

# Benchmarks

NORTH BENNET STREET SCHOOL

FALL 2008 | WWW.NBSS.ORG



## STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN PRESENTS A DETAILED VISION FOR THE FUTURE

“The school’s success over the prolonged period of its existence is a result of its unwavering commitment to the ideals represented by the highest level of craft skills, as well as its flexibility to adapt its programs to the aspirations of succeeding generations. The school has benefited from over 100 years of stable leadership and stewardship, with each generation accepting the responsibility of leaving the school with the financial and educational resources to ensure its success for the foreseeable future.”

*Strategic Business Plan FY09 to FY13 (See pages 8 and 9)*



**NEW WHEELS:** Carpentry students have a new, fuel efficient vehicle.

*Page 3*



**FRANK BAIRD’S 30TH:** An invaluable resource for generations of NBSS’s students.

*Page 4*



**WGBH:** North Bennet Street School is profiled on Boston’s premier classical music station.

*Page 6*

## Financial Aid Plan Approved

**S**TUDENTS attending North Bennet Street School will see a significant increase in financial aid under a plan adopted by the Board of Directors at its September meeting.

In addition to increasing tuition assistance, the plan calls for students who apply for financial aid to be notified of their award when they are accepted for admission.

The plan was approved by the Board at the recommendation of the Business Planning Committee, a group with representatives from the faculty, the administration, and the Board of Directors that has been working with consultants over the past year to refine the school’s business model. (See related story on page 8.) In a survey of over 9,000 past, current and prospective students, the committee found that the cost of tuition is the top deterrent to enrollment for all of the full time programs.

In addition to the data gathered from survey respondents, faculty and staff interviews revealed a growing concern that to fulfill its mission, the school must facilitate access to a North Bennet Street School education or face the erosion of the student base as it currently exists if tuition becomes cost prohibitive.

An analysis of financial aid availability in the 2006-2007 academic year showed that over half of the full time students (56% or 96 of 171) applied for financial aid. Students received a total of \$1.1 million in aid from four primary sources, including grant and scholarship aid (\$98,000), Federal Stafford Loans (\$570,000), PLUS (parent) loans (\$228,000) and alternative loans (\$303,000). Approximately \$881,000 in financial aid need went unmet.

Of the amount awarded in grants and scholarships that year, North Bennet Street School supplied only \$15,600. The recommendation of the Business Planning Committee is to increase that number to as much as \$400,000 over the course of the next five years. The goal is for these scholarships to cover from ten to thirty percent of the cost of tuition, based on a

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NBSS Event at ST. Botolph Club

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Miguel Gómez-Ibáñez presented *North Bennet Street School: An Education in Craftsmanship for 125 Years* for members of the St. Botolph Club in Boston on June 24, 2008. His illustrated history focused on the school's role in educational innovation from the late 19th century arts and crafts movement to the digital, Do It Yourself movement today. He emphasized the transformations that have made it one of the world's leading schools for the preservation and instruction of hand craft.

St. Botolph Club and North Bennet Street School were founded a year apart in the early 1880's. After the founding of St. Botolph Club in 1880 to promote the making and enjoyment of art, music and literature, North Bennet Street Industrial School was established in Boston's North End in 1881 by Pauline Agassiz Shaw.

After the opening remarks, Wendy Withrow (BB'08) and David Truscott (VM'09) described their reasons for coming to NBSS and their experiences here. Withrow displayed examples of her work at NBSS and described the Bookbinding curriculum. After presenting and discussing a viola he made this year, Truscott - an accomplished violinist - played a Hungarian czardas on his own violin.

Following the presentation, club members hosted their NBSS guests for dinner and conversation. St Botolph members Jackie Blombach (PC'02) and Sheila Perry, NBSS Director of Development, were on hand as were Art Taylor (CF'00) and Marie Oedel (BB '02). ●



Annual Evening of Traditional Craft

THE Massachusetts Historical Society's historic 1898 independent research library was the setting for this year's Annual Evening of Traditional Craft, held May 15, 2008. The event raised a record \$107,555 from over 300 graduates, faculty and friends of the school who attended.

Guests viewed an exhibition of alumni work curated by Walter McDonald and beautifully displayed in seven rooms over two floors, connected by a marble staircase. Also on display was the MHS exhibition John Adams: A Life in Letters, as well as related period furniture, paintings and sculpture from the Society's collections. The two exhibitions combined seamlessly to provide an elegant, Beaux Arts backdrop for the school's annual social event.

Cabinet and Furniture Making graduate Erin Hanley ('07) exhibited a black walnut coffee table commissioned by Sheila Perry, NBSS Director of Development. Charles Kline ('05) exhibited a Chinese Chippendale Bookcase, Kevin Mack ('08) showed a lady's writing desk and Chippendale chair, and Richard Oedel ('05) a console table. Nine jewelry graduates exhibited, including Sarah West ('97), who contributed a gold leaf necklace.

Preservation Carpentry was represented this year with displays from an architectural project at the Hotel Del Coronado in Coronado, California by Robert Davidson ('02), a Neo-Gothic interior from Florida by Brent Hull ('93), and work by four Massachusetts graduates; Walter Beebe-Center ('94), Richard Friberg ('04), David Lewis ('03) and Ford Ogden ('94). Bookbinding was represented by nine graduates, including recent alumnae Emma Bates ('07) and Amanda Nelsen ('07). A piano was provided by the Advanced Piano Technology class of 2008, and students Erik Diehl ('08) and Emily Townsend ('08) played throughout the evening.

NBSS BOARD PRESIDENT Burt Harris (CF '97) joined MHS President Dennis Fiori and NBSS Executive Director Miguel Gómez-Ibáñez greeting guests at the Annual Evening of Craft (top). Richard Oedel (CF '05) describes his Art Deco style hall table to Ken Stone of MIT. (above)



NEW WHEELS The Carpentry program took delivery this summer of a 2008 Dodge Sprinter cargo van. A generous grant from the Sunfield Foundation in New Jersey provided the department with the large capacity, fuel efficient diesel vehicle. ●

Alumni Challenge

A RECORD NUMBER OF ALUMNI responded to the Alumni Challenge, offered this year by an anonymous graduate, resulting in a matching gift of \$50,000 for the Annual Appeal. Two thirds of the funds raised are earmarked for annual operating purposes, and one third is allocated to the Walter McDonald Scholarship Endowment Fund.

"The challenge was successful in reaching the goal of its generous donor: a deeper recognition by graduates of the need for supporting North Bennet Street School," said Sheila Perry, Director of Development. "We received gifts from 28 graduates who had never supported the school before. Another 60 donors who had not made a gift for a number of years were inspired to reconnect with the school."



TWO BEQUESTS BENEFIT SCHOOL

NORTH BENNET STREET SCHOOL recently received word of two bequests: the first from the estate of Barbara Groetzing, mother of Sanford Groetzing (BB'02) and the second from the estate of Maurice L. Bombar, Jr.(CF'87). Marjorie Bombar, Maurice's widow, writes, "[Maurice] often spoke of his time there and the talented people he felt privileged to work with."

Over the years the school has received a number of important gifts, generally unexpected, from the estates of alumni and friends with longstanding ties to the school's training programs and mission. For more information about including North Bennet Street School in your estate planning, please contact Sheila Perry, Director of Development, at development@nbss.org or 617-227-0155, Ext 111. ●

The overarching goal of this plan is to make an education at North Bennet Street School available to students of all economic backgrounds.

Financial Aid Plan Approved by Board

Continued from Page 1

student's financial need. The school will continue to build the Walter McDonald Scholarship Endowment Fund as a perpetual term source of financial aid for students.

"The overarching goal of this plan is to make an education at North Bennet Street School available to students of all economic backgrounds," said Burt Harris, President of the Board.

"To do that we must set our tuition at a realistic, competitive rate that allows the school sufficient funds to maintain quality while at the same time providing financial support. Currently, tuition covers approximately 70 percent of the cost of an education. The balance is contributed by the endowment and fundraising, with all students benefiting equally. The school's contribution will be better allocated to help students on the basis of need. Some day we will be able to attract students who have no means, but we have to start somewhere."

The school will begin to implement the scholarship plan with students who are admitted in September, 2009. ●



## Frank Baird Turns Thirty

**F**RANK BAIRD, North Bennet Street School's Facilities Manager and an invaluable resource for generations of students, completed thirty years of service to the school this fall, having guided the school's physical transition from a neighborhood social service agency to a nationally recognized school of craft.

He was hired in 1978 first as a substitute carpentry instructor and soon after as Head of Maintenance. At the time, Shaw House was used for after school programs and the first floor workshop machine room was the cafeteria. "There were many aspects of the physical plant that were crumbling," recalls Frank, "including a decaying, 1931 steam boiler encased in asbestos. Heating was a real problem." Soon after he arrived, a

thirteen-year restoration of 39 North Bennet Street began. Social service programs and the daycare center were moved to the North End Union. The waning watch repair, offset printing and camera repair programs were phased out in favor of violin making, bookbinding and preservation carpentry. The building renovations had to take place while school was in session, requiring close coordination with the faculty, the contractors, and the architects. Departments moved while their area was worked on. The basement space, which at that time was cluttered with "a hundred years of trash," was cleared out to accommodate the shifting departments. When the elevator shaft was cut into the main building, the sprinkler system had to be rerouted around the shaft. Frank worked through the night with the contractors. The building was ready for occupancy the next day, and he headed home to sleep.

"It was an incredibly exciting time," he says. "I could see the good that was coming from it. There was an enthusiasm that was going into the school, and you could see the improvements and the success of the new programs. A cohesive school atmosphere started to flourish when those extraneous programs moved out."

In the '80s Frank became a licensed construction supervisor and a licensed electrician.

When ever there's a change at the school, a renovation, construction, or building emergency, he is in the thick of it. One September morning this year is no different. Receptionist Ellie Tait calls down to Frank's office; a guy has reported a leak in the 2nd floor men's room. Frank responds, "A leak, a guy..." These facts are confirmed, and after pause Frank asks, "Did he confess to causing this problem?" ●



FRANK BAIRD in his office, surrounded by evidence of his thirty years of experience.

## Locksmiths Assist Historical Society

**S**hortly after enjoying the hospitality of the Massachusetts Historical Society, which hosted the school's annual *Evening of Traditional Craft* in May, the North Bennet Street School Locksmithing Department was able to return the favor by restoring 65 of the society's eighteenth century cabinet locks. The fitting of keys and the restoration of the hand made English locks was a part of a larger restoration project involving the display cabinets themselves, a project that had been undertaken by NBSS graduate Michael (Shanklin) Wheeler (CF '76).

"The locks were in extremely poor condition, requiring many hours of work before keys could be fit to them," said David Troiano, Locksmithing Instructor. "Key blanks were not available, and the new keys had to be hand crafted from raw material."

"One of the fringe benefits I receive as Department Head," he added, "is becoming involved in the restoration of many special projects brought to us, because no one else had the expertise or will to work on them. Our students are lucky in that they receive training in all areas of our craft, from hand made locks to the newest systems involving biometric switching devices and electronic access control systems." ●

## Inspired Design: The Mentoring Stamp

**A**N EXHIBITION of Fine Bookbindings this fall at Smith College, Northampton, MA owes its inspiration as well as much of its content to graduates of the North Bennet Street School bookbinding department. *Inspired Design: the Mentoring Stamp*, jointly sponsored by the Mortimer Rare Book Room, Smith College, and the New England Chapter of the Guild of Book Workers, was co-curated by Barbara B. Blumenthal, Book Arts Specialist in the Mortimer Rare Book Room, and Barbara Adams Hebard ('90), Book Conservator at the Boston Athenaeum. The exhibition features work by seven other graduates of the North Bennet Street School Bookbinding program; Jeff Altepeter ('99), Alegria Barclay ('07), Emma Bates ('07), Barbara Halporn ('06), Kiyoshi Imai ('89), Amanda Nelsen ('07), and James Reid-Cunningham ('90), as well as program advisor Samuel Ellenport and Hebard herself.

Bookbinders were challenged to make interpretative covers for *Designing the Mentoring Stamp*, written by Lance Hidy, artist, typographer, and type designer. Hidy's narrative describes the creation of the Mentoring Stamp, his

first postage stamp designed for the United States Postal Service in 2002.

"The idea for this exciting exhibition began in 2006, while I was Exhibition Coordinator for the New England Chapter" says Hebard. "I asked Martin Antonetti, Curator of Rare Books at the Mortimer Rare Book Room for permission to hold an exhibition in his library, and his colleague, Barbara Blumenthal, to choose an exhibition theme. Both were very enthusiastic about hosting an exhibition, and Smith College associates offered generous support."

Other New England Chapter board members who helped bring this vibrant show to fruition are graduates of the NBSS bookbind-

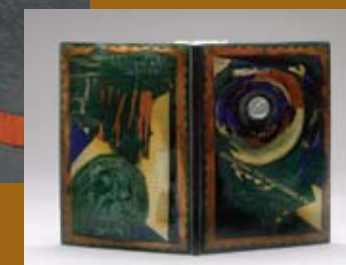
ing program; Jeffrey Altepeter, Lori Foley ('95), and Amanda Hegarty ('91). Additionally, assistance was provided by James Reid-Cunningham, President of the National Guild of Book Workers.

The exhibition is located in the Book Arts Gallery, Neilson Library, Smith College, Northampton, MA, August 10 through December 20, 2008. A deluxe exhibition catalog, documenting the work of NBSS graduates, is available for purchase. Copies may be purchased online. A paperback version of Hidy's *Designing the Mentoring Stamp* was produced by Acme Bindery, whose owner Paul Parisi is a longtime NBSS program advisor.

"*Inspired Design* is an exciting new collaboration between Smith College and Bookbinding Program graduates. It created an excellent opportunity for the graduates to show their work to a wider audience outside the greater Boston area and to increase awareness of the North Bennet Street School," says Hebard. ●



Bindings by Alegria Barclay (above), Jeffrey Altepeter (right) and James Reid Cunningham (top).







## MAKING A CLASSICAL CONNECTION WGBH-89.7

**I**N JULY North Bennet Street School's music-oriented teaching programs – Piano Technology and Violin Making – were profiled on a new series of radio broadcasts presented by Boston's premier classical music station WGBH-FM (89.7).

The weekly series, *Classical Connections*, covers the classical music experience in Massachusetts, and examines what classical music means to those living and working in the Commonwealth. The show's producers had heard about the North Bennet Street School's offerings, and believed our story could make for an interesting segment.

What actually resulted were two segments, due to the volume and richness of the material collected by the WGBH team. The first segment features second-year Piano Technology student Sean Hansen describing the satisfaction of taking an old piano and bringing it back to life. Then

WGBH host Cathy Fuller (an accomplished pianist) plays two of the school's rebuilt pianos – a 1918 Hazelton Brothers grand and a Chickering grand from the early 1930's – and talks about the differences in sound that these instruments offer now that they've been restored by NBSS students.

The second segment highlights the ways in which the Violin Making program helps students engage their dual passions for music and working with their hands, while at the same time preserving the traditions of handcrafting stringed instruments.

To hear both segments, go to [www.wgbh.org](http://www.wgbh.org) and click on the "Classical Connections" link in the right column, then choose "More Classical Connections" to reach the show's archives. You'll find the NBSS stories filed under their July 11 and July 18 airdates. ●

The Piano Technology department has two small grand pianos for sale that were restored by second year students in the Spring of 2008. Both have had their soundboard and ribs repaired and refinished, the cast iron plate re-bronzed, and the fallboard decal replaced. They have a new pinblock, tuning pins, strings, and damper felt. The damper and lyre system has been renovated, the action touch weight improved, and the case refinished. Tuning and voicing, and action and damper regulation are also completed.

A 54" 1918 Hazelton Brothers mahogany grand piano, serial number 68682 built in 1918, \$7,800.00.

A 5"-8" Baldwin model H grand piano, brown mahogany, serial number 50360 built in 1925, \$8,500.00

## Two Join Faculty

**T**WO NEW FULL TIME instructors joined the Carpentry and Preservation Carpentry faculty in Arlington this September. Patrick O'Shaughnessy is the new Carpentry Instructor, taking over for Fran Sullivan who moved with his family to Arizona after graduation ceremonies last June. Richard Friberg has been named as the second Preservation Carpentry Instructor, filling in for Robert Adam, who has stepped back from his daily teaching obligations to become a Special Advisor and consultant to the program. Steven O'Shaughnessy, the current first year instructor, is the new Department Head.

**O'SHAUGHNESSY**, founder and owner of Sequoia Custom Builders Inc., is a graduate of the Carpentry program and has

operated his own painting and building contracting business since 1997. He has degree in Business Administration from Saint Anselm College.



**FRIBERG** has been the lead Preservation Carpentry substitute teacher, and is the instructor for a number of courses in the Workshop Program, including historic timber framing, platform framing, and courses in bowl turning and spindle turning. As the owner of Pleasant Avenue Restorations, he has completed numerous preservation and renovation projects throughout eastern Massachusetts.

**ROBERT ADAM** leaves his position as Department Head after 26 years involvement with North Bennet Street School. He was hired to work as a carpentry instructor in 1982 to teach

contemporary construction methods and subsequently became head of the department. While in that position, he proposed that the school offer preservation training that would be unique in the field: a curriculum-based training program to teach comprehensive traditional carpentry skills in the classroom as well as on projects in the field. The Preservation Carpentry program began in 1986 and has since gained a national reputation for innovation and excellence, working on historic sites throughout New England and the Northeast.

As Special Advisor, Adam will assist the full time instructors, working collaboratively with both first and second year students on special projects. Guest lecturers and field trips will also be added to the curriculum, taking advantage of the wealth of experience of the many preservation architects and consultants in the Boston area. ●

## FROM THE WORKSHOP DIRECTOR

Jourdan Abel

**T**HE WORKSHOP PROGRAM at North Bennet Street School continues to grow with professional development classes for alumni, as well as more introductory and all-level classes for those entering the craft world.

This fall we are pleased to run the first ever *Three Month Bookbinding Intensive*, taught by graduate Stacie Dolin. We're proud to bring Peter Geraty in to teach a Leather Decoration class, as well as Julia Rabin for a class on historical Paste Papers. Heather Hamilton and Debra Cuoco return for *Paper Conservation for Bookbinders*. Additionally, Regina and Dan St. John of Chena River Marblers return for two marbling workshops and a free artist demo/discussion.

In the Jewelry realm, we're happy to announce that Cynthia Eid will be at NBSS to teach three classes over the next several months – *Argentum Silver*; *Forging and Forming with Hammers*; and *Forming with the Hydraulic Press*. Cynthia will also be giving a free

artist talk in conjunction with her classes. Marlene Richey joins us once more for *Marketing 101-You*, a great course for all craftspeople. Curtis Buchanan will visit the school in June for a continuous arm rocker Windsor chair class, and Matt Wajda will be teaching a pembroke table class. Dan Faia, full time instructor and CFM grad, taught two architectural carving classes this fall – be on the lookout for more. Steve Brown, head of the Cabinet and Furniture Making Department, will teach a *Cabriole Leg Sampler and the Ball and Claw Foot Workshop* in January.

Additionally, we're pleased to offer a Master Keying workshop for Locksmiths, led by DJ Dabenigno, graduate of the full time program. This workshop is an excellent way to master Master Key systems, and can be taken as a whole or in parts.

There are many more exciting workshops happening here at North Bennet Street School. Please visit our website to see them all, and to register. I always enjoy speaking to graduates and working to offer the continuing education you want to receive here. Please email me at [workshop@nbss.org](mailto:workshop@nbss.org), or call with any questions, comments, suggestions, or ideas you have for the workshop program.



## BAC Hosts Student Exhibit

**T**HE BOSTON ARCHITECTURAL COLLEGE (BAC) on Newbury Street in Boston, once again played amiable host to the NBSS Annual Student Exhibit in April. Titled "The Past is Present", the exhibit featured works from all eight of the school's departments.



### ON VIEW

A tilt-top table in walnut with burl inlay by Edwin Hinspeter (CF '09) at the annual exhibition of student work.

On display were fifteen pieces of furniture, thirty-five creations from the Jewelry department, two recently completed violins, a series of Joseph Cornell inspired books from Bookbinding, photo documentation of recent Preservation Carpentry projects, a thirteen foot mock up of a Victorian house frame provided by the Carpentry department, examples of historic locks dating back to the 18th century, and a recently renovated Steinway from the Piano department. Recently appointed Associate Director Claire Fruitman introduced herself in her welcoming remarks at the exhibit's reception. "The BAC is one of the best places for our student show because of its great location," she said in her opening statement. "We are fortunate that the two schools have established such a great partnership, and owe special thanks to BAC President Ted Landsmark, a former member of our own Board of Directors."

The Student Exhibit in the spring of 2009 will return to the BAC. ●



# Year-long Study Yields Strategic Business Plan

The study confirmed the value of the workshop program, and identified three distinct roles that it plays in the school.

admissions and profitability trends in the full time and workshop programs. A market-place survey was also undertaken of competing programs for each department as well as employment prospects for graduates of individual programs.

The constituent survey found that the key strengths of North Bennet Street School are embedded in its traditions and in its emphasis on quality education and excellence in craftsmanship. The survey revealed strong satisfac-

tion levels for course instructors, course curriculum, the application and enrollment process, and the overall experience. For each of these four areas tested in the survey, over 90% of workshop student respondents and over 80% of full time program respondents provided a rating of "Good" or "Excellent," with a higher proportion consistently choosing "Excellent."

While satisfaction rates were consistent, there were key differences found in the characteristics of students from each of the full time and workshop programs, indicating the need for a number of distinct strategies for the future. In addition, differences were found between the current student body and prospective students. Prospective students included a higher proportion of females, a higher proportion of out-of-state residents, and were somewhat younger than current students.

The study confirmed the value of the workshop program, established in 1991,

and identified three distinct roles that it plays in the school. Workshops function as a recruiting and screening mechanism for the full time programs, as an avenue for the school to engage individuals with a general interest in the craft trades, and as a way of connecting graduates and craft professionals to the school through advanced or "master classes."

In its financial analysis, the study found that over the years both the full time and workshop programs have produced inconsistent financial results for the school, due primarily to the relatively small numbers of students in each program and the dramatic impact of fluctuations in enrollment on school finances. While a single student dropping out of a program can have a disproportionate negative effect on a program's profitability, the study noted that the opposite is also true: modest gains in the numbers of students who complete the year can improve the school's finances dramatically.

The committee identified a number of "barriers to enrollment", the most significant of which is the cost of a craft education and the lack of financial assistance. The recent student loan crisis has put additional pressure on student finances, and the study concluded that without improved availability of scholarships, there will be a reduction in enrollment and an eroding of the broad student base that currently exists as tuition becomes cost prohibitive. But despite all of the pressures on enrollments and finances, the overall application, enrollment and employment data demonstrated a strong demand for both the full time and workshop programs, and that the market would support program expansion in several areas. Based on the research findings, the committee developed five core goals and corresponding

implementation strategies that will refine the school's operating model.

The first three goals focus on the overarching need to increase the pool of qualified applicants to the school. The foundation for this effort, according to the plan, is preserving the school's tradition of excellence and quality craftsmanship while at the same time promoting the school's reputation and raising its prominence in the community. A three pronged strategy is proposed that includes meeting the needs of practicing professionals in the trades through master classes, using the gallery and public programs to establish the school as a community resource for individuals interested in craft, and engaging a new generation in the value of hand skills by returning to the school's roots with programs for youth in area schools.

The committee also recognized that for the pool of qualified applicants to remain strong, the cost of an education at North Bennet Street School must be kept afford-

able for a broad range of students. To do this, the report proposes a significant increase in the amount of scholarship money that is made available to students. (See related story page one.)

A second set of goals focuses on the need to improve operations and efficiency. The report notes that the school's existing resources can be used more effectively by increasing the numbers of students in programs that indicate strong market demand. The report also recommends a number of administrative improvements, including the replacement of the school's information management systems, and enhancement of the school's capabilities in the areas of marketing and communications.

The final goal identified by the report is the improvement of the school's facilities. In the research phase, TDC found that the existing North End buildings are overcrowded and inappropriate for school activities in many ways, and that only minimal enhancements to existing

programs are possible within the confines of the existing facility. In addition, the research found that students, faculty and staff alike are not happy with the temporary resolution of establishing a separate facility for two programs in Arlington. The Business Plan calls on the administration to work aggressively over the next 18 months to identify a solution to the school's facility needs. The report identifies a set of pre-

ferred characteristics for an improved facility, including a North End location, a location that allows for consolidation of all existing programs with the potential for modest growth, an open floor plan suitable for the school's needs, and the possibility of below market rate financing.

The timetable for implementation of the newly approved plan calls for replacement of the school's database, allocation of additional resources for marketing and outreach, and the first steps toward a significant increase in financial aid all to take place over the course of the coming year.

## QUESTIONS

What is the potential to improve or expand each of the various programs at the School?

What are the income and expense implications of acting on these opportunities?

What is an adequate facility to support the program currently and with any potential enhancements?

Can the School generate the capital support to realize this vision?

## THE COMMITTEE

### NBSS BOARD MEMBERS

Daniel Cheever  
Burton Harris  
Amos Hostetter  
Jim McNeely

### NBSS STAFF

Miguel Gomez-Ibanez, Executive Director  
Jourdan Abel, Workshop Director  
Steve Brown, Cabinet & Furniture Making Department Head  
Robert Delaney, Director of Admissions  
Claire Fruitman, Associate Director  
Maria Schauer, Business Manager/CFO

Prospective students included a higher proportion of females, a higher proportion of out-of-state residents, and were somewhat younger than current students.

## AMERICAN CRAFT COUNCIL HEAD ADDRESSES GRADS

# “Keepers of our Collective Flame.”

COMMENCEMENT 2008

**F**AMILY AND FRIENDS of the 85 members of North Bennet Street School's Class of 2008 gathered in Old North Church May 30 to receive their diplomas and celebrate their achievements.

The commencement speaker was Andrew Glasgow, Executive Director of the American Craft Council based in New York. Glasgow's address focused on the unique nature of a North Bennet Street School education. “At a time when abstract concepts in education have taken precedence over any technical skills, you have chosen a time-honored method of learning,” he said to the assembled graduates. “When I encounter someone from NBSS, it is akin to someone on Wall Street encountering an individual with a Harvard MBA. We know we are dealing with the best, and, we know we can speak a shared language.”



ANDREW GLASGOW

Glasgow noted that the school's traditional focus on hand skills and technical ability was not in opposition to conceptual thinking, but rather complementary to it. “In my estimation, this combination makes for a well balanced life. The knowledge you have gained from this special ability



### PRESERVATION CARPENTRY

students gather to receive their diplomas: (l to r) Adam Rissolo, Tara Hrynik, Brian Horne, Adam Reitano, Amy Kellett, Michael Bernstein and Lucas Davisson.

related to process and technique, no doubt, nourishes your soul,” he said.

Addressing the ongoing debate at the American Craft Council about the meaning and value of the word “craft”, Glasgow described North Bennet Street School students as “traditional makers who are highly trained and who value technical ability as much as concept,” and “the keepers of our collective flame.”

He added “your North Bennet Street School education is rare in today's world; it sets you apart. It also gives you a front row seat at the ongoing debate of how the craft world views itself. There is some responsibility with that seat; your involvement would be welcome and appreciated. You have much to offer.”

## Feinmann wins alumni award

**C**ONSTRUCTION professional Peter Feinmann of Arlington, a 1983 graduate of the carpentry program, was named by the Alumni Steering Committee as its 2008 Distinguished Alumnus of the Year during graduation ceremonies this May at Old North Church.

Feinmann, who runs the award-winning residential remodeling and construction firm Feinmann, Inc. in Lexington, is widely known for his efforts in bringing greater financial discipline to the construction management process, and for the overall excellence of his company's residential design and construction work. The firm was named 2008 Remodeler of the Year by the Builder's Association of Greater Boston, and received a Market Leaders Award in 2007 from Professional Remodeler Magazine.

The Distinguished Alumni Award recognizes an alumnus who has shown outstanding achievement in his/her craft and who has advanced the body of knowledge in his/her particular trade,” said Heather Proffitt (PC '04), chairperson emeritus of the Alumni Steering Committee. “The award recognizes not just Peter's past achievements, but also his continuing dedication to the field of residential construction. Through all his success, Peter has never forgotten his roots at the North Bennet Street School.”

## Benchmarks

The newsletter of the  
**North Bennet Street School**  
39 North Bennet Street, Boston, MA 02113  
(617) 227-0155

**Do you have news to share?**  
Contact us at [newsletter@nbss.org](mailto:newsletter@nbss.org)

# NBSS Alumni News

## PRESERVATION CARPENTRY

**Tara Hrynik ('08)** has begun her career in historic preservation working for the National Park Service in Fredericksburg, MD.

The Boston Globe featured the work of the second year Preservation Carpentry class on a Shaker herb drying shed in Harvard, MA. Students replicated two doors and replaced a slate roof. 2008 graduates **Tara Hrynik, Josh Ewart, Nat Hill,** and **Michael Bernstein** were quoted in the article.

**Steve O'Shaughnessy ('99)** led the first year class through restoration work on sash from two Historic New England properties, the Otis House in Boston and the Josiah Quincy House in Quincy. Some of the Quincy House sash were from the structure's unusual monitor roof.

**Adam Rissolo ('08)** is working for 53 Restorations in New York City. He just finished restoring the main entry to the Frick Collection, a beautiful set of 1914 quartersawn white oak pocket doors. He's also been to Newport, RI to work on a door and window restoration of the mansion Miramar.

**Rich Friberg ('04)** and his wife Cheryl are the proud parents of a son, Benjamin Noah Friberg, born on May 12, 2008.

**Heather Proffitt ('04)** married her fiancé Carl on September 13th in Groton, MA. **Rich Friberg ('04)** and **Greg Cope ('04)** were in attendance with their wives. Heather and Carl met volunteering to help a friend with a carpentry project.

## CABINET AND FURNITURE MAKING

**Jamey Pope ('06)** is taking the lead on teaching the Three Month Furniture Making Intensive at the school this fall.

**Maurice L. Bombar, Jr. ('87)** of Bellevue, WA died on May 10. Maurice was an enthusiastic supporter of the school and focused particularly on carving and gilding after graduation. His reproduction of an 18th Century Georgian chair was featured in Fine Woodworking.

**Harrelson Stanley ('85)** and his Japanese style workbench were featured in a Woodworking magazine weblog this spring. After graduation Harrelson went to Japan to study traditional lacquering and woodworking. He's now living in Massachusetts and owns [JapaneseTools.com](http://JapaneseTools.com).

**Earl Powell ('08)** has received the Design Management Institute's highest honor, DMI Life Fellow. Earl is President Emeritus of the Design

Management Institute and led the organization for two decades.

Taunton Press' new book *Fine Woodworking's Furniture: 102 Contemporary Designs*, includes work of **Bill Doub ('73)** and **Miguel Gómez-Ibáñez ('99)**.

**Bruce Eaton ('06)** and **Matt Wajda ('00)** both had pieces in the Wentworth-Gardner House Exhibit this summer in Portsmouth, NH. The exhibit features furniture inspired by the architecture of the Wentworth-Gardner House and created by the artist at the Mill at Salmon Falls.

**Storm Mandeville ('02)** died tragically at his home in Revere, MA this spring. Fellow students knew Storm to be a very open, friendly person, with a big personality and great, self-deprecating sense of humor. A former mason, he thoroughly enjoyed his time at the school, taking



**BRIAN WELDY (CF '01)** is an apprentice cabinetmaker at Colonial Williamsburg. He will be one of the speakers in January 2009 *Woodworking in the 18th Century: Bedroom Furniture* conference at Colonial Williamsburg.

great pride in his projects. He left behind many friends at the school and will be greatly missed.

**Scott Schmidt ('85)** is now Supervisor of the Fabrication Unit of the Smithsonian Institution in DC.

**John McCormack ('88)** published an article, The Ultimate Crosscut Sled, in the July/Aug. issue of Fine Woodworking. In conjunction with the article, John taught a crosscut sled workshop at NBSS this summer.

**Kevin Mack ('08)** reports that nine months after finishing his studies he is really seeing the efforts pay off. “I have begun to secure more work than I can handle,” he says and, “The North Bennet Street name opens more doors than I imagined.” He will be at the 2008 Providence Fine Furnishings Show exhibiting some of his new work.

**Ryan Rhoades ('08)** spent the summer helping to rebuild Earl Powell's '72 Airstream Overlander. Currently he is working for Sequencia fine gardening and teaching furniture making to adults and teens at the Eliot School in Jamaica Plain. Ryan is also looking for employment in a local shop. Contact him at [humanhandwork@gmail.com](mailto:humanhandwork@gmail.com)

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# NBSS Alumni News

## BOOKBINDING

**Chela Metzger ('93)** was part of a group from the University of Texas involved in the preservation and assessment of colonial libraries in Arequipa, Peru. She says, "Our hopeful declaration that there would be no mold problem in this very dry environment proved premature."

**Stacie Dolin ('00)** has long been a strong part of NBSS's introductory bookbinding workshops and is now teaching the first ever Three Month Bookbinding Intensive.

**Monica Feeney's ('08)** boyfriend popped the question last spring. How did he do it? With a photo album crafted by **Wendy Withrow ('08)**. The last photo in the album had the caption "Will you marry me?" The answer was a decided "yes."

Three NBSSers were awarded scholarships from the Guild of Book Workers to attend the Conference on Standards of Excellence in Hand Bookbinding scheduled for October 2008 in Toronto. The recipients are **Bexx Caswell ('09)**, **Alegria Barclay ('07)**, and **Wendy Withrow ('08)**.

This March **AnnMarie Ostrowski ('01)** accepted a Conservation Technician position at the Weissman Preservation Center, Harvard University. She had worked in the book lab at Harvard's Widener Library for five years and is excited about this chance to further develop her conservation skills.



**Johnny Carrera ('96)**, is making his New York City debut show at Synchronicity Fine Arts. "New Exchange: Prints and Collages" is the name of the show and three new monetary collages that are part of the "Fifth Freedom" series will be on display: Noah Webster (the back is shown above), John Adams and Freedom Fries.

This September **Amanda Nelson's ('07)** piece *Kinkade Recycled* was part of an exhibit at the Boston Children's museum "The Dirty Dozen: 12 Artists and a Ton of Trash." And speaking of children, Amanda gave birth to her first child Leo Auden Dell Abrahamson on June 28th. Congratulations Amanda and Will!

**Jake Benson ('95)** offered a series of workshops at the Pyramid Atlantic Arts Center, Silver Spring, MD this past spring, as well as a workshop hosted by the Potomac Chapter of the Guild of Bookworkers at the Folger Shakespeare Library in September. Jake is currently an undergraduate in Persian studies at the University of Maryland.

The "Inside Harvard" section of the Harvard University website profiled **Dorothy**

**Africa ('93)** this spring. Dorothy works at the Law School's Langdell library, preserving its oldest and rarest books. "I visit the stacks sometimes," she admits. "Just like Michelangelo - when he finished the Sistine Chapel, he could go look at it. That's what I do."

**Alan Haley ('93)** has been working for the Library of Congress since graduation. His title is Preservation Specialist and he is part of the Rare Book Treatment section of the Conservation Division. Recently he gave two day workshops on disaster preparedness and response as it affects cultural property. He has also done preservation assessments for collections in El Salvador, Iraq, and has just recently returned from Accra, Ghana where he assessed the condition of the W.E.B. Du Bois Library.

## JEWELRY MAKING AND REPAIR

**Alan Meltzer ('86)** is now producing a jewelry line that combines his love of fine jewelry design and his hobby, woodworking. The line is exotic hardwood jewelry geared toward the high end jewelry market. The company name is Albergo Di Vita.

**Ann Cahoon ('02)** and **Gretchen Furse ('03)** taught NBSS's first Jewelry Technician Certification Course for the workshop program this summer.

**Emily Scott ('07)** participated in the ARTBEAT craft show in Davis Square in Somerville this July.

**Jade Drakes ('08)** is working for DePrisco jewelers in Framingham.

**Bridget Garner ('08)** is working for Joel Bagnel Jewelers in Wellesley and Metro Jewelry Appraiser in Medford.

**Rosemary Trainor ('90)** joined the Board of the New England Jewelers Association this spring.

**Eva Martin ('03)** won first place in the 2008 Jewelry Arts Awards sponsored by Lapidary Journal Jewelry Artist.

**Denise Fenoglio ('06)** and **Cathy Bobzin ('06)** are showing work in the Dina Varano Gallery in Chester, CT.

## LOCKSMITHING

Locksmithing Instructor **Dave Troiano** was featured in the member spotlight section of *Keynotes* the official publication of ALOA (Associated Locksmiths of America). He was interviewed about his business and how he got started in the field. Dave says he is thinking about retiring from teaching. He said, "I will continue at Aborn Lock spending more time training my son Mike, in the area that I have traditionally taken care of myself, to ensure a smooth transition for him when I finally retire."

## VIOLIN MAKING AND REPAIR

**Peter Bingen ('05)** of Ukiah, CA, was profiled in the Launch Pad page of September's *Strad* Magazine. Launch Pad profiles promising young violin makers from around the world.

**Eric Rene Roy ('95)** is a partner at Upton Bass String Instrument Corp. in Stonington, CT. The fifteen employee company just moved out of downtown Mystic to a larger space and will be focusing on manufacturing its own brand of double basses. A line of violins is also in the works.

**Mike Disque ('05)** Works at the Steinway factory in New York, and reports that **Drew Carter ('05)** has been visiting from Montana as he searches for piano work in the city, and that **Hale Jacob (PA, '06)** is taking a break from piano work and studying for the LSAT test for graduate school.

**David Golber ('98)** has an instrument, a Hardanger fiddle, in the exhibition *Keepers of Tradition, Art and folk Heritage in Massachusetts*, at the National Heritage Museum in Lexington. The exhibition will be up until February 8, 2009.

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**Christina Thomas ('08)** was the first NBSS Intern to participate in a work-study program sponsored by The Associates of the Boston Public Library. Her projects included the conservation of 18th century French engravings, a 15th century German book on early Christian saints, and a 17th century medical dictionary owned by John Adams.



**Peter Feinmann (C '83)**, acknowledges being honored as the recipient of the 2008 Distinguished Alumni Award. Nominations are being solicited for next year's honoree.

## Call for Nominations

THE ALUMNI COUNCIL is seeking nominations for the **2009 DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD**. Do you know a graduate of NBSS that shines above the rest? This award is intended to highlight the achievements and contributions of graduates from all programs—graduates who have distinguished themselves within their craft and within their artistic community. In addition to celebrating individuals that have fostered excellence in traditional craft, this year the award may also be extended to an NBSS graduate who has given back to the greater community through service and commitment.

We hope you will join us in honoring our peers by taking the time to send in a nomination. Anyone affiliated with our NBSS community may submit a nomination. Please send a nomination via snail mail or email:

*Nominations may be sent to:*

stuserve@nbss.org or  
NBSS Alumni Services  
36 North Bennet Street  
Boston, MA 02113

Please include:  
Nominee Name  
Your name, address, telephone number and email address.  
A statement of why the nominee is deserving of the award.

# NBSS Alumni News

Continued from Page 13

Current student **Andrew Khederian, ('11)**, was profiled in his home town paper the *Plymouth Bulletin*. Andrew's interest in jazz guitar brought him to the school. "I really love it," he says of the program, "I knew it was something I wanted to do in my life."

**Paul Wargaski ('00)** won second place in last years Chicago Business Plan Competition. The competition, sponsored by Chicago Community Ventures, is organized every year to encourage small business development. Paul says the competition lead him to focus more effort on the instrument rental side of his business, and since that time rental revenue has increased five times.

## PIANO TECHNOLOGY

**John Foy ('81)** has just joined the staff of University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill as the full-time piano technician for the Department of Music. His piano rebuilding shop (John Foy Piano Restoration, Inc.) will continue under the operation of **John Johnson ('00)** and **Louis Del Bene ('07)**.

**Debbie Cyr ('93)** and **Emily Townsend ('08)** co-wrote a three part article on Ivory Keyboard Maintenance and Repair for the *Piano Technicians Journal*. Part 1 and 2 were published in the July and August issues of the magazine. Part 3 will be out in September.

**John Cavanaugh ('87)** has had a busy year traveling the globe to tune, to teach, and to learn about piano tuning. He's been to China, Germany, and Aspen, where he prepared a piano for Piotr Andrewzewski. In August he was at Tanglewood to do a voicing workshop with piano technology apprentices. He's still director of Piano Technology at the Oberlin Conservatory and Co-Director of the "Steinway at Oberlin" seminar. He is married to Sarah Colson, and has three daughters: Katherine, Sophie and Nora.

**H. Nancy (Iwasa) Bartlett ('99)** and **Michael Bartlett (VMR '99)** of Walpole welcomed their fourth child, Andrew Peter Bartlett on July 14th. Nancy is teaching piano and voice at Stoughton Music After School Program and Michael is working at Rayburn Music as a luthier.

**Dennis Erwin ('07)** and **Nate Reyburn ('08)** and were interviewed in the June *Piano Technicians Guild Journal* article, "Fathers, Sons, and Training in Piano Technology." Their fathers were also interviewed in this piece about continuing on in the family business and deciding to seek formal training at a school rather than an apprenticeship.

**Kevin Joseph Luke ('08)** stepped in at the last moment to play the organ at the school's graduation in May. Thank you Kevin!

**Claire Belback ('06)** returned to the Chicago area after graduation, married Brent Smith and had a daughter, Celeste. She is expecting a baby boy in October. Claire has also been establishing her own piano clientele and is doing contract work for Family Piano Co. in Waukegan.

**Lauri Greco ('04)** is currently living in Mesa, Arizona with her husband Lance and baby girl Maelee. She says, "I've tried to cut back on my tuning, but somehow it seems I'm still too busy! I mostly do private tunings, but also do tunings for AZ Piano dealership. I wanted to become a piano technician because of the flexibility it provides, and it has turned out to be a perfect career for me and my family!"

## CARPENTRY

**Lee Noel Chase (CA '92, PC '94)** is currently enrolled at the Boston Architectural College and has completed her first year of a Masters in Architecture. Amazingly, **Lou Hamil (PC '93)** was in one of her math classes. She lives in Lexington with her three year old son, Haynes Porter, and works full-time at an architectural firm in Cambridge.

**Sean Hardeo ('06)** appeared in the City/Weekly section of *The Boston Globe* in September. The article described Sean's work in getting NBSS's chapter of Habitat for Humanity up and running. "When I started this, I had no idea what it would become," he says of the school's chapter of Habitat. "Its grown every year and I applaud them (NBSS students)."



**MADE TO ORDER** Six new benches were installed this fall in the Violin Department thanks to a foundation grant.. The benches were specially designed by Violin Department Head Roman Barnas and constructed by graduates Ken Craggs (CF '07), Christoph Streubert (CF '09) and Mike Leggett (CF '08).

## 2ND ANNUAL ALUMNI PARTY



**T**O CELEBRATE Walter McDonald's thirty-plus years of service to the North Bennet Street School over two hundred alumni gathered on Saturday, March 1 at the Charlestown Knights of Columbus for a surprise party honoring the former Associate Director (and current, part-time Financial Aid Director). On hand were alumni from all departments, and several decades.

"It was great to see everyone," said Violin graduate Jess Fox "I got to catch up with Jeff Scotto and James Raffin," two schoolmates she hadn't spoken to since graduation.

Coordinated by the Alumni Council, this was the 2nd time the North Bennet Street School community gathered for a party meant to bring current students together with those who have gone before them.

"I'm old enough to have met lots of people from all walks of life," said Dennis McCarten, a 2006 graduate from the Violin program. "But none are more interesting or fun than my NBSS peers. People who immerse themselves in handwork are just more fun to be around."

The Alumni Council chose an Appalachian theme for the evening, with a makeshift house front constructed on a stage, and the musical stylings of one-man-band Eric Royer - who played slide guitar, mandolin and a "foot guitar." In addition to connecting with old friends, the party also featured door prizes from such suppliers as Talas, Rockler, Gesswein, ALOA, Lie Nielsen, Boston Gems and Findings, Pianotek Supply, Johnson String, Woodcraft, International Violin and several others. ●



**North Bennet Street School** participates in a variety of cultural festivals throughout the year, thanks in part to funding from the **Massachusetts Cultural Council**. We are grateful to the Council for this ongoing support.

# NBSS Calendar

October 19, 2008 – January 25, 2009

**TRADITIONAL CRAFTSMANSHIP - NON TRADITIONAL EDUCATION**  
**Furniture by NBSS students**  
Fuller Craft Museum, Brockton, MA

October 24 – 26, 2008

**FINE FURNISHINGS PROVIDENCE**

November 7 – 8, 2008

**NBSS ANNUAL OPEN HOUSE**

November 13 – 15, 2008

**CRAFT BOSTON HOLIDAY**

Westin Waterfront, Boston

December 19, 2008

**TABLE HOCKEY CHAMPIONSHIP TOURNAMENT FINALS**

January 29, 2009

**FREE PUBLIC PROGRAM: CHENA RIVER MARBELERS**

Artist's Talk and Demo with Regina and Dan St. John  
North Bennet Street School

February 21 – May 24, 2009

**CRAFT IN AMERICA**

Fuller Craft Museum, Brockton, MA

February 26, 2009

**FREE PUBLIC LECTURE: CYNTHIA EID**

Artist's Talk with Cynthia Eid, Metalsmith  
North Bennet Street School

March 7, 2009

**THIRD ANNUAL STUDENT ALUMNI PARTY**

Location to be announced

March 27 – 29, 2009

**CRAFT BOSTON**

Seaport World Trade Center, Boston

April 9, 2009

**FREE PUBLIC LECTURE: SHANNA LEINO**

**Bookbinder and toolmaker**  
North Bennet Street School

April 2009

**ANNUAL EXHIBITION OF STUDENT WORK**

Boston Architectural College

May 29, 2009

**GRADUATION EXERCISES**

Old North Church



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# openhouse

Friday, November 7, 2008 10am – 2pm

Saturday, November 8, 2008 10am – 3pm

See extraordinary craftwork in progress.

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CARPENTRY

JEWELRY MAKING & REPAIR

LOCKSMITHING

PIANO TECHNOLOGY

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