

The CNEW Skew

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Volume 18 Issue 7

July 2005

Editorial

Another artistic ramble this month. At my daughter's request, we recently went to New York City for two days to tour some of the museums. This was my first visit to NYC in 20 years and only my second ever.

We spent the first afternoon in the Museum of Modern Art, mainly in the early 20th century galleries. All those paintings you've seen in books and magazines: it seemed as if they were all there, for real! Picasso's *Demoiselles d'Avignon* (now that's one impressive canvas), several Seurats and van Goghs, Dali's *The Persistence of Memory* (I expected it to be much larger than it is), and more, and more and – closing time!

Day two, we started at the International Center of Photography, as my daughter is studying the subject and plans to be a photographer. This was less than riveting because the two exhibitions they had on were of photographic books and daguerreotypes from the studio of Southworth & Hawes. The daguerreotypes were noteworthy because in addition to having mastered the techniques of photography, Messrs. Southworth & Hawes both had some training in art and produced photographs that were not only technically proficient but also had artistic merit. Their Boston studio attracted many famous and wealthy patrons eager to have a portrait that was more than simply a photograph.

Our third and last stop was at the Whitney Museum, where the main exhibit was a collection of recent works entitled *Remote Viewing*. The very self-important high art introduction to the exhibition was all about the artists "exploring new worlds" and "inventing new languages". As we walked around I got more and more annoyed. The exhibition was almost entirely paintings with only two sculptural works, one being a series of tiles laid out on the floor. It is a hundred years since Einstein added the fourth dimension of time to the three of space and yet all these important artists are explor-

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President's Message

I would like to thank everyone that brought in turnings for the Chapter Spotlight. All the pieces were high quality, and Bobbi had an excellent way to rate each piece. I will be looking forward to seeing us in the chapter spotlight. I wish I had more to report on, but things have been pretty quiet lately on the turning front, and I have been pretty busy myself.

Lisa and I are looking forward to hosting the annual picnic in Lancaster on August 6th at 1pm. It should be a lot of fun, Lisa loves to entertain guests and has prepared a game with some prizes for everyone to have fun with, and everyone will get a chance to see my shop filled with shavings, so don't miss out. Dust off your tools, as the chapter challenge will be making garden turnings like flowers, mushrooms or anything else you can dream up, and you can still come even if you can't make anything as I doubt I will have time myself. Travel instructions are on the back page of the newsletter.

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Club Officers and Contact Info for 2005

President, Ray Boutotte

VP, Internal, Bobbi Tornheim

VP, External, Reid Gilmore

Secretary, Tim Elliott

Charlie Croteau

Treasurer, Richard DiPerna

Newsletter, Graeme Young

Video Librarian, Al Faul

Book Librarian, Wayne Moore

Webmaster, Dave Eaton

Photography, Emilio & Vicky Iannuccillo

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Minutes of July Meeting

Charlie Croteau

Ray Boutotte opened the meeting at 6:30.

New Members/Visitors: Henry Fairlie a woodworker is our newest member, Henry says he is "Starting at the bottom" when it comes to woodturning. Welcome Henry.

Old Business: Ray picked up two Super Nova chucks with 35mm and stepped jaws for the club's use.

Richard DiPerna will be moving so the club will need a new treasurer. Anyone interested in the position should contact Ray.

Treasurers Report: As of this month the club has a balance of \$1860.00.

Events: The annual picnic will be held Saturday Aug. 6th at Ray Boutotte's house, 73 Carter St. Lancaster MA 01523. See back page for directions. Yard Art Challenge for the August picnic: The theme will be "Organic", flowers or whatever comes to mind. Good Luck!

July 16th, 9:30 am to 3:30 pm Jean Francois Escoulen will be at the Cole Spring Community Center, 36 Beach St. North Kingston, RI. Cost \$20.00 which includes lunch.

August Craft Fair – Aug 26-28th. Reid Gilmore passed around a sign-up sheet. Volunteers are needed to set up and man the booth as well as demonstrate.

Items to be sold at the Fair should be marked in dollar amounts with no cents to make sales tax computation easy.

Oct. 14 will be a demo with Jack Grube. There will be a sign up sheet.

Heads up on a N. E. Regional Symposium: Spring 2006.

New Business: A motion was made and approved for the club to buy \$140.00 of sharpening equipment from the AAW. This would include a Wolverine sharpening jig, diamond hone and some other equipment.

Ray B. proposed that the club buy \$400.00 dollars worth of C.A. glues and different sanding discs to begin a CNEW Store. These products would then be sold to members at about a 30% discount when compared to market prices and the profits would be reinvested into the club. A motion was made, seconded and passed.

David Eaton volunteered to be the new Webmaster. Thank you Dave.

Bobbi Tornheim ran a very nice "Critique Night" program. Sixteen pieces were judged and the best pieces were chosen to be put in the Chapter Spotlight to be submitted to the AAW by Graeme Young.

Innovative Perspectives in Turning

June 16th – August 7th

This exhibition of contemporary woodturning has been assembled by Guest Curator, Albert LeCoff. The distinctive "turners" selected for this show all have a strong personal vision of how lathe turning can be used for artistic forms. Work on display will range from traditional vessel forms to purely sculptural pieces.

Mon-Sat. 10am-5pm, Sundays: 12-5pm

Brookfield Craft Center Mill Building

Rte. 25 in Brookfield, CT

Tel: 203-775-4526

www.brookfieldcraftcenter.org

Escoulen and his Bedan

Emilio Iannuccillo

I got to see a demo by Jean-François Escoulen recently. My preconception was that I don't really want to turn some of the crazy multi-center stuff he does. But my attention was captured and held by the techniques and step by step turning methods we were being shown.

Escoulen is a very controlled and prolific turner. He is best using his own off center chuck and the French bedan tool. The bedan, sort of a cousin to the skew, is a rectangular piece of high speed steel, with a straight across tip and sharpened with one long 70° bevel. It is used with the bevel up and one cuts with only the corners of the tool. A cut away from the corner will commence a catch.

Technique One

The movement to cut with the bedan is

- tool rest is above center, bedan is bevel up on the tool rest
- set the tool bottom rubbing on the wood and commence the cut by rolling the tool along the tool axis until the tool corner begins to cut into the wood
- simultaneously as the corner cuts, swing the handle up and in the opposite direction so that the tool is supported and rubbing the wood on the flat bottom of the tool.

He didn't say it was easy.

Technique Two

Escoulen turns thin. He started by turning a couple of miniature 2 inch golf clubs using two centers. The golf club shafts finished at about 2mm diameter. Note that 3mm is 1/8". All with his bedan. He started using the tail stock but in order to turn thin he removed the tail stock and held the wood, one end in the chuck and other end stabilized with his right hand, the bedan in his left hand. He claimed all French turners are left handed.

Technique Three

Building on the above we were shown how to construct a trembleur, a useless artifact mainly used for show off and as part of an apprentice turner's final exam. It was about a foot tall, looked like a series of heart shaped beads with very thin (2mm) connec-



tions in between. When standing on end, the delicate trembleur sways like a flower in the wind.

In the turning of this item, we were shown how to use a string steady. The string steady is a flat board, large hole cut out in the center and mounted on the lathe with the turning going through the center hole of the steady. Four nails around the hole are used to crisscross and tie string around the thin part of the turning, holding the turning in place. The string used is shoemaker's string. It is a fairly strong, waxed string.



Technique Four

From this point Escoulen began to get more complex. He showed us a simple offset turning using three centers. The centers ran on one diagonal of the blank ends in a straight line, the points numbered 1, 2, 3 on the left and 3, 2, 1 on the right. Using 1 to 1, 2 to 2 and 3 to 3, changing points several time, he produced a strange shaped bottle stopper where the top had no resemblance to the bottom.



Technique Five

Next we were treated to a procedure to turn a spoon. This started out as per the golf club except that the golf club shaft was turned with crazy off center disks and rings. The technique was to show us how to hollow the bowl of the spoon. With the spoon at the headstock and the handle swinging menacingly in an arc, Escoulen used a half round milling bit on the end of a long shaft to reach in between the spinning propeller to hollow out the spoon bowl. Think of it as turning the inside bottom of a hollow form, with 95% of the upper part cut away.



Technique Six

From here we were treated to the turning of Escoulen's famous off center boxes. Most of his crazy forms are really boxes and sometimes two or three boxes on one piece. This was done as a series of the foregoing processes, too many steps to set out here. Suffice it to say he does the base or bottom first and the lid last. The work is remounted multiple times, sometimes using jam chucks to turn away the last mounting point.

This was a truly engrossing demo from a humble but talented artist, who actually taught us useful techniques that we can use without the need to use his designs.

The Winter 2002 issue of *American Woodturner* has two articles by Glenn McMurray, one on turning a trembleur and the second, based on material by Jean-François Escoulen translated by Glenn, on using the bedan.

The word bedan is old French for "donkey's nose", which describes the angle at which the tool is ground.



Editorial (ctd)

ing new worlds – entirely in two dimensions? One or two works had dispensed with the canvas and were painted directly on the museum walls – how innovative! If these guys were inventing new languages, they were languages intended to be understood by only a very few, and I was obviously not one of the elite. The only message I heard was "I have a very large studio" as the majority of the paintings were so large that only a museum would have room to display them. The only part of the Whitney I enjoyed was a gallery of Alexander Calder's work, including a few of his delicately balanced mobiles.

So what does any of this have to do with woodturning? Looking at Calder's mobiles, I thought I might try something similar with small turnings instead of flat metal plates. Of course, the turnings would have to be hollow so they would be light enough to move, so the project would be technically challenging as well as artistic. I also remembered an article I had seen in *American Woodturner* [1] about turnings mounted on top of wires so they moved. When I looked up the article, by Peter Rand, it was titled *Turning to the Fourth Dimension*. Not only that, but Dali's "soft watches" painting (which is *The Persistence of Memory*) is mentioned in the article not just once but twice. And in hunting through my old issues to find that article, my eye was caught by a quote from Mark Lindquist [2] "Today woodturners have solved most of the work-holding and technical work methodology problems, or are on the brink of solving them. And now the larger issue that looms is that which is... being made, not necessarily how it is being made: In essence the idea of what the object is and what message is being communicated through it." Just like Southworth & Hawes. All coincidence, or maybe I just don't see the pattern yet?

And then there was the demonstration by Jean-Francois Escoulen, with his stated "obsession with defying the laws of gravity". Maybe you'll see some pieces that vaguely resemble Jean-Francois' very distinctive style sometime (but no trembleurs – I just don't have the patience for something like that, especially when there is a very good chance that I'll destroy it halfway through owing to lack of technical skill).

[1] *AW* Fall 2002

[2] *AW* Fall 2003, *Finding your own Voice* by Gary Zeff



Top: pieces by **Frank White**, Arnie Paye and Gary Bashian



Cavern by Ken Lindgren

The wood is yew from a tree estimated at 150-200 years old which came from Prowse Farm after the tree had to be taken down. Prowse is where John Adams and others in 1776 wrote a lot of what became the Declaration of Independence. The Massachusetts delegation met at Prowse Farm before going on to Philadelphia.

On the blank a Forstner bit was used to drill a recess for a faceplate. The recess later became the mortise for a tenon on the purpleheart base. The piece was hollowed and the interior finished with 3 different colors of a sand based paint to give the appearance of a cavern and to provide a flat contrast to the high gloss exterior. The stalactite, also covered in sand paint, is attached to the purpleheart cover on the top. The exterior finish is 5 coats of urethane oil and buffed. The piece is 14" diameter x 10" high.



Left: **Walnut platter** by Bobbi Tornheim.

Items indicated in **bold italic** are those selected for the Chapter Spotlight submission. Will the makers of those pieces **please** send me a short write-up on the piece and/or themselves for submission with the piece. Apart from Ken Lindgren, no-one has yet done so - Ed.



Top left: *Frank White*

Top right: *Joe Harbey*

Middle left: Graeme Young

Middle right: Joe Harbey

Bottom left: Graeme Young

Bottom right: *Reid Gilmore*





Top left: *Ken Dubay*

Top right: Bobbi Tornheim

Middle left: Ken Lindgren

Middle right: *Ken Dubay*

Bottom left: Reid Gilmore

Bottom right: *Mark O'Malley*

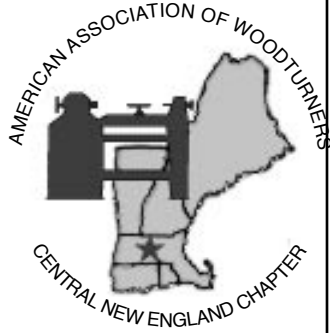


The CNEW SKEW

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Central New England Woodturners

A Chapter of the American Association of Woodturners



On the web: www.cnew.org

Annual Picnic Saturday August 6th

Travel Instructions to Ray Boutotte's
73 Carter St. Lancaster, MA
978-368-0004

From Southern/Eastern MA: Take the Mass Pike west to Exit 11A, the exit for Rte. 495. Proceed north on Rte. 495 to exit 27, the exit for Rte. 117. Take right off the exit ramp and follow Rte. 117 west thru Bolton center until you get to Rte. 110. Take a left onto Rte. 110 south. Go straight thru a 5-way intersection staying on Rte 110, and take your first right onto Mill Steet. Take your second left onto Carter Street. If you reach Rte. 70 you missed it.

From Western MA: Take Rte. 2 east to exit 35 for Rte. 70. Take a right off the exit ramp and then a left onto Rte. 70 south. Follow Rte. 70 thru center of Lancaster. Continue till you drive under a train bridge. Immediately after the bridge take a left onto Carter Street. If you enter Clinton you have gone too far.

From Worcester MA: Take Rte. 290 to Rte. 190 north. At the end of Rte. 190 take Rte. 2 east. Follow directions for 'Western MA'

From Northern MA (North of Rte. 2): Drive south on Rte. 495 until you get to Exit 27. Follow the directions for 'Southern/Eastern MA'.