

WOODWORKERS NEWS



Northeastern
Woodworkers
Association

June 2026, Vol. 35, Number 6

NWA Crafters' Forty-four Boxes Hold the Sacred Remains of Colonial Soldiers Laid to Rest, May 22, 2026, at Lake George

By Susan McDermott; Photographs by Dave Mobley and Rick Bird

No doubt our readers have read local newspapers or viewed television news about the discovery of a burial ground with the bones of three hundred humans revealed during the excavation of a construction site on Courtland Street. The construction was halted and the 140 staff and volunteers of the New York State Museum, Department of Environmental Conservation, and the Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation spent 15 months sifting through tons of soil. They found thousands of bone fragments and teeth. Curator of Bioarchaeology at NYS Museum, Lisa Anderson, supervised the DNA identification of bones and 800+ teeth. The thigh bones of forty-four individuals and their remains belonged to forty-two young men, a woman, and a child. Lisa Anderson's photograph appears [here](#). Our NWA members may recall her visit to our September monthly meeting at the Shaker Meetinghouse, as well as two newsletter articles about the NWA Crafters' box building, and Lisa's presentation.

Rick Bird, leader of the NWA Crafters, and his wife, Eileen, were invited to participate in the memorial service and exclusive luncheon of those instrumental in the preservation of the remains. Rick was given a plaque of appreciation and replicas of the buttons found of the First Pennsylvania Battalion which marched over three hundred miles to the Quebec Campaign. General Horatio Gates established a hospital in November of 1776 at Fort George for isolating soldiers with smallpox and other fatal diseases. Here was the hidden site rediscovered in 2019. For more information, please contact any Committee members or NWAeducation@yahoo.com.



Four of NWA's forty-four boxes.



Reenactors

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nwa.president@woodworker.org
- Vice President/Program Chair**
Roy Richardson
- Secretary** - Linda Reiss
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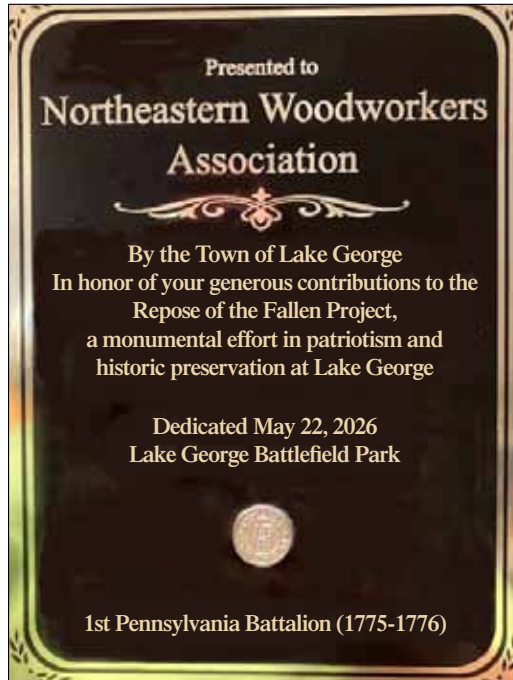
John Olenik

Showcase Chair

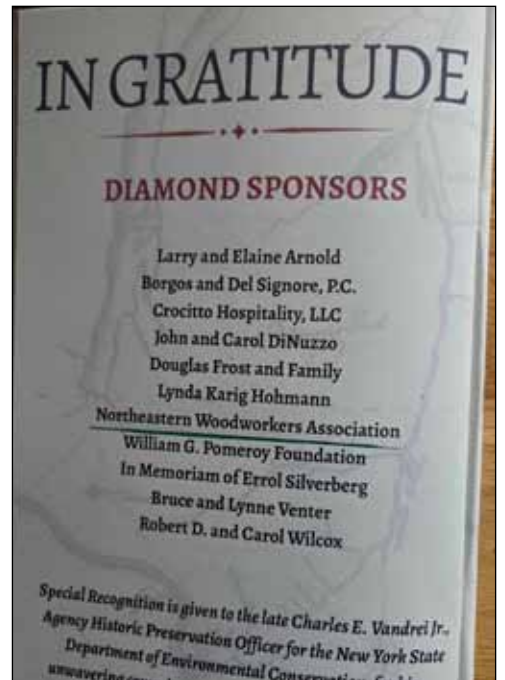
Dave Rustin,
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Totally Turning Chair

Todd Gunter



Plaque of appreciation.



Program's highest acknowledgment.



Button of the First Pennsylvania Battalion.



Rick and Eileen Bird



Lisa Anderson speaks to hundreds.

WOODWORKERS NEWS

is published by the Northeastern Woodworkers Association for its members. The Association's aim is to provide a common meeting ground for lovers of woodworking who want to know more about wood and the techniques for forming it. The newsletter is published monthly. The newsletter is available online at www.woodworker.org



Your next issue of **Woodworkers News** will be published in early September. Submissions are due by the 15th of each month. John Michne, Editor
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NWA Thanked for Burial Urns for Military Veterans

By *David Mobley*

NWA recently received a thank you from the Patriot Guard Riders, Veteran Recovery Program (PGR/VRP) for providing cremation urns for their program. This program seeks out and identifies unclaimed cremated remains of US military veterans from funeral homes across the nation and provides respectful interment of the remains.

For over a decade, NWA has provided handcrafted wooden urns for the PGR/VRP. Most recently, ten of the urns were used in an interment ceremony near Buffalo on Memorial Day. In a note to NWA, Bill Schaaf, State Captain of the Patriot Guards Riders of NY, acknowledged the burial boxes NWA built for the Lake George Battlefield Park reinterment (see accompanying article).

He went on to thank NWA "...for the urns you created for the Patriot Guard Riders Veterans Recovery Program. The PGR/VRP held military honors at WNY [Western New York] National Cemetery for ten unclaimed cremated remains - 3 WWI - 4 WWII - 1 Korea - 1 Vietnam - 1 Cold War. Five of these veterans have remained unclaimed for over 55 years. Prior to the ceremony this past Friday, these ten unclaimed lay in state at the George F. Lamm American Legion Post 622 in Williamsville, NY. Once again, thank you for your fine work and dedication to our VRP program."



The ten unclaimed cremated remains lay in state.

From the President

Hi Folks,

After years of ducking the job, I ran out of excuses and decided it was time to pay my dues. Regardless of how I got here, the position of NWA President is an important one and one that I plan to do and do well.

My overall goals are simple:

- Take care of members and member groups,
- Maintain open and transparent meetings in the conduct of NWA business,
- Focus on NWA finances,
- And as I learned from Boy Scouts, leave it better than you found it.

Along those lines, I'd be remiss if I simply assumed the post without recognizing my predecessor for a job well done. Kay McCampbell stepped up and into the President's position two years ago at a time when most were running away from the job rather than towards it. To say Kay had her hands full would be an understatement. But Kay worked hard, righted the ship, and returned NWA to where it is today. Thank you Kay.

Going forward, I'm obviously not the only one pushing this train up the hill. NWA's board is comprised of four officers and five Board Members At Large.

Officers:

- VP Roy Richardson
- Recording Secretary Linda Reiss
- Treasurer Alan Hayes

At Large:

- Bill Laymon
- Dave Ruger
- Diane Balch
- Jordan Mapes
- Steve Koonz

Finally, as has been said many times before, the value of a club such as NWA is found in its volunteers. Please get involved, stay involved and don't be afraid to try new things. None of us has the time to do everything, but all of us have the time to do something. Thanks all.

Lee Hilt,
President, NWA

NWA Aprons Available for Purchase

For this year's Showcase, NWA commissioned a special batch of aprons embroidered with the NWA logo. Each apron is crafted from heavy cotton canvas and features four riveted pockets and a metal eyelet detail that allows for an adjustable neckband knot.

A small number of aprons are still available in **navy, black, and burgundy at \$30 each.**

Quantities are limited.

To order, please email your **preferred color and quantity** to julianashei@yahoo.com.



Building the Moravian Workbench

By Wally Cook

The German speaking Moravians emigrated to the American colonies around 1740 and originally settled in and around Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. They have been known for their fine craftsmanship. One of their lasting designs is the portable workbench. This bench design was found in Old Salem, NC.

Ben Markwell and the hand tool SIG in the Mid-Hudson chapter have been working on building this workbench – and recently gave a talk on its construction to a large group of retirees, the Hurley Seniors. As part of the talk, Ben assembled the workbench while describing each element and then explained the use of various hand tools used in the construction.

The workbench has certain hallmarks: canted legs, through-tenons, and removable vise and dust tray. Will Myers is responsible for popularizing the bench – he teaches at Roy Underhill’s woodworking school in NC. Plans for the bench are easily obtainable at this link: [Free Moravian Workbench Plans](#).

Ben’s bench used a variety of woods: cedar, sugar maple, pine, walnut, and red oak. The bench comes completely apart but is very stiff when assembled. The key is the pressure exerted on the angled legs. The top surface on Ben’s bench is 3-inch-thick cedar. Traditionally, the top surface is oak – and that weight increases the stability of the platform. It is Ben’s intention to add the oak topper.

A wide array of tools was used in the making of the workbench: various saws (rip, crosscut, back saws, and cabinet saw), planes (scrub, block, jack, pilaster), chisels, brace and bit drills, clamps, and shooting boards.

Ben demonstrated the use of each. In fact, some of the tools were hand crafted by Ben. It was an impressive collection!

The talk was well received with many of the participants admiring the traditional craftsmanship required in using non-powered tools for the bench creation.



Ben started with a pile of workbench parts.



Ben described all the tools necessary for building the workbench. He stressed the pleasure of the process, using hand tools.



Ben’s cabinet saw used for fashioning boards.



The bench was easily assembled in front of the audience – it was rock steady.



Gary Edelstein made the threaded parallel clamps used in the project.

NWA Monthly Meeting May 14, 2026

By Susan McDermott

Vice President Roy Richardson opened the meeting with a final call for votes from attendees who had not voted online. Eleven voted yes for the slate of candidates which added to well over the required quorum of the entire active membership (about 456 able to vote).

Roy introduced our new president, Lee Hilt, who had a few words for how he will conduct NWA Board meetings. He emphasized transparency to the membership. The Board will not use Executive Sessions to stop discussions from being recorded in the minutes. Also, the budget reports will be known to members at large.

Lee said there will be a donor's shop cleanout in Delmar (watch for a Constant Contact for appeal for volunteers with their trucks). Also, on June 23, there will be a request for volunteers to transport a large amount of rough-cut hardwood lumber from Nassau. It will need cleaning, planing, measurements, identification, and air-drying stacking in the Shaker Barn.

Todd Gunter and Linda Reiss are the Co-Chairs for 2027 Showcase. Their goal is having a greater reach with marketing strategies with social media to lure more vendors and attendees. Ten have volunteered to work on a marketing committee, but it needs a leader.

Roy encouraged NWA members to reach out now to invite friends to the Learning Center, our meetings, and to share the woodworking experience. We need greater visibility.

Roy introduced Eric Marczak, a flute and guitar builder, musician, and leader of the NWA Musical Instruments SIG, held monthly at the Learning Center. 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, (518) 399-7849; Ray Puffer, Ray.Puffer@gmail.com, (518) 272-6421; Eric Marczak, epm03@hotmail.com, (518) 872-9324.

Eric brought in a variety of flutes and wind instruments. He played each one as he talked about the ancient history and cultural influences



Eric's flutes.

of each. He began with the earliest history of an instrument, the ancient Sumerian harp dating back to 2600 BC. Other ancient instruments were the Aboriginal didgeridoo, played to this day as a sacred instrument

in Australian indigenous cultures. Eric said women are forbidden from playing it. He joked that women had power that men wanted. AI said, "It is taboo for a woman to touch the instrument as it would bring bad luck to the land, anger the spirits, and lead to infertility." This long hardwood tube is naturally hollowed



Ancient Sumerian harp excavated in 1920's from the Royal Cemetery in modern-day Iraq.

out by termites. To hear this eerie music, go to YouTube Didge Project. If you really want to rock, Google YouTube Anna RF “The Most Beautiful Didgeridoo Player.” She breaks all the norms!

Eric made a Lur or long horn (4 to 6 feet) from wood he found at Herm Finkbeiner’s barn when Herm passed in 2013. Herm founded NWA with eight members. Eric made his own Viking Age Lur of straight wooden tubes with no finger holes, bound together with natural fibers. It is played by the musician’s lip vibrations.

Eric had two Box Elder flutes, replicas of the 1500-year-old Southwest tribes’ flutes played by Hopi, Pueblo, and Zuni peoples. These flutes were rim blown like the sound you make blowing over the rim of a glass beer bottle. They have six drilled finger holes made in wooden tubes of Elderberry or box Elder. The earliest were carbon dated between 620 and 670 CE and excavated in Utah and Arizona (AI and Google). Staying with flutes, he then played one of his own hand crafted Native American flutes to the soft background music of a Native American song. He then shifted to a discussion of the Stradivarius guitar that AI says only five original ones survive today. One (the Rawlins, 1700) is in the National Music Museum in Vermillion, South Dakota (Wikipedia).

Eric then explained the operation of the hurdy-gurdy, a medieval European stringed instrument like a mechanical violin played with a hand crank rather than a bow. Google has several examples of its sounds and operation. Another interesting musical instrument fact was the experimental papier-mache classical guitar made by Antonio de Torres in 1864. The design proved that the back and sides of the instrument contribute minimally to its tone. The soundboard does the work.

Eric introduced the Japanese Koko; a thirteen stringed instrument used in Japanese music for over one thousand years. It is played sitting on the floor, plucking the strings with three finger picks on the right thumb, index, and middle fingers.

Returning to wind instruments, Eric described a 64,000-year-old bone flute played by Neanderthals. This was unearthed in a cave in Slovenia. It is the thigh bone of a juvenile



Japanese Koto.

cave bear. It has two holes spaced to produce musical notes (Wikipedia). He then played his South American double tubed flute and received applause from the admiring audience. Many were surprised by Eric’s broad repertoire of flute performances.



Neanderthal “flute”.

He explained how flutes are incorporated into the Swedish bagpipes enjoyed a revival in the 1960s to 1980s.



Swedish bag pipe.

The Armenian flute is made from Wild Apricot wood with double reeds that are very sensitive to humidity. They were a traditional shepherd’s flute usually played with two players. Eric needed a few minutes to get his reeds to play.



Armenian duduk.

Eric concluded by playing one of his Native American flutes with a mournful song honoring Navajo warriors.

The evening ended with Charlie Goddard showing members his collection of axes from the 1900's.



Charlie Goddard's timber tools.

Wooden You Like to Know

By Charlie James

I make fixed thickness stops when I have a piece of thin stock. Moveable stops tend to move down when I plane over the stop with a hand plane. It's just a matter of fitting the stops to the bench holes, they're quick to make with hand tools, easy to use and never move. I make a few different thicknesses from scrap hardwood, and I usually make them wider than they need to be so there's more surface to grab. End grain can split so face or edge grain lasts longer.



Hand Tools Throws a Sharpening Party

By Susan McDermott

Tuesday night, May 5 at 7:00 PM, NWA members were invited to bring their chisels, plane irons, carving tools, and miscellaneous cutting tools to sharpen at the Learning Center. There were a variety of sharpening methods such as wet/dry sandpapers on granite, oil stones, whet stones, diamond plates, and a Workshop power sharpener. Thirteen attendees brought items they bought from yard sales, flea markets, or Grandpa's wood shop to be resurrected, redeemed, restored, or rehabilitated. No tool was hopeless!

Dave Parkis, Scott Oliver, Wally Carpenter, and Matt Jaskula served as coaches, lending their expertise and encouragement to the owners of dull tools. As members polished, passed over coarse to finer grits, and removed burrs at the sharpened edges, conversations and stories flowed. In sum, it was an informal, enjoyable evening of hands-on learning. These pictures illustrate the members' activities.



Dave Parkis uses granite with autobody wet/dry sandpapers 400, 1000, 1500, 2000 grits.



Dave uses a long granite slab with adhered sandpaper to make continuous sweeping passes with a jack plane.



Someone's yard sale block plane about to be sharpened.



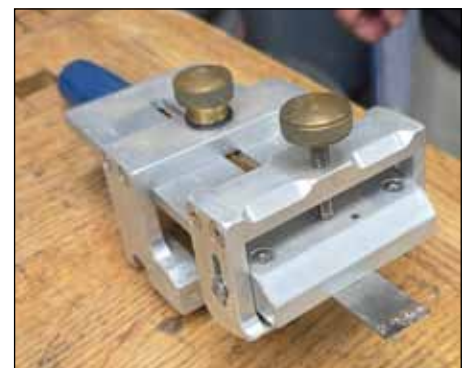
A competitor of the \$15 Eclipse honing guide.



Part of the high-end Veritas honing guide kit.



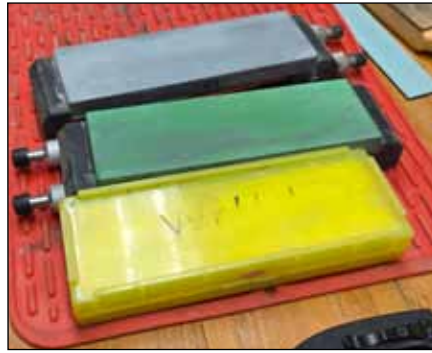
Parkis's custom-made sharpening guide, not available commercially.



This priceless honing guide with a junk chisel blade.



Nancy Bunker's miniature block planes for her musical instrument building.



Wally Carpenter's Norton whet stones 1000, 5000, 16,000 grits.



Wally's Work Sharp bench top power sharpener for plane irons and chisels.



Wally's small Japanese water stones Gordon McClelland used to sharpen his curved carving tool.



An abrasive rouge is used as Gordon sharpens his carving tool.



Wally demonstrates the use of diamond stone paste (1, 2, 3-micron grits).



Two diamond steel plates with four grits (top side and bottom) can sharpen edges and flatten whet stones. Also leather on a board to polish the sharpened edge.



This owner polishes the back of his blade before sharpening. He uses a whet stone and leather to achieve a mirror finish.



This is a Boy Scout hatchet that belonged to a member's grandfather.



Scott Oliver demonstrates several ways to secure the hatchet for sharpening. Here he clamps it to the bench.



Here Scott uses a bench dog to hold the hatchet.



He uses sandpaper glued to a block of scrap wood.

John Michne's Generous Donation to the Fiske Fund

By Susan McDermott

NWA Mid-Hudson members, Rich Cerruto, John Van Buren, and David Harvey spent 80 to 100 manhours in the winter of 2023-4 restoring a twenty-year-old Adirondack guideboat built and donated by John Michne. John is nationally known as an expert on building Adirondack guideboats. He has written a revised and expanded edition of his originally co-written [Building an Adirondack Guideboat](#) which has five stars on Amazon books. He donated a copy to the NWA library at 97 Railroad Avenue for our members' reading pleasure.

John Van Buren of NWA Mid-Hudson described the team's restoration which entailed sanding the hull and trim, painting the exterior hull, fitting, and finishing the two decks, and replacing the gunwales. The repairs took place in the SIG leader, Rich Cerruto's comfortable, well-lit shop. John Van Buren said, "It was an honor to help restore one of John Michne's prize winning boats." This boat could sell for potentially \$10,000 or more, and it is for sale!

The photograph is of John's guide boat at NWA Showcase 2002 where it won Best in Show. John wants the proceeds of the sale to go entirely to the Fiske Fund which awards grants to NWA members who apply to woodworking schools' tuitions or compensation for instructors invited to our facilities. See <https://woodworker.org/fiske-fund/> for guidelines to apply.



John Michne's Best of Show 2002.

Adirondack Woodturners Association to Host Woodturning Demonstrations

By Liz Donati

To supplement the many demonstrations offered monthly by our skilled membership, AWA is excited to announce two guest woodturners, Rick Angus and Jim Echter.

On July 8, Rick Angus will present a demonstration on turning lidded boxes. In this session Rick will focus on grain pattern and alignment on the lathe. He will demonstrate how to cut and fit mortise and tenon joinery to insert contrasting wood.

With over 30 years of woodturning experience, Rick is a noted Connecticut-based instructor who is routinely featured at Snow Farm: The New England Craft Program and the Connecticut Valley School of Woodworking. Rick is expert at teaching how woodturning tools work and providing the details of efficient tool handling – giving his students foundational knowledge and practical guidance.

On November 4, Jim Echter will present club members with The Sensational Skew, his popular class on the many uses of the skew chisel. Jim will follow his demonstration with a two-day hands-on class to help participants develop their skew techniques on November 5 and 6.

Jim has over 40 years' experience in custom woodturning and teaching. He is a nationally recognized instructor based in the Finger Lakes region and has presented at the American Association of Woodturners Symposium, Totally Turning, and other regional events. Noted especially for his use of the skew chisel, he has written articles on its many uses for *American Woodturning* magazine.

Free to NWA members, both demonstrations will be held during regularly scheduled AWA meetings starting at 6pm on July 8 and November 4. Jim's two-day workshop will require pre-registration and a fee. Details of that workshop will be announced via email prior to the event.

NWA Education Summer Program Schedule

By Juliana Shei

In support of NWA's mission — “advancing woodworking, in all its forms, through education and activities that encourage the sharing of woodworking knowledge and skill”— the Education Committee is pleased to present its upcoming classes for the next three months. Please note that dates, instructors, and topics are subject to change. Additional announcements will be shared as details are finalized.

- June** Sharpening Chisels (Dave Parkis and Scott Oliver) — June 13
Machine Knowledgeable (MK) Classes
Table Saw (Dave Mobley), Jointer (Juliana Shei),
Planer (Juliana Shei), Scroll Saw (Steve Koonz)
Machine Qualification for MK members:
Jointer, Planer, and Miter Saw
(Chuck Thorn and Juliana Shei) — June 23
- July** Audio-Visual Training (Matt Jaskula) — July 28
Introduction to Hand Power Tools (Pam Bucci)
Make a Heart-Shaped Napkin Holder (Rick Stevenson)
Machine Knowledgeable (MK) Classes
Table Saw (Dave Mobley), Jointer (Woody Bowler),
Planer (Woody Bowler), Scroll Saw (Steve Koonz)
- August** Streaming Shop Activities
(Wally Carpenter and Rich Riedel) — August
Working with Epoxy (Todd Gunter)
Make a Kumiko Trivet (Juliana Shei)

We sincerely thank the instructors who generously contribute their time, knowledge, and enthusiasm. Their commitment enables NWA to provide meaningful and affordable educational opportunities for our members. Members interested in sharing their skills or techniques are encouraged to participate; prior teaching experience is not required. For more information, please contact any Committee members or NWAeducation@yahoo.com.

NWA Education Committee: Matt Jaskula, Dave Mobley, Frank Nacaise, Don Orr, Chuck Thorn, and Juliana Shei (Chair Pro Tem)

Sawdust...

Long time NWA members are selling their home and moving south. They are in a time pinch and need help selling their 4-piece oak office furniture set: Corner computer desk, Hutch 2-drawer, Printer stand 3-drawer, Matching desk and chair. Call Susan or Cary (954) 557-3146

- Lee Hilt, President

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This is the last issue of Woodworkers News until we come back for the September issue. Stay safe and enjoy summer!



ENJOY YOUR SUMMER

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.

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. 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 **Contact:** Pam Bucci at (518) 429-6440 or 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.

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 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.

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 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, (518) 399-7849; Ray Puffer, Ray.Puffer@gmail.com, (518) 272-6421; Eric Marczak, epm03@hotmail.com, (518) 872-9324.

CHAPTERS

NWA Mid-Hudson - All meeting are held at the Mid-Hudson workshop located on Sawkill Ruby Road. **The Mid-Hudson Chapter** meets on the 4th Thursday of each month from 3pm-5pm. **Community Service SIG** meets every Wednesday from 9am-12-pm. Andy Moss is the Lead (andyemoss@icloud.com). **Hand Tool SIG** meets every Friday from 9am-12pm. Ben Markwell is the lead (benmarkwell@gmail.com). **Boat Building SIG** meets 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.