

# WOODCHUCK CHATTER

## NEWSLETTER OF THE WOODCHUCK TURNERS OF NORTHERN VERMONT

AN AFFILIATE OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF WOODTURNERS

WOODCHUCKSVT.ORG

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Vice President: Karen Drennen

Secretary: Gary Walz

Treasurer: Brad Jackson

Newsletter Editor: Andrew Duling

Members at Large: Bob Martin, Adam Wager,  
Tom Dunne



Last Meeting: July 19th, 2023

*Charring open grained turnings*

Next Meeting: SUNDAY August 27th, 2023

*Annual Woodchuck Picnic and Show and Tell*

After that: September 23rd, 2023

*Embellishing with Color*

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## FLASH BULLETIN: THE WOODCHUCK PICNIC RETURNS!

CALLING ALL WOODCHUCKS, FRIENDS OF WOODCHUCKS, WANNABE  
WOODCHUCKS, WIVES and SIGNIFICANT OTHERS!

Your board is pleased to announce that, after a two-year hiatus, there will again be a picnic at the home and studio of Russ Fellows in Jericho. Russ and his partner, Bob, will be organizing this. They will provide various grill items and attendees are asked to bring an addition to the table of their choosing: salad, veggie dish, potato, pasta, dessert, whatever! Russ and Bob will also provide an assortment of drink items.

In the past we have had club founder and woodturning celebrity, Al Stirt, do a demo for us. Al is unable to attend this year so we thought it would be a nice idea to set up a gallery table. Members are encouraged to bring some examples of their work, and after dinner anyone who wishes, can do a short talk on it. This will give wives, friends, significant others, an opportunity to see the great variety of things Woodchucks make when they "hide" away in their shops!

Russ will also have his usual bounty of wood to give away! This year: birch, maple, cherry, ash, elm, honey locust, walnut, and a few surprises! Attendees are invited to bring contributions as well.

**When: Sunday, August 27**

**Where: 26 John Davis Dr. Jericho, VT**

**Any time after 11:00. A social hour first, then dinner, then a program.**

**Please notify Russ of your intention to attend, and how many in your party. ([Russfellows@outlook.com](mailto:Russfellows@outlook.com)) If you don't get an acknowledgment from him, it means your note went into cyberspace! Give him a call at (802-343-0393)**



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HOPE TO SEE MANY OF YOU! LET'S MAKE IT THE BIGGEST ONE...EVER!!

### Notes From Ya Boy

A short Chatter this month because we're heading on vacation tomorrow. Unfortunately I won't see you all at the BBQ this month as I am going to be at a show in Okemo. This is turning out to be my busiest month this summer. I've certainly set myself up for lots of sanding and finishing during every free moment during the next few weeks. We are still looking for a Chatter editor as I am stepping down in October. Anyone who takes on this mantle will be bequeathed the Woodchucks email address and all templates for Chatter! I'm happy to help anyone get started and hoping someone steps up. Enjoy the rest of your summer!

## **Woodchucks Meeting Minutes 19-Jul-2023**

Meeting was called to order by President Harvie Porter at 7:03. Meeting was held in person. We went around the room with introductions.

### **Announcements**

Check the AAW site for upcoming online demos and events

Cindy Droza will demo for us next March.

Annual picnic will be held at Russ's on Aug 27.

Al Stirtz will not be available

We will hold our own expanded show and tell

It will be a pot luck, with grilled items generously supplied by Russ again.

Just a reminder of help we need:

Chatter Editor – Andy plans to abdicate his position at the end of October.

Technology Assistant – We could use someone to help setup and oversee the technology we use

### **Raffle**

Our monthly raffle was held, again primarily thanks to the generosity of Russ.

### **Show and Tell**

#### **Jake**

Projects worked on with Russ:

A buffed cedar bowl with no other finish

His first (and last, according to Jake) hollowform

A flamed, spalted, burlled live edged bowl w/spar varnish finish

#### **Adam**

Small burned vessel in ash. Finished with Osmo Oil

Spalted burl bowl

#### **Dave B**

Two bowls (one ash, one maple) with photo sensitive dyes using common yarrow weed.

An ash bowl with red dye over leaf on the inside. Dave explained the challenges of placing the leaves.

#### **Tom D**

3 cedar pieces with wood from Russ:

Small hollow form

Vase

Bowl

**Imir**

Also showed 3 cedar pieces

Box with top and finial

Vase with carving tool used to make a decorative feature

Base

Also a hawthorne hollowform

**Kevin**

Koa stump

**Gary**

Penguin. Turned offset with some carving of the beak area with a King Arthur Merlin

**Meeting Topic – Burning!**

Ross and Adam each showed their techniques for a burned finish. You can do this on any wood type, including figured and porous woods

**Ross**

Primarily burns to open up the wood for other finishes He has a 7 step process:

Turning

Sanding

Burning

Cleaning

Cleans with a nylon brush (prefers it over a brass liming brush)

Follows this up with a gray Scotch Brite pad

Light seal

Lacquer

Add colorant

Wipe on/off with liming wax

Then Scotch Brite to clean it off

Cleans with mineral spirits (just on surface with a folded paper towel)

Waxes it twice

Finished with General Finishes Wood Bowl Finish (Dave B suggested a spray finish)

**Adam**

Sand to 120, just to remove tool marks

Adam burns deeper than Ross, so he doesn't use a liming wax finish

Burns up to 1/8" deep

Burn slowly like you're toasting a marsh mellow

Uses Mapp for thicker pieces, butane for thinner

Does the rim last, since it will burn easier

It *does* burn away any fine detail, so caution

Burns the outside more than the inside

With green wood, will get an "alligator skin" look

Finishes with rattle can lacquer or oils like Osmo oil)

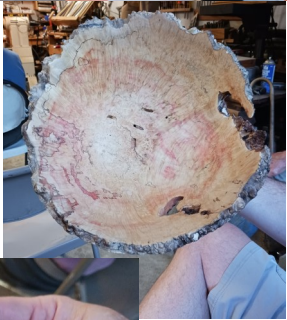


# Ross Mitchell Demo





# Show and Tell





# Sawdust Session—August





## “ONE FOR THE BIRDS!” Russ Fellows

This is not really a woodturning story, but because it has one turned component it qualifies as one. And, it's a cute story, or at least with one very cute character!

I had some visitors from California at the end of July, my longtime friend (and college roommate), and his daughter and grandson. They had come to Vermont to drop off the boy at Camp Keewaydin on Lake Dunmore, where he had gone in the 50's, also at age 11.

They arrived a couple days in advance of the drop date, and because they had recently completed an auto trip, they didn't really want to do a typical tourist drive around in Vermont. How about a shop project!? The answer was an enthusiastic 'yes' and we proceeded to the shop.

There had been a recent conversation about birds and Birdhouses, so it was easy, we'd build a birdhouse! The raw material was no problem. As any recent visitor to my shop can attest, the detritus from many previous projects meant ample choices. Next decision, what species of bird would we attempt to house? For reasons that were not clear to me, except that they lived in the Bay Area, it would be the California sparrow. On to the design department, Grandpa became the chief of research, I would be technical and production advisor.

Augie wanted something different, so, a two level house. Thanks to the internet, we learned that sparrows require a floor plan of  $4\frac{1}{2}'' \times 4\frac{1}{2}''$ . Done! Also, interestingly, NO perch! I guess that is to make entry more difficult to possible predators. The size hole also was important. To discourage "squatters", every bird needs a hole specific to their body size. Final design considerations, vent holes, a hinged back door for clean out, and a socket on the bottom for the pole on which it would sit. The final touch, the roof would be a piece of a reject Bob abstract painting! This would be one classy birdhouse!

As I write this I am just finishing packing up our masterpiece, in preparation to send it off to California. Augie was delighted with it, and the oldsters had fun doing it with him! It will be a science project report for him when he gets back to school in September!

And oh, yes: the turned part? A walnut handle on the back door! See photo.



At the July 19th meeting, Adam and I demonstrated the burning technique know as Shou Sugi Ban. Mine is the “lighter” version of this technique, which blackens the surface and opens the early wood grain of ring porous woods such as Ash and Oak, but it does not impart any charred texture to the surface. I add white or pigmented liming wax to create contrast between the early and late wood surfaces, per the seven-step process outlined below:

#### 1. Turning

Either once or twice turned is fine, but the true-up achieved through a second turning will be lost in this process since all forms tend to warp when burned. Dry wood will, of course, warp less than wet, but some beautiful and dramatic warping and cracking can be achieved by burning the piece while still wet.

#### 2. Sanding

I sand these pieces thoroughly because with this lighter burning technique any scratches and tool marks broadcast through the burned and buffed surface even more than they do through a clear finish. Note that with Adam’s deeper burning technique you can burn right through the scratches, and still brush and buff your way to a smooth (but slightly different) final surface. It will only take a few pieces to determine a level of burning that produces the surface quality you prefer.

#### 3. Burning

I start with a broad, sweeping motion with the torch to bring the whole piece close to flash point. This may begin to turn the piece light brown but it does not ignite or turn black yet. I then work a small section at a time with a tight circular motion just until it flames and turns black – at which point I immediately extinguish the flame by blotting it with a piece of leather. This blotting technique is what keeps the burning “light” and avoids creating any real charred texture. I move from section to section, returning here and there as needed, and I periodically go back to a broader sweeping motion to keep the whole piece evenly hot. In certain light, some sections may read as a deep translucent brown and not black, but the subsequent steps will blacken it all up.

#### 4. Cleaning and buffing

Begin to remove the fine (and somewhat stubborn) layer of black dust by vigorous brushing with a nylon or Tampico bristle brush. (Avoid metal bristles, which will scratch the surface) Follow this by thoroughly wiping with paper towels or Scotch-Brite grey pads – which will buff and burnish the surface as well as cleaning it further. It may seem like you could keep brushing and wiping forever, but eventually the black residue will taper off. You may get the best result by alternating between brushing and wiping. Follow this with a blast of compressed air. Take the time to trace the grain lines with the air, which will really open up the pores to accept pigment in a later step.

#### 5. Sealing

Apply a few light coats of satin lacquer. The goal here is to apply enough to reduce the porosity of the smooth portions (late wood) so that it resists tinting when the wax is applied, without applying so much that you clog the open grain of the early wood. I have recently discovered that this is less of a delicate balance than I once thought it was. As long as you don’t flood the surface with lacquer, you’ll be fine.

#### 6. Coloring

Apply liming wax, Hampshire Sheen embellishing paste wax, or a similar product liberally to the whole surface and work it deep into the open grain. Once applied, begin to remove it immediately by wiping with paper towels. Once you have removed most of the excess, switch to Scotch-Brite grey pads, turning frequently. Follow that with a light wipe with a folded paper towel moistened with mineral spirits. (Note that I use paper towel rather than a folded cloth because the paper towel is stiffer and glides across the top of the open grain without pulling the wax out of the open pours) Apply a second coat of wax and repeat the whole messy process. Toward the end of this second application, experiment by going back and forth between the mineral spirit wipe, and rubbing/buffing with the grey pad.

Some waxes come tinted, or your can add powdered dyes or other pigments to white liming wax

#### 7. Finishing

Although the wax never really dries, it does harden enough that even finishes containing solvents can be used as long as they are applied gently. I get good results with my usual 2-3 coats of General Finishes Wood Bowl Finish.

Pictures next page....





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## AUGUST 2023 Treasurer's Report

Bank	Balance forward
5395.71	
<b>IN-</b>	<b>COME</b>
Do-	nation/Raffle 52.00
<b>EX-</b>	<b>PENSES 0</b>
<b>Bank Balance ending</b>	5447.71
Cash on Hand	25.00

The Board of Directors of The Woodchuck Turners of Northern Vermont gratefully acknowledges the payment of dues from the following members for **2023**:

Jay Bailey, Ronald Bauer, Wayne Beauchemin, Ted Beebe, Dale Bergdahl, David Bisbee, Chris Bishop, Bradford Blaisdell, Robert Bouvier, Dave Buchholz, James Bushey, George Cacchio, Mike Dever, George Disney, Karen Drennen, Andy Duling, Tom Dunne, Cheryl Ferry, David Ferry, Joe Fortin, Joe Gaines, Barry Genslinger, George Gibson, Jim Goodwin, Rick Hamilton, Damon Hartman, Peter Hebert, Linda Hollingdale, Jim Holzschuh, Brad Jackson, Paul Jagielski, Kevin Jenness, Scott Johnson, Kevin Kelley, Eddie Krasnow, Luc Lefebvre, Kevin Liddiard, Chris, Lumbra, Bob Martin, Russ Michel, Kevin Murdough, Ted Nelson, Elsa Oppenheimer, Mike Papin, Harvey Porter, Randy Ramsden, , Brian Reed, Barent Rogers, David Scrase, Reed Sims, Dave Smith, Edwards Smith, Marilyn Stolberg, Brad Vietje, Wes Volk, Adam Wager, Fred Walters, Gary Walz (55)

The Board of Directors of The Woodchuck Turners of Northern Vermont gratefully acknowledges the payment of dues from the following members for **2024**:  
Harvey Porter (1)

Scott Bennett, Russ Fellows, Ted Fink, Michael Mode, Dick Montague, Nick Rosato, Hav Smith, Army Spahn, and Al Stirt are Honorary Lifetime members (9)

If you have paid your dues for the 2023 year but do not see your name listed above, please contact me at [BradJackson234@gmail.com](mailto:BradJackson234@gmail.com) to correct that error of omission. Dues for 2023 are \$25. Checks should be made out to "WTNV" and sent to: Brad Jackson, 14 Rustic Drive, Essex, VT 05452

Please note: The following privileges are only available to dues-paying members:  
Video library use, mentoring program, bulk purchase discounts for CA glue and Anchor Seal. 10% discount on purchases from Klingspor, Penn State Industries, Rare Woods USA, WoodTurnersWonders, and Craft Supplies.

Klingspor requests you login **before** you order.

PSI requests you mention the club.

Rare Woods USA requests you order using coupon code WOODCHUCKSROCK or mention the club.

Woodturnerswonders requires the individual member to create an account at [woodturnerswonders.com](http://woodturnerswonders.com) and then send an email to [members@woodturnerswonders.com](mailto:members@woodturnerswonders.com). They should include their name as well as the name of the club in which they are a member. Woodturnerswonders will then add the discount to their account and send them an email explaining the next steps. This will give them a 10% discount on Lamps, Sandpaper, and Sanding Accessories. Craft Supplies gives Club members 10% off abrasive discs and finishes when ordering as an individual. They just need to call in the order and mention their membership when ordering those products.

*Reminder: As previously advertised, unless you have paid your annual dues by April 1st your name must be removed from the discount list.*


**Brad Jackson/Treasurer**



## **Mentors**

*These Woodchucks are able and willing to help other Woodchucks wanting some hands-on instruction.*

Dick Montague: General turning, all aspects plus tool sharpening.  
802-584-3486  
montagueturn@gmail.com  
Groton

Russ Fellows: General, segmented, & multi-axis turning  
802-343-0393  
russfellows@outlook.com  
 @fellowswoodart  
Jericho

Ted Beebe: Segmented work.  
802-849-2436  
Teddy.beebe@gmail.com  
Fletcher

Tom Dunne: Hollow turning, etc.  
802-388-6981  
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Dave Buchholz  
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