Northeastern Woodworkers Association

WOODWORKERS NEWS

December 2026, Vol. 35, Number 10

Message From the President

By Lee Hilt, President NWA

With the holiday season upon us, I'd like to stray, albeit temporarily, from my usual format and, among other things, take time to recognize NWA as a wood working organization, for the many positive and impactful things accomplished throughout the year.

Man, I need to take a breath after that line.

Ok, I've recovered.

I'm not able to list these events nor will I try to name everyone involved. But a quick reread of 2026 newsletters will detail these projects and the many volunteers who make this club work. Thank you all for what you do to make working in wood such a joy.

Among the hustle and bustle that has become the holidays, I hope you are able to find something and someone to be thankful for this year. The beginning of 2026 saw my family with more questions than answers, surrounding the health of our oldest. However, things worked out for the better and I am happy to report that all is well with the Hilt family.

On a more individual basis, I am aware that not all of our members are well and for some, their days of woodworking have passed. Know that you are appreciated and are kept in prayer. Thank You.

For the rest of us, find the time - no, make the time, to spend time with the ones you hold dear. This is a great time of year and one that should be shared with friends and family.

Happy Holidays and Happy 2027,

Lee Hilt

Managing Your NWA Dues

By Dave Peterson

Dues are the fuel that keeps NWA running. They are very important to keep our shops and organization healthy. They are also important for you because you must be a member in good standing to use the shop, vote in the elections, take the training courses or get funding for training from the Fiske Fund.

Paying your Dues

There are several ways to pay your NWA dues.

- You can send a check and renewal form to NWA, PO Box 246, Rexford, NY 12148,
- Leave the check and renewal form in the membership mail box at the 97 Railroad Ave Shop,
- Pay with a credit card or Apple Pay via our payment app Zeffy, accessed from our home page at http://woodworker.org/membership/

Once your payment is received, we extend your membership one year from your anniversary date, which may be different from the date you made your payment. If you have not paid dues in over a year, your anniversary date will be updated to the date you paid and membership in good standing is reinstated.

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nwa.president@woodworker.org
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If you have not paid by your anniversary date, the Membership Committee will send a reminder, generally in the middle of the next month. We don't send the reminder before your membership lapses to avoid issues of double payments. By setting a reminder for yourself you can avoid your membership lapsing.

Have your dues been paid twice in the same year?

Unfortunately, we have cases of this. It is most often caused by one of the following reasons:

- You got a notice you are late and pay by check or credit card as requested, but you also had used Zeffy in the past and left the **default auto pay option** in place. Zeffy then charges your card on your autorenewal date, which is after your anniversary date.
- You have used Zeffy several times, but used a different name or email, or said you were new rather than renewing. If you did not turn off the auto renewal option you thus inadvertently created a second (or even third - yes it has happened) payment order.

If there is a double payment, we extend your membership another year unless you ask for a refund. While Zeffy does not know it is double charging the same person, we can generally figure it out, so we do not create multiple memberships for an individual or family.

How do I manage Zeffy?

Go to Zeffy.com and log into your account. Your username is your email address and if you don't have a password, Zeffy will send you a link to establish one. You will then be able to view and change your personal and financial options, including turning the auto pay option on or off. You will not be able to see what credit card you used but you can enter new information if you want to change cards or update the current one. Zeffy will show if your credit card is expired so you know to update it. You may need to check the various emails you might have used to find all the accounts you created.

If after doing this if you need additional help send an email to the Membership Committee at nwa.membership@woodworker.org.

Hand Tool SIG Seeks Demonstrators

By Scott Oliver

The NWA Hand Tool SIG meets on the first and third Tuesday of the month September through May and is focused on helping woodworkers expand their knowledge of the craft through demonstrations and hands-on sessions. The first Tuesday is dedicated to a demonstration of a new technique or skill such as sharpening curved tools, the variety of joinery planes, or how to build stick furniture. The third Tuesday is for open shop time where members can bring projects they are working on to get advice or just do some wood working around other folks. We typically provide guidance for tricky sharpening situations and the like. The Hand Tool SIG is looking for folks to share their knowledge with the group through one of our monthly demonstrations. If you have a talent to share please contact Dave Parkis dparkis@nycap.rr.com or Scott Oliver rscottoliver@gmail.com.

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Build a Stickley Table Class - Part II

By Susan McDermott

This article will describe the six three-hour classes of Stickley table instruction during October's Friday nights, ending on November 6. We spent more than the 21 hours scheduled in the shop and ended the class before we assembled, glued, and finished the red oak table. The final choices about finishing would be ours.

In Part 1, I described Week 1 as the gluing of two planed $9^1/_2$" wide oak boards using a pocket hole cutter and two biscuits. The shop band saw used an improvised nail in a block on the underside of the tabletop to carefully turn the rectangular top into a circle 18 inches in diameter. Don Cooke and Bob Reinhart assisted Bob Kehn in the first and second classes assembling the bandsaw jig.



Steve's tabletop cut by the bandsaw.

By the second class we were cutting mortises either with a power mortiser or a router and jig setup. It is so much easier and neater than using mortising chisels and a mallet!



Ed uses a power mortiser to cut mortises on his four legs.

We moved to the table saw to use a sled to cut tenons' shoulders and Bob's tenon jig's setup to trim tenons to exact size. While it takes time to set up this jig and experiment on scrap wood, the result is the class quickly cut precise tenons without error.

We moved to the drill press equipped with a two-inch Forstner bit set at 1000 rpm to cut four curves in the lower stringers.

The third and fourth class meetings made sure we labelled our leg mortises and ends of our stretchers' tenons for custom fits as we carefully pared tenons and mortises for snug fits. Rather than assembly line classwork at the table saw, band saw, and drill press, we were now working individually at our benches, sizing the stringers to the legs. Unless we took our



Dennis used a router and jig to cut his mortises.



The table saw sled made consistent cuts of tenons' shoulders.



Setting the table saw blade height for desired tenon size.



Bob's tenon jig setup made precise repetitive cuts of upper stretchers' tenons.



Cutting the curves of lower cross stretchers at the drill press.



Labelling and fitting the lower stretcher to the leg's mortise.



Lower stretchers with lap joint and tenons.



Upper stretchers dove tails are carefully measured and marked for hand cuts.



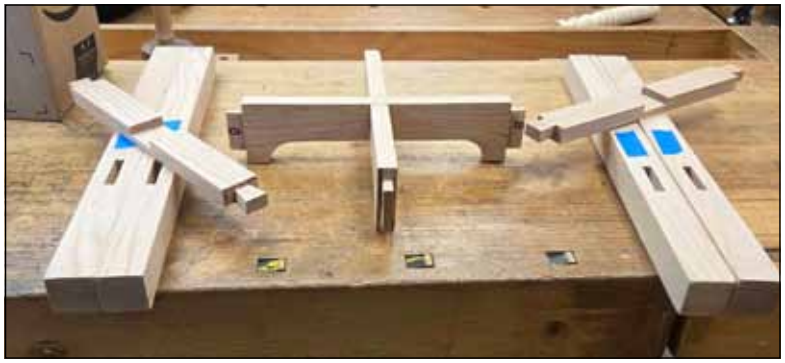
Upper stretchers with a lap joint and dove tails.



Top of legs with hand chiseled sockets to receive dovetails.

pieces home to sand the wood pieces and continue our work with sharp chisels, we knew we would run out of class time before we finished our tables. Don Cooke continued in assisting Bob by giving us individual attention until the end of sixth class.

The fifth class taught us strategies of measurement, use of dovetail or pull saw cuts, sharpening our chisels, and the slower work with hand tools. The class was paced

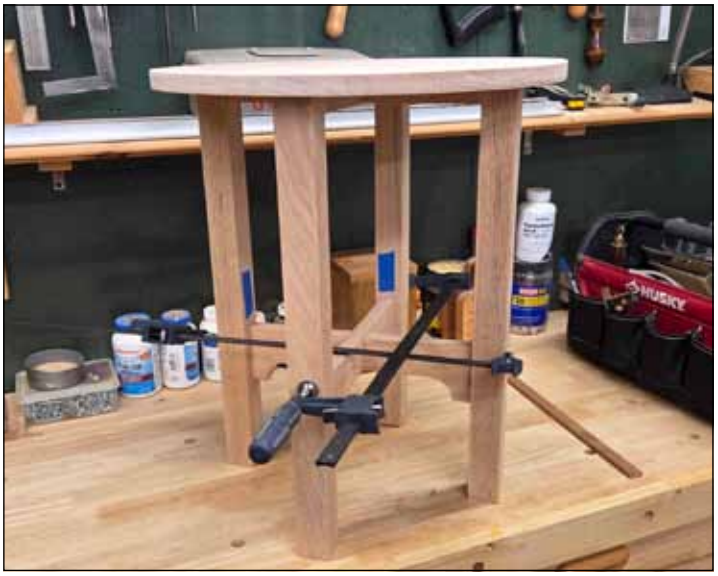


The legs and stretchers.

by individuals' progress with Bob advising and encouraging each of us.

Our last class continued with hand-chiseling the dovetail recesses of the legs where the top stretchers join under the tabletop. Bob concluded the class with the final steps of dry assembly and gluing to be done at home. He discussed our many options of finishing and suggested we research these options for their ease of application, durability, appearance, and personal preference.

The January issue of the newsletter expects to show the students' final tables. The class hopes Bob will teach more classes at the Learning Center as this class was a highly successful learning experience.



Dry fit.

NWA Provides Custom Awards for Saratoga Showcase of Homes 2026

By Dave Mobley



Some Saratoga Showcase of Homes 2026 awards, made by NWA Crafters, on display at a Showcase tour home.

The NWA Crafters SIG members, as they've done before, created custom awards for the Saratoga Showcase of Homes 2026. Organized by the Saratoga Builders Association, the Showcase exhibited some of the best work of their builders and associated trades (architects, landscapers, designers, and decorators) in a tour of new homes in October. Ticket sales to the tour raised money for Habitat for Humanity of Northern Saratoga, Warren and Washington Counties and Rebuilding Together Saratoga County. The awards, made of maple and cherry, were presented at a recognition banquet and displayed at the participating homes.

In a thank you note to NWA, Showcase Co-Chairs Lisa Licata and Barry Potoker wrote, "We are so very grateful for your generous support of this year's 30th Anniversary of the Saratoga Showcase of Homes! This event welcomed over 3500 visitors to 13 beautiful homes on display in this area's premiere new home tour. With your help, we're thrilled to announce that $70,000 will be donated to our local charities!"

In recognition of the volunteer efforts of NWA members, they said, "please know that your commitment to this annual fall tradition is so greatly appreciated, and you are a large part of its continued success." As an additional thank you, the Saratoga Builders Association donated to NWA to support our ongoing programs.

Use Your End-of-year Planning to Bolster NWA

By Bob Fleury, NWA Fundraising Chair

As we approach the end of the calendar year, we start thinking about how we fared financially during the year, getting ready to work on the tax filing, etc. There are several ways that you can better your position as you file your taxes and help NWA at the same time:

- IRA Qualified Charitable Distributions: up to $11,000.00 (2026 limit) can be directed from your IRA to NWA tax-free even if you do not itemize deductions. Your IRA administrator sends the gift directly to NWA.
- RMDs (Required Minimum Distributions): Some of us are of an age where the IRS mandates that we must draw down on our investments. Directing some or all of an RMD to NWA through a Qualified Charitable Distribution can satisfy your obligation to take an RMD while lowering your taxable income.
- Direct Giving: a monetary gift to NWA qualifies as a charitable contribution.
- Gifts in Kind: a gift of items or equipment needed by NWA can qualify as a charitable contribution.
- Legacy Giving: Including NWA in your will or trust or naming NWA as a beneficiary of a retirement account or life insurance policy provides a meaningful way to benefit NWA for years to come.

This, of course, is not legal or accounting advice and when considering any such gift, you should consult with your financial, legal, and accounting advisors.

If you are contemplating a Gift in Kind, please consult with officers of NWA and the SIGs you are thinking about.

Promotion from Machine Knowledgeable to Machine Qualified

By Ray Puffer

We have received several inquiries on how a member may be promoted from Machine Knowledgeable (MK) to Machine Qualified (MQ) on a particular machine in the Learning Center. Here's how it's done:

- First, a MK member must accumulate significant experience safely operating said machine under the supervision of MQ members.
- Second, the MK member must study and follow the NWA's Safety Manual, available on the NWA website (https://woodworker.org/shop-safety-manual/), or in a binder located on the whiteboard tray in the Learning Center.
- Third, and very important, the MK member must be willing to mentor and teach others on the safe operation of the machine.
- Fourth, two MQ members may recommend to the Learning Center Operations Committee (LCOC) that the MK member be promoted to MQ status. A form for this process is available on the Bulletin Board next to the white board in the Learning Center.
- Fifth, the LCOC Chair reviews the recommendation, and if he/she signs off on the promotion, the promotion is made official on the Master Certification List posted on the Bulletin Board.

Questions related to this process may be directed to the LCOC Chair, currently Ray Puffer, at ray.puffer@gmail.com.

The Taming of the Skew

By Liz Donati

Many wood turners have a bit of a love/hate relationship with the skew chisel. Properly used, the skew leaves a remarkably smooth finish on spindle-turned pieces without sanding. For those of us who struggle to use it properly, the skew leaves gouges and frustration in its wake. So how does a turner overcome that frustration and master the skew?



Instructor Jim Echter at the lathe.



Jim addressing the students.

That's where Jim Echter comes in. Jim is a professional turner with over 40 years of experience in custom woodturning and teaching. He specializes in spindle turning and makes a wide variety of custom products – from small drop spindles for fiber artists to large columns for architectural restoration projects. Jim is committed to sharing his skills and expertise with the skew to other turners, and has developed an approach, "The Sensational Skew," to share that knowledge. Jim has taught this technique across the country, including several times at AAW's International Symposium and at Totally Turning. "The Sensational Skew" provides step-by-step instruction with a defined set of exercises and repeatable movements to help turners of all levels master the use of the skew, build confidence, and improve the quality of their finished pieces.



The class, left to right: Stan Blanchard, Sandra Hautau, Cindy Dollard, Ken Aupperle, Jim Echter, Hugh Quigley, Bill O'Brien.

Jim recently visited our shop for three days to share his approach with club members. He began his visit with a demonstration at AWA's monthly general meeting on Wednesday, November 4. Jim followed that with two separate sold-out, hands-on sessions on Thursday and Friday. Everyone who participated learned and practiced the key elements of Jim's approach, including how to "glide the bevel" to avoid catches and create a smooth surface. He individually coached us in the body movements needed to move the skew smoothly (what Jim calls "the dance of the woodturner"). This hands-on approach helped participants learn his technique to create clean-cut beads, V-cuts, and planing cuts. Members left confident that, with practice, they can finally achieve the controlled, smooth cuts that cut down on sanding and improve their finished pieces.

So the next time you're in the shop if you notice a few turners dancing in front of their lathes, you'll know that they are simply working to improve their skills and finally tame the skew.

KWA News

By Wally Cook

New Lathe: The Mid-Hudson Shop has a new resident – A Harvey T-60S lathe! The Harvey features a super-quiet motor, heavy duty swing-away bed extension, 60-3500 rpm range, and a 24" swing over the bed. The unit was available as an 'open box' buy through Harvey Industries but proved to be a top-notch specimen with no obvious flaws. The T60S has a customized banjo which supports a tool rest with an extra long post. Since this aspect limits the use of our normal range of tool rests, the banjo was replaced with one from OneWay. Thanks to Alex Rabinovich, Paul Phillips, Beirne Low, and Stan Pressner for assembling this new piece of equipment.



Alex, Paul, Beirne, and Stan build a Harvey lathe.



A new oak slab getting dressed for the Moravian work bench.

The Harvey T60S was purchased with assistance of donations by KWA members – an incredibly generous community! Two older lathes were also sold to optimize space in the shop.

Upgraded Work Bench: The MHV Hand Tool group constructed a Moravian workbench which will be on display at the annual MHV show. A new oak 4-inch slab will replace the current cedar work surface. Ben Markwell, Gary, and Ron Roberts are currently taking the slab down to finish dimensions.

Annual Show: The Annual Mid-Hudson Show and Sale is upcoming Saturday, December 5, at the Hurley Reformed Church between 10AM to 5PM. There will be a variety of demonstrations and plenty to see. The address for the show is 11 Main Street in Hurley, NY. Admission is free!



Phil Dudek at his display during the 2025 MHV Show.



Sam Amodeo high fives a pal at last year's show.





Karen Amodeo presents the People's Choice award to Dave Ruger.

Sawdust…

Dear Members,

As the Christmas season is upon us, we extend our heartfelt wishes to you and your loved ones for a joyful Christmas filled with peace, happiness, and cherished moments.

Thank you for your continued support, fellowship, and commitment throughout the year. Your participation and dedication have helped make our community stronger and more vibrant.

May the New Year bring you good health, abundant blessings, and success in all your endeavors. We look forward to sharing another wonderful year together.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

With warmest regards, the editor and staff at the Woodworkers News.



November's NWA Monthly Meeting: Restoration of an Eastlake Chair

By Susan McDermott

On a rainy Thursday night, November 12, members assembled at the shop while others joined by Zoom to learn how Crafter, Learay Rayburn-Silvia restored and upholstered an Eastlake parlor chair.

Eastlake furniture is a late 9th-century design style popular from roughly 1870 to 1890. It emerged as a direct rebellion against the highly ornate, curvaceous, and mass-produced styles of the mid-Victorian era, such as Rococo and Renaissance Revival. Named after English architect and writer Charles Eastlake, this style serves as a historic bridge between heavy Victorian decoration and the cleaner, more intentional Arts and Crafts movement (Learay's PowerPoint).



Learay Rayburn-Silvia.

She attended the Center for Furniture Craftmanship in Rockport, Maine, See Here where her instructor, Keaven Harrt, taught the methods of wood preparation and upholstery. Learay had previously begun the repair of the chair's damaged wood, filling the tack holes with Plastic Wood, and finishing the chair frame with the following steps and products: She cleaned the wood with Minwax Paste Finishing Wax (Dark) and 0000 steel wool. Then she applied Howard Beeswax & orange oil to polish and condition the wood. For the gouges that would still be visible after upholstering, she used the burn-in stick/waxes to fill in some of the gouges on the front of the chair. Finally, she used Restor-a-Finish (Mahogany) to really bring back the richness of the wood.



Eastlake carving.



Many tack holes to be filled with Plastic



Layers of materials affixed to the seat.



The photos show the layers of materials affixed to the seat after the webbing was secured. She first made a template of the seat area using paper, but an inch was added to each side. Then she cut a 3" foam using a foam cutter to match the template made. This was $^{1}/_{2}$" inch greater than needed. Then a layer of 1" Dacron foam was cut 4" greater than needed on all sides. Next, a layer of muslin was also cut that was 4" greater than needed on all sides.

The seated area was then gradually smoothed on all sides by compressing the foam and Dacron. She wanted this seat area to be tight and smooth. Finally, the fabric was stapled onto the chair frame and strips of gimp tacked on to hide the staples.

The final challenge was caster replacement. Learay said it involves quite a bit of information: the size of the wheels, the distance from the floor to the plate of the caster, the attachment strategy, and the understanding that an exact replacement may not be available. Learay realized the attachment first required a drill press to drill a straight hole in the center of the front leg, so a dowel could be inserted. Since the chair was already upholstered, positioning the chair under the drill bit required engineering that was beyond Learay's skills.

Dave Mobley solved this complex problem. Learay praised his ingenuity and success.



There's a secret to how this leg was made.



Secret revealed.



Casters replaced with new ones on chairs front legs.



Dave Mobley getting ready to drill holes for new casters.



The restored chair.



The back of the chair.

Wooden You Like to Know

By Charlie James

If a screw hole is stripped I use toothpicks, skewers, or chopsticks as dowels to fill the hole. The toothpicks are likely birch, and the chopsticks and skewers may be bamboo, so the wood does not have a lot of tensile strength. It's a rudimentary repair but as an example hinges and door knob screw holes repaired this way can last for years. Nothing more is needed than some glue and the aforementioned stock and a knife to whittle the wood down to size if necessary. Place glue in the hole and hit the filler in with a small hammer so the wood goes in as far as possible. It doesn't matter what it looks like. When the glue dries, clean up the outside of the hole with a chisel and drill a new hole.

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) 429-6581for 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.