

The Turning Point

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The next meeting of the Nova Woodturners' Guild
will be held at Lee Valley Tools, 150 Susie Lake Crescent, Halifax
Sunday, January 12, 2025 at 2:00 PM

At the January meeting:
Creating Turned & Engraved Flowers
Show & Tell

The President's Report

I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season. First white Christmas since 2013 in Halifax and I can't remember the last time I had to shovel snow on Christmas morning. I want to thank everyone who took part in the ornament exchange and the wreath draw. I'm looking forward to Richard Ford's video on Engraving Wooden Flowers which will be very informative.

As many of you know the Guild has quite a collection of pieces donated to us and I have been to several selling events with the aim of raising funds for the Guild. After being at these events I have come to the conclusion that we need to show our goods to a wider audience. I was wondering if anyone in the Guild has had any experience with online forums such as Etsy and if it would be worthwhile pursuing. Any feedback would be greatly appreciated.

Hope to see you on the 12th and happy turning.

Bob Earle – President

Notes from the November Meeting

The meeting was called to order by President **Bob Earle** at 2:04 PM with 10 members and 2 guests present and 4 members online.

Announcements:

- The annual dues are now due. If any of your personal information has changed, please complete a new membership form. A new feature this year is that dues (\$40.00) can be paid by e-Transfer to Treasurer@novwoodturnersguild.com. So, dues can now be paid by cash, cheque, credit and debit card or e-Transfer.
- This meeting, like recent ones is being run in a “hybrid” format with both in-person participants and others joining online. After last month's meeting, we have received our new ATEM Mini Pro video switcher, so both image and sound quality should be improved for those online.
- Earlier this month, we were invited by Lee Valley to attend a special sale day with in-store specials and sales of crafts by artisans. **Bob Earle** attended and took the remaining items in the Guild stock from previous sales. Several visitors were interested in turning and checking out the Guild, but sales were low with only one ring stand sold for \$10.00.
- A reminder about the Christmas Ornament Challenge that **Dave McLachlan** detailed in the current newsletter.
 - **Dave McLachlan** has volunteered to photograph any entries that need images on the Monday following the November meeting.
 - Each person needs to enter their own entries.
 - Entries are accepted online from Nov 1st to 29th.
 - Lee Valley has offered to display the entries in a case in the store.
 - Next month's meeting will be held December 16th and will be our annual Christmas Social gathering. More details to come by email.

Main Presentation:

The main presentation was a demonstration by President **Bob Earle**, on Turning Lantern Ornaments. These attractive ornaments hold an LED tea light to give a very warm and realistic appearance.

Preparation:

- Start with a blank over 2” square (anything from 2” to 2¹/₂” works well) and 4¹/₂ to 5” long. The blank must be exactly square.
- Mark off each of the four sides with a point 1⁵/₈” (40mm) from one end and exactly in the centre of each face. Drill a ⁷/₈” diameter hole in each face at the marked point and drill just past the centre of the blank.
- You want to end up with a square blank with two ⁷/₈” holes that pass through the blank, intersecting in the middle. These holes will form the “windows” in the sides of the lantern.

The Process:

- Mount the blank in the chuck jaws with the end with the holes in the chuck and turn a tenon on the other end of the blank for your chuck jaws.
- Reverse the blank so that the tenon is held in the chuck jaws.
- Using a Forstner bit, drill a 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ " hole in the bottom end that is deeper than the holes drilled through the blank sides to hollow out the lantern. Drill slowly to avoid jamming the bit and potentially cracking the sides of the blank where it is drilled through.
- Next use a 1 $\frac{3}{8}$ " Forstner bit to enlarge the hole in the bottom to accommodate your tea light. This hole is drilled only $\frac{3}{4}$ " deep to accommodate your tea light in the base. The larger hole creates a small internal shoulder for the tea light to rest against. Note: you will need to size this hole in diameter and depth to accommodate your tea lights — dimensions may differ with between brands.
- Use a small square or carbide scraper to clean up any torn fibres on the inside of the lantern cavity.
- Bring up the tailstock with a cone centre on the live centre to support the outboard end of the blank and begin turning down the blank to make a smooth cylinder using a roughing gouge or spindle gouge. Turn the cylinder down to approximately 2" in diameter.
- Mark off points at the bottom of the lantern to mark out a small ($\frac{3}{16}$ ") bead at the bottom and another just below the side openings. Mark a third point the same distance above the side openings to mark the start of the roof line. Turn down the sides of the cylinder between these marks to create raised areas for the beads and roof edge. A small square-ended scraper works well for this. Turn the centre section (with the side openings) down to approximately $\frac{1}{8}$ " thick.
- Using a spindle gouge, begin to taper down the roof area to make a conical roof. Don't go too far as you'll need good support for the rest of the turning.
- Form the edges of the beads to make nice rounded beads. The body of the lantern can be decorated with a texturing tool of burned lines at this stage.
- Part off the blank and reverse it, mounting it on a chuck with spigot jaws so that you can finish the top of the roof. Don't apply a lot of pressure on the jaws so you don't crack the blank. Then finish turning the top of the roof to your desired shape. The roof profile can be straight or with a concave or convex curve — your choice. Turn the roof so that you have a small knob at the peak to accept a hanger. Drill a $\frac{1}{8}$ " hole sideways through the knob at the top (or just below it) to accept a short piece of wire for the hanger.

Completing:

- Sand all surfaces working through the grits to your desired finish, then apply a coat of your desired finish. Bob prefers wipe on polyurethane for these projects.
- Once the finish is dry, glue your tea light into the base using hot-melt glue.
- Finally, bend a short piece of copper house wire (≈ 3 " long) into a "U" shape to form a small bail. Insert the ends of this wire into the holes drilled at the top of the roof to form the bail hanger.

Show & Tell:

- **Mark Hazen** showed off two "inside-out" ornaments in Maple.
- **Charles Nieforth** presented two hollow ball ornaments with fine finials: one in cherry with mahogany finial and one on oak with a maple finial. The finish was high gloss spar varnish for a durable coating.

- **Gary Landry** showed four “icicle” ornaments in maple with inserted acrylic segments' The acrylic segments are off-cuts from pen making saved and repurposed. The finishing was done with the Beall system to buff to a high gloss.
- **Ted Monk** presented a range of unique ornaments:
 - a hollow ball ornament in cherry and walnut with burned snowflake decorations and a rattle (beans);
 - a “Peeking Bird” birdhouse ornament in maple;
 - a Gnome ornament with synthetic fur beard;
 - a ridged icicle ornament in walnut with an acrylic insert;
 - a ball ornament (stained) with walnut finials.

Raffle Results:

Martin Lachance took home a maple blank
Charles Nieforth won a turning book
Mark Hazen added a new book to his library
Chris Palmer also took home a turning book
Gary Landry collected a maple blank

Tool Auction:

An impromptu auction was held for a donated tool carrier for turning tools. It was won by **Mark Hazen** (\$20).

The meeting wrapped up at 3:50 PM.

Calum Ewing — Secretary

Notes from the December Meeting

The meeting was called to order by Vice-President Bill Maes at 2:07 PM with 11 members and 3 guests (**Mary Landry**, **Jacky Westhaver** and **Zulema Jolivet**) present in person and 2 members online.



Announcements:

- We were invited by Lee Valley to attend a second special sale day with in-store specials and sales of crafts by artisans. **Bob Earle** attended and took the remaining items in the Guild stock from previous sales. **Dave McLachlan** also attended and did a demo of creating a “Celtic Knot” ornament. Several visitors were interested in turning and checking out the Guild, and there was \$70.00 in sales of items.
- The Guild members entered 28 ornaments in the online ornament challenge and these were displayed in the store at Lee Valley during December.
- Next month's meeting will be held January 12th and the main demo will be by **Richard Ford** on *Creating Turned & Engraved Flowers*. More details to come by email.
- **Dave McLachlan** is also working on a future demo is a new jig he has made to create “wave” ornaments.

Social Activities:

Much food, drinks and cheerful banter was enjoyed.



Christmas Wreath Raffle:

- A wreath created by **Mary Landry** was donated and decorated with many donated ornaments (many were entries in the online challenge). The raffle was won by **Jacky Westhaver**.
- A cedar wall star decoration donated by **Calum Ewing** was won by **Gary Landry**.
- **Dave McLachlan** donated one of his large carbon fibre tool handles with a collet, which was won by **Mark Hazen**.
- A medium tool handle donated by **Dave McLachlan** was won by **Gary Landry**.
- A set of digital calipers donated by **Gary Landry** was won by **Norm Jolivet**.



Wreath by Mary Landry.



Dave McLachlan and the handles he donated.

Show & Tell:



Gary Landry showed off some lantern ornaments created after **Bob Earle's** demo last month. Gary coloured these with “Sharpie” markers.

Ornament Exchange:

In our annual ornament exchange, members bring turned Christmas ornaments in plain wrapping. All donations are placed on a table and then participants can select a different package for each ornament that they contributed. In this way members are able to collect a range of ornaments and display the work of other members.

Dave McLachlan created a ball ornament with Celtic knot — won by **Gary Landry**.
Ted Monk contributed a hollow ball ornament — won by **Dave McLachlan**.



Gary with a Celtic knot ornament



Dave with a ball ornament

Bob Earle created an open ball ornament with brass bell — won by **Ted Monk**.
Ted Monk contributed a hairy gnome ornament — won by **Mark Hazen**.
Bill Maes created a “bird house” atonement — won by **Mark Hazen**.



Mark and a hairy gnome



Mark and a very small house

Gary Landry contributed three icicle ornaments in maple with acrylic inserts — won by **Charles Nieforth**.
Norm Jolivet created an icicle ornament in maple & walnut — won by **Bob Earle**.
Bill Maes contributed a bell ornament with clapper — won by **Bob Earle**.
Bob Earle a snowman orznamet — won by **Norm Jolivet**.
Bob Earle created a lantern ornament — won by **Norm Jolivet**.
Norm Jolivet contributed two icicle ornaments — won by **Ted Monk**.
Mark Hazen contributed an inside-out ornament — won by **Norm Jolivet**.
Charles Nieforth contributed a ball ornament with finials — won by **Bob Earle**.



Charles with three icicle ornaments



Norm with a snowman and two lantern ornaments

The gathering wrapped up at 4:10 PM.

Calum Ewing — Secretary

DaveM's Fireside Chat

Well here we are in a new year having completed the first quarter of the 21st Century. Hard to believe that it has been 25 years already since Y2K. . . It seems fitting that we should have a turning challenge to commemorate this turning point so I would like to suggest that we all try our hand at turning a finial of some sort for our next Show & Tell in February. It can be any sort of finial: either one associated with an ornament or maybe a handle for a lid.

Finials can be quite fanciful, decorative and/or functional. I thought I would share just a few of my finials to give you some ideas.



Figure 1. Celtic knot ornament. Roasted curly maple, red dyed veneer and holly finials.



Figure 2. Knobby sea urchin ornament with African blackwood finials.



Figure 3. Sea urchin ornament with African blackwood finials.



Figure 4. Celtic knot ornament. Curly maple, red dyed veneer and African blackwood finials.



Figure 5. Cocobolo finial on my Time Suspended mantel clock (cocobolo, cherry wood, apple wood).

The last two figures were from entries submitted by Leo Westhaver to our NWG Annual Competition a few years ago and demonstrate some truly elegant finials.



Figure 6. Lid finial on a lidded box submitted to NWG Annual Competition made by Leo Westhaver.



Figure 7. A spiral lid finial on a NWG annual competition hollow form piece made by Leo Westhaver.

Hopefully these will inspire you to try your hand at making finials this coming month or just bring in some of your own examples of finials you have done in the past.

On the technical side I thought I would talk today about making your own small gouges and skews from high speed steel (HSS) blanks that are readily available. I have talked about these small gouges and skews at several meeting Show & Tells, but I haven't really talked about how I go about it. . .

The HSS blanks are often used in metal machining and are meant to be ground into various shapes and sizes for specific tasks in metal work. Likewise, they can be turned into wood lathe tools. The most readily available blanks are M2-HSS (or equivalent HSS). These are already hardened to Rockwell 60 to 63 and come out of China mostly. For small tools this steel is adequate for holding an edge. The same grinding techniques can also be applied to M35 and M42 HSS blanks which have higher percentages of cobalt in the steel which increases their hardness and edge holding ability, but these steels are harder to come by and more expensive. Often 6mm×100mm M2 steel round blanks can be had for \$20 for 10 pieces.

The first thing you will need is a rectangular holder to shape and sharpen the blanks (as seen in Figure 8). This is simply a piece of 2"×1/2" square aluminum bar that is bored through lengthwise to 6mm and a couple of set screws installed to retain the blank. This holder can also be used to hold the blank for resharpening as well.



Figure 8. Here we have the 1/2" aluminum bar with opposing set screws (M4). The set screws should be short enough so they are recessed within the 1/2" body.

If you are only making a few tools you could easily use a 5/8" hard maple blank instead of aluminum. To bore it through I usually hold the rectangular blank in pen jaws and bore it on the lathe, this way I get an exactly centered holder and a straight bore. The square cross section allows one to engage precisely with the angle guide and platform ensuring the two sharpened surfaces are parallel to each other. When I am sharpening these blanks I use a Sorby ProEdge Sharpening system based on 2"×30 1/2" belts. The first step is to set the angle of the platform to 90° to the belt and using the 22 1/2° angle guide to establish the angle of the skew (Figure 9). Then without loosening the set screws on the aluminum holder, start the grinding operation for the skew with the grinding set at 20° (Figure 10). Grind a small portion on each face rotating the holder 180° each time and a brief dip in water to keep the grinding blank cool. Figure 11 shows the actual skew angle grinding jig, which is simply a 45° wedge with a guide bar attached to the back of it. If you don't have a ProEdge system you can easily make your own skew angle jig out of 1/4" plywood and a suitable guide bar. Figure 12 shows a simpler belt sanding system using a 1" belt available from Lee Valley.



Figure 9. Establishing the skew angle on the end of the blank with the grinding platform set to 90°. The belt in this case is a 60 grit ceramic belt.



Figure 10. Set the grinding platform to 20° to the belt and begin to grind the skew cutting edge. Rotate the holder 180° to do the opposite side and use the opposing angle on the guide by sliding it to the right.



Figure 11. The actual angle guide is simply a 45° wedge with a guide bar fastened to the back, and could be made of 1/4" plywood if your grinder doesn't have one.



Figure 12. Establishing the skew face angle using a 1" belt sander (Lee Valley).

Once the skew angle is fully established to a cutting edge on the 60 grit belt, it is time to switch belts to a 120 grit zirconium belt. Figure 13 shows the coarse grinding marks left by the ceramic belt. Figure 14 we have switched to a 120 grit belt and briefly touch up each skew face. The belt is switched once more to a 220 aluminum oxide belt and then a 400 silicon carbide belt to give a nice finish to the skew faces. Each belt switch over on the ProEdge only takes seconds so it only takes about 10 minutes to grind a blank to a finished mini-skew.



Figure 13. The skew angle is fully established to a cutting edge but notice the coarse grind marks on the skew faces.



Figure 14. Once the skew profile is established to a cutting edge switch to a 120 grit zirconium belt to remove the coarse grind marks.

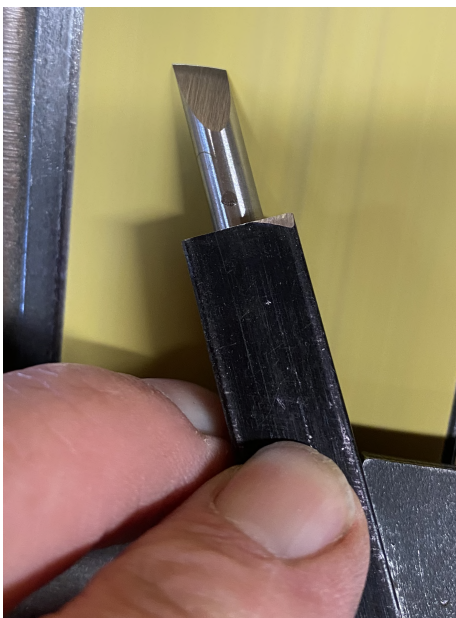


Figure 15. 220 grit aluminum oxide belt used to polish up the skew face... The face showing is from the 120 grit belt.



Figure 16. 6mm and 7mm round skew blades ready for use. These could be further polished using micro abrasive sheets by hand to a mirror finish.



Figure 17. A round 6 mm skew mounted in a mini carbon fiber handle for detail work on finials.



Figure 18. A round 6 mm skew mounted in a mini carbon fiber handle (far right), a 1/4" bedan (center left), and a 5mm beading tool with 3/8" adapter for use in a collet handle (far left).

Hopefully this will encourage more of you to make your own smaller skews and other tools for finial work.

Cover Photo



Guild brother Bill Maes passed on these photos of an oak bowl he turned, noting “What I find somewhat unique about it is the way the grain converges as seen on the bottom. Quite by accident I will note.” Accident or not, your humble newsletter editor finds the grain quite beautiful, which might be considered remarkable, given his long-term membership in the “I hate oak” club.



Bonus photo: given that we normally view bowls from the top, I feel certain many of you would like to see this more conventional view of Bill's work.

Photo Credits

Thanks to Chris Palmer for photos from last month's meeting. The other photos were (as far as the editor knows!) all taken by the person who made the item in question (e.g., Bill M) and/or the person who wrote the article (e.g., Dave M).

Nova Woodturners' Guild — 2024/25 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 whomever 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 that committee.

Position	<address>	Incumbent(s)	
Executive	executive (sends the message to all executive positions on the list)		
President	president (or) pres	Bob Earle	
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	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.