

# NORTHWEST CORNER WOODWORKERS ASSOCIATION

July, 2009

**Next Meeting: July 7, Hillcrest Park Lodge  
7:00PM General Meeting  
1717 South 13th Street, Mount Vernon  
Phone: 360-770-7203 or 360-387-4174**

**I-5 exit 226 (Kincaid Street Exit). Go East up the hill. This is Broadway Street. Continue on Broadway to S 13th Street (which is about 5 to 6 blocks from the freeway). Turn right (south) onto South 13th and go about 6 blocks. The park is on the right. Turn into the park, the parking lot is in front of the lodge.**

## Guitar-making Is “In”

A new adventure in woodworking, guitar-making, has taken the country by storm. Along with a renaissance in woodcarving aided by better tools and materials, the “woodworking” umbrella claims new adherents into specialty pursuits made possible



Aaron Howell - Mr. Guitar Man

by technology. Grizzley’s latest catalog includes 32 pages listing kits, materials, and supplies for guitar-makers, a marketing achievement only a few years’ old.

**Aaron Howell**, professional musician and owner of **Penquin Coffee** in Anacortes, has what it takes to create stunning guitars out of the parts and pieces afforded him. An active guitarist himself, Aaron has learned how to make guitars that sound as good as they look. And they are beautiful works indeed.

He brought a variety of his stringed instruments to our meeting in June where he set up some of his jigs and gave a demonstration of how guitars are made. The detail and close tolerances of the craft are evident.

Craftsmanship in the first order is a requirement. Wood-shaping in thin woods requires steam-bending operations as well as careful planing. Veneering, inlaying, banding, kerfing, binding, and purfling are other techniques to master. The guitar-maker must deal with many materials other than wood: metals like steel wire and brass, resins and

minerals, and plastics, to name a few.

With a little urging from his audience, Aaron gave us a sampling of the musical sounds of his guitars.



Jigs & Fixtures for Guitar Makers

of any month between the hours of 6 and 9 p.m. where he and the Fidalgo Swing group will entertain you. – Jay Geisel



Program Chair Jim Bucknell  
with Aaron Howell

He makes guitars for his own use and for his friends who want to purchase them. If you would like to hear more of Aaron Howell's music go to the Anacortes Rockfish Grill on the fourth Wednesday



Let Me Entertain You! Thanks, Aaron

## Final Classes, Shop Tours, & Picnic Mark End of Current Season

As summer approaches, attendance at monthly meetings tends to get smaller. June's attendance was in the low forties as school recesses and vacations take their toll. But those that showed up can attest that we heard an inspiring story from guitarist and woodworker **Aaron Howell** who worked two-and-a-half years to make his first guitar.

The business meeting was quickly handled. **Gene Benson** prompted members to donate their time at **Val Matthews** shop, on Saturdays, or his own on Monday, Wednesday, or Friday, to create Toys for Tots. Those who work at Val's create toy crickets and crocodiles while Gene's workers help build doll cradles. Gene is also setting up a wood raffle of 4x4x8 maple timbers to start next month.

The wood was donated and all proceeds will be turned over to the local Marine Corps Reserve in December.

**Chuck Robertson** said educational classes are ending for the season but will be restart in September. Two classes remain: **Phil Choquette's Wood Finishing 2** on Saturday, June 13, at 10 a.m. in **Mike New's** shop in Bow, and **Jerry Couchmen's** class on **Box Making** set for Tuesday night, July 14, at 6 p.m. in Ferndale. Both classes are full. Chuck is planning the next educational program and wants to hear from the members about their particular desires and needs. Give Chuck a call with your comments or suggestions.

**Gary Danilson** announced a new set of shop tours for Saturday, June 6, involving four member's shops in the Stanwood/Camano Island area. Shop visits began at 9:30 a.m. at the following shops: **Jim Torrence, Jim Sickler, Nick Van, and Dwain Colby**. Maps and driving instructions were provided.

**Phil Choquette** urged members to plan now to exhibit at the forthcoming **Arts Alive!** which occurs on the first weekend in November (November 7 and 8). The Saturday and Sunday event has, for many years, featured the woodworking skills of NCWA members and Phil encouraged us to make a good showing in 2009 when we will, again, have the opportunity to show and/or sell our projects to the pre-Christmas shoppers who descend on LaConner from as far away as Seattle. We will share the Garden Club building on Second Street with our woodturning friends, who usually start their selling activities on Friday. "Let's show them what we are capable of doing," Phil declared.

Please remember that our picnic at the Matthews' estate has been moved up a couple weeks to July 25. There will be a regular meeting in July, but, per usual, **no meeting in August**.

Our Bring 'n Brag session featured **Shelly Clouse**, who wanted a box for a double deck of cards. Being a woodworker she made her own and showed the results at our meeting. **Bill Rawls** was at it again. His latest table is a lot lighter and features a top made of various woods and colors in a breadboard-type motif. –Jay Geisel



New - From Dewalt. Your own nailer.

## Changes to By-laws Vote Set for July

At the July meeting you will be asked to approve an amendment to the NCWA By-laws regarding a change in the timing of events for the Election of Officers and their nomination. The proposed changes will ease the lack of time for this duty at our December meetings of the general membership.

The last meeting of the year has become a major salute to our Toys for Tots program and leaves little time for other business activities and the traditional election of officers. The Amendment establishes a process whereby officers will be nominated in September, the publication of the slate follows in the October newsletter, and an election of officers by the membership at the November meeting.

At its June meeting, the NCWA Board re-established a regular membership meeting for the month of November, making eleven NCWA general meetings per year. Heretofore the November meeting was cancelled due to Arts

Alive! an activity that has never involved the majority of members. The new NCWA calendar calls for general membership meetings every month except August, the usual time of the annual picnic.  
–Jay Geisel

## Education Committee Report

We have just finished another successful year of classes thanks to all the members who took advantage of them. If we had charged the \$100/half day that many of the woodworking schools do, our association would be rolling in money.

Your Education Committee is in the process of putting together classes to begin in September. We will be repeating the popular classes and eliminating (at least for next year) those in which there was little interest. We will be adding several classes that have been suggested by various members. It is still not too late to suggest a class that you would like. Just email or phone Chuck Robertson ([cerjor@hotmail.com](mailto:cerjor@hotmail.com), 360-387-6333) with your ideas.

At their latest meeting, your board of directors voted to charge for classes starting in the fall. Each class will cost \$5.00. This money will be put into an account for reimbursement to the instructor for materials and other charges. More information will be available when the classes are announced, most likely in August.

Have a good summer in the shop. –Chuck Robertson

## Shop Tours Loads of Fun

Our club had another successful shop tour on June 6. We had 25-30 participants visiting the four Stanwood/Camano Island shops that were open for the tour. Our morning began at **Jim Torrence's** shop where we were treated to coffee, cookies

and a nice display of Jim's handiwork. A great example of how even a large shop needs good organization and layout.



Jim Torrence's Shop within a Shop

We then moved on to **Nick Van's** and **Jim Sickler's** shops. Everyone was impressed with the desk Nick was building and the airplane rocker being made for Toys for Tots by Nick and **Dwain Colby**. Nick also had one of the 4 cradles he has made on display.



Beautiful Space Utilization  
at Jim Sickler's Shop

**Jim Sickler's** shop was a nice example of efficient use of a converted garage space. Lots of machines on casters and meticulous organization. Jim's wife also treated us to a nice spread of fruit, cheese and drinks.



Dwain Colby's Workshop

Our tour ended up at **Dwain Colby's** shop on south Camano Island. Dwain and his wife have built an octagon-shaped house from the ground up and we were treated to a tour of their home. We saw lots of innovative ideas that came out of his small shop. After the tour we enjoyed a cold



A refreshing end to a great day

drink and snack's on one of Dwain's decks overlooking Saratoga Passage.

Our shop owners did a great job setting up their shops for the tour. All of their work and the chance to spend the day with fellow woodworkers made for an interesting and enjoyable day. Our last shop tour for the year will be in October as we venture north to the Bellingham/Ferndale area. It is shaping up to be another great tour so plan to be there. —John Bellinger and Gary Danilson

### Utilization of NCWA Library on the Rise

Our club library continues to grow and get great use. We have added five new books which committee member **Steve Johnson** has reviewed for the newsletter. We also have added "*Making an Archtop Guitar*" by Robert Benedetto. This book was generously donated to the club by the **Aaron Howell**, our speaker at our last meeting. All of the new books will be available to checkout at our July meeting.

Our books are usually allowed to be checked out for 2 months but we will tag the new books and ask you to keep them for just 1 month. We'll do that for the first year on new books to give more members a chance to see them. We will continue to ask that videos be checked out for 1 month.

Just as a reminder, our club library books and videos are available to any current member. There is a signout book for you to check books in and out. There is no limit on items checked out but returning materials on a timely basis helps keep books available to all clubmembers.

We will continue to put out a bin for recycled woodworking magazines. If you have used magazines that are just taking up space, your fellow woodworkers might find them interesting. There has been great interest in this in the past and every magazine that has been brought in has been taken home by someone else. — Gary Danilson

## My Life with Sam Maloof

How many woodworkers in this World can say they shook hands with the Master? He was 90 at the time and I was 85. He singled me out from the crowd, offered his hand, and thanked me for coming to his lecture! His grip was firm and I couldn't help marveling at the lack of coarseness in the hand that had guided thousands of plane strokes and a mountain of sandpaper.

Sam Maloof made a rare appearance in the Northwest a couple of years ago when he gave a one-evening, sold-out lecture at the Bellevue Art Museum.

Maloof's furniture and designs, and his definitive rocker styles (he says he has designed 15 different ones), have won him fame everywhere; he was a living legend. And the Maloof legacy will continue beyond his lifetime as his three loyal assistants (each has worked for him for at least 30 years) will inherit the Maloof nameplate and all of the studio properties.

The Studio has a backlog of furniture orders that will last more than a decade and a fine supply of hardwoods that will outlive the new owners. But at the time, Sam was running things; he worked 10 to 12 hours a day, six days a week, keeping an eye on production, performed a lot of the actual saw operations, and always handled the final assemblies.

Handmade Maloof furniture has grown so popular that prices double up every few years. This likable, modest man told a few stories that left everyone chuckling. A person who bought a Maloof dining-room set of table and chairs for \$3,000 offered Sam a chance to buy them back several years later for \$60,000. After Sam turned him down the owner sold them at auction for \$250,000.

The lecture included a couple of short DVD presentations that were quite interesting to woodworkers in the audience, especially one filmed in the production shop where Sam and his assistants were working at the machines, creating yet another Maloof rocker.

Following the lecture several dozen people lined up in the Museum foyer to get the Master's choice inscriptions and signatures in their Maloof biographical books and other works. NCWA was well represented by Rick Anderson, Cec Braeden, Bob Doop, RP Myers, Larry Tomovick, and myself. It was a very enjoyable visit.

**Note:** The above article was written and printed with a different headline in the NCWA Newsletter three years ago. I thought it appropriate to update the text and reprint it now that Mr. Maloof has passed away age 93. Please see the June edition of the NCWA Newsletter for Mr. Maloof's obituary. --Jay Geisel

### Redwood Slabs -- Free

I'll have a pickup truck load of redwood slabs for use by members who want them in their shop. The redwood will have to be milled into useable boards, as the shapes are many and varied. My only requirement is that you will agree not to use the wood as a fire starter.

First come, first served. I'll park the truck as close to the meeting room as possible. This is old growth redwood, with as many as twenty growth rings per inch. Nice stuff when you mill it. -- Nick Van

## **Fiction and Fact from Nick's Almanac (With text from Ed Pysher).**

The next time you are washing your hands and complain because the water temperature isn't just how you like it, think about how things used to be. Here are some facts about the 1500s:

Most people got married in June because they took their yearly bath in May, and still smelled pretty good by June. However, they were starting to smell, so brides carried a bouquet of flowers to hide the body odor. Hence the custom today of carrying a bouquet when getting married.

Baths consisted of a big tub filled with hot water. The man of the house had the privilege of the nice clean water, then all the other sons and men, then the women, and finally the children. Last of all the babies. By then the water was so dirty you could actually lose someone in it. Hence the saying, "Don't throw the baby out with the Bath water".

Houses had thatched roofs-thick straw-piled high, with no wood underneath. It was the only place for animals to get warm, so all the cats and other small animals (mice, bugs) lived in the roof. When it rained it became slippery and sometimes the animals would slip and fall off the roof.. Hence the saying "It's raining cats and dogs".

There was nothing to stop things from falling into the house. This posed a real problem in the bedroom where bugs and other droppings could mess up your nice clean bed. Hence, a bed with big posts and a sheet hung over the top afforded some protection. That's how "canopy beds" came into existence.

The floor was dirt. Only the wealthy had something other than dirt. Hence the saying, "dirt poor". The wealthy had slate floors that would get slippery in the winter when wet, so they spread thresh (straw) on floor to help keep their footing. As the winter wore on, they added more thresh until, when you opened the door, it would all start slipping outside. A piece of wood was placed in the entrance way. Hence the saying a "thresh hold".

(Getting quite an education, aren't you?)

In those old days, they cooked in the kitchen with a big kettle that always hung over the fire. Every day they lit the fire and added things to the pot. They ate mostly vegetables and did not get much meat. They would eat the stew for dinner, leaving leftovers in the pot to get cold overnight and then start over the next day. Sometimes stew had food in it that had been there for quite a while. Hence the rhyme, "Peas porridge hot, peas porridge cold, peas porridge in the pot nine days old"...

### ***THE WOOD SHED.....***

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**COMING EVENTS**

July 7	7:00 PM	Membership Meeting	Hillcrest Lodge, Mount Vernon
July 15	7:00 PM	Board Meeting	Farmhouse Restaurant on Hwy 20
July 25	1:00-6:00PM	Annual Picnic	See Newsletter
July 27	Noon	Newsletter Deadline	Nick's Email (nvan@verizon.net)
<b>August</b>	<b>There will</b>	<b>no Membership Meeting</b>	<b>in August</b>

The NCWA is open to all interested woodworkers, and was formed to promote high standards in woodworking, woodworking education and showcasing local woodworking. Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM. Location is announced in the newsletter. Dues are \$30 per year, payable to NCWA, 150 Swinomish Dr., Laconner, WA 98257. Newsletter submissions are welcomed and are due by the 3rd Saturday of the month. Submit to NCWA Newsletter, 24 Jacks Pass Court, Camano Island, WA 98282 or Email to nvan@verizon.net or call 360-387-4174.

**2008 Officers and Chairpersons**

President:	Jeff O'Donnell	(360) 678-2205	Education	Chuck Robertson	(360) 387-6333
Vice President	Jim Torrance	(360) 629-6670	Librarian	Gary Danilson	(360) 424-9268
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Board at Large	Dave Blair	(360) 733-3911	Toys for Tots	Gene Benson	(360) 466-3004
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Activities	Open				

**NCWA NEWSLETTER**

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