The Journal of the Nova Woodturners' Guild

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January 2026

The Turning Point

In this issue:

The next meeting of the Nova Woodturners' Guild
will be held at Lee Valley Tools, 150 Susie Lake Crescent, Halifax
Sunday, January 11, 2026 at 2:00 PM

At the January meeting:
Pre-meeting **hands-on** demo: mini-gouges for finials
Turning Acrylic: talk and then demo
Show and tell

The President's Report

Bob calling the December meeting to order, under the watchful eye of Norm.

I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season. We almost had a white Christmas but Mother Nature had other ideas. I want to thank everyone who took part in the ornament exchange and the wreath draw. Things to look forward on this year will be our annual wood turning competition, which will be held a little sooner than last year, so stay tuned for more info. The auction of the donated wood working equipment will be held shortly and will be a great fund raiser for our Guild. Once again we are looking for demonstration ideas that you would like to see for our monthly meetings.

Hope to see you on the 11th and happy turnings.

Bob Earle – President

Notes from the December Meeting

The meeting called to order by President **Bob Earle** at 2:04 PM with 12 members and 2 guests present (Mary Landry and Ray Bolman) and 2 members online.

Announcements:

- The Guild was invited to participate in a special market day for local artisans at Lee Valley, on November 15th. **Bob Earle**, **Louise Plourde** and **Darrell Eisner** were in attendance. There was lots of interest in the Guild but no sales were made by the Guild.
- Our local Christmas ornament challenge was organized by **Dave McLachlan** and was very successful. All entered pieces were displayed in the Lee Valley store over the past few weeks.
- The Executive is finalizing the plans for our auction of workshop tools donated by **Chris Palmer**. This auction will be held online, through the support of the Atlantic Woodworkers Association, and will be open to Guild and AWA members.
- **Dianne Looker** has brought some gift certificates that she is willing to part with for reasonable offers. She has a $30 certificate for Carter & Sons Toolworks and a $25 certificate from R&D Bandsaws. Contact Dianne if you are interested in these.
- Our next regular meeting will be on Sunday, January 11th, 2026.

Social Activities:

Much food, drink and cheerful banter was enjoyed.

Christmas Ornament Raffle:

- All together there were 12 ornaments donated for the raffle. Some were those on display in Lee Valley and others were donated at the meeting. The assortment of ornaments by members was won by **Chris Palmer**.

Show & Tell:

Greg McMullen showed off some different small bowls of unknown woods from his firewood pile and salvaged pallets. The woods appear to be Maple, Birch and possibly some Cherry.

Bob Earle used the Sorby texturing tools from the Guild tool library to decorate the rim of an open bowl.

Other Raffles: ('cause the fun never stops)

Ania Chen added a thin parting tool to her tool collection.
Dianne Looker took home a cherry blank.
Charles Neiforth added a turning book to his personal library.

A photograph of the rarely-in-front-of-the-lens Chris Palmer

Another view of the ornament tree.

New member Ania winning one of Dave's carbon-fiber tool handles.

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.

Gary Landry created a Snowman ornament — won by **Louise Plourde**.
Bob Earle contributed a painted Snowman ornament — won by **Gary Landry**.
Ania Chen created an innovative turned wreath ornament — won by **Bob Earle**.

Bob Earle turned a Santa Gnome ornament — won by **Ania Chen**.
Charles Neiforth contributed a pair of hollow ball ornaments with finials — won by **Bob Earle**.

Bob Earle turned and painted a Snowman ornament — won by **Charles Neiforth**.
Mark Hazen used up a range of offcuts to build blanks for a tree ornament — won by **Bob Earle**.

Gary Landry turned a ball ornament with finials in Maple, Walnut and Angelique — won by **Mark Hazen**.
Dave McLachlan contributed a ball with finials ornament with the ball dyed before assembly — won by **Gary Landry**.

Louise Plourde turned a quaint birdhouse ornament — won by **Dave McLachlan**.

Chris may not have gotten a picture of Louise receiving her ornament, but he did get her here hanging around in the crook of Dave's arm. Of course, "they" say it is better to give than receive. — Editor

The gathering wrapped up at 3:50PM.

Calum Ewing — Secretary

Spearpoint and Bowl Scrapers

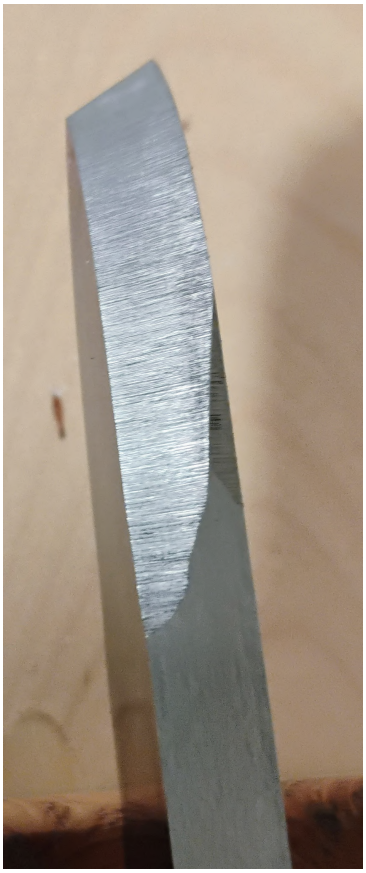
I recently put the finishing touches on two scrapers that I thought would be a great asset to have when turning bowls and others items that would benefit with the use of a scraper. Perhaps I've been watching too many turning videos. Both scrapers were made from 8 × 25 × 200 mm ($^5/_{16}″ \times 1″ \times 7\,^7/_8″$) HSS that I purchased from Amazon.

The spearpoint end was drawn out on the blank by bisecting the width and with a 30° angle making an isosceles triangle. The hypotenuse side was drawn with a slight curve to allow only a portion of the edge to be in contact with the wood surface. The face was ground at a 35° angle.

The bowl scraper end was ground at a 10° angle, again with a slight curve to allow only a portion of the scraper to contact the wood surface. A small notch was ground into the left side so it can be used to get into a tight corner. The face was ground at a 30° angle.

The handles were turned from pieces of Birch from my cottage lot from a windfall a few years ago. The handles are $10\,^1/_2″$ long and at the widest about $1\,^1/_2″$ wide. The ferrules were made from a 1″ copper pipe connector which was cut in two.

Hope to try them out shortly and see how well they work.



Bob Earle

Dishes and Scoops

These miniature salt dishes and scoops (a one inch scale is included to indicate size) were turned to accompany gifts of seasoned cooking salts that my wife gave to three of her family members. The scoops were turned from maple dowel rod, two of the bowls are from ambrosia maple and one is from walnut. The finish is Mylands high friction polish. The scoops could have been made a little thinner to be more pleasing to the eye but I had limitations in hollowing tools available. All in all I am pleased with the outcome.

Gary Landry

DaveM's Fireside Chat

Welcome to a new year, hopefully everyone had a great holiday season... I did spend quite a bit of time on the lathe before Christmas getting ornaments ready for family member's trees (I try to have a new ornament every year for a number of family members). To this end I have been using my new mini-CF handles and small tool bits with great success. At this month's meeting I will have a couple of lathes set up with collet chucks and some small blanks so members can try out the small tool handles and blades before the meeting actually starts. These small tools can be especially useful for making finials (not so much for larger turnings), so I hope you will look forward to giving them a try...

On the technical side I wanted to talk about making sure your lathe bed is level in both directions... this can have a huge impact on the alignment of the headstock and tailstock if you don't. I found this out when I recently moved my lathe about a foot to align it better with a new overhead radiant heater. I was going to do some drilling of finial blanks on the lathe and wondered why the tailstock drill no longer aligned with the headstock and wondered how that had happened. (Figure 1).

So when I moved the lathe, I hadn't replaced one of the shims I had there before and the floor was slightly different in the new location (only a foot away). Anyway, when two 60° centers were placed in the tailstock & headstock and brought close together, they were out of alignment by about a $^1/_{16}''$ with only 8″ of lathe bed between the two stocks. Over the whole length of the lathe this misalignment would have been considerably larger.

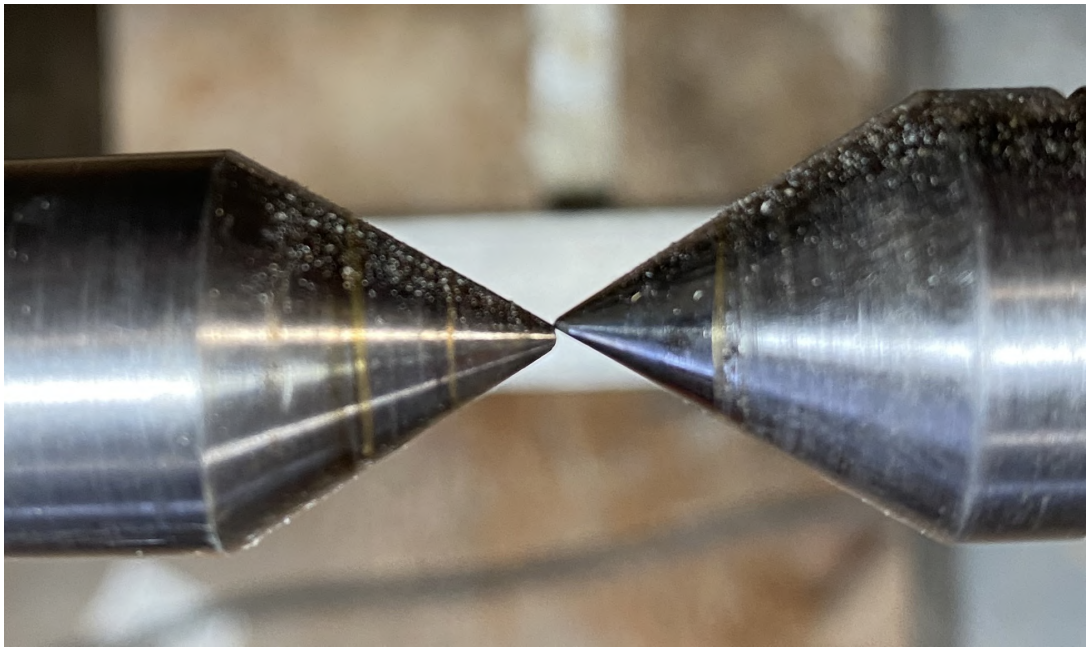


Figure 1. Looking downwards at 60° centers shows that the headstock and the tailstock were out of alignment.

To figure out why this happened I got out my machinist's level (Figures 2 & 3), and saw that the bed of the lathe was considerably out of level across the ways from the headstock to the tailstock in opposite directions... This created a twist in the ways from the headstock to the tail stock.

Figure 2. Looking down on the machinist's level at the headstock. (The right way is closest to the operator and the level is directly under the end of the center).

Figure 3. Looking down on the level at the tailstock end of the of the lathe. Note the opposite directions of the bubble.

Most of us don't have a machinist's level, which are extremely accurate. . . Figure 4 shows how much the bubble changes from dead center when level with a single sheet of 120 grit sandpaper placed underneath one end.

Figure 4. Looking down on the level at the tailstock end of the lathe, with the left edge closest to the operator when the ways were level and a single sheet of 120 grit Norton sandpaper placed under one end.

So, from Figure 4 one can see the sensitivity of a machinist's level; this far exceeds that of the average woodworker's level, which might not show that there was a twist in the lathe bed. Many of us, though, have a digital inclinometer used to set the angle of a table saw blade. These often read the angle to two decimal points and can work for you if you put a flat piece of metal across the lathe ways and measure the angle at the headstock and then at the tailstock end. In my case there was about 1° of twist in the lathe bed according to the inclinometer. After shimming the lathe legs the ways were once more level, (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. Looking at the level at7 the tailstock end of the of the lathe the ways were level, and the inclinometer indicated 0.00 deflection between the ways.

A few shims later I managed to get the bed level between the ways. Once the bed was level across the ways at both ends, low and behold, the 60o centers were once more completely in alignment (Figure 6).

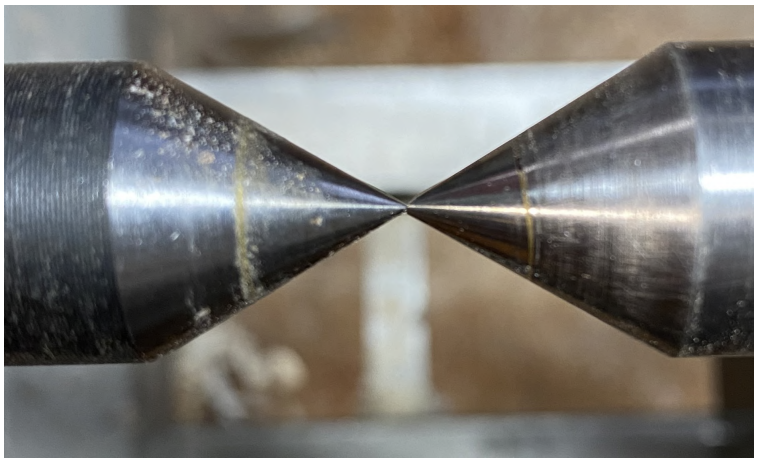


Figure 6. Once the ways were level the center points aligned perfectly.

One last check I wanted to perform was to see if the headstock was perfectly aligned with the tailstock when the tailstock was at the far end... to do this I used something most of us don't have: a high-end Laser Boresight; fortunately I do have one (Figure 7).

Figure 7. A Laser Boresight which can fit into the MT2 bore of the headstock.

The boresight in my case has a tapered end that snugs up to the end of the headstock bore and an aligning bushing on the end of the shaft which aligns the laser to the bore (Figure 8).

Figure 8. The Laser Boresight fitted into the MT2 bore of the headstock.

Once switched on with the tailstock at the far end we see that the bore is perfectly with the tailstock over the whole distance of the lathe (Figure 9).

Figure 9. The Laser Boresight confirmed the alignment of the headstock to the tailstock over the length of the lathe.

Had I not done the leveling procedure I could not have done the on-lathe drilling required with a 3mm drill bit. I encourage everyone to check their bed ways to make sure they are level to each other before resorting to adjusting the head or tailstocks to the bed ways, as it can make a difference. (Note if you have a very large lathe like a OneWay 2000 series or a Powermatic the bed might not twist much, but my machinist friend, when we moved his large eight foot, three ton machinist lathe to a new location, spent hours making sure it was perfectly level in its new location to ensure the ways were perfectly level in all directions).

Dave McLachlan

Video of the Month

Have you ever felt bad about the work you had to do to prepare a blank for turning? Or the tedium of the roughing-out phase? Here is a video that might make you feel better about the amount of effort you have been putting in on those two jobs:

https://youtu.be/jXO6ShejRss?si=vPv4uUPqiW7WGvZA&t=1938

That link takes you to the beginning of the lathe work, but if that isn't enough to make you appreciate your lathe and your tools, you might want to go back to

https://youtu.be/jXO6ShejRss?si=vPv4uUPqiW7WGvZA&t=1000

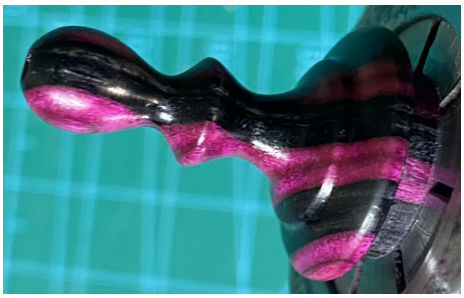
to see the beginning of the off-lathe preparation.

The careful observer will note how the dog was smart enough to stay out of the way. (Was the dog winking at the camera at 17:30?)

For Sale

Greg MacMullin has a lathe profile copier for sale. If you are interested please contact him directly.

Cover Photo



Chess pawn? Fine adjustment knob for some device? No! Not all finials have to be lethal weapons, as Dave McLachlan shows us with the above finial.

Purpleheart? A red wine spillage accident with some light-coloured wood? No! Dave made these from *spectraply*. He reports that he made it as an experiment to see if a spectra-ply pen blank could be used for fine finials; it actually turned very easily and was more rigid than some solid hardwood finials.

While not every finial needs to be lethal, the one pictured on the cover has the friend shown below. You can see that either the lower finial is very long and thin, or someone has massive fingers.

Photo Credits

Thanks to Chris Palmer for photos from last month's meeting; the person who took Chris' picture is in question, but there is some suspicion that Dave McL might have stepped in to take that one. 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` *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	`director1`	Mark Hazen	
Committees			
Library	`library`	Jim Diamond Brian Sharp	C
Web Site	`webmaster`	Richard Ford	C
Membership & Promotion	`membership`	vacant	
Newsletter	`newsletter` (or) `news`	Jim Diamond	C
Competition	`competition`	Bill Maes	C
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.