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SOUTHBURY ARTS AND CULTURE ALLIANCE NEWSLETTER: October 2025



Meet the Artist: William Eaton of W. Russell Woodhaus

By Kelly Keenan, SACA

Photos courtesy of the artist

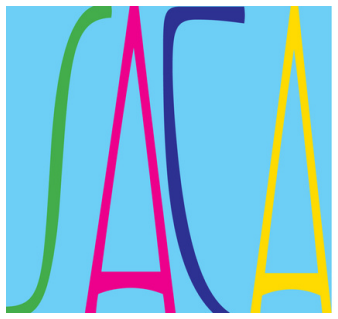
For Southbury resident William Russell Eaton, woodworking has always been more than a hobby—it's been a lifelong thread woven through his career, creativity, and sense of home. Eaton has quietly built a reputation for custom, finely crafted furniture and commissions that highlight both skill and artistry.

"I've always been around building and fixing things since I was a kid," he reflects. "As a teenager, I spent time fixing up boats and building homes before going to college." That early start led him to Wentworth Institute of Technology in Boston, where he earned degrees in Construction Management and Architectural Engineering.

What followed was not the predictable path of a woodworker but instead a successful 30-year career in packaging R&D, first at Cadbury Schweppes and later at PepsiCo. "I never thought it would have led to a 30+ year career, but it did," Eaton says. "I had great growth, leading teams on technology development and systems innovation for some of the world's biggest brands."

Recently, after a corporate restructuring, Eaton turned his focus back to what had always been at the heart of his creativity: woodworking. "I've been focusing more on building my following as well as establishing an actual business," he says. "Most of my work so far has been commissions through word of mouth or Instagram, but I'm starting to build inventory for Etsy and local sales."

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Eaton's style blends reverence for tradition with a love of clean, modern lines. "My inspiration for many pieces comes from historical as well as mid-century modern examples, which I really love," he explains. "I also love to make things that accentuate the natural elements of the wood and use them as part of the design."

While he enjoys the process, his favorite moment comes at the very end. "It's seeing the final piece come together, and especially seeing how excited and happy the client is when they see it for the first time," he says. "The least favorite part? Definitely cleaning up the mess from all the tools and dust—but it's part of the job."

His work is also shaped by a community of woodworkers he admires. Among his influences are Paul Jasper of Copper Pig Woodworking, Marc Spagnuolo (The Wood Whisperer), and Matt Cremona. Local inspiration comes from Mike Pekovich, a contributing editor at *Fine Woodworking*. "And one of the all-time inspirations in my life is Norm Abrams," Eaton adds. "Measure twice, cut once was his motto. I watched him growing up on PBS's 'This Old House' and 'The New Yankee Workshop'. I even have signed books from him!"

When he's not at his workbench, Eaton's talents often extend to fixing just about anything. "I love learning about repairs and taking on projects that might seem intimidating," he says. Recently, when his heating system failed, he researched and replaced the blower motor himself, saving thousands of dollars. "Friends even got me a shirt that says, 'I can fix that!'"

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For emerging artists and makers, Eaton offers simple but hard-earned advice: “Look for inspiration in different places and don’t be afraid to ask questions of those whose work you admire. Take risks—not unsafe ones—but the kinds of risks that push your design or process. Failure is inevitable, but the learnings are invaluable. Each mistake carries something important into the next project.”

As he builds toward establishing a full-fledged woodworking business—possibly with a future shop in Maine—Eaton continues to find joy in every grain of wood and every finished piece. His Instagram feed offers a glimpse into that journey: a place where craftsmanship, history, and creativity come together, one careful cut at a time.

For more information about this month's maker, or if you are interested in being featured in an upcoming issue of the *Southbury Makers Spotlight*, contact us at info@southburyartsandculturealliance.org or visit www.southburyartsandculturealliance.org.

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