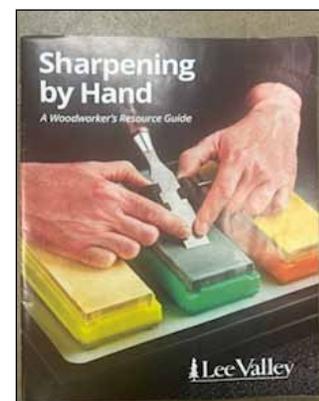
- Shapton water stones and glass stones, made in Japan, are high end and expensive.
- Water stones, such as the Sharp Pebble, are cheaper, but need to be flattened after repeated use with a diamond plate or flattening stone.
- Oil stones use honing oil with aluminum oxide abrasives which wash away metal particles. They come with two-sided grits coarse/fine (Norton sells the expensive Arkansas system). [Sharpeningsupplies.com](http://sharpeningsupplies.com) sells sets of Arkansas oil stones in wooden holder with the honing oil for \$120. This traditional method takes time to use.
- There is a diamond paste that can be smeared on steel plates or leather strops. It comes in different color-coded grits from 45-micron grit to 0.25-micron grit. (\$12 to \$25 per unit)
- DMT Diastone is a nickel plate impregnated with diamond chips. It needs to be broken in. It is cleaned with a degreaser and rag. Do not buy the cheaper versions from Amazon



Scot's chisels.



Scot's collection of diamond plates.



Free sharpening guide from Lee Valley.

as they are not uniform in grit. These do not dish or cup. Double sided 8-inch plates run \$180 each.

- The least expensive system is using sandpaper grits glued to a flat, thick piece of glass. Scot suggested Klingspor abrasives. The “mystery” box has papers from 80 to 600 grits. Dave Parkis interjected that 3M Cubitron abrasive papers last much longer, having a ceramic grain that cut faster. These can be purchased on Amazon without shame.

Scot uses a honing guide to sharpen his chisel and plane irons, as well as other straight edges. He suggests a bevel angle of 25 to 35 degrees which is achieved with an eclipse gauge you can make yourself. It measures the distance of the blade tip to the front of the honing guide. Just keep that distance consistent with every sharpening. Scot uses a wheel grinder to shape the 25-degree bevel before he uses the honing guide. He makes a micro bevel on the tip which can be re-sharpened quickly. Since the honing guide can rock side to side, hold it steady as you push and pull the blade across the sharpening medium.

Scot suggests hollow grinding new chisels and irons. Garrett Hack has a great [video](#) worth watching.

For a new blade, Scot suggests polishing the back after sharpening. It will remove burrs on the tip and smooth the back to a mirror finish. Scot used a 25-micron steel plate with the blade held flat 45 degrees to the plate's edge, alternating 45 degrees up and down to achieve a crosshatch pattern. Do not drag the back of the blade perpendicular to the steel plate, as the straight lines will weaken the blade's metal. Finish polishing the back with a leather strop. You need only polish the back once. Scot concluded with free hand sharpening which takes considerable practice to replicate the desired angle.

REMINDER! Attend Showcase and get free guides from the vendors.



*Scot uses a digital device to check the angle of the blade's edge.*



*Scot sharpens a spoke shave blade free hand.*



*Dave Parkis shows the plane iron mount on the Eclipse.*



*The Eclipse Honing Guide for chisels and plane irons (about \$15).*



*Happy attendees.*

# SHOWCASE

## March 28th and 29th, 2026

# Crafters Making Race Cars For Showcase

*By Rick Bird*

While work continues on the Crafters' Display Case for the Showcase raffle, some members have been working on items to sell in the Showcase NWA store. Charlie Goddard brought almost twenty rectangular race car blanks, wheels, axels, and tailpipes to the shop. Wheels have been painted black, Bob Reinhardt cut profiles out on the bandsaw and sanding has started. The bandsaw technique involved cutting out the side profile first, taping that cutoff back to the blank temporarily, flipping the blank to then cutting out the top profile to achieve the final sleek race car appearance.



*The Crafters pit crew, left to right - Wayne Distin, Yusuf Silk, Charlie Goddard, Bev Reinhardt, and Bob Reinhardt.*

## Wooden You Like to Know

*By Charlie James*

When I want to get a close “guess” on the center of a piece of wood I use an old plumber’s trick that they use to find the center of a pipe. Put your finger or something like a dowel under where you think the center is and balance the wood. Think of it like a see saw when it’s balanced, and you’ll be pretty close to center.



# SHOWCASE

## March 28th and 29th, 2026

Saratoga Springs City Center  
Saratoga Springs, NY

*Hope to see you there!*

### SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

#### SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGs):

**Adirondack Woodturners Association** - The AWA holds a general meeting (usually including a live demonstration) at 6:00pm on the first Wednesday of each month (except for January and July, when the meetings fall on the second Wednesday). AWA also hosts Open Turning where turners can come to learn and refine their skills from 5:30pm to 8:00pm on all other Wednesdays. Contact: Bill O'Brien at [williamobrien33@hotmail.com](mailto:williamobrien33@hotmail.com).

**Spindle and Pen Turners plus Introduction to Woodworking** - Meets Mondays 9:00 AM to noon and Mondays 5:30 PM – 9:00 PM, including holidays except Christmas. Contact: Pam Bucci at (518) 429-6440 or [woolglass2@gmail.com](mailto:woolglass2@gmail.com). Wednesday "Learn and Turn" sessions occur on alternate Wednesdays at the NWA Learning Center. These sessions run 5:30 PM to 8:45 PM. [www.adirondackwoodturners.com](http://www.adirondackwoodturners.com) Contact: Pam Bucci at (518) 429-6440 or [woolglass2@gmail.com](mailto:woolglass2@gmail.com).

**Kaatskill Woodturners** - Also an AAW Chapter. Meetings are held at 12 noon on the second Saturday of the month at the KWA Shop, 2076 Sawkill-Ruby Road, Kingston, NY. Contact: Stan Pressner 917-535-4195 or [spressner@me.com](mailto:spressner@me.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, Saratoga Builders Association, the Warren Washington and Albany Counties ARC (A Respectful Commitment), and the Northeast Construction Trades Workforce Coalition which is the non-profit arm of Curtis Lumber. Sharing information, fellowship, education, and relating experiences are a major part of these sessions. Contact: Rick Bird [biggrbird@gmail.com](mailto:biggrbird@gmail.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 [dbalch1@nycap.rr.com](mailto: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) 429-6581 for further details: [dparkis@nycap.rr.com](mailto:dparkis@nycap.rr.com).

**Scrollers SIG** - Meets Mondays 5:45 to 8:00 PM - new scrollers welcome. Wednesdays 5:45 to 8:00 PM - machine qualified scrollers only (possible demonstrations) Contact: Stephen Koonz (518) 290-0722 (text only)-

**NWA Musical Instruments SIG** - Meets at 97 Railroad Avenue shop 6:00 to 8:00 PM, second Tuesday of the month. Contacts: Jon Hedman, [jonwhedman@gmail.com](mailto:jonwhedman@gmail.com), (518) 399-7849; Ray Puffer, [Ray.Puffer@gmail.com](mailto:Ray.Puffer@gmail.com), (518) 272-6421; Eric Marczak, [epm03@hotmail.com](mailto:epm03@hotmail.com), (518) 872-9324.

#### CHAPTERS

**NWA Mid-Hudson** - The address and hours for the Mid-Hudson shop to be changed. Contact: Bill Sterling [wster1156@aol.com](mailto:wster1156@aol.com) or Wally Cook [wally.cook@gmail.com](mailto:wally.cook@gmail.com) for details.

**Boat Building SIG** - Tuesdays at Rich Cerruto's shop in Gardiner, NY from 9:00 am until 4:00 pm with a lunch break. [r\\_cerruto@yahoo.com](mailto:r_cerruto@yahoo.com).