

The Turning Point

In this issue:

President's Report	2
October Meeting Notes	4
Making a handle for a...	9
Christmas Ornament Exchange	13
The Electrical Corner	15
Guild Executive	17



The next meeting of the Nova Woodturners' Guild
is at Lee Valley Tools, 150 Susie Lake Crescent, Halifax
Sunday, November 24, 2023. 2:00 p.m.

At the November meeting:
— techniques for embellishing turnings
— bring in your recent work for Show and Tell

The President's Report

Gary Landry

First, a report on our attempt to run a simultaneous in-person and virtual meeting last month. Bottom line is we had problems that made it difficult for those at home to see what was going on. We tried to use an unfamiliar laptop (Apple), made all the connections we thought would be appropriate and then could not get the ethernet connection at Lee Valley to work for us. Therefore we had to default to their WiFi connection. That meant not only a delay in starting but when we got going the signal received at members' homes was, at best, choppy due to using the WiFi connection.

So, during the meeting a motion was proposed and passed to allow the Executive to purchase a new laptop IF it was found that the problem in casting to your houses was due to the performance of the laptop used. To that end, we performed a series of tests using a donated laptop (thank you Richard Ford!) and the ethernet connection in the Seminar Room at Lee Valley (not their WiFi).

Our working theory was that we were having problems either due to the processing power of the laptop being used and/or the casting platform being used (Jitsi or Zoom). Our tests were conducted to see if the donated laptop would work well enough on the Jitsi and/or Zoom platforms. The tests were designed to check the following:

- a) will the donated laptop has enough power to cast our meetings using both Jitsi and Zoom;
- b) will the donated laptop had enough power to cast our meetings using only Jitsi;
- c) will the donated laptop had enough power to cast our meetings using only Zoom; or
- d) does the donated laptop have insufficient power to cast no matter which platform we use?

So our tests could have produced many different results. If the result was 'a' or 'b' we would not have to spend Guild funds on buying a modern laptop. If the result was 'c' then we would not have to buy a laptop but we may have to buy an annual subscription to Zoom. If the result was 'd' then we would have to buy a laptop that meets our needs.

And now to the result of the tests. The result was (a) we do not have to buy a new laptop as Richard's donated laptop was up to the task at hand, and (b) we can use both Jitsi and Zoom. As long as we are willing to put up with about a half second lag in the signal when using Jitsi we do not have to buy a subscription to Zoom (which had no lag but has a subscription cost well over \$100 USD). Calum is investigating the Jitsi software and perhaps the OBS broadcasting software to see if we can change a yet-undiscovered setting and eliminate the lag. We have to thank Lee Valley Halifax for letting us use their direct wired ethernet port for our casting. Without this we would not be able to use the hybrid format to include those members who cannot make it in person to the meetings.

Due to the increased complexity in setting up for a hybrid meeting please be advised that our meeting in November on the 19th WILL START AT 2 PM NOT 1 PM. If this is to continue we will advise later in the meeting season and each reminder from Calum about an upcoming meeting will have the date and start time included.

If you cannot make it to our meetings please do not give up hope that you can join us virtually. Stick with us as we work out the bugs from, what is to us, a new endeavour. Once again we ask for your patience.

This month our demo will be provided by Calum and is entitled “Techniques for Embellishing Turnings”. We have seen the great effects that Calum has employed on his past turnings, especially on the pieces he has entered into our annual turning competition, so expect to be enlightened!

We are trying to continue to provide raffles at the meetings without having a dedicated Raffle Master. So far, it seems to be working.

I can also report that we are about to sign a contract with an American turner for an IRD in January. The subject will be related to turning a square plate with a beaded base. You can see this turner's work by going to [Jeff Hornung — Woodturner and Artist](#). Hopefully there are no snags.

This month we will be selling turned pieces at the Christmas Show to be held at Scott Manor House (SMH).

We are asking you to turn some pieces to be donated to the Guild as a fundraiser for our ongoing annual expenses (such as that laptop or a Zoom subscription!!). We are informed that items in the \$5 to \$25 range sell the best and the fastest and encourage you to think of things you could produce for sale at that level. For example I plan on turning four to six French rolling pins for \$20 each. Please contribute. If you have any items to donate now please bring them to our November meeting. If you are still making them after the meeting please contact any of the executive (or preferentially [Bill Maes](#), our VicePres, who is our contact with Scott Manor House) to arrange pickup or drop off. And, if you are able to spend some time at our sales table we would welcome your participation. Once again, please contact one of the executive (the best choice is [Bill Maes](#)) to volunteer.

Bring in your latest pieces for Show and Tell and some loonies for the raffle.

Turn some wood, make some shavings, and please stay healthy.

*Editor's note: if you plan on attending the meeting remotely, note that the Jitsi software is said to work best with **chrome** (and, in my experience, **chromium** is the same). I recommend you update to the newest **chrome** or **chromium** in advance of the meeting. You and a friend can test out Jitsi at any time for free, by both visiting the URL <https://meet.jit.si/NoWoGuTest> at the same time. This will allow the two of you to test both your camera (not absolutely necessary, but nice) and your audio configuration (mic and speakers).*

Notes from the October Meeting

Calum Ewing

The October meeting was the Guild's first attempt at a 'hybrid' meeting with the the in-person meeting being broadcast live to online participants. After some initial technical difficulties getting things set up and working correctly, the meeting was called to order at 1:50 PM by President Gary Landry with 13 members present in person and three online.

Announcements

- Membership dues are now due. We can take payment (\$40) by cheque, cash, credit or debit cards at any meeting, or by e-transfer to treasurer@novawoodturnersguild.com.
- We are attempting to host most, if not all of this meeting, both in person and online (via the Jitsi platform) for members unable to attend in person. We expect problems to arise as well as delays as we iron out the kinks in the process. Thanks are due to Lee Valley for making their internet connection available for this.
- Lee Valley has asked if we could provide a few turners to demo woodturning in their showroom in the period leading up to Christmas. Gary Landry is working out details with the store manager and will provide details in a later email.
- Scott Manor House in Bedford has invited the Guild to participate in their Festival of Lights craft show event as one of the groups that demonstrated and showed work there during the summer. The dates are Nov. 25 and 26th. Members can contribute items to sell (the museum takes a 10% commission) and should bring any items to the next meeting. Experience has shown that the best selling items are usually in the \$20–40 range. We will need a few volunteers to cover two shifts: Saturday Nov. 25, 10:00 to 4:00 and Sunday Nov. 26, noon to 4:00.

General Discussion

Hybrid Meetings: If the hybrid meeting experiment is successful, the Guild will need to acquire a dedicated laptop with sufficient speed and processing capability to support these meetings. A motion was made by **Gary Landry**, seconded by **Bob Earle** that, the membership support the expenditure of funds to buy a laptop of sufficient capability to allow broadcasting our meetings to members at their residences Motion approved. In follow-up discussion, Bob Earle suggested Two Bad Cats in Bedford as a good source for affordable refurbished IBM computers.

Internet Remote Demo: We are planning an Internet Remote Demo (IRD) on January 21, 2024 and will need to approve the expenditure to set this up. A motion was made by **Gary Landry**, seconded by **Bill Maes** that, the membership supports the expenditure of funds to obtain an IRD for January 2024. Such funds shall not exceed \$500. Motion approved.

Main Presentation

The main presentation for the meeting was by **Gary Landry** on “What's New in Pen Turning”. For this presentation, Gary defined 'pen' as any turning made with a brass tube permanently inserted into a blank and turned on a mandrel.

History: Early attempts at making wood pens involved dismantling a normal pen, drilling an appropriate hole in a blank and turning a closed end 'stick' pen. As manufacturers began to offer more sophisticated kits, a whole range of kits, pen mechanisms, mandrels tools and accessories became available — including small dedicated pen turning lathes. For example, a well known vendor of pen kits has over 300 pen kits available and over 200 different 'non-pen' kits to make other things (e.g., key rings or magnifying glasses).



Gary showing some of the range of non-pen kits

Pen Kits: There is a huge range of kits available now for different types (twist, fountain, bullet, etc.) and sizes of pens. Many are designed for specific audiences (e.g., Hunters, etc.). Non-pen kits now include things like bottle stoppers, crochet hooks, shaving brushes and razors, pill keepers, key chains, letter openers and needle cases.

Blanks: Originally pens were made with local and exotic hardwoods. Now blanks of acrylic, bone, antler and combinations of stabilized wood and acrylic are available. Specialty blanks of acrylic with items embedded in the acrylic are also available, including circuit boards, coffee beans, feathers, etc. Blanks can also be shop-made with various casting media or even polymer clay (e.g., SculpeyTM clay). Manufacturers also sell moulds, pressure pots, casting resin and additives for casting custom blanks at home. Another interesting approach is to make segmented wood blanks at home using typical segmenting techniques to get different effects — a great opportunity to use up off-cuts!

Tooling: Small, bench-top 'midi' lathes have become popular with pen turners. Following this, manufacturers have begun marketing dedicated pen turning lathes. But a lathe of any size can be used to turn pens and similar kits.

Dedicated blank drilling clamps have been created to help turners accurately align the holes drilled through blanks. One manufacturer provides a dedicated chuck to hold pen blanks for drilling on the lathe with the drill held in a Jacobs Chuck in the tail stock.

Blank end dressing mills have been created to ensure that the face of the blank is smooth and exactly 90° to the tube end. Specialized jigs for dressing blank ends on a disk sander are also now available. This avoids having to buy blank dressing mills for each tube diameter available.

Mandrels: Bushings are specific to each kit to ensure finished parts have the correct diameters for kit components and must be mounted on the correct mandrel. New 'universal' mandrels have interchangeable shafts for different tube diameters and can be adjusted in length to accommodate different blank lengths. A new method involves using small bushing-like inserts that fit into the blank ends and have 60° recesses in the ends to be held by cone centres in the head stock and tail stock.

Pen Assembly: A range of pen assembly clamps are available. These are all essentially linear vises with levers to drive the parts together. A new innovation is using robust pads with Morse tapers in the head stock and tail stock allowing use of the tail stock screw to drive the parts together. These 'part drivers' can also be made from hardwood at home.

Adhesives: A wide range of adhesives for securing tubes in blanks are now available including epoxies, polyurethanes (e.g., Gorilla GlueTM), cyanoacrylates (e.g., Crazy GlueTM).

Disassembly: Specialized tools are available to allow pen parts to be taken apart with little to no damage to the components. A lot of disassembly can be done using a good set of machinist's 'transfer' punches and carefully selecting the correct diameter punch to push a stuck part out of the tube.

Finishing: Very fine grit abrasives (e.g., up to 12,000 grit) are available to get the best finish on the wood or other material possible. For acrylics and other resins, a number of specialty polishes from the automotive industry have become popular with pen turners. Automotive clear coats and finishes will often stand up better to the oils from skin that break down traditional wood finishes as pens are handled frequently.

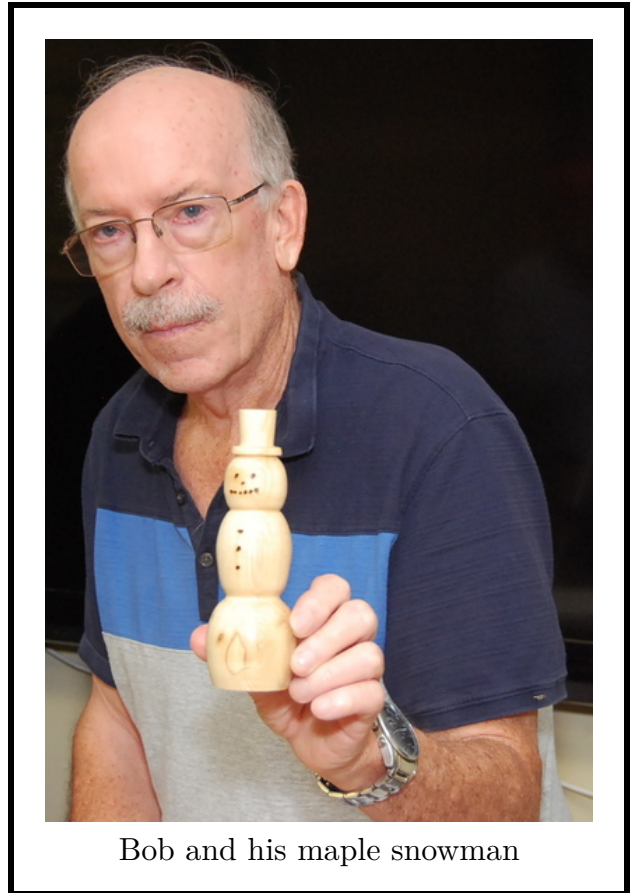
Display & Storage: A great selection of display stands are now available. In addition custom carry/display cases for pens are sold by pen turning manufacturers. Art supply stores often have cases intended for large ink markers that work well for transporting and displaying pens.

Show & Tell

Bob Earle showed off a lidded box in cherry
 a small vase made from the limb of a maple tree collected near home
 a small bowl in an unknown hardwood
 a snowman ornament in maple



Bob and his bowl



Bob and his maple snowman

Show & Tell (continued)

Brian Sharp presented a small baby rattle in maple. It has corn kernels inside the hollow globe for the rattle and it took some experimentation with the number of kernels to get the right sound. It is finished with oil and then a salad bowl finish for a food-safe finish.



Brian with his rattle

Raffle Results

Bob Earle took home a maple bowl blank.

Chris Palmer won a spindle blank and a bowl blank.

Gary Landry added a bowl blank to his collection.

The meeting wrapped up at 3:45 PM.

DaveM's Fireside Chat

Making a handle for a double ended finishing scraper

As many of you know, Richard Ford has designed and produced some excellent negative-rake detail-finishing scrapers from 16x4x200mm HSS tool blanks. These are excellent at getting a fine finish on turnings. Since they are double ended they aren't easy to mount in a conventional handle. For some time I have thought about how I might make a user friendly handle that allowed me to quickly reverse the scraper to use the other profile and still have it be a small, easy to use tool.

I had several design requirements... 1) it had to be easy to use, light weight and not bulky; 2) it needed to allow a variable length of blade to protrude and allow the blade to be reversed; 3) it had to have some sort of internal dampening to help keep the internal portion of the blade from vibrating up and down if it was held only by a set screw at the front of the handle; and 4) it had to offer an easy way to keep the blade in position without any additional tools.

It seemed to me that this might be an ideal situation for using a piece of carbon fiber (CF) tube for the handle... and I happened to have some 20mm OD x 18mm ID CF tube in the shop. Next I would need a short piece of 1" aluminum (1.75" long) to make a blade retainer boss to fit into the CF tube, and finally an end cap/internal baffle to finish the handle. The 20mm OD CF tube would be just large enough to accommodate the width of the blade with a couple of millimeters to spare and meet my first criteria.

The first step was to make the aluminum boss. I used the Taig lathe to turn the aluminum blank down to 20mm, and then step it down to 18mm the last 1.25" to exactly the internal diameter of the CF tube so it would just slide in with no play. I then bored it out with a 4mm drill after using a center drill to mark the center of the blank. This would give me a reference point for center, to do the milling using a 4mm carbide end mill. The milling had to be done in three steps; first, create a 4mm x 16mm horizontal slot 1/2" deep on the end of the boss to accept the blade. Second, the blank had to be refastened in the milling vise so a through slot could be cut the length of the boss with a short section remaining to ensure the integrity of the boss. Third, the boss was remounted to mill another horizontal slot parallel to the rest but retaining 1mm wall at the sides to ensure the slot wouldn't expand or collapse.



Slots cut into the aluminum boss to accommodate the scraper shaft.

The boss was then drilled and tapped for a M5 bolt. Finally the horizontal slots were filed with a small rectangular file to produce square corners to accommodate the blade. The boss was then epoxied into the CF tube.



The boss epoxied in place, photographed here with a pen for size reference.

The next stage was to make the internal baffle and end cap. For this I chose a piece of cherry $1\frac{1}{16}$ " \times $1\frac{1}{16}$ " \times 10". I made a 4.1mm slot most of the length of the blank on the table saw so it was exactly centered on the blank, and glued a small 4mm thick block in the open end so it could be held in the wood lathe with a live center.



Cherry blank with 4mm slot cut. (The slot is longer on the back side, and the top side was hand cut to square the slot after this photo.)



The blank held between pen jaws and live center, ready for turning.



The blank turned down to 21mm and the internal baffle ready to turn down to 18mm.



Blank reversed into an ER32-18mm collet chuck to turn down the end cap.



Internal baffle and end cap ready to be epoxied into the CF tube.



Handle with thumbscrew ready to use with the negative rake scraper.



Blade held in place ready to use. Half turn of the thumb wheel releases the blade to reverse ends or change extension length.

Christmas Ornament Exchange

Ted Monk

As the 10th anniversary of our annual Christmas Ornament Exchange nears I believe it's time that we give it a bit of a reboot, a little nudge, if you will. As an avid participant of this event I've seen the amount of entries drop dramatically over the years, with only five of us participating last year.

I hate to think that interest has waned. I'm more prone to believe that the reason is a simple lack of awareness, and more specifically, timely awareness — we often remember, or are reminded of this event too late to give it the effort it deserves. This, and the fact that our newer members may not all be aware of our traditions, has led to the diminished amount of participants.

The Christmas Ornament Exchange began ten years ago as a Guild participation project to give its members the opportunity to exchange small works among themselves. Appropriately held at the holiday meeting it carries the air of gift giving and surprise. A fun event, for sure!

The process is simple:

1. You turn as many ornaments as you like, one, two, three, even four. There is no limit. (This is where the more members that participate the better the event is overall (*I)).
2. Add a tag to your ornament(s) with your name on it. (I also like to add the year's date.)
3. Wrap each ornament individually. Or put it in a bag. The idea is so no one knows what it looks like or who made it (*II).
4. Bring your ornament(s) to the meeting and place in the designated area.
5. When it's time for the exchange, members will take turns picking an ornament. If you bring one, you can pick one. If you bring two or more you can pick the rest on subsequent turns.
6. Once you pick an ornament you can open it.
7. Once all the ornaments are picked the event becomes sort of a Show & Tell with the receivers showing the ornament(s) they received to the rest of the members and telling us who made it. The maker of the particular ornament can then tell us a bit about the ornament they made; how they turned it, wood(s) used, type of finish, inspiration, etc.

Note *I: If you brought more ornaments than were available for exchange you can retrieve them once the event is over.

Note *II: Although there should be nothing on the package identifying you as the maker it's a good idea to have a mark or something so that you know your ornaments. This will minimize the chance that you'll pick your own. :)

That is pretty much the event but the reason I enjoy it so much is that, in addition to participating and the challenge and fun of turning a piece that I'll be sharing with another member, is the fact that I will receive a piece from a fellow member! Oh, I know they say that it's all about the giving but in this case I have to disagree. It is seldom that we have the opportunity to acquire a piece made by a fellow member, if at all, and this event does just that. Here is a chance to secure a small piece of art from a fellow Guild member that you can easily display once a year! You can't beat this opportunity.

As you can imagine, I have collected quite a few pieces of fellow member's work over the past nine years. However, it is not about the amount of ornaments I have amassed but the memories they evoke each and every Christmas as my family and I decorate our tree. Because of the amount of family ornaments we have there is no longer room for all of the Guild member ornaments on our tree but it is still a joy to get them all out and go through them and choose the ones that'll be displayed that particular year. It is especially nice, and what I enjoy the most, remembering past members, members that for one reason or another went on their way, and more sadly, members that have passed on. It's these reminders that touch me the most (I admit it. I am getting a lot more sentimental as time goes on. :)).

I hope that I've given you a nudge and that you'll join me this year and participate in this annual Guild tradition.

I'm looking forward to hanging your ornament on my tree this year!

The Electrical Corner

Jim Diamond

When the Guild was formed back in the last 1990s, one of the issues we investigated was whether we could save money for members by doing group purchases of expensive items. We looked at buying Racal Airstream helmets, which not only provide protection from impacts to the face and head, but also used a fan with a filtration system to pass filtered air down over your face, which is a particular benefit while wearing glasses. (Apparently somewhere along the line 3M took over this product, see [this web page](#).) After some legwork (by, if I recall correctly, Stephen Zwerling) we were able to get a somewhat reduced price, and a number (10?) of the NWG members of the time bought one.

The Racal Airstream helmets came with a NiCd battery pack (shown below) and charger. There were two models of the charger: the “plain” one and the “smart” one. The battery pack contains four sub-C NiCd cells (shown below). Sub-C cells are the same diameter as C cells, but slightly shorter; in the photo, you can see two “columns”, each made up of two sub-C cells.



A fancy can



The internal battery pack consisting of four sub-C NiCd cells

Painting with a very broad brush, I'd categorize battery chargers into three types:

- (a) very sophisticated chargers that take great care of batteries;
- (b) somewhat smart chargers that do an OK job; and
- (c) chargers that are as stupid as a bag of hammers.

For better or worse (i.e., worse), I decided to not spend the additional \$100 (or so) for the better charger. To my disappointment, I eventually realized that the Racal “plain” charger fell into the “bag of hammers” category. Specifically, if I left the battery charging for the recommended amount of time, the charger cheerfully fried the batteries, which drastically reduced their life.

At some point the original battery pack had a uselessly short life. I looked around, but could not find a source of sub-C NiCds at what I considered to be a reasonable price. I don't recall what a new battery pack cost at the time, but if you look [here](#), you will see a price of \$405 (at time of writing) for a new one. (As the humorist Dave Barry says, “I am not making this up”. Yes, over \$400 for four sub-C NiCd cells in a can. Admittedly, it is a fancy can, but it's still a can.)

I went to Radio Shack and got four NiCd D cells (which were probably C cells in a D-sized package) and a four-cell holder, and jury-rigged a socket for the proprietary plug on the wire coming from the Airstream helmet. This worked reasonably well for a few years, but even with the use of a “somewhat smart” charger, the batteries lost interest in life after a while, probably because the Radio Shack NiCd batteries were mediocre to begin with.

Next month I'll write about an (arguably) much better solution to the problem. This other solution might also work for people with other brands of powered respirator helmets. I'd be interested in knowing a bit about the battery packs for other brands (in particular, the voltage of the battery pack); if you have another brand of powered respirator and would take a minute to tell me about the battery pack's voltage, I'd be happy to hear from you; please email me at newsletter@novawoodturnersguild.com with your information.

Nova Woodturners' Guild — 2023/24 Executive

All members of the executive, as well as committee chairs, can be reached by using the email address associated with that position. That is, a note sent to (for example) the president will go to who ever is president at that time. The following <address>es should be followed by @novawoodturnersguild.com to send mail to the person holding that position.

A 'C' after a committee member's name indicates they are chair of the committee.

Position	<address>	Incumbent(s)	
Executive	executive (sends the message to all executive positions on the list)		
President	president (or) pres	Gary Landry	
Vice President	vice-president (or) vp	Bill Maes	
Secretary	secretary	Calum Ewing	
Treasurer	treasurer	Dave McLachlan	
Director at Large	director-at-large	vacant	
 Committees			
Library	library	Jim Diamond Richard Ford	C
Web Site	webmaster	Richard Ford	C
Membership & Promotion	membership	vacant	
Newsletter	newsletter (or) news	Jim Diamond	C
Competition	competition	vacant	
Guild Photographer	photographer (or) photos	Chris Palmer	C
Fund Raising	raffles	vacant	C
Members Group	members	members	

The [members](#) address forwards the email to all members who have signed up to be on the members list. To add or remove yourself from the [members](#) list, email webmaster@novawoodturnersguild.com.

If you wish to send an email to **all** current members of the NWG, send your message to secretary@novawoodturnersguild.com with a request to forward your email to all members.