



## 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, November 2, 2025 at 2:00 PM

At the November meeting:  
Dave McLachlan: designing and turning finials  
The NWG Christmas ornament challenge  
Show and Tell, raffle, and other good stuff

## The President's Report

The year seems to be flying past, as we're now approaching the holiday season. This month's demo will be by Dave McLachlan on turning finials, just in time to put the finish on some Christmas ornaments. We will have some information on a tool auction of some woodworking equipment which was donated by Chris Palmer for a fund raiser for the Guild. Dave will also present a twist to an event we took part in last year, which was the Christmas Ornament Challenge. The twist is that the event that we partook in last year was the last. Dave has come up with a way to keep it going as well as displaying our work to the public at Lee Valley.

See you on Sunday and happy turning.

Bob Earle – President

## Notes from the October Meeting

The meeting was called to order by President Bob Earle at 2:03 PM with 13 members present and 3 members online.

### Announcements:

- The October meeting had to be postponed from the planned date due to a conflict with the Seminar Room being in use for a pen turning seminar.
- 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.



*One member looking somehow slightly more distinguished than usual. Trimmed beard? New jacket?*

## Main Presentation:

President **Bob Earle** demonstrated *How to Turn a Cell Phone Speaker*. He learned this project from a video link that a friend sent to him. The “speaker” is essentially a wooden cone with a slot cut into the base to accommodate your cell phone. For the demo, Bob used a piece of Norway Maple — a wood he's not keen on, as it is difficult to get a good surface on it.



*Bob talking about some aspects of the finished item before diving into the demonstration.*

## The Process:

- Start with a blank at least 7" inches long and 4 $\frac{1}{2}$  to 5" in diameter. Mount the blank between centres and turn to round.
- Turn a tenon on one end and mount in the chuck with the tail stock in use for support.
- Turn the outside to a smooth, slightly concave cone. The small end must be slightly larger in diameter than the width of your phone — roughly 3 to 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ " for most phones. Use calipers to ensure that the small end is slightly larger than the phone width.
- Mark the location for the base near the small end of the cone (leave enough wood for a tenon for your chuck), then measure your cell phone in width and thickness. Mark the boundaries of a slot just inside the base that will just accommodate your phone.
- Turn a tenon at the tailstock end, then true up the face of the end and part off any nub remaining.
- Reverse the blank in the chuck so the small end is now in the chuck. Then bore out the interior with a large Forstner bit to the desired depth (the location you marked out for the cell phone slot) ensuring a wall thickness of at least  $\frac{1}{2}$ " is maintained.

- Hollow out the inside using a hollowing tool or scraper bringing the wall thickness down to approximately 1/4" but no less. The speaker needs to have a relatively robust wall thickness so that the walls do not resonate in use.



Two shots of Bob hollowing away.

- Bob uses a small platform tool rest that will fit inside the cone to help support the tools while hollowing.
- Use a large round or curved scraper to refine the curve on the outside and remove any tool marks, further refining the shape and wall thickness if needed.
- Use a depth gauge to mark measure the depth of the inside and mark this on the outside. Make a second mark towards the large end indicating the desired width of the phone slot.
- With the headstock locked, use a small hand saw to cut the two faces of the slot to the desired depth. The depth needed is given by the points on the slot that approximately match the width of the phone. Then use a small chisel to remove the wood filling the the slot. Next use a flat file to clean up the faces and base of the slot.



Bob sawing the slot edges and then chiseling out the slot.

- Use a large round or curved scraper to clean up any damage on the inside from cutting the slot.
- Apply sand the inside and outside of the cone to the desired grit and apply your favorite finish.
- Using a contrasting wood, turn two small “ball” feet with tenons that are  $\frac{1}{4}$ ” diameter and the same length. Sand and apply finish to these feet.
- With the centre of the slot as the 12 o'clock position, drill two shallow  $\frac{3}{4}$ ” holes about  $\frac{3}{4}$ ” from the open end of the cone at the 4 and 8 o'clock positions. Glue the feet in place and you are done.
- To use the speaker, start your favorite tunes on your phone and drop the phone into the slot so that the corners of the phone are supported by the sides of the slot. You'll be amazed at how much better your phone sounds!

## Show & Tell:

David Dansereau showed off a small bowl in Cherry burl



**Gary Landry**

presented a series of pens he had made from the legs of an old family heirloom crib. These were created as mementos for two generations of the family that had spent time in the crib as infants.

He also showed off a ship's wheel he had turned from wolmanized spruce for use by his grandson in his outdoor play. This project was inspired by the fun his grandson had playing in the ship in the Oceans gallery at the Museum of Natural History.

**Raffle Results:**

<b>Chris Palmer</b>	took away a selection of magazines for his library.
<b>Greg McMullen</b>	added a Richard Raffan book to his library.
<b>Charles Nieforth</b>	also picked up a bundle of turning magazines.
<b>Bob Earle</b>	took away a Maple blank for a future project.
<b>Charles Nieforth</b>	picked up a wheel for his bench grinder.
<b>Brian Sharp</b>	won a phone speaker blank donated by Bob Earle.
<b>Bob Earle</b>	collected a kit for a three-legged stool donated by Mark Hazen.

The meeting wrapped up at 3:40 PM.

Calum Ewing — Secretary

## DaveM's Fireside Chat

It is a quick turn around this month with our meeting just two weeks from our last one. We are entering November and the time to contemplate making some Christmas Ornaments for a Xmas tree. To this end, this month I will be giving a Finial Considerations demo at the meeting. . . In a lead up to this I focused on making finials at a recent Lee Valley turning demonstration at Lee Valley on October 23.



Figure 1. Here I am just finishing up an African Blackwood finial at my Lee Valley demonstration on October 23.



Figure 2. Here I am just starting the finial. The end of the finial has been turned to completion and finished, and the thin stem has just been started.



Figure 3. The finished-up African Blackwood finial at my Lee Valley demonstration, October 23.

The demonstration attracted many Lee Valley customers, and several people stayed more than 20 minutes while I finished a finial. As well, several of the onlookers suggested they would be interested in joining our Guild.

The November demo will focus on finial design in the form of a brief slide presentation which hopefully will provide you some inspiration for your own Xmas ornament adventures. I will also provide some photo documentation of my own techniques for turning finials. I will follow this up with an actual demonstration of turning a finial and making an ornament.

On the technical side I wanted to follow up on last month's discussion on using India ink as an ebonizer. I thought I would try it out on a soft maple finial which turned very easily and provided a nice creamy clear white background for the India ink (Figure 4). The starting material was simply a “soft maple” pen blank from William Wood-Write. I turned it mostly with my 6mm micro spindle gouge and micro skew. The finial was sanded to 400 grit and then I used Richard's Nova Silk polishing paste to finish the sanding.



Figure 4. The finished up soft maple finial prior to applying India ink.

I then applied the Speedball India ink with a small flat watercolour paint brush, applying a second coat after it had dried. Once it was thoroughly dry, I used the Nova Silk polishing paste once more. This did remove some black onto the paper towel I used to apply it. I then treated it with Doctor's Woodshop Pens Plus finish, to give you the final ebonized form seen in Figure 5.



Figure 5. The finished ebonized finial from Figure 4.

So in the end I was quite pleased with the “Ebonized” look of the finial. . . I think I could have used a woven non-abrasive after applying the India ink to cut the raised grain (which wasn't that significant). Is this as impressive as the African Blackwood finial in Figure 3? Probably not, but it was a close approximation, and with some tweaking of the application and preparation it could be really close. Also, there might be some other finish topcoats that could be applied like a spray lacquer that would be more appropriate than the Pens Plus finish that I used.

Dave McLachlan

## 2025 NWG Christmas Ornament Challenge

Last year the Guild membership participated in the 2024 Christmas Ornament Challenge sponsored by *As Wood Turns* (<https://www.aswoodturns.com/challenges/>)... That was the last year for that challenge; the spin-off from that was a display of NWG member Christmas ornaments at Lee Valley, which was well received by LV customers. We had 31 entries to the NWG 2024 challenge by 8 participants, 21 of which were also entered in the *As Wood Turns* challenge. It should be noted that an ornament submitted by an NWG member was one of just twelve ornaments chosen by Allan Stratton as exceptional for “design and execution” from a field of more than 300 entries.

We are now announcing a continuation of this new tradition, with a **2025 NWG Christmas Ornament Challenge**. Members can submit up to four ornaments. The end date for entry submissions will be Saturday November 29, from 1:00 to 3:00 PM at Lee Valley (we will have an NWG member there to receive entries). Since our meeting is early in the month, we will also arrange for a prior additional day (to be announced at a future date) for entry submissions.

Submissions should be submitted in a small cardboard box with the submitters name, contact number, and e-mail address clearly marked on the box. All submissions will be put on display at Lee Valley as before in a glass cabinet, and can be retrieved at the Christmas Social.

The other advantage of this challenge is that it provides everyone an opportunity to prepare items ahead of time for the Ornament Exchange event and the Christmas Wreath at the Xmas Social. The display at Lee Valley also gives us an opportunity to promote the Guild and our talents to the wider public.

In addition, each participant will receive a 4mm tri-point tool provided by David McLachlan.

The NWG executive looks forward to displaying your submissions.

## For Sale and For Free

With the property sold and the closing date fast approaching, I am clearing all my tools, turning and others, and lots of wood: from turning blanks to pen blank sizes. Some are priced, such as significant exotic hunks, but most is available for free (or a small voluntary payment if your conscience would bother you). There are also a few corded tools (planer, router, circular saw) for free and some drill bits, including large saw tooth bits. I also have lots of paper and salt mill mechanisms for near free or as akin with bits for modest kit prices. Please call to arrange to come by and clear out my workshop. And the OneWay 2436 is for sale, as is my Axminster chuck and jaw sets and my Vicmarc Escoulen eccentric chuck. Only a few weeks left!

Steve Zwerling 902.497.0656

## Cover Photo



The very rare finialed sea urchin (*Echinoidea Finialis*) in its natural habitat. The shell is about 2.5" across, and Dave McLachlan claims that the upper and lower finials are made from one 5" x 7/8" African Blackwood pen blank.

## 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 and/or the person who wrote the article.

## Nova Woodturners' Guild 2025/26 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](mailto:@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)	
<b>Executive</b>	<a href="#">executive</a> (sends the message to all executive positions on the list)		
<b>President</b>	<a href="#">president</a> (or) <a href="#">pres</a>	Bob Earle	
<b>Vice President</b>	<a href="#">vice-president</a> (or) <a href="#">vp</a>	Bill Maes	
<b>Secretary</b>	<a href="#">secretary</a>	Calum Ewing	
<b>Treasurer</b>	<a href="#">treasurer</a>	Dave McLachlan	
<b>Director at Large</b>	<a href="#">director1</a>	Mark Hazen	
<b>Committees</b>			
<b>Library</b>	<a href="#">library</a>	Jim Diamond Brian Sharp	C
<b>Web Site</b>	<a href="#">webmaster</a>	Richard Ford	C
<b>Membership &amp; Promotion</b>	<a href="#">membership</a>	vacant	
<b>Newsletter</b>	<a href="#">newsletter</a> (or) <a href="#">news</a>	Jim Diamond	C
<b>Competition</b>	<a href="#">competition</a>	Bill Maes	C
<b>Guild Photographer</b>	<a href="#">photographer</a> (or) <a href="#">photos</a>	Chris Palmer	C
<b>Fund Raising</b>	<a href="#">raffles</a>	vacant	C
<b>Members Group</b>	<a href="#">members</a>	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](mailto:webmaster@novawoodturnersguild.com).

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