

# Benchmarks

SPRING 2008 | WWW.NBSS.ORG

## Fruitman named Associate Director

**C**LAIRE FRUITMAN (CF '96), a former instructor in the Cabinet and Furniture Making Department, has been named to succeed Walter McDonald, who stepped down as Associate Director of North Bennet Street School in 2007 after 30 years. She has taken over administrative responsibility for all educational programs at the school, including the eight full time programs and the workshop program.

"It is very exciting for me to be at North Bennet in the capacity of Associate Director. Having been around since 1993, I know the school and how it works. I know its rewards and its challenges better than an outsider could. As a graduate of the

*Continued on Page 6*

## Challenge grant bolsters scholarship endowment

**T**HANKS to an enthusiastic response to its appeal for scholarship support, North Bennet Street School has raised its fundraising goal for the recently established Walter McDonald Scholarship Endowment.

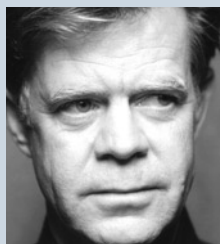
"We haven't set a specific new target," said Board of Directors President **Burton Harris** (CF'96), "but I think it is realistic to hope that the scholarship endowment can reach the million dollar level within the next three years." At the start of the campaign, the endowment value was \$245,000 and an initial goal of an additional \$200,000 was set that would have nearly doubled the endowment.

That initial goal was eclipsed in December with the announcement of a matching grant from an anonymous national foundation. Under the terms of the grant, up to \$100,000 in contribu-

tions to the Scholarship Endowment Fund will be matched each year for the next three years. After receiving several leadership gifts for the fund this fall, the first year's \$100,000 of matching foundation support was received by the school in January. The endowment's value is now over \$500,000.

"We have received a very generous gift from a foundation that is known for supporting leading craft organizations across the country," said Executive Director **Miguel Gómez-Ibáñez** (CF'99). "The fact that North Bennet Street School is known and respected by a foundation that is well outside our geographic area is more evidence of the school's national reputation. We are very grateful, especially because they have recognized the critical role that scholarship funds will play in maintaining that reputation."

*Continued on Page 2*



### **WILLIAM H. MACY**

What does a movie star do during a break in filming? Visit the North Bennet Street School, of course. Page 5.



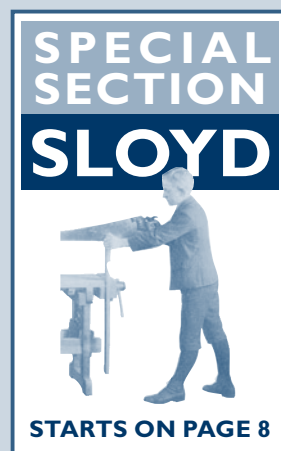
### **MAYOR TOM MENINO**

Boston's Mayor pays a visit and charms everyone with his down-to-earth manner. Page 4.



### **ONLY A GAME**

Karen Given of NPR's *Only a Game* covers Table Hockey, and NBSS athletes finally get some respect. Page 4



# Challenge grant boosts endowment

Continued from Page 1

The school has three years in which to raise its share of the \$300,000 match, which would bring the endowment value to over \$900,000.

The Scholarship Endowment Fund was established at its meeting in June 2007 by the Board of Directors in honor of Associate Director Walter McDonald's 30 years of service to the school.

The school's 2007 Annual Report, titled *The Commitment to Craftsmanship*, was written by current North Bennet Street students who offered their own experience to illustrate the need for additional scholarship funds. ●

## ALUMNI CHALLENGE

### Keep those cards and letters coming...

**A**N ANONYMOUS Board member has posed a challenge to the graduates of North Bennet Street School: If alumni, as a group, can surpass their total giving to last year's Annual Appeal, all donations beyond that will be matched dollar-for-dollar up to \$50,000. Last year's alumni total was \$48,500.

"We hope that the challenge encourages all alumni to give at whatever level they can. Increasing the number of graduates who support the school each year is critical and no donation is too small," says Director of Development **Sheila Perry**. "In fact, the challenge essentially allows people to double the impact of their gift."

"We know the School and its future are important to the alumni," says Perry. "Hopefully, this initiative will inspire those who have the ability to give something back." ●

## Conference room table donated by Pomeroy & Co.

**T**HE FRIENDS AND ALUMNI of Pomeroy & Co., Inc. have designed, fabricated and donated a mahogany conference table for the new meeting room on the second floor of Shaw House. The table is twelve feet long and four feet wide at its widest, with four-way book

matched figured mahogany veneer and a molded mahogany edge.

Pomeroy & Co., Inc., an architectural woodworking and general contracting company, specializes in custom restoration and new construction projects in greater Boston and beyond. Located in Charlestown, MA, the company's focus is on quality craftsmanship and the execution of detailed designs. **Greg Pomeroy**, founder and self taught carpenter/woodworker, traded in his adze and rabbet plane for an IBM Selectric and thermal paper fax machine when he incorporated in 1989. The company now employs 35 people, seven of which are alumni of NBSS. For many years Greg has served as an advisor to the school's Carpentry Department and is currently on the Board of Overseers at the school.

Pomeroy staff members include North Bennet Street School graduates **Erik Sherwood (CA'02)**, **Jennifer (Patsos) Mello (PC'01)**, **Barry Mann (PC'97)**, **Peter Monius (CA'88)**, **Andrew Ingalls (PC'03)**, **Andrew Gelling (CA'06)** and **Jeffrey Stanleys (PC'07)**. Jennifer Mello was the Pomeroy & Co. Project Manager for the conference table. ●



POMEROY



## Alden Trust funds capital improvements

**I**N DECEMBER, the trustees of the George I. Alden Trust awarded North Bennet Street School a grant of \$90,000 to support a number of critical capital improvements to the North End buildings. The projects supported by the grant address six life safety, building envelope, educational efficacy or code compliance issues.

Improvements to the educational facilities include new workbenches and storage cabinets for the Violin Department that meet the unique needs of violin makers. The existing benches, more appropriate for restorers, will be replaced by benches that allow students to work with vises specifically designed to hold instrument parts under construction.

A remote air conditioning system will be installed in the second floor Piano Technology classroom, replacing the existing window mounted units which generate too much noise for students to properly hear intervals when tuning. The Alden grant will fund a split system with a remote roof mounted condenser, effec-



EXTERIOR MASONRY REPAIRS underway on the North Bennet Street façade

tively removing the source of any distracting noise.

In the Jewelry Department, a new flashback control system for jewelry torches will be installed to prevent flashbacks that occur when high pressure oxygen overcomes the normally low pressure of natural gas. The new equipment will meet new standards set by the Fire Safety Board.

Life safety and building envelope improvements

include pointing and repair of the fourth floor brickwork on North Bennet Street as well as roof repairs at the main building, slate replacement at the Greener Building roof and the relocation of rain water leaders at Shaw House to prevent basement leaks.

Code compliance repairs will also be made to the fourth floor toilet room in the Cabinet and Furniture Making Department.

Plans for all six projects are moving forward and work is expected to be completed by the start of the next school year. ●

## Shaw Society honors annual donors

**L**AST FALL the Board of Directors approved the establishment of the Pauline Agassiz Shaw Society to recognize North Bennet Street School's most generous annual supporters.

Named in honor of the school's founder and first benefactor, the Society welcomes individuals, foundations or businesses who donate \$1,000 or more in unrestricted gifts during the fiscal year. This includes gifts to the Annual Evening of Traditional Craft and most gifts to the Annual Appeal. The Society currently has 82 members, including 18 new donors this year.

Director of Development **Sheila Perry** says, "Shaw Society members, through

their support of the school's core operations, cast an important vote of confidence in our programs and our mission.

"This group of donors is loyal and it is growing and we wanted to find a way to formally acknowledge the importance of their support. The establishment of the Shaw Society seemed fitting."

The Society's roster will be published each year in the *Annual Report* and members will have the opportunity to continue learning about all aspects of the school and the traditional craft community at special programs and events.

For information on becoming a member of the Shaw Society, call Sheila Perry at 617-227-0155, ext. 111. ●

## Joseph Newman scholarship fund established

**A**FUND IN MEMORY of bookbinder Joseph Newman has been established by his former colleagues at Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC). The Joseph Newman Scholarship Fund will be used to benefit bookbinding students at the North Bennet Street School.

Joseph Newman, who died in 2007 after a lengthy battle with lung cancer, started his career as an apprentice at Harcourt Bindery in Boston and later became the shop manager.

He left the Harcourt to start a small binding business, Pride's Crossing Bindery in Beverly Farms, which he successfully ran for four years. He joined the staff at the NEDCC in 1983 where he worked as a book conservator for more than twenty years.

Newman was involved in the founding of North Bennet Street School's Bookbinding Department in 1986. According to then Associate Director Walter McDonald, "he was one of the first people I talked to and I asked him to be the instructor, but he didn't feel he could leave NEDCC."

"Joe Newman was a skilled and talented bookbinder and conservator," said Deborah Wender, Director of Book Conservation at NEDCC. "Joe was a generous mentor and teacher and many benefited greatly from his connoisseurship and knowledge of binding history. Joe's willingness to share his knowledge and love of books with his colleagues at NEDCC earned him the nickname 'The River.'"

He believed strongly that bookbinding skills were best learned by spending time at the bench. ●



NEWMAN



# Only A Game

from WBUR Boston and NPR®

IN JANUARY, fans of National Public Radio's award-winning *Only A Game* sports show were treated to virtual rinkside seats for the 9th annual North Bennet Street School Table Hockey Tournament.

The 11-minute segment,



**A JUMBOTRON SIMULCAST** captured each slapstick moment

broadcast over 165 NPR member stations with a combined nationwide listenership of 400,000, offered up an authentic and very humorous portrayal of the school and its only legitimate varsity sport – table hockey.

The story featured interviews with various NBSS students as they made their way through the tournament's preliminary rounds. At the finals, all the sounds of this major sporting event were captured on tape – the singing of the national anthem, a fly-over (using paper airplanes) and a slickly produced half-time show featuring a sing-a-long led by Walter MacDonald on clawhammer banjo.

The packed house cheered and jeered as Joseph Balboni ('08) from the Jewelry Making department defeated Violin

Making student Sef Gray ('08) for the coveted title of NBSS table hockey champion.

Joe was then presented with the Andersson Cup, an under-sized replica of the NHL's Stanley Cup expertly crafted from mahogany by students in the Cabinet and Furniture Making department.

"We had a tremendous response to the show," said Executive Director Miguel

Gómez-Ibáñez. "I heard from alums all over the country."

But the most unusual response came from the Fenn School in Concord, Mass. "Apparently, their sixth grade boys also play table hockey. They're thinking about mounting a challenge," he said. [You can hear the segment by visiting [www.nbss.org](http://www.nbss.org) and clicking the *Only A Game* link on the homepage.] ●



**NPR'S ONLY A GAME** reporter Karen Given interviews champion Joseph Balboni about his training regimen



**BOSTON MAYOR THOMAS MENINO** toured North Bennet Street School this March, bringing with him representatives from the Boston Public Schools. The Mayor visited each of the departments, talking with students and teachers, including (at left) Piano Instructor David Betts and (at right) Violin student Andrew Khederian (VR'11). Impressed with a Federal secretary by Dave Benetello (CF'08), he said "This is great — just great. I can't believe what goes on here!"



## William H. Macy stars in visit to North Bennet Street School

**A**CTOR William H. Macy, star of *Boogie Nights*, *Fargo* and *The Deal* and husband of *Desperate Housewives* star Felicity Huffman, took time off from work in December to visit North Bennet Street School. Macy was in Boston for the filming of a new movie, *The Lonely Maiden*, a comedy scheduled for release this fall. In addition to being an award winning actor, Macy is an avid bowl turner. When offered a chance to tour the school, he was enthusiastic in his acceptance. But getting the offer through layers of security to the Los Angeles based actor was not easy. It took Jason Gregoricus, Director of Student Services, over one year.

Jason's quest began in September 2006, when a student suggested Macy as the 2007 graduation speaker, after seeing him on the cover of *Fine Woodworking* magazine. The magazine provided the contact information for Macy's Personal Assistant in LA.

"I got nowhere. I fell flat on my face," said Gregoricus. "I never got through to Macy. But nearly a year later, Billy Chubb, a piano student, came to me and said that he saw Macy filming a movie near the Paul Revere statue. 'Let me get this straight,' I said, 'he's right around the corner, literally, from the school? I knew I had to try again.'"

Gregoricus, Gallery Manager Ken Craggs (CF'07) and Andy Glenn (CF'08) assembled a gift

bag for Macy, including a school catalogue, roll skirt and ball cap, a mahogany turning blank and a letter inviting Macy to the school. "My plan was simple," says Gregoricus, "Get on the set and give the bag – in person – to Macy and try not to get arrested in the process."

He made his way through one set of security guards after another, replying "Delivery for William H. Macy" and opening the bag for inspection every time he heard "Hey, buddy, you can't go over there!" He was able to get to Marika, the film's Production Assistant, only to learn that Macy had left for LA two hours earlier. But after hearing the story behind the gift bag, she agreed to pass it on to the actor when he returned.

Seven days later, Gregoricus got

a voicemail. "Hey, Jason! It's Shawn Tanaka with William H. Macy calling. First of all, Bill wanted to thank you for sending over the bowl blank and all the stuff that went along with it. They're just fantastic. As you know, Bill is a wood turner and obviously he was happy to receive it. And he would like to take you up on your offer to take a tour and come by and see the place"

On Tuesday morning, December 4, William H. Macy arrived with his personal assistant for a tour of the school. He spent over an hour, visiting each department and speaking with students and faculty members about their work.

In the Locksmith Department, Macy was presented with an original 20 pound cast-iron jail cell lock from the old Charles Street Jail. The jail was renovated in 2007 and is now the Liberty Hotel, where Macy was staying during the filming. "I'll bring this down to the front desk tomorrow and tell them my lock isn't working and I need another key," he said.

After the visit, Macy did respond to the graduation invitation, saying his work and family schedule did not leave time for a return visit in May, but he added: "I can't tell you how flattering it is that you would want me to deliver the commencement address. I have great respect for the North Bennet Street School and the work and excellence that comes out of it." ●



**TURNING POINTS** Workshop instructor Janet Collins, Executive Director Miguel Gómez-Ibáñez and actor William H. Macy examine a bowl being made by workshop students



# Claire Fruitman named Associate Director

Continued from Page 1  
Cabinet and Furniture Making program, I understand what it is to be a student here...and having taught in the Cabinet and Furniture Making program, I know what the days are like for our teachers," she said.  
Fruitman worked as a stylist in the advertising industry in New York for ten years before turning to furniture making. After being inspired by the New American Furniture exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts Boston in 1989, she worked as an apprentice for several furniture makers and a blacksmith before enrolling in a two month intensive workshop at



FRUITMAN

Penland School of Crafts in North Carolina.  
"After Penland," she notes, "the studio furniture programs at RIT, RISD and UMASS Dartmouth seemed to be logical choices, but I felt that a strong foundation in technical skill would serve me better than studying design first. North Bennet provided exactly what I needed. I applied to the Cabinet and Furniture Making program and began my studies in March of 1994. When I graduated in March of 1996, I joined seven people — including instructors Lance Patterson and Alex Krutsky (CF'81) at Fort Point Cabinetmakers, a long time cooperative woodworking

shop in Boston. I remained a part of it for ten years. Over the next few years I built my furniture making business making commissions and my own spec pieces. One day, five years after I graduated, I received a call at the shop from Walter McDonald. 'Claire, Will Neptune is taking a leave of absence. Would you like to teach for a year?' I didn't even have to think about it before answering, 'yes, please.' That one year turned into six."  
Since starting in the fall, Fruitman has been working with new Workshop Director Jourdan Abel to restructure and expand the workshop program, redesign the workshop catalogue, expand the number of full time programs represented in the workshop program and develop new strategies for



GRIFFIN BRAM

marketing and outreach. She also started a new family with her husband Brian Bram with the birth of their son, Griffin Riley Bram in October.  
"With the help of students, teachers, alumni, board members and staff, we can further the mission of the school while we make the experience of being here all it can and should be for everyone," she said. "I invite each of you to share with me your ideas, comments, criticism, feedback, hopes and dreams. I am always ready to listen and discuss. You can email me at [associatedirector@nbss.org](mailto:associatedirector@nbss.org), call me at extension 117 or stop into my office in the Shaw House Link. My door is (almost) always open and I look forward to hearing from you." ●

# Intern opportunities expand for bookbinders

OPPORTUNITIES for students in the Bookbinding Department to supplement their bindery experience with internships continue to expand as a result of two sources of additional funding and a newly-established relationship with the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.  
The Associates of the Boston Public Library and North Bennet Street School have established a new partnership that will provide an internship for a second year Bookbinding student at the library's Conservation Laboratory. The project is an outgrowth of meetings held last fall between the school and the library in

response to an article in *The Boston Globe* concerning the deteriorating condition of many rare books in the library's collection, including the historic collection from the Adams library.  
Second year student Christina Thomas (BB'08) of Oren, UT will serve as the first intern, working with Conservation Librarian Stuart Walker.  
Calling the new internship "a mutually beneficial opportunity," Betsy Hall, Executive



THOMAS

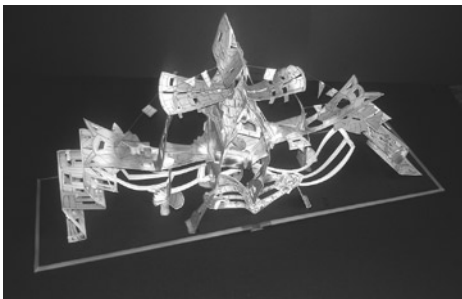
Director of the Associates said that the group "is very pleased with this collaboration and is looking forward to a long and fruitful relationship."  
The internship program at the Boston Athenaeum will expand as a result of an additional grant from the Von Clemm Foundation sponsored by Lisa Von Clemm, a member of the school's Board of Directors. The grant funding will support a full-time six-month internship at the Athenaeum's conservation department.  
The availability of paid internships for North Bennet Street students of book

conservation will become increasingly important as the joint Simmons College/ NBSS Masters program in book conservation is developed. "The news is good," according to James Reid-Cunningham (BB'90), Chief Conservator of the Boston Athenaeum, who added that the internships "will be essential if we want to compete with other graduate school programs."  
In addition to internships at the Athenaeum and BPL, an unpaid internship has been established at the Art of the Ancient World library of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. The position was created through the efforts of NBSS Board member Marie Oedel (BB'02) and is held this year by second-year student Yumiko Harris (BB'08). ●

THE WORKSHOP PROGRAM at North Bennet Street School is expanding. We received feedback from alumni that you'd like to see more professional development and advanced classes in the catalog and several have been lined up for the summer.  
In the Bookbinding world, we've got British pop-up superstar Paul Johnson coming in July for a free lecture and two days of workshops. Jeffrey Peachey is coming up from New York for an 18th Century French Bookbinding class and BB alum James Reid-Cunningham (BB'90) will be teaching Stiffboard Vellum Binding. We've got a new partnership with Simmons College and will be offering a Collections Maintenance course in conjunction with their library science program. Daniel Kelm is coming to Boston to teach a Chemistry for Binders course. We've also got Chena River Marblers coming for a marbling workshop and Mark Andersson (BB'92) returning from Arizona for a Gold Tooling workshop and Leaf Casting Symposium in June.  
In the Jewelry realm, we're pleased to announce our first Jewelry Technician Certification Course, taught by Ann Cahoon

## FROM THE WORKSHOP DIRECTOR

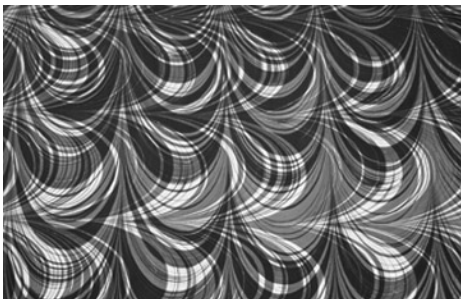
(JM'02) and Gretchen Furse (JM'04), which will prepare students for the JA Level One Certified Bench Technician Test. We're bringing Wayne Werner, winner of the MJS Vision Award for his Mokume Gane work in from Baltimore to teach this beautiful Japanese technique.  
And we haven't forgotten about the woodworkers! Brian Boggs returns again in June for his ever-popular Ladder Back Chair Making class. CFM instructor Dan Faia (CF'94) is offering several new carving classes this summer, from Federal and Sheraton Legs to Furniture Embellishment and he'll team up with Lance Patterson (CF'79) in August for a Clock Making Workshop. John McCormack (CF'88) is coming in from California to teach a workbench class and a Crosscut Sled Workshop in conjunction with his article on the same topic in the July/August issue of *Fine Woodworking*.  
There are many more exciting workshops happening this summer here at North Bennet Street School. Please visit our website to see them all and to register. We look forward to seeing you this summer!  
- Jourdan Abel, Workshop Director



PAUL JOHNSON'S POP-UP BOOKS



WAYNE WERNER: MOKUME GANE



CHENA RIVER MARBLERS



JOHN MCCORMACK'S WORKBENCH

# Mark Andersson leaves NBSS, heads west

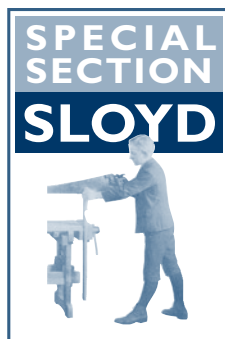
BOOKBINDING instructor Mark Andersson (BB'92) has moved with his family to the southwest after leading the department for 10 years, turning over responsibility of an expanding program to Jeffrey Altepeter (BB'99) in December. The changing of the guard was able to take place only after completion of the 9th annual table hockey championship tournament on December 14, 2007. The championship cup was re-named the Andersson Cup in Mark's honor at a ceremony recorded for National Public Radio immediately following the game. (See story on page 4)  
Mark Andersson came to North Bennet Street as a full-time bookbinding instructor in the fall of 1998, to take the place held by Sally Key for four years. He had graduated from the program under Mark Esser in 1992, worked at the Christian Science Church and the University of Washington, had been awarded a Fulbright Fellowship to study bookbinding in Sweden.



ANDERSSON

He brought several new projects to the curriculum, added photographic documentation for all repair and conservation projects and developed a regular schedule of monthly field trips. During his tenure the department moved from its basement location to the new second floor bindery and he was selected as national Vice President of the Guild of Book Workers.  
"Hiring Mark was one of the best decisions of my career", said Walter McDonald. "He was the realization of almost everything that defines a great teacher. He cared for students, set high standards for them without being overbearing and was constantly thinking about how to improve their learning experience. Not only that, he was an encouraging and thoughtful colleague, as well as a caring friend." ●





# Training “the whole person.”

Brought to America by NBSS in 1889, Sloyd system is still at the school's core

FROM THE BEGINNING, North Bennet Street School was a pioneer in advocating the value of hand skills training to society. The manual arts training movement known in Sweden as Educational Sloyd (slöjd means ‘craft’ or ‘manual skill’) was brought to this country in large part through the efforts of the school's founder, Pauline Agassiz Shaw.

During the period of the school's advocacy for Sloyd, starting in 1889 and extending through the beginning of the 20th century, the goals of manual arts training and its value to the individual as well as to society were vigorously debated. Over 100 years later, promoting the value of hand skills and craft training is still central to the school's mission, and Educational Sloyd remains the philosophical foundation of the educational programs at North Bennet Street School.

The Sloyd system adopted by North Bennet Street School in the 1890s had the effect of shifting the reliance on the

apprentice system for the teaching of traditional trades to a structured program in which tool processes, sequences and construction methods were analyzed and arranged in pedagogical order. A series of woodworking projects was developed in increasing order of complexity, with the result of each a useful household object. With the gradual introduction of new tools, new shapes and new hand skills, each successive project was intended to “secure the constant and proportionate development of mind and body” such that “each should prepare for the next, not only physically but mentally,” according to Sloyd founder Otto Salomon.

Central to this effort was the conviction that hand skills training was not only a path to employment, but of value to the individual for its own sake. North Bennet Street School teacher Lizzie Woodward wrote in 1893 that “books alone cannot restore that balance of mind and body from which purity of thought and life is derived.”

In the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1899, Harvard

Professor William James echoed that sentiment, writing that the value of manual training schools was “not because they will give us a people more handy and practical for domestic life and better skilled in trades, but because they will give us citizens with an entirely different moral fibre.” He argued that hand skills “confer precision, because if you are doing a thing, you do it definitely right or definitely wrong. They give honesty, for when you express yourself by making things, and not by using words, it becomes impossible to dissimulate your vagueness or ignorance by ambiguity.”

The need for manual arts training had first gained national attention at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition of 1876. American educators were enthralled by what became known as the Russian System of Industrial Arts. Victor Della Vos, director of the Moscow Imperial Technical School exhibited a “system” of industrial training that was supposed to

**THE AGE OF SLOYD AT NBSS** A boys' Sloyd class in the first floor bench room (at left) and the Sloyd school for teachers in the fourth floor upper bench room (at right), both c. 1900, with illustrations from two of the school's publications.

move people rapidly from farm labor into jobs in industry.

Sloyd was a rival system of training developed in Sweden, where it was felt that the general skill level of the population was declining due to the availability of ready-made objects. It was developed as a philosophy of general education aimed at improving the mental, physical, and moral development of children, with woodworking as its core. Unlike the Russian system, in which students were introduced to craft skills after the basics of reading and writing were covered in school, Sloyd was introduced at the elementary school level where it was observed that the development of hand skills and mental capacity were concurrent and mutually reinforcing. While the Russian system relied on classroom instruction, Sloyd stressed bench work and the individual's development, as opposed to a group's progress.

Sloyd's focus on the overall education of the child, rather than the preparation of individuals for the labor force fit well with the philosophy of Mrs. Shaw, who described the school's mission as training the “whole person”; not teaching “how to make a living, but how to live.”

In 1889 she hired Gustaf Larsson from the Sloyd School in Nääs, Sweden, to come to North Bennet Street School to develop a prototype Sloyd training program suitable for Americans. That effort expanded two years later when the fourth floor of 39 North Bennet Street was converted to a school for Sloyd teachers headed by Larsson. Mrs. Shaw sent an exhibition of North Bennet Street School's Sloyd program to the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago, and funded the publication of a series of books on Sloyd, including *Sloyd As Adapted In Boston* (1893) and *American Sloyd* (1900), as well as a quarterly newsletter *The Sloyd Record*.

By 1903, Larsson estimated that 34,000 students had been taught by the hundreds of teachers that were trained in the program at NBSS. Sloyd teacher training continued until 1909 when the North Bennet Street location ran out of space and Mrs. Shaw raised money to build a new Sloyd School near the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.

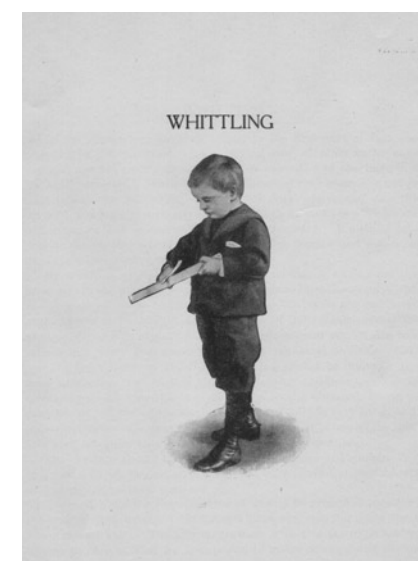
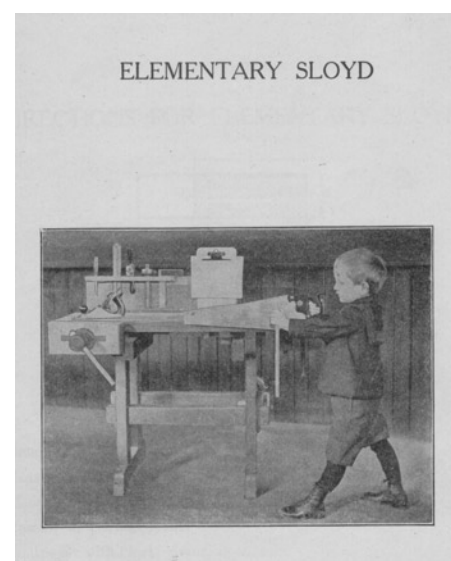
A century later the shop programs in America's public schools, which got their start through the Sloyd teacher training program at North Bennet Street School, have been largely dismantled, considered

outmoded and unresponsive to the needs of society today.

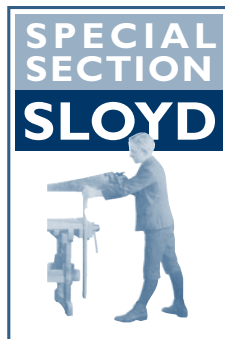
Mrs. Shaw's vision of the value of North Bennet Street School as educating the “whole person” also seems outdated for a school with mature students in their 30s, many of whom have families and a college education. But the concerns of Sweden in the 1870's still resonate. Otto Salomon developed Sloyd in response to a society he saw as being overwhelmed by inexpensive, ready made, disposable objects and rapidly losing the knowledge embodied in hand-made objects.

North Bennet Street School, the school that once turned away from the Russian System because it “merely” prepared students for employment, now stands apart from most other crafts schools in the country expressly because of its commitment to careers that employ the intelligence of the hands to produce objects that last.

The objective of nurturing a “whole person” has expanded to nurturing a “whole society”, and Pauline Agassiz Shaw's vision that North Bennet Street School's value was greater than that of a trade school is still the sustaining vision for the school. ●







# A living legacy

## NBSS inspires the Clear Spring School in Eureka Springs, Arkansas

BY DOUG STOWE

IN THE FALL OF 2001, I was a brand new part-time woodshop teacher in a new private high school, where I was given the challenge and opportunity of creating a woodworking program. This was a rather unusual thing with so many woodshop programs closing throughout the United States. I had some teaching experience with adults in woodworking clubs and at Arrowmont, a craft school in Gatlinburg, Tennessee.

I was invited to attend the first meeting of the New England Association of Woodshop Teachers in Boston, and arranged a visit with the North Bennet Street School. It was during this trip in October 2001 that I became acquainted with a system of woodworking education called "Educational Sloyd."

At the North Bennet Street School, I was asked by Janet Collins, then the Workshop Program Director, "Do you know about Sloyd?" I had seen the word "Sloyd" before. Sloyd knives are still sold in various woodworking catalogs. When

I said, "No, I don't know about Sloyd." Janet took me downstairs to meet Walter McDonald, NBSS' Associate Director.

He showed me an old book about Sloyd and informed me that NBSS was active in the late 1800s and early 1900s in promoting the Sloyd system of woodworking education over its rival "the Russian System."

But what was Sloyd? My brief discussions with Walter McDonald gave me a hunger for more information. When I returned home from the conference, I began researching on the internet and buying 100-year-old books that led me deep into the history and theory of woodworking education and through a circuitous route back to my starting point, North Bennet Street School. My research made me more acutely aware of the essential role of the hands in building

**CLEAR SPRING STUDENTS** using hand tools to produce pencil sharpeners according to directions for the first project in *Elementary Sloyd* and *Whittling* published by NBSS in 1906.

basic human intelligence and led to the development of a woodworking program at the Clear Spring School inspired by educational Sloyd and called *Wisdom of the Hands*. Our first projects in elementary school woodworking were drawn almost directly from early Sloyd teacher training manuals and were planned to fully express the philosophy of educational Sloyd. What better place to begin than at the beginning – a pencil sharpener that is nothing more than a piece of wood with coarse sandpaper glued on. This simple project, making an object useful to the student in his or her other schoolwork, was not dependent on absolute accuracy for success, so if measuring were not exact or if sawing were not perfectly straight, the product of the child's work would still be a useful object.

Over the past several years I have come to understand what every industrial arts teacher in America knows as the unspoken mission of manual arts. We have all observed those changes in our students that can be called maturity, vision, confidence, growth, development of wholeness. Sloyd gave voice to those observations and accepted those things as clear goals of the educational process. ●

### DIRECTIONS FOR ELEMENTARY SLOYD



1.—PENCIL SHARPENER  
White wood.  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch.

TOOLS  
Pencil, Rule, Plane, Bench Hook.

- DIRECTIONS  
Wood prepared  $6\frac{1}{2} \times 1\frac{1}{2}$  inches.
1. Plane one side straight.
  2. Measure width, draw line, and plane.
  3. Plane one end in bench hook.
  4. Measure length and plane.
  5. Sandpaper with block, rounding corners.
  6. Cut sandpaper, No. 1, and glue to wood.



DOUG STOWE PHOTOGRAPHS

# NBSS News

## PIANO TECHNOLOGY

**Elizabeth Snow** ('07) is working for Jude Reveley of Absolute Piano in Lowell, MA as an action rebuilder and road tuner. She is building her personal clientele and has been hired to maintain the 20 pianos at Tabor Academy in Marion. She has been expanding her rebuild work under Jude and hopes to present some of it in April at the NEECSO Convention.

**John Cavanaugh** ('87) is Director of Piano Technology at the Oberlin Conservatory. He prepared pianos for selection at the Aspen Winter Music Festival this year. He will be back in June to join the Summer Music Festival tech staff. He spent two weeks in March studying hammer tone at the Steinway

factory in Hamburg. This spring he's also off to China to teach some specific piano technology techniques at the Forren School, part of the Beijing Central Conservatory.

**Cy Shuster** ('06) passed the tests granting him the status of Registered Piano Technician at the PTG National Convention in Kansas City last June.

**Joan Schwartz** ('83) has been running the service department of Beethoven Pianos in New York City for the past four years. She informs us that she has openings for technicians with over 5 years experience to work in the New York store or at Beethoven's Bronx warehouse.

**Nancy (Iwasa) Bartlett** ('99) is teaching Piano and Voice at  
*Continued on Page 12*

## 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)



## FOUL WEATHER FRIENDS

**IN SPITE OF A HURRICANE**, over 700 visitors toured North Bennet Street School during the fifteenth annual **Open House** in November.



Continued from Page 11  
Stoughton Music School. She and her husband (**Michael Bartlett**, VMR '99) are expecting their fourth child in late July. Michael is working at Rayburn Musical Instruments in Quincy, MA.

**Adam Markowitz** ('87) has been donating used pianos to groups and individuals in New Orleans who need them. Check out his documentary *9 Pianos* on YouTube.com.

**Boaz Kirschenbaum** ('03) and his wife **Sakiko Isomichi** (PT '07) announce the birth of their son **Cassidy Isomichi Kirschenbaum** on Dec. 18th, 2007.

The *Amherst Bulletin* featured an article on **Aaron Bousel** ('76) and his work with the homeless. He is president of the Board of Directors of Amherst Friends of the Homeless in addition to his work tuning and repairing pianos and harpsichords.

He also has a contract with University of Massachusetts' music department to maintain their 60 pianos.

**Zoe Sherman** ('00) and **Chris Kendig** (PA '00) are the proud parents of **Matilda Kendig Sherman**, born February 27, 2008.

**Doug Atkins** ('97) recently attended the Little Red School House seminar sponsored by Yamaha Pianos. Doug spent a week learning the most advanced piano tuning, regulating and voicing techniques at the Yamaha American headquarters in



## EXHIBITIONIST

**NBSS GALLERY MANAGER KEN CRAGGS** (CF '07), in collaboration with the Workshop Program, will present a free lecture and art display in July by **Paul Johnson**, an internationally renowned bookbinder who specializes in Pop-up Paper Engineering. The gallery is currently showcasing the work of 25 Jewelry, Bookbinding and Cabinet and Furniture students, alumni and faculty.

Buena Park, CA.

## CARPENTRY

**Peter Feinmann** ('83) and his company completed the renovation of 18 affordable housing units for the Housing Corporation of Arlington (HCA). Peter says, "This is our third opportunity to collaborate with HCA," says Peter, "The work they do is vital, making it possible for families to live in Arlington who would not otherwise be able to do so."

## BOOKBINDING

**Stacie Dolin** ('00) appeared on the BNN-TV Channel 9 segment *It's All About Arts* on Oct. 26th to talk about NBSS and promote the November Open House.

**Amanda Nelsen** ('07) had her MFA Graduate Exhibition for

the Art Institute of Boston this January. The show was titled *Recycled Work*.

**Jenny Jarvis** ('06) has been in the UK since graduation where she attained her master's in Conservation Studies from West Dean College. She is currently working at the Whitworth Art Gallery in Manchester as a project conservator for a set of textile pattern books.

**Jeffrey Altepeter** ('99) was a profiled alumni in the January/February issue of *Indiana Alumni Magazine*. He describes how coming back to teach at NBSS is a great opportunity to keep learning. He says, "It forces a deeper level of consideration that I might not have when I'm working alone."

**Christina Amato** ('07) interned with the Boston

Athenaeum after graduation and has just returned to the Boston area after interning at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore for six months. Christina will start work at Harvard University Weissman Conservation Center this spring.

**Rebekah Lord Gardiner** ('93) is living on Pont-Aven, France for a year with her family. She studied at the Pont-Aven School for Contemporary Art in the fall semester and just finished teaching a two-day non-adhesive bookbinding workshop to illustration students there. Rebekah has been incorporating her bookbinding skills into her sculptures and work in other media. She and her family plan to return to the USA this summer.

## PRESERVATION CARPENTRY

**Robert Adam** was a contributing author for the *New England Real Estate Journal* in February. He wrote about the need for proper training and craftsmanship in the building trades.

The July 2007 issue of *The Town Crier*, the newsletter for the Historical Society of Watertown, featured an article describing the contribution of NBSS students to the restoration of the Edmund Fowle House.

The class did most of the restoration of the second floor Council Chamber, where the Executive Council of the Provincial Congress once met. Brick fireboxes were recreated and a fireplace surround

duplicated to fit an addition fireplace found behind Victorian Era plaster.

**Trevor Thomas** ('07) and **Andrew Athanas** ('07) were pictured next to the fireplace they helped recreate.

**Robin Adair** ('02) started his own business, Adair Restoration LLC in Ann Arbor, MI in February '07. He is currently in the process of restoring 60 louvered shutters for a private residence in Saline, MI.

**Benjamin Wilson** ('93) has recently accepted the position as Head of the Bureau of Historic Sites in the New Hampshire Division of Parks and Recreation. He oversees such sites as the Wentworth-Coolidge Mansion in Portsmouth, Tip Top House on Mount Washington; Robert Frost Farm in Derry and the Franklin Pierce Homestead in Hillsboro. He lives with his

wife and two young sons in Hopkinton, NH and can be reached at [benjamin.wilson@dred.state.nh.us](mailto:benjamin.wilson@dred.state.nh.us).

The first year **Preservation Carpentry** class is in the process of restoring a number of window sash for Historic New England. They have fourteen sash from the 1770 Josiah Quincy House in Quincy, two of which are twelve-light, Georgian style believed to be original to the house. In addition there are four more sash from the Harrison Gray Otis House in Boston which have unusually large, 12' x 12' crown glass lights and two sash from Robert Adam's Shaker House in Shirley.

## CABINET AND FURNITURE MAKING

The *West Roxbury Transcript* featured a story last December on **Chuck Quinn** ('06) and  
*Continued on Page 14*



## PANELS FOR EXPERTS

**John Leschen** ('04) and **Charles A. White** ('01) completed the ambitious move of the **Marmion Room** (circa 1758) within the American Wing at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in N.Y.C. in early February. Leschen and White were part of a team assembled by **J.M. Kelley Ltd.** of Niskayanu, NY. John lives in Plympton, MA where he operates **Phantom Housewrights, Inc.** Charles operates **Boerum Hill Joinery** in Brooklyn.



## Peabody Office Furniture displays NBSS work

**T**HIS PAST FALL, the shop windows of Peabody Office Furniture on Congress Street in Boston's Financial District had none of the high tech production office furniture for which the contract furniture dealership is known. Instead of carbon fiber Aeron chairs, there were mahogany, cherry and maple Chippendale, Federal and Queen Anne chairs made by students of North Bennet Street School.

The showroom window display was the idea of Chris Peabody, one of the owners of Peabody Office Furniture, in response to his visit to the school for this year's annual Open House.

It included a Chippendale chair and an oak chest by **Peter Michelinie** (CF'08), a Roundabout chair by **Jeff Scotto** (CF'06), a Queen Anne chair by **John Gifford** (CF'95), a drum table by **James Raffin** (CF'06), a Federal arm chair by **Peter Cabot** (CF'01), a tilt-top table by **Brian Weldy** (CF'94), and a Windsor arm chair by **Dan Faia** (CF'94). Violin instructor **Roman Barnas** also contributed six violins made by students from previous years' classes.

The display was designed by Nelson, Inc. and featured chairs suspended from the ceiling at different angles in front of falls of fabric in complementary colors, as well as a shaving horse, wood shavings and a Windsor chair in the making, but still in pieces. ●



## DESK JOB

**KEVIN MACK** (CF'08) was awarded **Best of Show** for a traditional piece at the 12th annual **Fine Furnishings & Crafts Show** held in late October at the Rhode Island Convention Center. The winning piece was a reproduction of a Seymour writing desk in cherry with tiger maple, pine and ebony accents.

*Continued from Page 13*  
his business, C. W. Quinn Furniture. His workshop is in Roslindale and opened a design studio in Brookline last September.

**William Turner** ('79) was one of the woodworkers featured in an article in the *Boston Sunday Globe* Travel section about Stonington, ME woodworkers. He and his wife and two daughters live on a 12 acre farm.

Last year **Steven Sackman** ('01) was commissioned by Suffolk University to make six carved and gilded maces for their graduation ceremony. The University has asked Steven to make more maces for graduation again this year.

**David Flanagan's** ('07) business, Wychmere Woodworks LLC, continues to grow. David now

employs former CFM student **Andrew Maher** in his shop.

**Karen Wales** ('94) is now Associate Editor for *WoodenBoat Magazine*. She says, "My NBSS background was pivotal in helping me attain this position. I have already contacted several friends from North Bennet with article ideas."

**John McCormack** ('88) has written an article titled *A Unique Crosscut Sled* scheduled to appear in the July/Aug issue of *Fine Woodworking* magazine.

Last fall, John started teaching at Laney College in Oakland, CA where he is developing curriculum for a new program designed to give Hispanics entering the cabinet and furniture making trades a firm foundation of skills.

The Fall 2007 issue of *New Hampshire Home* pictured pieces

by **William Thomas** ('79) as part of *The Allure of Fine Furniture*. This article focused on the group New Hampshire Furniture Masters. **Sam Chase** ('89) is also a member of New Hampshire Furniture Masters and appeared in the article.

**Nikolaus Meller** ('96) has spent the last 12 years in Los Angeles working for manufacturing and high end residential furniture companies. Four years ago he started his own company NIKMEL, Inc., which specializes in furniture development for designers and manufacturers.

**Beth Ann Harrington** ('94) received an MFA in wood from the University of Wisconsin, Madison in May of '07. She is currently studying there for a master's degree in Art History. Her artwork was recently exhibited in a two-person exhibition at the Urban Institute of Contemporary Art in Grand Rapids, MI. Last spring Harrington's work was on exhibit at The Soap Factory in Minneapolis. A video interview made during that installation can be found on YouTube.com.

## JEWELRY MAKING AND REPAIR

**Denise Fenoglio** ('06) and **Cathie Bobzin** ('06) are collaborating and working together under the business name Toast & Dragon, Studio Jewelry. Their work will be at the Fort Wayne Museum of Art's annual Art 4 Sale show in April. Their jewelry can also be found in the North Bennet Street School Gallery and the

Dina Varano Gallery. They are currently working on an exclusive jewelry line for the Hyland Collection.

**Geraldine Kish Perry** ('00) is partner at Goldsmiths 3 in Concord, MA.

**Eva Martin** ('03) has two rings featured in the jewelry book *500 Wedding Rings*.

**Danielle Douhet** ('05) is head of the repair department at Shreve, Crump and Low.

Current students **Michelle Renée Mercaldo** ('09) and **Saedis Halldorsdottir** ('09) are interning with South End designer **Melissa Finelli** ('96).

**Michael Sprague** ('09), also a current student, has a internship with Forest Beach Goldsmiths in Chatham, MA.

The **JMR** class took a field trip to Powell Flute in Maynard, MA this February. Three JMR alumni are currently working there.

## WORKSHOPS

Workshop instructor **Brian Boggs** built a complete chair at the Milwaukee Fine Furnishings Show. There he won the Marc Harrison award for marketing excellence. At the Providence show he won Best in Show in the Traditional Style.

Workshop instructor **Janet Collins** ('96) has written an article on building a case with compass rose inlay for the May/June issue of *WoodenBoat* magazine. ●

## 2ND ANNUAL STUDENT/ALUMNI PARTY

"GOT TO SEE a few people whom I had not seen since I graduated from NBSS, which was great and a few more I hadn't seen since last year's party," said **Jess Fox** (VM '06) about NBSS' 2nd Annual Student / Alumni Party.

Held this year at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Charlestown on March 1st and coordinated by the Alumni Steering Committee, approximately 200 North Bennet alumni, students, staff and supporters gathered to celebrate the career of **Walter McDonald** – this year's party honoree.

But the party was also about bringing together the entire NBSS Community.

Featuring door prizes from the likes of **Lie-Nielsen**, **Talas**, **Commonwealth Lock** and **International Violin** (among others), the bluegrass stylings of one-man-band phenom Eric Royer and catered by *Talk of the Town*, the evening had something to offer graduates and students from all departments and all tastes.

Guest of honor Walter McDonald selected the raffle tickets, distributed the prizes

and commented on the tribute:

"Working for a long time at North Bennet Street School with generous and hard-working colleagues has been very rewarding, but what always made it worthwhile was seeing the accomplishments of students who responded to the challenges, growing in



## PRIZEWINNERS

Piano Technology's **Jack Stebbins** shares a laugh with honoree **Walter McDonald** during the raffle portion of the festivities.

skill and understanding. It was thrilling to see so many students and graduates and to have a chance to hear so many stories of accomplishments since graduation."

Suggestions for next year's Third Annual Student Alumni Party should be addressed to Jason Gregoricus in Alumni Services at 617-227-0155, x107 or [studentservices@nbss.org](mailto:studentservices@nbss.org). ●



**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

April 7 - April 27, 2008

**ANNUAL EXHIBITION OF STUDENT WORK**  
Boston Architectural College

May 10, 2008

**SOCIETY OF AMERICAN PERIOD FURNITURE MAKERS**  
NBSS, 60 Lowell Street, Arlington

May 15, 2008

(On display until May 22)

**ANNUAL EVENING OF TRADITIONAL CRAFT**  
Massachusetts Historical Society  
1154 Boylston Street, Boston

May 30, 2008

**GRADUATION EXERCISES**  
Old North Church, Boston

June 7, 2008

**GUILD OF BOOKWORKERS, NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER ANNUAL MEETING**  
North Bennet Street School

June 9 – 11, 2008

**WAYNE WERNER ART OF MOKUME GANE WORKSHOP**  
North Bennet Street School

June 18 – 21, 2008

**FURNITURE SOCIETY CONFERENCE**  
Purchase, NY

July 22 - 24, 2008

**PAUL JOHNSON POP-UP BOOK LECTURE AND WORKSHOPS**  
North Bennet Street School

August 18 – 22, 2008

**LANCE PATTERSON/ DAN FAIA CLOCK MAKING WORKSHOP**  
North Bennet Street School

October 24 – 26, 2008

**FINE FURNISHINGS SHOW**  
Providence, RI



# Annual Evening of Traditional Craft

THURSDAY MAY 15, 2007 FROM 6:00 TO 8:00 PM  
AT THE MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
1154 BOYLSTON STREET, BOSTON

THE NORTH BENNET STREET SCHOOL will host its ninth annual *Evening of Traditional Craft* at THE MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL SOCIETY, 1154 Boylston Street, Boston. The evening will feature a cocktail reception and a collection of exceptional work from intricate book bindings to elegant furniture, musical instruments and jewelry. The graduates whose work is on display will be present to discuss their work with guests.

THE MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL SOCIETY is located in the Back Bay in a beautiful Beaux Arts building designed by Edmund March Wheelwright and constructed in 1899. Founded in 1791, the Society is home to one of the most significant collections of American papers in the world, representing generations of correspondence, both public and private. In addition to the Adams Family papers, the collection includes Thomas Jefferson's personal papers. The Society's exhibition *John Adams, a Life in Letters* will be on view and open to our guests for the evening.



*The Evening of Traditional Craft* is North Bennet Street School's only annual fundraising event. Tickets are \$150 per person, available at the door or by contacting [LRIORDAN@NBSS.ORG](mailto:LRIORDAN@NBSS.ORG).

Parking is available at 1058 Boylston Street (across the street) or at the 50 Dalton Street garage. MBTA access is from the Hynes Convention Center stop on the Green Line.



## NORTH • BENNET • STREET • SCHOOL

AN EDUCATION IN CRAFTSMANSHIP

39 NORTH BENNET STREET, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02113-1998  
(617) 227-0155 • [WWW.NBSS.ORG](http://WWW.NBSS.ORG)

Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Boston MA 02113  
Permit No. 52223