

# WOODCHUCK CHATTER



July 11, 2008

Volume 5, Issue 7

## THE NEWSLETTER OF WOODCHUCK TURNERS OF NORTHERN VERMONT

An Affiliate of American Association of Woodturners

[WWW.WOODCHUCKSVT.org](http://WWW.WOODCHUCKSVT.org)

### Next Meeting: July 17, 2008

We will meet as usual at the Shelburne Art Center. Ralph is scheduled to introduce us to a software program called Google Sketch-Up.

The program is useful in our field for designing projects and jigs. If you had a hard time in drafting class, this may make you feel like the millennium has come.

Prez. Russ puts in a plea for raffle stuff this month. He would also welcome feedback from the members on programs we would like and, of course, volunteers to put on demos.

All the cards Russ has been juggling finally came down in a neat stack. We **will** have our picnic meeting on Sep. 6 at the Russ Fellows' home & workshop in Jericho. Stay alert for further details.



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### June Meeting Notes

The meeting was called to order by Joe Laferriere. The clan introduced themselves around the room.

The minutes of the last meeting were approved as printed in Chatter 5-6.

Anchorseal is in and gallon containers were being filled before the meeting. Ralph will have the remaining supply at his shop. Price is \$10/gallon



#### Web Site –

As Jim Cunningham's PC is down for the count he is working on using a new hosting site – more details to follow.

#### Hats are in –

Ted has them for the low price of \$7 each.

#### Fine Furniture Show in Woodstock –

Russ to be the point person for the club's booth.

Vermont WoodNet has decided to close the Maplewood Gallery in Stowe. Closing date is Monday July 21, 2008.

Next meeting and the summer picnic to be

(Continued on page 3)



## Woodchuck Chatter

### Woodchuck Turners of Northern Vermont

#### Board of Directors

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Woodchuck Chatter will be published monthly. Deadline for submissions is the 7th of the month. Please E-mail all submissions to the Editor in text or Word format. Visuals can be submitted as JPEG or TIFF.

## Random Shots –



I've had a bit of a dry spell. I would go down to my shop and putter around, arranging my stock, putting tools where they belong, inventorying consumables. In spite of all my reading (see last issue) I was not inspired to actually produce anything. Part of the

problem was that I had been asked to duplicate a chair leg. Frankly, I'm afraid to do free-hand copying. I finally got my courage up one morning and started on the leg. The result was pretty good. I left extra stock on both ends so it could be precisely sized—this wasn't a rocking chair. Staining & finishing it are another matching problem & I'm working on it. That felt so good that I started on a couple of lidded containers I had promised. One needed a friction-fit lid. By the time I had finished both boxes, I was feeling pretty good about turning and ready for other projects. Turning is great therapy. Turning calms me and gives me a feeling of accomplishment.

### Modern tools vs. ancient tools

Ralph is prepared to show us a computer tool to augment our ancient tool kit. This can be a useful and time saving helper. Like a new gouge, there can be a learning curve. Like a favorite bowl gouge, it can become the sharpest tool in your box—or sit on the shelf gathering rust if you don't like it. If you do any pre-cutting designing work, "Sketch-Up" can save both time and valuable wood. Lots of tool-types back away from computers through fear or ignorance. Here's the facts. You won't break the computer if you make a mistake. You might lose the file you

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## From the Chairman 's Desk



Greetings from the President's messy corner! It (my studio) is messy because I haven't had an event in it for a while... like Open Studio. I guess I need to schedule something, and as a matter of fact, I am!

This is my clever little segue to my first item of business for the column this month, and that is the as-yet-still-unconfirmed Woodchuck annual picnic! Because of ongoing scheduling uncertainties among various board members (mostly me!) and Al Stirt, our kind and generous yearly demonstrator, and the problems and delays of all the back and forth communication this time of year, to finally nail down a date, it is still not 100% certain when it will be! However, because Al had an out-of-town conflict for Saturday September 6th, we are now zeroing in on the following Saturday September 13th. While it is a few weeks past when we have had it in the past, it is technically still summer!

And, since we are having it at my home in Jericho where it can all be inside if needed, it will not need a 'rain-date'.....so plan on it 'Chucks! Hope many of you can make it! We will talk about it in more detail at our meeting this month. (Editor's note: After this column was written Russ emailed me that Al Stirt, our generous and talented Life Member, has been released from his prior Sept. 6 engagement. We will have our picnic meeting on Sep. 6 at Russ Fellows' home & workshop in Jericho.)

And speaking of meetings....since the picnic is only five days prior to our scheduled September meeting, we are wondering if we should move that meeting back to August which now has no Woodchuck happening scheduled. Please communicate your thoughts on this to me or one of the other board members. Thanks! (Editor's note: We are tending toward cancelling the August meeting and keeping our Sept. 18 meeting as planned)

I will again be talking at the meeting this month about the upcoming Vermont Fine Furniture and Woodworking Festival in Woodstock in September. I want to encourage all of you to consider contributing a piece for our booth. Regardless of how modest you feel your work is so far, and how much you consider yourself a hobbyist vs. a producing artist, it will be a great way to "test the waters" with some of your work!

Those of you who have work at the Maplewood Gallery in Stowe very likely already know that the gallery is closing for good on Monday July 21st. This is a sad turn of events for those of us who are small producers but wanted a marketing "window" in Stowe... but a necessary move for financial reasons! They have reduced their hours to

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# June Meeting continued

(Continued from page 1)

discussed at this month's meeting – stay tuned.



Ted's threaded jam chuck



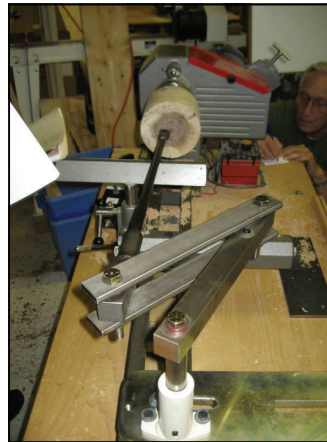
Randy's plum bowls and Lilac salt and pepper shakers



Ralph's spalted and live edge pieces

## Show & Tell

Demo: Ralph Bill Walsh with a demo of his homemade captured hollowing system along with various cutting tips



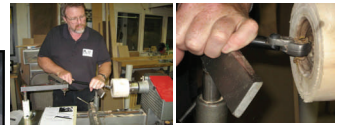
Bill's articulated arm hollowing rig on the lathe.



Close up of the arm



A cutter bar complete with laser guide.



# Treasurer's report

<b>Balance Forward</b>	\$2506.16
<b>Income</b>	
Raffle	20
Anchorseal	145
Hat sales	28
<b>Expenses</b>	0
<b>Balance Forward</b>	<b>\$2699.16</b>



**Notice:** The long awaited Woodchuck hats are in and they only cost \$7 each. I will bring a supply to the next meeting for individual purchases.

Ted

## Greetings From Skunk Hollow

I am, as usual, hard at work in my studio at my "part-time" retirement job.....that keeps me busy full time! Fortunately I love doing what I do and it is not drudgery! I have always said that artists are the luckiest people in the world in that they get to do what they love to do.....and sometimes even make some money at it! I do not feel my work falls into the category of "high art", but when the creative juices are flowing I at least feel I am "walking the walk" a little bit.

the loss of Maplewood (see my president's corner column elsewhere in this issue of "Chatter") brings my gallery count back up to six, a number that I am comfortable supplying. Sales vary tremendously from month to month, which is fine, as it gives me time to work on my individual commissions which trickle in now and then. I am slowly moving away from focusing on bowls to other things like vessels and covered containers such as those pictured here. It also keeps things interesting and avoids getting caught up in a "production" mindset.

Hope to see you at this month's meeting!

Russ Fellows



I have just been accepted at a beautiful gallery in Brattleboro, Vermont Artisan's Designs, which, with

## From The Prez—Continued

*(Continued from page 2)*

Thursday-Friday, noon-5, Saturday 11:00-6:00, and Sunday 11:00-3:00. If you have any inventory there, you must pick it up during these hours. Anything left after the 21st will be "disposed of" by the directors!

As of a short time ago, the Vermont Dept of Agriculture was still soliciting contributors for their space at the Eastern States Exposition in Springfield, MA, an event that runs for 16 days in September and had attendance last year of nearly one and

one-quarter million!

The website is [www.thebig.com](http://www.thebig.com).

My customary monthly reminders: please be ever-vigilant for articles of interest for "Chatter", and forward them, or a link, to Arny by the first of the month for inclusion in that month's issue. And look around your shops for an item for the raffle!

Hope to see you all next week at our regular meeting!

Russ Fellows

## Woodchuck Sightings

I will be part of the "Discover the Heart of the Islands" Open Farm and Studio weekend July 12th and 13th. The location of this open studio event will be just Grand Isle County (the Champlain islands). This event is similar to the recent state-wide Open Studio Weekend. We will have over 30 venues (both farms and craft studios) open to the public with over 40 artists demonstrating their craft. I will be in my wood-turning shop. We will also have our Angora goats on "display" and will be doing some fiber to yarn spinning



with wood-turned drop spindles (made by me). Maps will be available at several places in Grand Isle County or you can just follow large yellow signs (which will be up for the weekend) to the first venue and get a map from that artist. I will try to get to the meeting on the 19th and will bring some maps then.  
Jim Holzschuh  
Yellow Dog Farm

## Preventing green turnings from cracking - Part 3

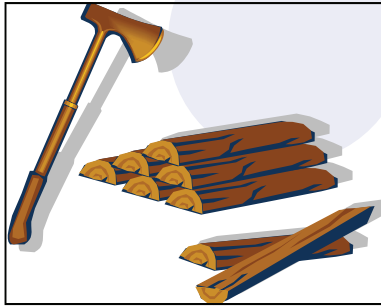
In the last two Chatter “lessons” I talked about the problem of green wood projects cracking while drying and some of the traditional solutions. This month I’ll touch on some of the newer and/or experimental solutions. Each of these methods has a range of opinion about what to do and especially how long to do it. As before, I want to emphasize that you should experiment with your particular equipment, materials, wood, and available drying conditions. Many of these “newer” procedures can or should be used in combination with traditional methods.

Most of us have a microwave, so we will start here. As with food, wood is heated from the inside. This heating is often not evenly distributed throughout the wood. Therefore you should use short bursts followed by resting time. This allows the heat to spread out evenly. There are two schools of thought: 1) let the wood cool completely between each burst, or 2) rest, but not long enough for the wood to cool. Since wood cells are more flexible when hot (as in steam bending) I favor the second. There are many opinions about duration of the heating cycle from 20 to 40 one minute cycles to longer but fewer cycles. For some woods I have started with one minute cycles

followed by resting just until it starts to cool. Depending on the wood shape and power of the oven, I increase

the time as the wood starts to dry. With so many variables you must experiment to fit your situation. Remember to keep an eye and nose on the process. Wood can char on the inside while looking good outside. You can smell the creosote when this happens. If cooked long enough, the wood can start on fire.

Soaking is another method. Soap and alcohol solutions are easy to do. I’ll talk about PEG another time. For soaking in a soap solution there are a variety of opinions about the soap to water ratio. One part dishwashing (not dishwasher) soap to 5-7 parts water might be a good place to start. The idea is to get the solution into the wood. Thin porous turnings such as red oak and ash will require less time than thick closed grain such as cherry or wood resistant to absorption such as white oak. Reported results seem to vary from “I never had a bowl crack” to “It’s messy and doesn’t seem to work all that well”. The soap may provide some lubricating



qualities for cutting and cell wall movement. It may slightly retard water leaving the wood resulting in more even drying.

Work can also be soaked in alcohol. Denatured alcohol is relatively cheap,

can be purchased in gallon or more quantities, and has a higher (95%) alcohol content (the rest is water). Isopropyl is usually 70 or 90%. I have been told and read that soaking times vary from 20 minutes to 24 hours. The alcohol displaces water in the wood and I think changes the nature of the cell wall to allow it to move without separating (cracking).

Immersing in boiling water for approximately 1 hour per inch of thickness changes the cells enough to restrict cell movement and/or allow some movement when drying. This is often combined with bagging and may reduce drying time to a third. I have boiled a blank with some end grain checking in a pressure cooker followed by aggressive microwave heating to completely dry in less than one hour. There was no new cracking and the end checking did not get worse. Check for strength, color change and the effect with different finishes for your specific projects. The alcohol (long soak), boiling, and microwave also have the

advantage of killing any critters that have made a home in your stock. Because they are combined with other methods such as bagging, it is sometimes hard to tell how much of the success is due to the soaking.

Coming up (if Arny does not fire me for being late) I’ll cover other combinations of techniques, PEG, vacuum, kilns, solar, finishing wet wood, preventing cracks while turning, and fixing cracks despite your best efforts. If you decide to try any of the above I recommend searching the internet, reading articles that seem to be written by knowledgeable folks, and experimenting until they work in your situation. If searching or sorting out the conflicting information is difficult or confusing, talk with someone who has knowledge or experience. Our group is a wealth of both. I would personally be glad to have you give me a call.

Richard Montague

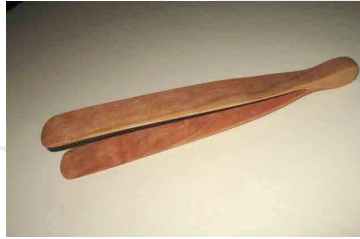
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## Woodchuck Chatter

### A Useful Project!

I've been working on wooden bowl accessories of late, and have designed and made what I believe to be an especially useful and easy-to-make salad tongs that makes a nice companion to a turned salad bowl or 10-14 inches. It takes



about an hour to make, using a band saw, a four-inch belt sander and a one-inch belt sander.

Photo one shows a rough cut on a band saw, (two interlocking V's) from a 12", 2 x 2" maple block.

Photo two shows the maple tongs after sanding first on a four-inch belt sander to smooth out the



outside; next on a 1" belt sander to smooth the inside. Finish with hand sanding to 400 grit.

Photo three shows finished maple tongs in a 12" maple salad bowl (duplicate photos here). Finished with beeswax & mineral oil paste for a nice feel and to keep the



flexing joint from drying out.

Photo four shows additional small accessory tongs made from black walnut scraps, useful for serving small food items such as olives, pickles, berries, and the like.

Terry Fulwiler



## From the AAW President



Earlier this year, AAW Board members met in Richmond, Virginia, to put the finishing touches on plans for the 22nd Annual AAW Symposium. I am looking forward to the June 20-22 event with a bittersweet taste, as this will be my last symposium as a member of one of the finest boards, I believe, to lead our organization.

I would like to share some of the highlights of our Board meeting. At the February meeting, the

Board approved the organization's strategic plan for 2008-2010. The Board decided to publish a AAW 25th anniversary book and hired John Kelsey to manage the project. John has extensive publication experience with Fine Woodworking, Cambium Press, and now with Fox Chapel Publishing. In addition to his vast experience in publishing, John is also an accomplished woodturner (although he claims to have been distracted from woodturning by other demands of life). Please join me in giving John a warm woodturner welcome. We are confident John will produce a book worthy of the AAW's silver anniversary.

The Board also reviewed the journal and adopted a strategy to restructure current publication methods to start expanding to six issues per year. We expect that new production processes will be in place next year. When to go to six issues per year is a decision to be resolved later.

The Board considered sharing the EOG (Educational Opportunity Grant) auction price of donated artwork with the artists. The question before the board was whether to allow the artists the option of receiving up to 50 percent of the retail price of the donated piece.

According to current Internal Revenue Service regulations, an artist may claim only the value of materials (no labor) when valuing a contribution for tax purposes. The Board wrestled with this question during our November meeting in Chicago, and it was on the agenda again for the February meeting. We explored the pros and cons over the course of two days. Then, in a final vote, the motion to share auction proceeds with the artists passed.

We have enjoyed 20 years of generosity from all our members who have donated wonderful work for previous EOG auctions. This is an opportunity for the AAW to give something back to

future donors and to make donations of possibly even better work more palatable. And, it is a stepping stone towards improving AAW's fund-raising and professionalism.

Finally, many of you are aware of the perilous condition of Phil Brennon, an AAW past president, after back surgery last summer. If you are interested in making a contribution to assist with medical expenses not covered by insurance, see details at our website. Barry Schwaiger of WMH Tool Group has generously donated a Powermatic 3520B lathe that will be raffled in Phil's benefit. You can purchase tickets for the lathe at the Richmond symposium or through the AAW website. Thanks in giving Phil a helping hand.

Angelo lafrate

President AAW

## More Random Shots

are working on, worse case. Ignorance? You do not have to know all the tricks in any program. I use several programs in my daily work. Here's a partial list: Microsoft Excel, Word, Publisher, Explorer, and Outlook Express. Adobe Photoshop and Acrobat. Norton Internet Security and Systemworks. Plus several more. I use a small fraction of what any of the programs can do. Every one of them has pages of functions. Some overlap in capability. I am learning the functions only as I

need them. Why learn Publisher's use as a web-page publisher when I have no desire to have a web page? Why learn the 1500 functions of Photoshop when my biggest need is to adjust contrast and color?

I am a believer that I have a finite number of storage cells in my brain and I should reserve them for the immediate and important needs. So, don't be afraid to grab a new tool and try it out. Computer aided design may be more than you need, but it just might save your bacon one day.

Army

## The Newsletter of Woodchuck Turners of Northern Vermont

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## Classified Ads

Hello Ted,

I found your address on the Woodchuck Turners web site. I was a former member of your organization and am now interested in selling my lathe with all the accessories that go with it. I have not established a price but am willing to accept a reasonable offer.

The lathe is a Nova 3000 w/DC motor and outboard tool rest assembly, which I bought new back in the early 1990's for \$1450. Included with it are a maple bench that I made to hold the lathe, a Oneway Stronghold 4 jaw key-operated scroll chuck, 4" and 6" faceplates and several turning tools.

My name is Dick Turner and I live in Berlin, Vt. If anyone is interested in purchasing the lathe they can e-mail me at [moturn1989@yahoo.com](mailto:moturn1989@yahoo.com) or telephone me at 802-223-3748.

Thanks.

## Policy on AAW Liability Insurance

Members of WTNV who are giving public demonstrations are covered by the AAW-sponsored liability policy under the following conditions:

You must be a member of

AAW and WTNV.

The event must be "sanctioned" by WTNV. That is, you must notify the Treasurer, who will provide a copy of the cover sheet for the policy. You

must also notify the editor of Chatter so you can be listed in Future Woodchuck Sightings.

The demonstration must have wood turning as the main subject.

### Woodchuck Mentors

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

*Craig Hall: Bowls, spindles, & hollow forms.  
802-644-5344  
[craighall@hotmail.com](mailto:craighall@hotmail.com)*

*Dick Montague: General turning, all aspects plus tool sharpening.  
802-584-3486  
[Montagueturn@hotmail.com](mailto:Montagueturn@hotmail.com)*

*Ralph Tursini: Spindles & bowls, vacuum chucking.  
802-899-6863  
[Tursini@pshift.com](mailto:Tursini@pshift.com)*

*Ted Fink: Bowls, spindles, & boxes.  
802-985-2923  
[jantedfink@gmail.com](mailto:jantedfink@gmail.com)*

*Russ Fellows: Segmented vessels. 802-899-3059  
[skunkmen@together.net](mailto:skunkmen@together.net)*

*Bill Walsh: tool sharpening  
802 482 215  
[billiriquois@yahoo.com](mailto:billiriquois@yahoo.com)*

## Policy On Borrowing The Club Lathe and Tent

This is the policy which was formulated at the October 2004 Board meeting. It was first printed in the October 2004 Woodchuck Chatter.

The primary goal in buying these tools is to have good equipment available so we can demonstrate in public, thereby attracting new members and recruiting would-be turners.

All members in good standing (paid up dues) are eligible to bor-

row the equipment primarily for demonstration purposes. We may borrow the equipment for ONE WEEK at a time. The Treasurer is responsible for knowing where the equipment is at any time; therefore the borrower is responsible to sign the equipment out—by phone or in person— and back in.

The lathe and its parts are a unit. Don't ask to borrow only the chuck or other parts.

The borrower is responsible for transporting the equipment to and from its storage location. The borrower is responsible for re-

turning the equipment in excellent condition with all its parts intact.

The borrower is responsible for any liability rising from the use of the equipment.

Only club members may operate our lathe to avoid litigation by untrained turners.

The Chapter has first dibs on all equipment so that we can show our stuff at public events.