American Woodturner

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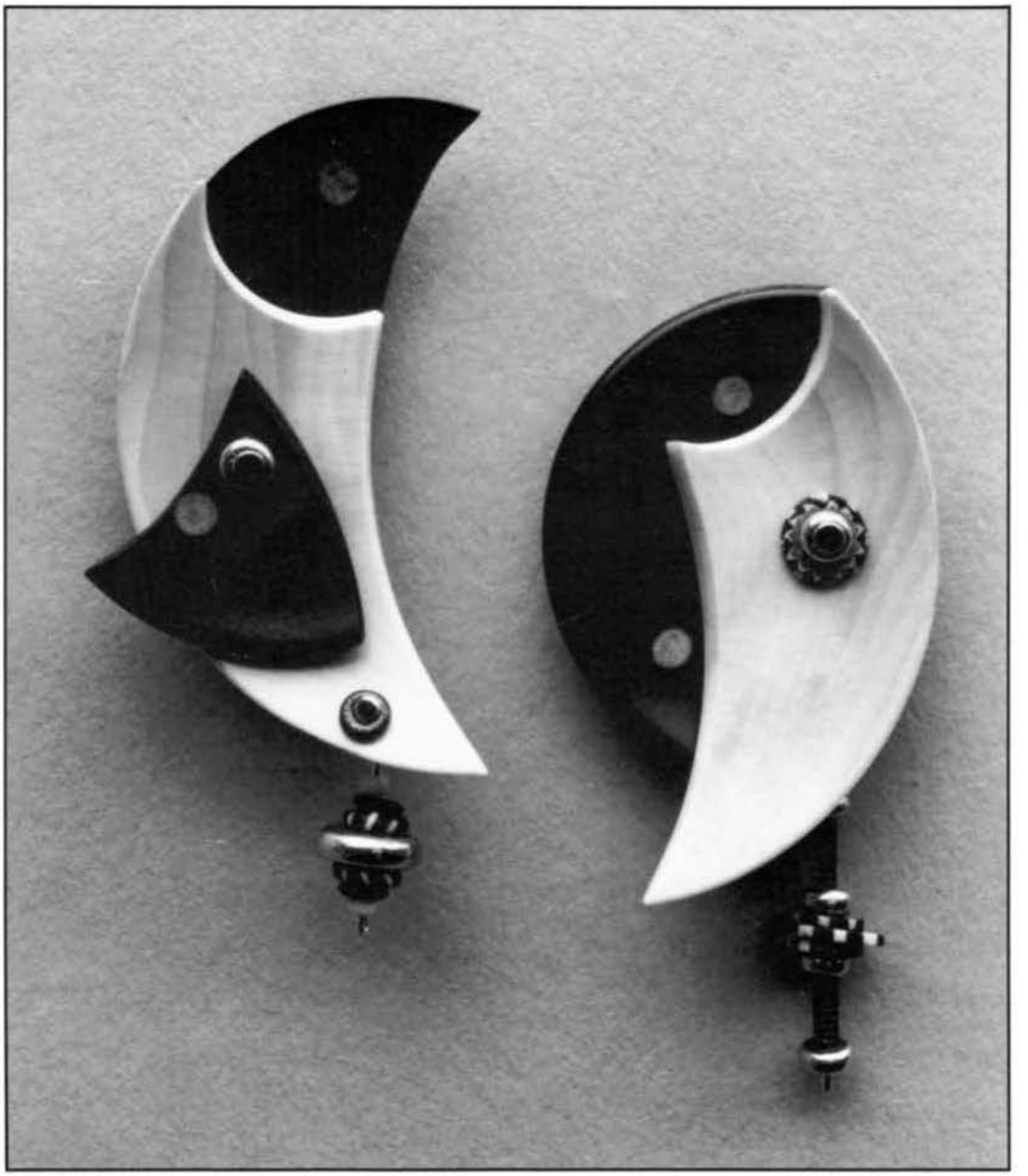

Dedicated to Providing
Education, Information, and Organization
To Those Interested in Woodturning

PRESIDENT'S PAGE

Alan Lacer, President of the American Association of Woodturners

I must say that my last column concerning product reviews in the journal got more feedback in the shortest amount of time than any other I have written. The comments were unanimous: the AAW's unique position as an organization and not as a magazine publisher lends itself well to the avoidance of a conflict of interest—that is, since we do not depend heavily on advertising dollars we can honestly do more objective reviews of products.

So, full steam ahead! The new editor, Rick Mastelli, is fully aware of this sentiment and will seek out competent individuals to pass a critical eye over products to be reviewed in the journal.

This discussion of reviews has raised a new issue: perhaps the AAW should get more actively involved in consumer advocacy. For some strange reason we seem to be receiving a larger number of complaints these days concerning business practices. In just the last six months we have had the following brought to our attention: a machine supplier took lathe orders (and money) but failed to ship the goods (seems they were having financial hard times and used the money for other purposes!); a woodworking supply business bootlegging turning tapes; a turning supply house taking an inordinate amount of time to correct a mistake and also failing to return calls; someone unhappy with another woodworking publication and unable to get a refund; a promoter failing to pay a demonstrator; possibly illegally harvested/imported wood being sold at the trade show of our national conference. And yes, it does cut the other way too: we just had a business contact our office asking for assistance in locating one of our members who had failed to pay on an order! The AAW was certainly not asked to get involved in all of the above cases—but should we?

Incidents such as these must first be considered as allegations only, to be investigated. Even the most cynical of types must admit that not every complaint against a business (or one of our members!) is valid. Someone who is neutral on the issue should be asked to hear from the other side—fairness calls for that as a minimum. There is also the fact that even the best of businesses make mistakes or have dissatisfied customers—how far do we push to get involved or communicate such incidents?

Next, does consumer advocacy and investigation of complaints fall under the mission of the American Association of Woodturners? We are given to "education, information, and organization to those interested in woodturning." Clearly the business of providing critical reviews falls under education and information—no problem there. But when we expand into other areas such as conducting investigations or taking a political stand on an issue (such as rain-forest protection or preservation of old-growth forests in the Northwest) we should carefully think these through before we leap. We have tried to stick pretty faithfully to our mission as an organization—that is one reason we have not gotten into the judging/jurying business for exhibitions, although we do promote and encourage such exhibitions. But we are not so bureaucratic that we can't be flexible or even expand our mission—especially if it is driven by the membership.

What do you think? Is it time for the AAW to move into a more aggressive and formal role in the area of consumer protection? Would this be one more added service that makes being a member of the AAW worth the annual dues? The AAW board will be addressing these questions during our next meeting scheduled for mid-October. Please feel free to contact us before that date with your sentiments.

* * * * *

On a different note, I would like to bid farewell to Betty Scarpino who has served as the journal editor for the past three years. She signed on as editor during a very difficult time for the AAW and has made a lasting contribution to the organization. Her decisions were not always met with complete approval or satisfaction—but I fear the day when our journal becomes so boring and bland that it doesn't produce a bit of controversy. The solid growth of the AAW and high renewal rates are powerful indicators of the job Betty has performed. We wish her the best in her pursuit as a fulltime woodturner.
—Alan Lacer

BOARD OF DIRECTORS' POSITION

Thinking of applying for a position on the AAW board?

Over the years, I've talked with a lot of our members who are thinking of applying for a position on the AAW board. One of the first questions they ask is: "What is it really like?"

Well . . . Humm . . . Seriously, it's a lot of fun and a lot of work. Work and fun seem to go hand-in-hand when *everyone else* is carrying the same load.

One of the best things about being an AAW board member is that you become part of the process of making things happen. You're there because you want to be there. You take your own ideas, your dreams, and those of your friends, and turn them into reality. You're there to listen, face problems head on, then help create solutions with the support of your fellow board members.

Are there politics? Forget it. From the very beginning, the board has frowned on rumor and innuendo in any form—no room for any Long-Ranger egos to muddy the waters with trivia and hearsay. Business is serious and the board is "in the business" of making education work for our members.

Oh, yes, how could I forget. You get to travel to exotic places—the symposium every year for free. And, of course, you work for the privilege. But then, it turns out that when you volunteer for the good of others, you find out just how good those "others" really are.

The AAW always, *ALWAYS* needs good people on its board. Without them, the organization will simply piddle in its own piles of shavings, wondering, "Gee, what happened?" Apply now and find out just how valuable you really are.—*David Ellsworth, past president of the American Association of Woodturners*

—see page 49 for application information—

American Woodturner

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On the Cover

Judy Ditmer, Piqua, Ohio. Earrings, 1 3/4″ long, ebony, maple, dogwood, brass, niobium, glass, and aja discs

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PRODUCTION JEWELRY: Mini-sculptures!

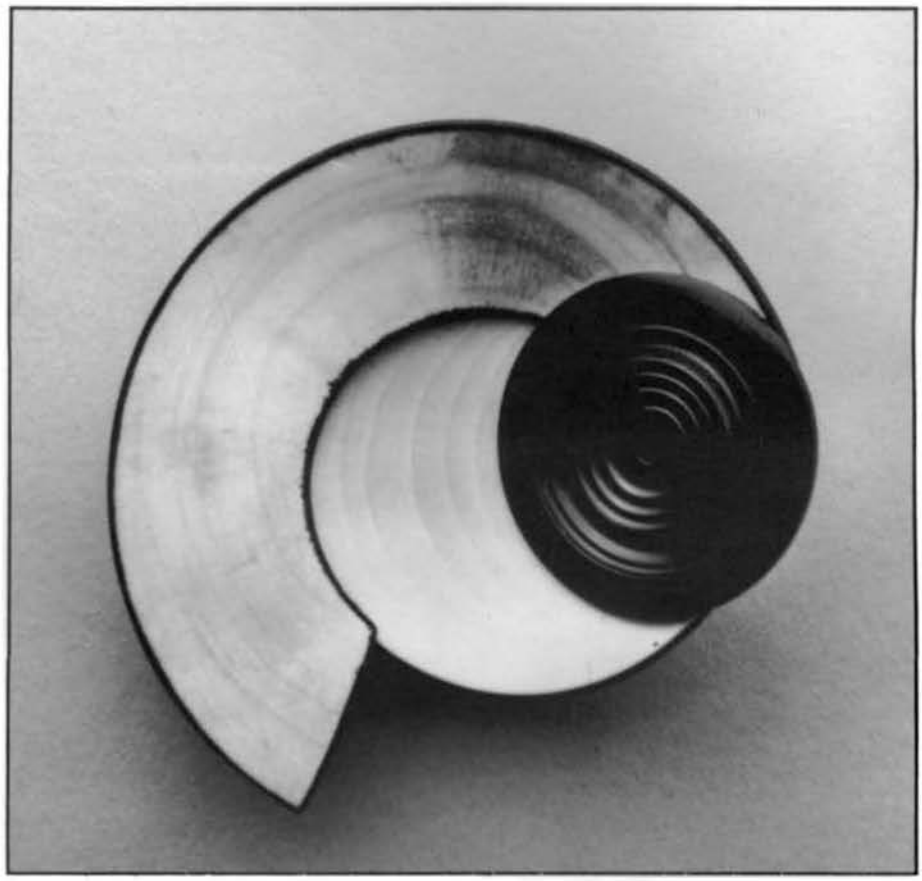
Judy Ditmer

If you watch much television or read trendy magazines, you might come to the conclusion that there is life only on the East and West coasts and nothing but a vast wasteland—full of not very much at all—in between. But of course that's not the case—millions of people live interesting, happy lives out there. By the same token, too much exposure to some of the current literature and conversation in turning (or just about any other medium) might lead you to believe that there are only two kinds of turning: "one-of-a-kind" and "production." I find this an over-simplification. The territory between these two extremes can be as richly varied as a continent, if we will look for it to be.

I make a wide range of turned items, from very much one-of-a-kind sculptural bowls and wall pieces through salad bowls and platters, boxes, clocks, pens, jewelry, and miniatures, to very much production finger tops. When I am asked what kind of turning I do, I'm never quite sure how to answer.

People generally characterize me as a production turner, but I don't really consider myself one—not in the sense they mean, anyway. I don't do the same thing day after day, but I do turn out a lot of work. To me, production turning and one-of-a-kind turning are not mutually exclusive. Certainly in my work there is a continuum. My sculptural pieces are very individual—each one is conceived, designed, and executed one at a time. While they are related because of the continuity of my ideas, interests, and approach, each one is unique. At the other end of this spectrum are the finger tops. While I do personally turn each one, sheer numbers produced, as well as the obvious design constraints, dictate that they will greatly resemble one another. And at $1.50 apiece, I'm not going to introduce any significant variations which would add noticeably to the production time, and therefore the cost.

In at least one of the items I make, in my quest to eat regularly and not go crazy doing it, I have found an approach that has many of the best features of both extremes. I make jewelry—earrings and pins—using pieces turned in a production mode, which are then put together and embellished individually to make one-of-a-kind pieces. I can produce these items quickly and efficiently enough to sell at a reasonable price (important for making a living), yet there is considerable variety in the work (important for not going crazy).



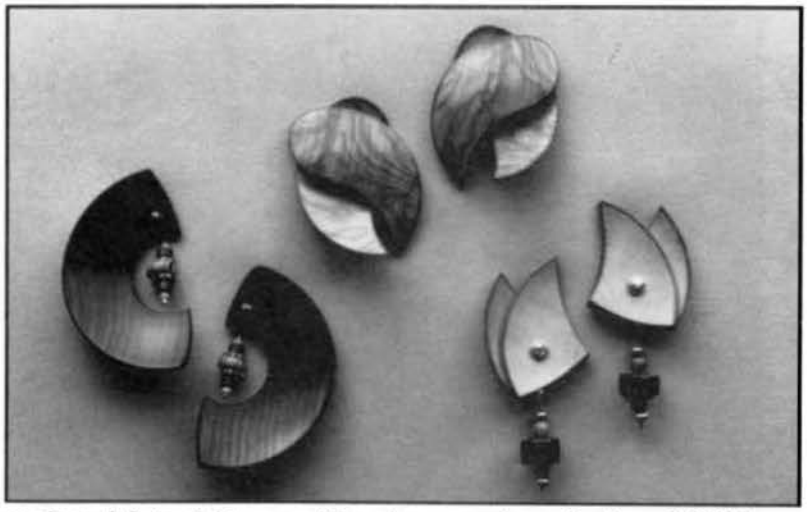
brooch, dogwood, ebony, spalted maple, 2" dia.

Making the turned pieces is repetitive, which is good because it is efficient and there is considerable satisfaction in the technical competence that arises from this kind of work. Designing and assembling the finished pieces is very individual, which is good because it makes the work distinctive, and it keeps me interested and happy to be doing it.

I find I have learned things from both production and one-of-a-kind turning that I might never have known I needed to learn had I been doing only one type of work. Each complements the other in many ways. Physically, the variety of tasks helps to prevent fatigue and repetitive-motion injury. Emotionally, variation prevents boredom, which is a safety hazard as well as unplesant.

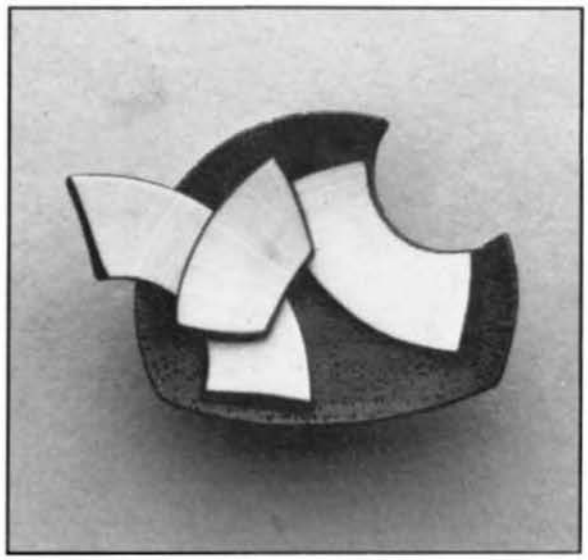
Most important to me artistically, is that each type of work feeds ideas to the other. Making hundreds of these small sculptures gives me the opportunity to really work out ideas—the volume allows me to explore a lot of territory, and the designs thus evolve relatively quickly. Production work makes me a better turner technically, making the unique pieces easier and more pleasurable to do; one-of-a-kind work stretches my

earrings, maple, ebony, pigmented inks, aja discs, glass, red horn, 1″ long



earrings, left to right, moradillo, glass, porcelan, aja discs, 1 3/4″ long; olive, 1″ long; beech, brass, turquoise, handblown glass, 1 1/2″ long.

earrings, bocote, 1 3/4″ long



brooch, wenge, beech, 1 1/2″ long

imagination and helps keep me from going stale in my production work. Because I am "in tune" from doing a quantity of turning, I can better achieve what I can visualize in any work.

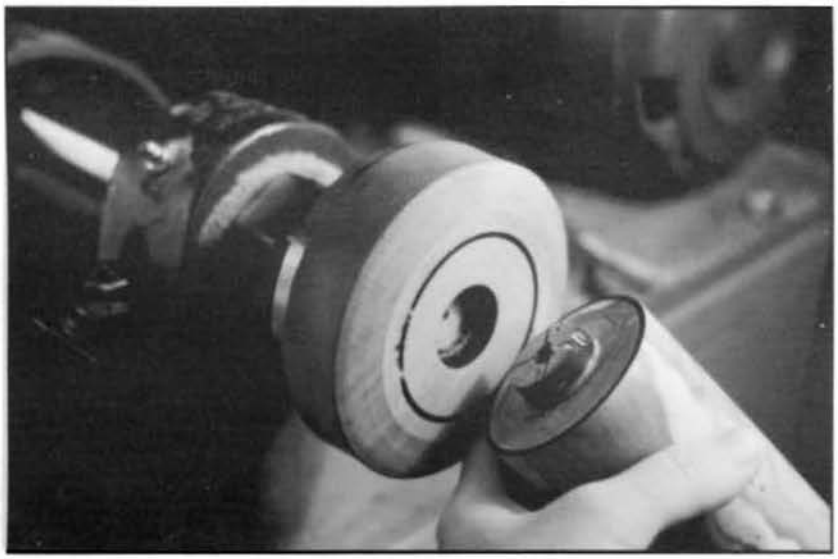
Neither end of the spectrum is better or worse, higher or lower, than the other. Aside from the more esoteric benefits of doing both, the variety is appealing. There are days when some fairly mindless production turning is just the thing . . . perhaps when I'm not feeling inspired or just want that great feeling you can get when the complex dance of repetitive turning is really working: the pile of rough blanks on the right getting smaller, the finished pieces accumulating on the left; me in the middle peeling off shavings. And there are days when I am happy for the intensity and concentration that a one-of-a-kind piece demands.

A mixture of one-of-a-kind and production work, whether by doing very different kinds of things or by using both approaches in one item, as I do with jewelry, is an excellent solution to the problems not only of making a living as a turner, but also of continuing to improve technically and artistically. And it's a lot more fun that way.

Judy Ditmer lives in Piqua, Ohio.

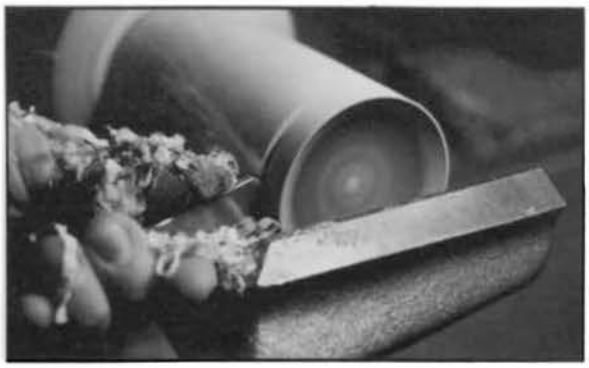
STEPS FOR TURNING EARRINGS

Judy Ditmer



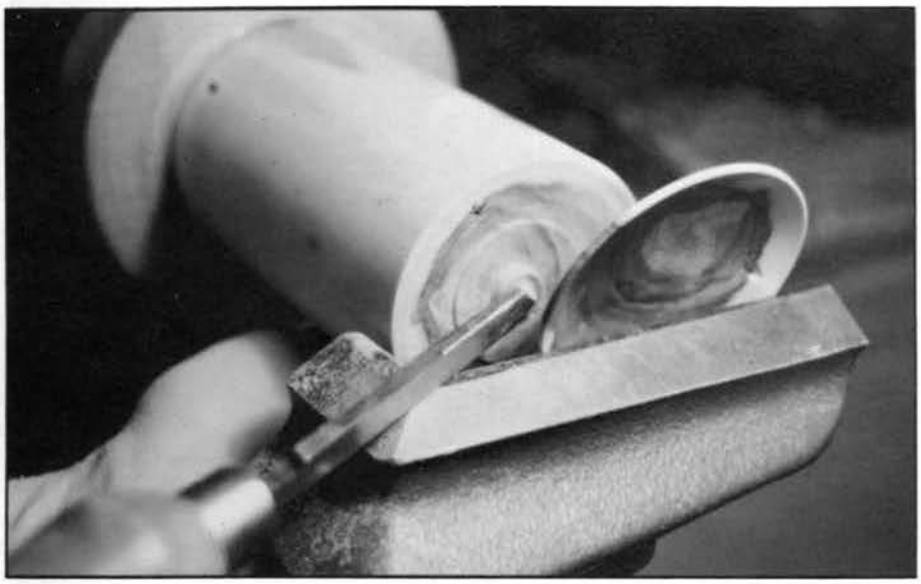
Turn a cylinder 1 1/2" to 2" in diameter between centers, with a slightly tapering spigot at one end. Turn a matching recess in a waste block of hardwood mounted on a faceplate. A good fit is essential—this can be determined by pushing the cylinder into the spinning waste block. Then glue the cylinder onto the waste block.

Turn the first earring disc. It is essential to get a very clean cut, as it will be impossible to sand away significant tearing from the end grain.



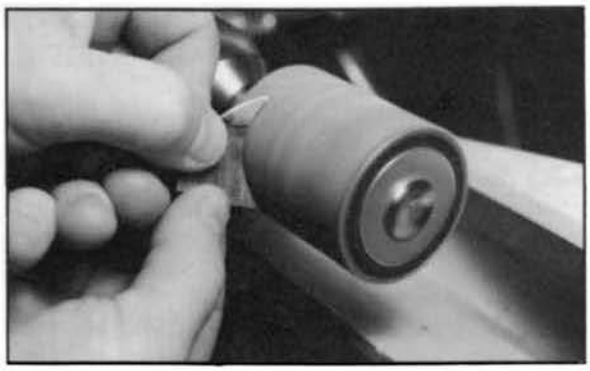
Before parting off the disc, it is necessary to make a clearance cut so that the final cut can follow the curve of the piece.

Make the final parting-off cut, carefully following the curve.

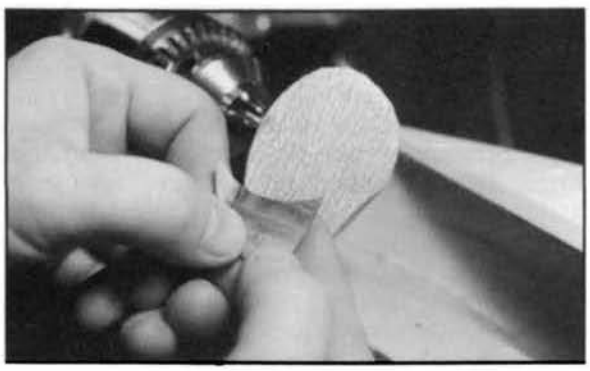


The turning part of the disc is complete.

After cutting the discs into halves or quarters on a jigsaw or bandsaw (with a fine blade), finish shaping the pieces using several sizes of small drum sanders.



Finish-sand the pieces with fine abrasive on a small foam-backed sanding disc.



If the earrings will have beads added, drill a tiny hole for the dangle. The piece is ready to be sprayed with clear lacquer and assembled with findings, beads, and other materials.

Sources of supply

findings, beads, tools, supplies—wholesale only

Rings & Things
P.O. Box 450
Spokane, WA 99210-0450
509/624-8565

findings, beads, supplies—wholesale only

Beada Beada, Inc.
4262 N. Woodward Ave.
Royal Oak, MI 48073
313/549-1005

findings, beads, supplies, tools

River Gems and Findings
6901 Washington N.E.
Albuquerque, NM 87109
1-800/443-6766

$10 for findings catalog
$10 for tools catalog
$5 for display and package catalog

Some findings—posts, ear wires, etc.—are available at local craft and fabric stores.

TURNED EARRINGS

Mitchell Haness

I began turning earrings for practical as well as for aesthetic reasons. I live in a South Florida suburb of single-family homes among neighbors with whom I've remained on speaking terms despite my woodturning. I often begin turning before dawn and again after dark. The sound of a bandsaw or of a large bowl crashing into the wall at these hours would not endear me to my neighbors. So, at these times I usually work on projects that I can complete quickly and quietly with a minimum of mess.

However, the real reason that I turn earrings is because the final product gives me such pleasure. And what better showcase for a handmade item than a woman's face? I turn two types of earrings, one oiled and buffed to a high shine, the other dyed to the vibrant hues associated with the tropics, then lacquered and lightly buffed.

turned earring disc ready to be parted off

In South Florida we are blessed with a variety of wood. Generally I use scraps from crotches and burls, although I do scout out pieces specifically for earrings. My first step is to decide upon the orientation of the wood for turning. The dyed earrings are striking because of their colors, but it is also important to consider the grain of the wood as it is visible through the dye. For the oiled earrings, I look for wood that has striking color as well as unusual grain patterns. Streaks, grain, and even worm holes figure into the final decision. I also need to consider the following: Will the earrings be turned end grain? Flat grain? Quarter grain? What about part of a knot? How about including the void between two annual rings as part of the design?

Once you have selected a chunk of wood and decided on how to orient the earrings in it, cut the piece, using a bandsaw, into a rough-cylinder shape of from 1 1/2 to 2 inches in diameter and 2 to 3 inches long. Glue the cylinder to a pre-cut, 3-inch diameter auxiliary block (screwed to a faceplate) using a thick cyanoacrylate glue. A squirt of accelerator will speed up the process, but remember that the glue goes on only one surface while the accelerator goes on the other. The nice thing about using thick cyanoacrylate glue is that it does a good job of holding end grain to side grain. Use caution, however, when using these products.

A good way to center the cylinder onto the auxiliary block is to first draw several circles on the face of the auxiliary block while it is spinning on the lathe—it will look like a target. Use those lines to center the cylinder onto the auxiliary block. Let the glue dry for a few minutes under slight pressure. Attach the faceplate to the lathe, then true up the face and the side of the cylinder.

Now some more decisions have to be made: Final size and shape of the earrings? Hanging, post, or clip earrings? Concave or convex? A designed turned into them? Complex designs require more planning, so you may want to start by matching a set of simple button-style earrings. Then you might consider turning relief patterns that create the dimension of depth and work towards earrings comprised of several pieces, some sanded into shape, some carved, and some turned.

The actual turning takes practice, of course, but it isn't too difficult for someone with modest skills. The first half of a pair of earrings is easy to design and turn; matching the second half of the pair to the first half requires a sharp eye.

Mainly I use a 1/2-inch scraper, a 1/8-inch parting tool, assorted tools made from cut nails and files, a chattertool, and a gouge for roughing the cylinders. Once an end-grain cylinder has been turned true with the gouge, turn the primary contour you choose onto the face of the cylinder. I use a scraper that is ground to a very steep angle, with the burr left on. Lift the trailing edge of the scraper off the toolrest at approximately 45-degrees and pull from the center to the outside of the cylinder so that you are shear-cutting rather than scraping.

Next, decide what patterns and/or relief you will make. You will have to experiment to find the proper tool for each pattern you select. Chatterwork generally works only on end grain, and works better on some woods than others. A 1/8-inch parting tool is practical for many designs. Tools can be made from cut nails and broken files, but make a handle for them. Because earrings are easy and quick to make, you can have fun experimenting.

If you have cut your patterns with sharp tools, you might be able

to start sanding with 220- or 320-grit paper. It doesn't take long. I finish with 1000- or 1200-grit paper, and the difference in finishes is apparent when the higher grits are used.

Part the earring from the cylinder, using a parting tool; but consider the thickness of the earring first. Mine are about 1/16-inch thick at the rims, and slightly thicker in the center. Once again, experiment with what you think looks good. Before the earring is completely parted off the cylinder, lightly sand the rim with a fine grit to take the "edge" off. I usually do this with the wood spinning on the lathe. Complete the separation of the earring. Guide the parting tool, don't push, and the earring will ease off of the cylinder into your palm. I sand the back of each earring by hand, down to 320-grit abrasive.

The rest of the cylinder becomes stock for the next earring. Now you are ready to turn the matching piece. Place the first half close by, where you can easily see it without having to turn around. Then good luck; and with a bit of practice, you will have it. Remember, we generally see only one earring at a time, so a slight difference will not be noticeable. Eventually your own desire for perfection will dictate the final product.

I use an oil finish on most of the earrings that have unusual grain patterns, as well as on end-grain earrings with chatterwork on them.

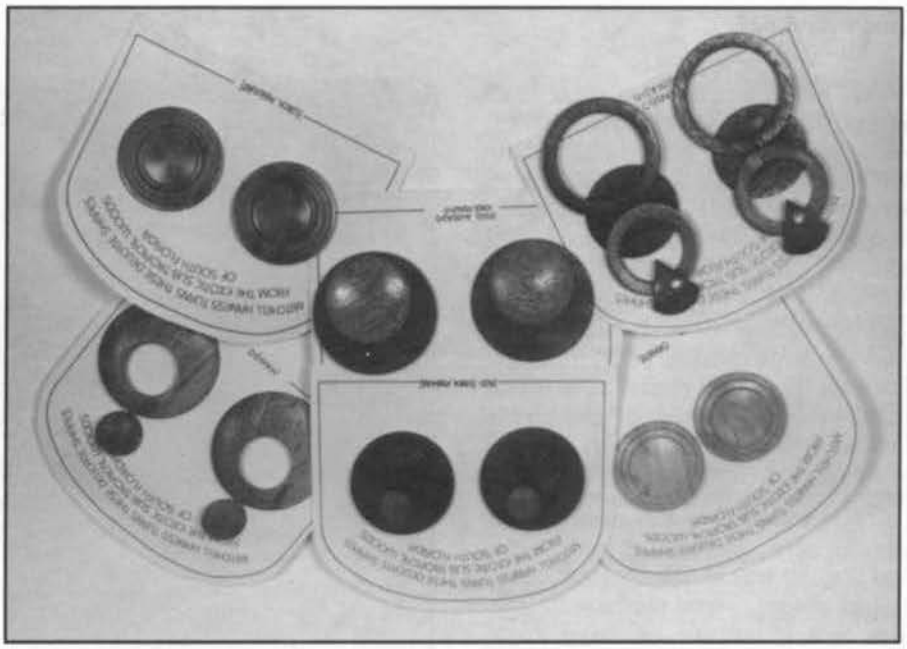
The earrings that I dye with water-based aniline dyes are primarily made from flat-grain cylinders. My favorite woods for this are Florida mahogany, avacodo, and mango because they hold the dye the best. Aniline dyes are toxic, so take respiratory, eye, and digital precautions when mixing, storing, and using them. Store both the liquid dye and the unused dye powder in air-tight containers. I use eight- to ten-ounce plastic containers with air-tight lids. I have stored these colors in my shop for months at a time with no marked loss of color intensity. The dye colors readily mix, and the custom-color options are endless.

Drop the finished earrings into a container with the appropriate dye color and leave them there for about a minute. Remove them from the dye using small needle-nose pliers and place them on a paper towel. Use care with the pliers because they will transfer colors from one container to another if they are not fastidiously cleaned. Place a paper towel on top of each drying earring and lightly weight them to prevent the thin wood from warping. The next day, remove the paper towel and the weight. Surprisingly, even thin circles of wood will have kept their original shape; the secret is that the wood has dried under pressure.

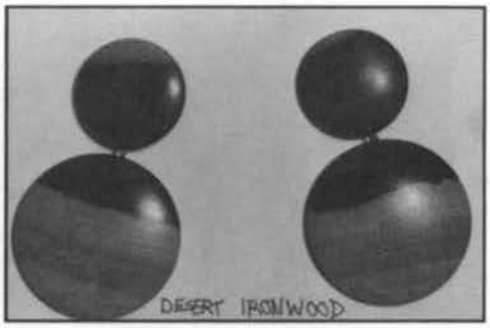
My earrings are often made from several turned pieces, each dyed a different color. After the dye (and the wood) is completely dry, glue them together and spray with a good lacquer straight from a can. A few days later, when all is dry and cured, lightly buff the earrings.

Attach the jewelry findings (*see accompanying article, "Steps For Turning Earrings" for sources of supply*). Posts for pierced ears can be attached with the same cyanoacrylated glue, as can earring clips. A steady hand is all that you need, and you will get the knack quickly.

What more could a turner ask for? It's quiet, fast, and beautiful, too. Have fun.



various earrings made from sub-tropical woods of south Florida



desert ironwood button-type earrings

Mitchell Haness lives in Miami, Florida.

TURN A TWIST PEN

Robert Rosand

If you participate in local craft shows, a large stock of good quality, reasonably priced pens is often the difference between a successful show and a so-so one. The first pen you make will be the most difficult, but after you make one, you'll want to make dozens. I will take you through the construction method, step by step, that I use for making pens, adding a few tips here and there; then offer some hints at the end of the article so that you don't make some of the mistakes I suffered through.

You will need to buy one or more kits for pens, a special turning mandrel for the headstock of your lathe, and of course, some nice wood. The first two items are available from Craft Supplies, USA, although there are other sources. Most pen kits come with assembly instructions. (*See accompanying article, "Pointers for Turning Pens," for sources of supply.—BJS*)

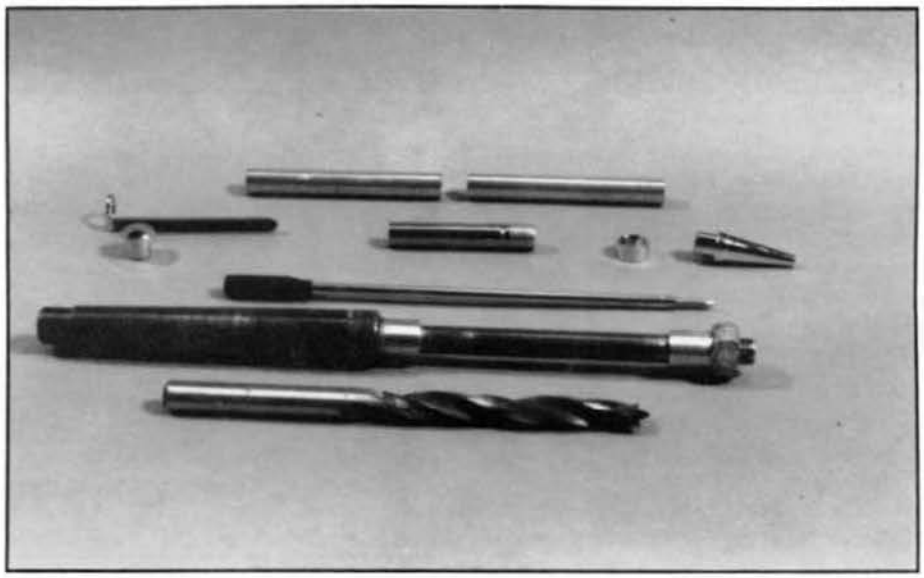


photo 1. Items (other than wood) needed to turn a twist pen, bottom to top: drill bit, mandrel, ink cartridge; l. to r. end cap and pocket clip; retraction mechanism and brass ring; pen point; brass tubes.

The pen blank

Since I generally use burl to make my pens, I do not have to be concerned about the grain matching when I assemble the pen. I cut blanks about 5/8 inch by 5/8 inch by 3 inches long and turn them between centers to make a cylinder (photo 2). I do these in batches of twenty or thirty or more. Each of these blanks will become one-half of a pen.

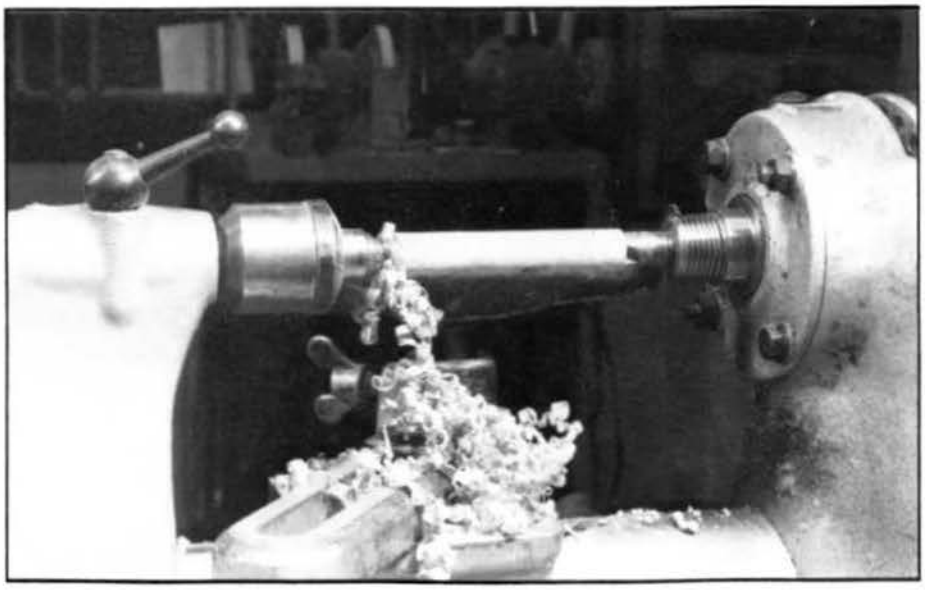


photo 2. Rough turn each pen blank into a cylinder.

I place each blank in my trusty three-jaw chuck and true up one end of the cylinder with the long point of a skew (photo 3). If the small indentation on the end (where the tailstock center was) does not appear to be running true, use the long point of the skew to create a small, on-center hole. If you don't do this, the hole you drill for the brass tube may be pulled off center.

With the pen blank still in the three-jaw chuck, drill a hole into the pen blank using a 7-mm diameter drill bit. The hole from the tailstock center will help get the drill started on-center. I use a Jacobs chuck in the lathe's tailstock to hold the bit, then advance the tailstock to drill the hole (photo 4). Don't drill all the way through the blank or it may split. This is why my rough stock is a bit long. Early on, I lost far too many blanks as a result of splitting. Be sure to clear the drill bit often, as this will also help keep the blank in one piece.

Next, glue a brass tube into each pen blank using five-minute epoxy. I use a small-diameter steel rod (an old drill bit) to mix the epoxy and smear

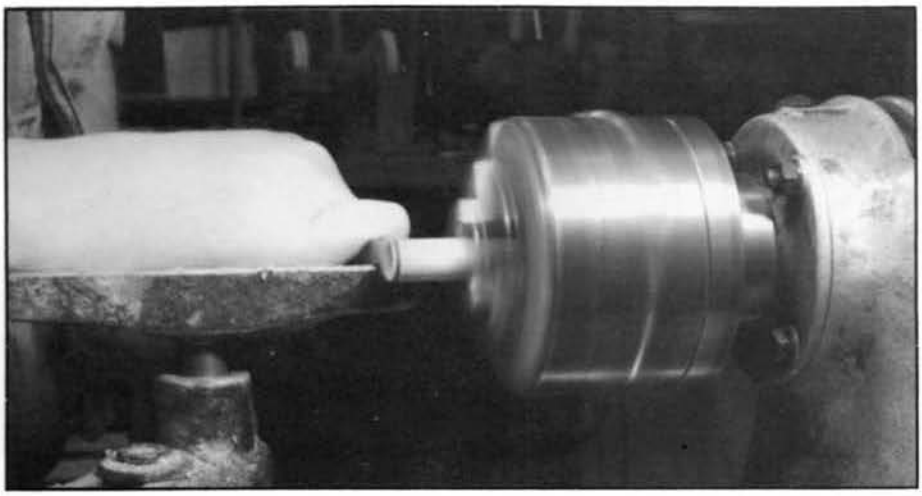


photo 3. True-up the end of the cylinder with the long point of a skew.

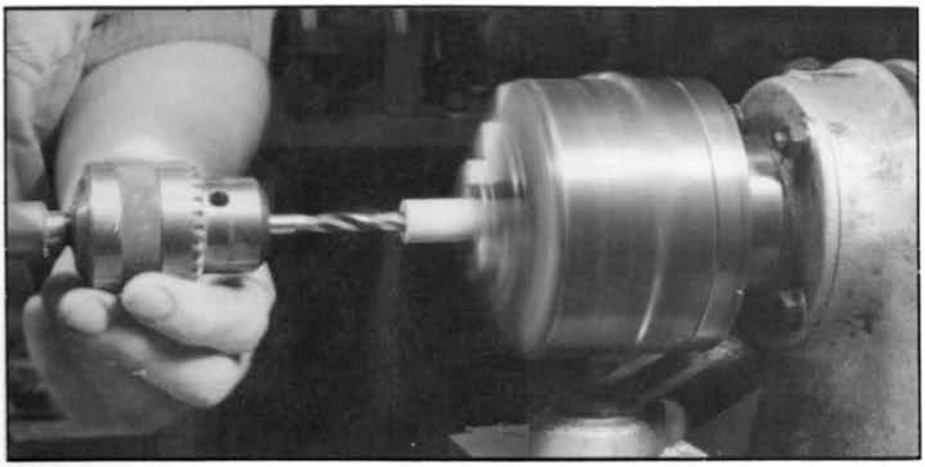


photo 4. Drill a hole in the cylinder, but not all the way through. A brass tube will be glued into the hole. A Jacobs chuck held in the lathe's tailstock holds the drill bit.

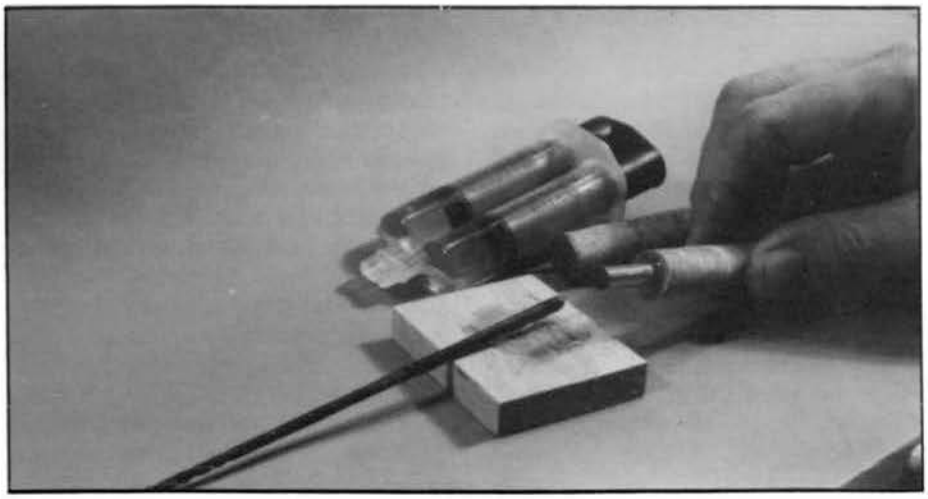


photo 5. Glue a brass tube into the pen cylinder.

it on the inside of the pen blank (photo 5). Be sure that the brass tube does not stick out of the end of the hole. Five-minute epoxy is gap filling and dries fast. In the past, I used a slow-drying epoxy and found that it didn't always bond properly. My theory is that the slow drying process allowed the epoxy to leach into the wood fibers, causing a poor glue joint.

After the glue has dried, I cut the pen blanks to length on my table saw. A simple jig will allow you to cut the blanks to the proper length (photo 6). At this point, I drill out any excess epoxy from the interior of the brass barrel. A 1/4-inch diameter drill bit fits perfectly, but I always use a smaller-diameter bit first to remove most of the epoxy, followed by the 1/4 inch bit (photo 7). Before I did it this way, friction would occasionally heat up the epoxy enough for the barrel to spin loose within the blank.

Finish-turning the barrel blanks

Put your turning mandrel into the headstock of your lathe, place a bushing on the mandrel followed by a pen blank, another bushing, then the nut. Bring up the tailstock center to support the mandrel. The bushings are your guide for the thickness of the finished pen barrel. You are ready to finish-turn one half of a pen.

I use two tools to turn the pens, a small roughing out gouge and a small skew. The roughing out gouge removes most of the excess stock and the skew does the finish work. I use a small piece of formica as a straightedge, placed on top of the blank and the bushings to tell me if I need to remove any more material (photo 10).

I sand with 220-, 320-, and 400-grit paper, followed by a coat of sanding sealer and a couple of coats of Waterlox. The finish can be applied either on or off the lathe. I generally find it too time consuming to return a batch of blanks to the lathe and consequently apply the Waterlox by hand off the lathe.

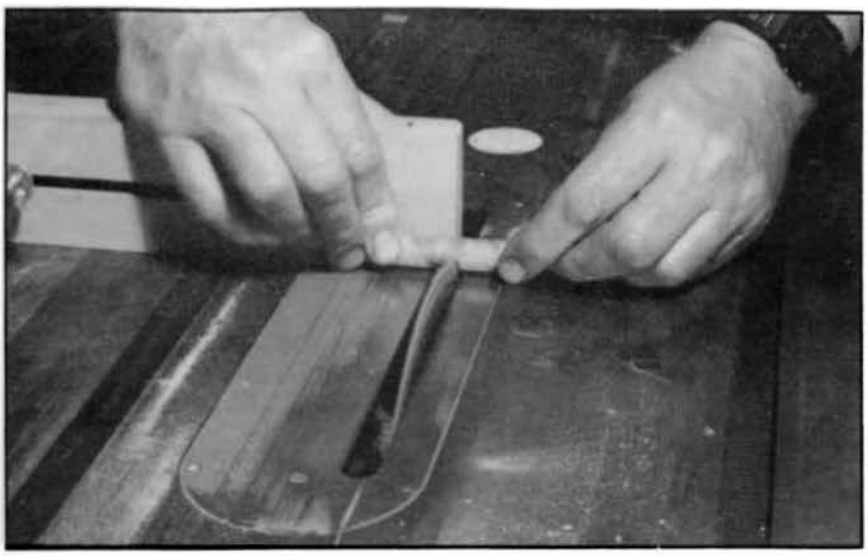


photo 6. Cut each cylinder to length. If you use a jig on your table saw, exact, clean cuts can be made.

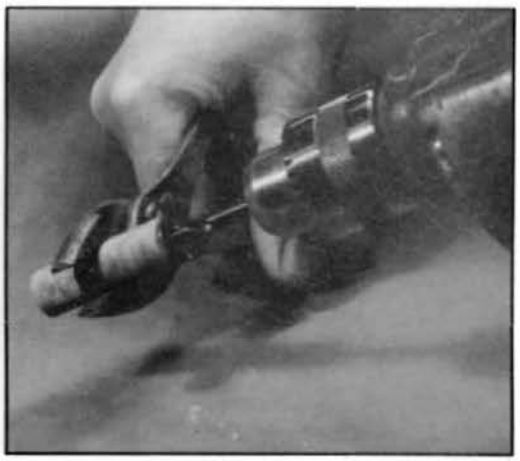


photo 7. Drill out excess expoxy from the brass tube before finish-turning the cylinder.

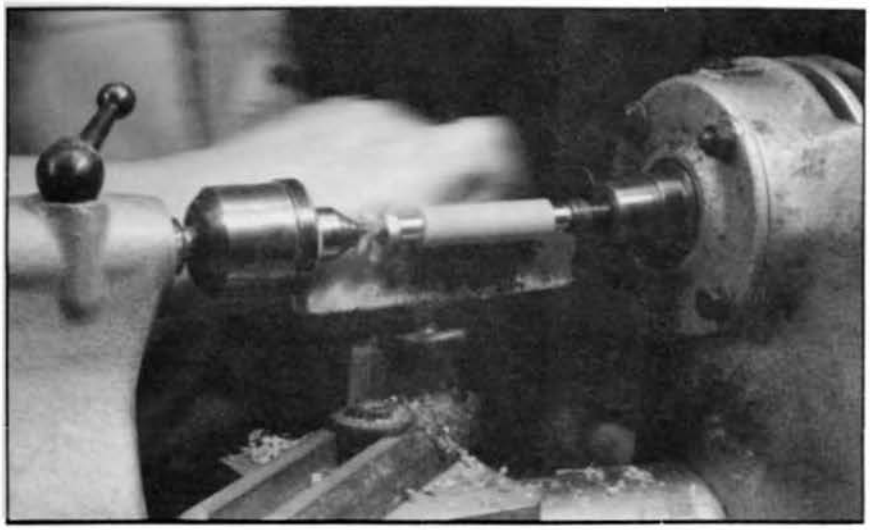


photo 8. Finish turn the pen blank. The cylinder is attached to a pen mandrel.

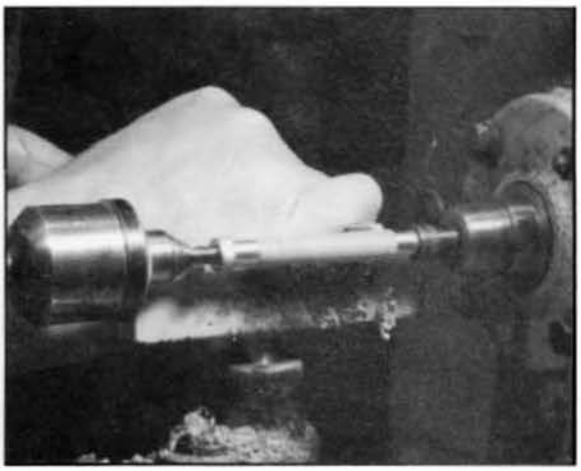


photo 9.

Even though it is not advertised as such, I assume that Waterlox has ultraviolet inhibitors. It helps woods such as padauk and Osage orange keep their colors for a very long time. Customers also seem to prefer pens that are oil finished rather than ones with wax or lacquer. But this is a matter of preference.

Pen assembly

At this point, you may want to file out a bit of the brass tube interior so that the fit of the pen tip, end cap, and pocket clip is not too tight. The reason I suggest this is that I have lost a number of finished pen blanks due to splitting when pressing the pen tip or pocket clip in place. This occurs most frequently with straight-grained woods. I apply a very small amount of five-minute epoxy before assembly. Press the pocket clip and end cap into the end of one of the finished barrel blanks. Glue and press the pen tip in place. I use my bench vise to gently apply pressure (photos 11, 12).

The retraction mechanism is then pressed in, up to the groove on its shaft. Screw in the ink refill and make sure that the pen tip extends out far enough. If not, return that section to the vise and press the retraction mechanism in a bit farther. Slide a brass ring over the retraction mechanism and press the pocket-clip portion of the pen over the retraction mechanism. That's it.

Miscellaneous

I find a three-jaw chuck indispensable for turning pens, particularly for drilling the hole; but not everyone owns one or desires to turn

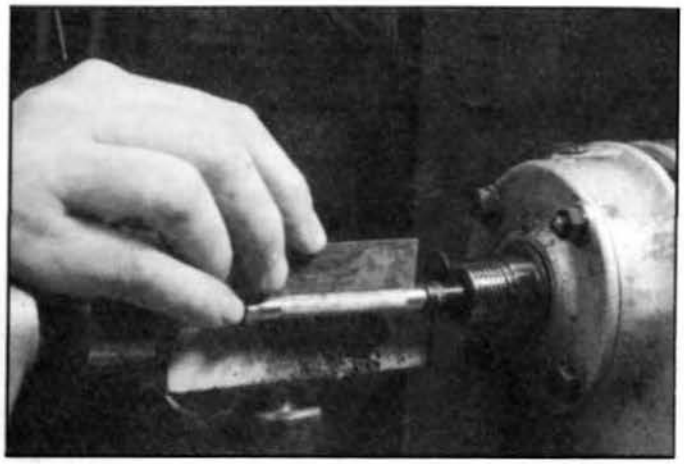


photo 10. Check the thickness of the wood using a straight-edge held against the bushings of the mandrel.

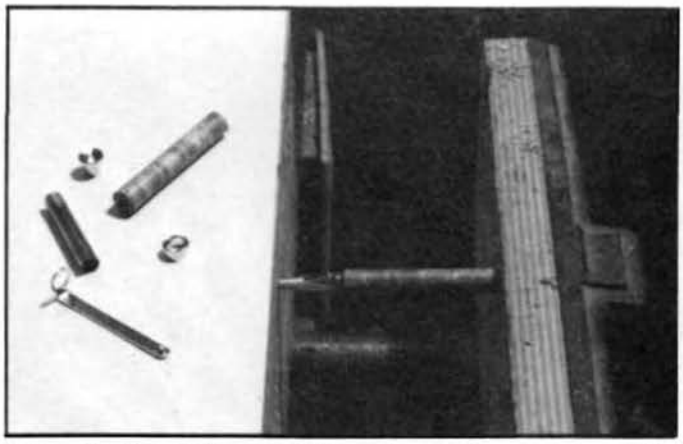


photo 11. Pen during assembly. A bench clamp works well to press the parts together.

photo 12. Pen being assembled, held in a bench clamp.

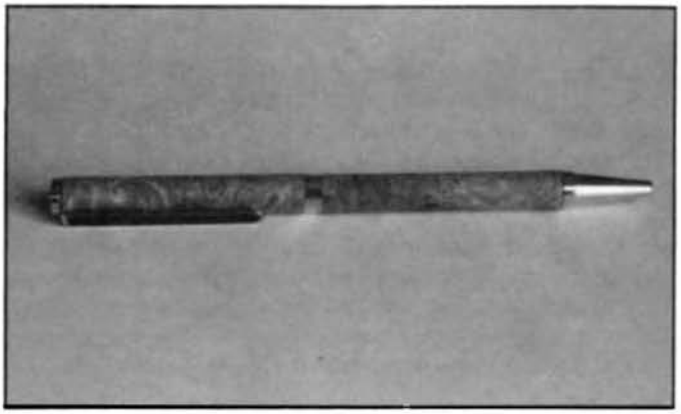


photo 13. Finished pen, Robert Rosand, 1993.

mass quantities of pens. If this is the case with you, you might want to consider the drilling method suggested by Dale Nish in his 1991 article. (See, Dale Nish, "Turning Pens," *American Woodworker*, June 1991, No. 20, pp. 27-31.) Dale suggested drilling a 1/2-inch diameter hole in a piece of scrap wood clamped to a drill press. Turn the pen blanks to fit the hole. Place the blank in the hole, steady it with a pair of pliers, then drill the 7-mm diameter hole for the brass barrel.

Buckeye burl pens are one of my best sellers, but this wood can be a bit difficult to turn. If you're having trouble getting a clean finish with this or any other wood, try a 50/50 mixture of sanding sealer and turpentine (not mineral spirits) on the wood prior to your last cut or two. In most cases, this will drastically reduce torn grain. Incidentally, do the finish turning while the surface is wet; do not wait for the surface to dry.

One potential pitfall of turning pens is to use wood that is not adequately dry. I have had some woods split the entire length of the brass tube after they were finished. I can only attribute this to wet turning stock. Now I routinely dry all turning stock in a shop-made dryer (any size you want) made of two-inch thick insulation board outfitted with a 60- or 100-watt light bulb and a small personal fan. I dry the wood after it is cut on the table saw, before I drill the holes.

Craft Supplies, USA has been a very dependable source of pen parts. However, Craft Supplies Limited of England also sells a similar pen, as well as a "deluxe" version. Be forewarned that the brass barrel dimensions are larger and a different mandrel will have to be fabricated, but the pen is very attractive.

One final note. I found at least one "cheaper" source of pen parts than the one I am now using. Unfortunately, the aggravation involved in trying to get my merchandise (pleading letters, certified letters, registered letters, and finally a complaint to the Better Business Bureau) was just not worth it. Call me if you have had similar problems with a supplier and we'll swap notes.

Robert Rosand lives in Bloomsburg, Pennslyvania. He makes his living woodturning and was a demonstrator at this year's AAW Symposium.

POINTERS FOR TURNING PENS

Bill Hyatt

letter opener, fountain pens, pencils, and pens

Pens, pencils, ink pens, and letter openers are fun and easy to make and are wonderful gifts for that certain person who seems to have everything. The five basic steps for making the above items are the same: making the blank, drilling the blank, turning the blank, finishing the blank, and assembling the finished item. There are, however, a number of general items to consider when making pens that will help you achieve success.

Commercially purchased pen blanks are the most expensive approach to making pens, ranging in price from 50 cents to $3.00 per blank, depending on the wood and the source. I make my own blanks. Diameters can range from 1/2 inch for hard, clean-cutting woods such as cocobolo, apple, ebony, and walnut, to 5/8 inch for brittle woods such as purple heart or laminated woods of most any combination. Some heavily spalted or burled woods require a blank that is as much as 3/4-inch square in order to achieve a final cut that is clean.

I use a table saw for cutting pen blanks because I can more easily get squared edges which are important in the drilling stage. You could use a bandsaw, but unless it is well tuned, the blade may wander and ruin the blank. The tolerance for a 1/2-inch blank is less than 1/8 inch. In the finished product, the wall thickness will be 1/16- to 1/32-inch thick.

I use a drill press at its fastest speed (5500 rpm) for both the 7-mm diameter hole for pen, pencil, and letter-opener blanks and the 10-mm diameter hole required for the better ink-pen blanks. For whatever reason, the slower speeds tend to crack more blanks.

The drill press is mandatory for me in drilling the three-step ink pens since I have not figured out any other way to drill precision holes, although I suppose a Portaline attachment and jig to hold the blank steady might work. I have looked for a cheap bench-top drill press that I could dedicate to this function, but they all seem to have only a 2-inch travel. The blanks need a minimum of 2 1/4-inch travel. While I prefer a brad-point bit for drilling the 1/2-inch blanks with a pilot dimple in the wood to guide the start of the cut, I have found a twist-drill bit recommended for pens by Berea Hardwoods ($6.00) to be the fastest and most effective bit I have used.

To drill a straight smooth hole, I have made a simple wood jig consisting of two side pieces, 2 inches high, meeting at a right angle and mounted on a 3/4-inch thick board. I fasten this jig to the drill-press table with a C-clamp, center the blank under the bit and drill the hole in a series of short thrusts, going no more than 1/2 inch at a thrust, holding the blank steady with my thumb. (The blank could be clamped to the jig, but I have found that to be cumbersome and unnecessary.) The short strokes are to keep from breaking the blank during drilling, and also to keep from overheating the bit on hard woods such as ebony. Drilling end grain generates an enormous amount of heat. I also spray the bit with WD-40 as a lubricant after drilling each blank and make sure that I keep my drill bits sharp. A dull bit will wander.

After cutting and drilling, I like to glue the brass tube into the blank and then set the blank aside for a couple of weeks. Since I do not normally use kiln dried wood (and even the supposedly kiln dried exotics are not always dry), this gives the wood a chance to do its thing before I finish-turn it. If you put the blank aside without gluing in the brass tube, it may shrink and then the tube will not fit unless you redrill, which is a waste of time and also somewhat difficult.

Finish-turning the blank is quite straightforward, although I know of no way of doing it without a pen mandrel. These are available in both the single and double sizes for pens: Berea Hardwoods, $8; Craft Supplies, USA, $19.95; Packard Woodworks, $13.95; Gray Hardwoods, $19.90. The more expensive mandrels have a Morse taper attachment that mounts directly in the headstock of a lathe while the less expensive ones must be mounted in a Jacobs chuck. My personal preference is a Jacobs-chuck-mounted-double mandrel carried by Gray Hardwoods because it allows me to turn both parts of the pen at the same time, which facilitates sizing, helps match the grain pattern, and aids in decorating.

I turn the blanks at my lathe's maximum speed, 2000 rpm, and because I don't like to sharpen a skew, I make two passes with a 1/4-inch gouge to get the blank nearly to size, then make a final pass with a 1/2-inch skew. This is an idea I borrowed from Rodger Jacobs. The thickness

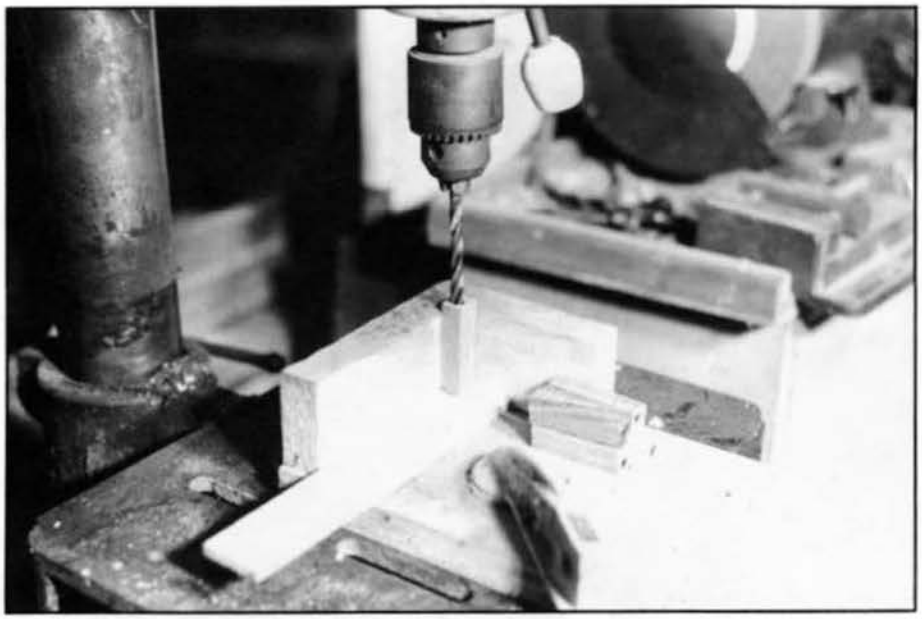
of the wood after turning will vary from 1/16 to 1/32 inch depending on whether the pens are to have a "slim" or "full" feel to them.

If I have made good cuts, there is little sanding to be done. I usually hit the wood quickly with 320-, 400-, and 600-grit paper for hard woods and use only 320-grit for a softer wood such as cherry or spalted wood. If you use heavily burled or spalted woods, expect some breakage because of the fragility of the wood.

I finish on the lathe with padding lacquer and HUT wax, available from Craft Supplies, USA, Gray Hardwoods, and almost any large woodworking store. The process from the time I put the two blanks on the lathe until the finish is completed takes about 6 minutes, although when I first began it took more like 20 to 25 minutes. Perhaps the best suggestion I can offer is to make sure your toolrest is absolutely smooth and slick. File out any nicks, sand with 320-grit abrasive, wax the surface, then buff with a cloth.

Before the parts are put together, make sure the ends of the blanks are square so that the wood will fit flush against the pen parts. The jig I use is a low-tech way to ensure square ends. I stick a piece of PSA 220-grit sandpaper to my bench and clamp a square-edge 2 x 4 on top of it. I then press each blank against the 2 x 4 and rub its end two or three times on the paper, then rotate the blank 90 degrees and repeat the process. I sand the ends flush with the brass tubes, except for the end where the endcap and clip are attached.

Many of the pen menchanisms I use require a small notch to be cut in one end, and in order to avoid having to cut through the brass as well as through the wood I have made the blanks 1/16-inch longer than the tubes. Sanding off the extra wood is easy to do because at this point the wood is very thin. On the end that will take the endcap and clip, I leave the wood 1/32-inch longer than the brass tube in order to cut a notch for the endcap and clip. I cut the notch with a Dremel tool. Assembly is routine except that it is quite difficult if you do not use a vise to squeeze the parts together.



A jig for drilling an end grain hole in a pen blank.

A final note on pen parts. I have used several types, and the sets sold by Craft Supplies, USA, although more expensive—$3.95—are clearly of higher quality and worth the price difference, because the less expensive pens require an additional step—cutting a small notch for the endcap and clip. If you follow the same procedure as I talked about above (leaving the pen blanks 1/16-inch longer than the brass tubes) do not overtighten your mandrel nut, otherwise the blank will break when you turn it thinner.

The best of the less expensive pen parts are marketed by Todd Gray of Vista, California; they range from $2.50 ea. for 5, to $1.70 ea. for 100. Berea Hardwoods, $3.00, Nick Cook, $3.25, and Packard Woodworks, $3.95, also supply dependable pen and pencil mechanisms. In the case of the ink pens, those marketed by Craft Supplies are again the most expensive—$9.95—but are better in quality and also much easier to make, as they do not require step drilling. If you want to go the three-step route, the parts are available from Craft Supplies, Ltd, England, or Berea Hardwoods, $7.00.

Sources of Supply

Berea Hardwoods 216/243-4452
125 Jacqueline Dr.
Berea, OH 44017

Nick Cook 404/421-1212
585 Cobb Parkway, Suite 1
Marietta, GA 30062

Craft Supplies, USA 801/373-0917
1287 E. 1120 St.
Provo, UT 84601

Craft Supplies, Ltd
The Mill, Millers Dale
Nr. Boxton, Derbyshire
SK 17 8SN England

Gray Hardwoods 619/940-1856
1750 Ravine Rd.
Vista, CA 92083

Packard Woodworks 704/859-6762
P.O. Box 718
Tryon, NC 28782

Bill Hyatt lives in North Carolina. A version of this article first appeared in the February 1993 "North Carolina Woodturner," Journal of the North Carolina Woodturners' Association, Ken Bachand, editor.

TURNING THE PITH OUT OF WOOD

William L. Stephenson, Jr.

photo by Sandsmith Studios

Black walnut vessel, crotch wood with spalted sapwood, 8 1/4" dia. x 9 1/2" h., William L. Stephenson, Jr. Note the pith near the base and the small knot near the top rim. There is also a pith approximately centered in the bottom.

Woodturners soon learn to turn the pith out of wood; some through the experience of others but most of us insist upon learning the hard way as we watch the piece we just turned begin to crack and split. Seemingly, no amount of cyanoacrylate glue stops the crack running through the piece, which is indeed the case, as further drying increases the stress and the stress is relieved by more cracking.

Actually, the pith of the tree or limb is not really the problem since the pith is either hollow or rather soft and pulpy. The real culprit is the one to two inches of wood surrounding the pith that contain the initial annual rings of wood, from the first-year ring out to the fifth or eighth ring. The wood in this area of the tree, whether stem or limb, is referred to as juvenile wood, meaning the wood that grew when the stem was young. To better understand this area of the tree where the cracking begins, we need to first understand a bit about how trees grow.

At the start of the growing season, which is correlated with the length of daylight, the stored energy in the tree is focused upon height growth of the stem and length growth of the limbs. Following this initial growth surge, concurrent with the sprouting of the new leaves or needles, the tree will begin diameter growth. During the initial growth in height, food or energy is derived from storage of food manufactured in previous growing seasons. By the time diameter growth starts, the new leaves are developing new energy for growth using fresh nutrients.

The cells developed for the initial height growth are highly elongated, relative to the size of other cells. The cell walls are relatively thin and the moisture content is relatively high. All of these cells are referred to as primary-growth cells and have the thin-wall, high-moisture characteristics which lead to instability during drying and cracking from the pith outward. The diameter growth during the first several years is mainly composed of vertically aligned cells. The tips of the stem and limbs are the parts of the tree which are the most exposed. Wind whips the tips, almost constantly, causing the layers of cells to slide against each other reducing any horizontal strength that may have developed during cell growth.

In about the third to fifth year of diameter growth, ray cells, which grow in a horizontal direction perpendicular to the center, have begun to develop and are attaining sufficient length to provide stability to the wood. The diameter-growth cells are taking on the thick-walled and lower-moisture characteristics of storage cells providing additional strength to the stems. Because of continued height and length growth, the tip of the stem or limb is now further back into the crown where it is more prone to swaying in the breeze rather than being whipped by the wind. The cells bind together a bit better which increases the strength.

Upon felling and bucking the tree into usable lengths, the center inch or two of the tree is exposed to drying, shrinking, and release of internal pressure. Cracks develop starting in the center juvenile wood relieving the stress caused by collapsed cells. A crack will continue to run across the grain, usually along the wood rays, until the stress is relieved. The ray cells guide the crack causing the crack to be relatively straight rather than jagged. Round wood in log form can often be rived into turning blanks, rather than sawn, by taking advantage of the straight cracks which can extend several inches outward into the log. The cracking in the ends of round wood can be retarded by coating the fresh cut ends

photo by Sandsmith Studios

Apple cup, 3 1/2" dia. x 2 7/8" h., by William L. Stephenson, Jr. Note the pith near the bottom of the cup. The wood came from apple-orchard trimmings.

photo by Sandsmith Studios

Red maple vessel, 6 3/4" dia. x 7 1/2" h., William L. Stephenson, Jr.

with a wax-based sealant (see *American Woodturner* articles, "Turning Domestic: Dogwood," Vol. 8, No. 1; "Turning Domestic: Persimmon," Vol. 8, No. 2; and elsewhere in this issue, "Turning Domestic: Sasafrass.")

All woods will crack in the center. Cracking can be minimized, and avoided in some woods, by positioning the pith in or near the bottom of the turned object; by turning the wood to the final form while green; and by turning to a thickness of 3/8 inch or less, with 3/16 inch being ideal for most woods. The final thickness is more important when turning the pith into turned objects because the reduction of the mass reduces the "competition" between shrinking cells. To minimize uneven distortion during drying, the pith should be centered within the turned object. End-grain turnings, where the grain and the center of the turning blank is aligned parallel to the lathe bed, should have the pith near dead center in the bottom of the object. Turn the piece a bit thicker when the bottom contains the pith.

Conventional turnings, where the grain and the center of the turning blank is perpendicular to the lathe bed, the pith should be centered in the height and width of the turned object. This dead centering is a bit tricky and requires some practice (see accompanying article, "Centering the Pith for Turning"). Off-center positioning of the pith will result in uneven distortion that can enhance the design of the finished piece; but expect it to fail more often than it works. Distortion during drying is highly unpredictable. (See also "Pithy Vessels" by Peter M. Smith scheduled to be published in *Woodturning* magazine.) Green-turned wood should dry slowly; fast drying promotes rapid change in dimensions which promotes cracking.

There are several additional guidelines that can be followed to enhance the results of turning pith-in objects:

1. Arrange to harvest the tree yourself and plan the cutting so that the tree falls gently without bouncing off rocks or other trees. A sharp rap will not only crack the pith of limbs and stems, it can also cause ring shake, ruining an entire segment of the tree.

2. Work efficiently:

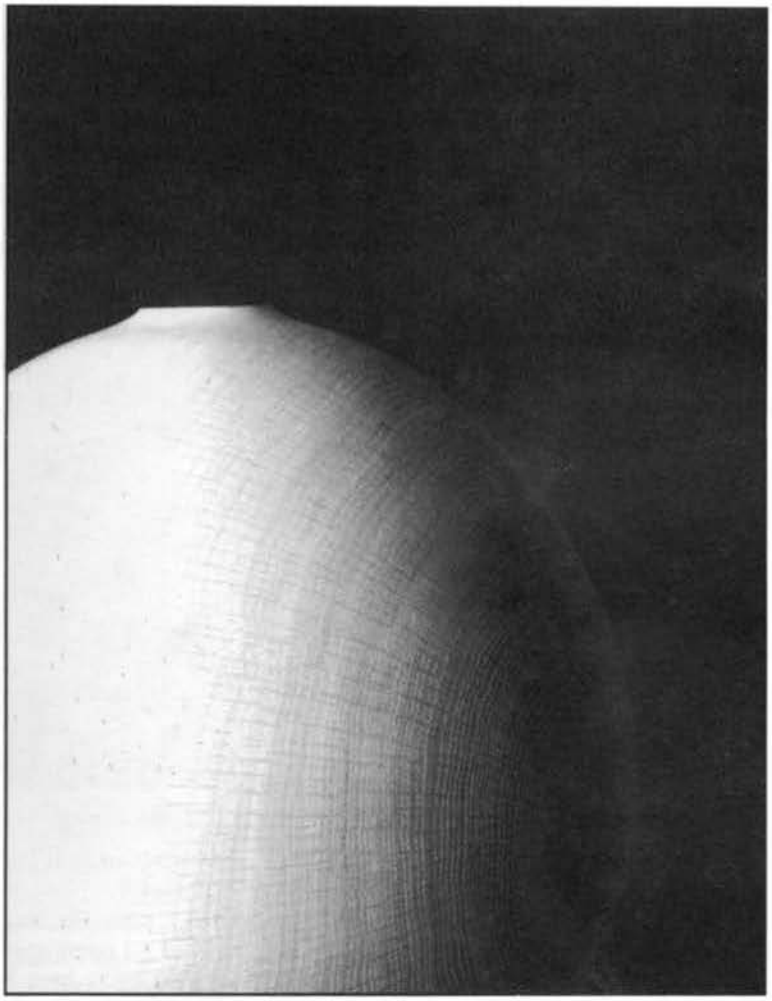
—When bucking the tree to usable lengths, cut a few, then coat the ends and cut a few more . . .

—When turning, plan the work so that the piece can be completed in a single session. Minimize heat by using sharp tools and sharp sandpaper. Heat accelerates surface drying which promotes cracking, expecially in fruit woods. If small cracks start to develop, lubricate the surface with a finishing oil or spray the piece with water.

3. Turn to a thickness of less than 3/8 inch for diffuse-porous woods such as apple and a thickness of less than 1/4 inch for ring-porous woods such as oaks.

4. Dry slowly. The plastic-bag technique works great. This process is described in the June 1993 issue of *American Woodturner*, Vol. 8, No. 2, pp. 29-30.

Even with slow drying in a controlled manner, about 20 percent of your pieces will have some cracking through the pith. During turning and finishing, try to avoid heating the wood due to friction because many woods will develop hairline cracks in the heated surface which may later expand and spoil a really nice turned



"Pot," white oak, 12″ dia. x 12″ h. by David Ellsworth. Note the success using a species of wood generally prone to cracking through the pith and juvenile wood.

object. You might also try saturating the pith and the center inch or so of a freshly turned object with water-thin cyanoacrylate glue, allowing it to dry overnight before you begin the sanding, finishing, or drying process. Several professional turners have had success with this technique.

Experienced woodturners have found the following woods to be rather forgiving when it comes to cracking at the pith area:

Forgiving woods: American walnut (*Juglans nigra*), butternut (*J. cinerea*), sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*), hophornbeam (*Ostrya virginiana*), flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*); soft maples—red maple (*Acer rubrum*), silver maple (*A. saccharinum*); elms—slippery or red elm (*Ulmus fulva*), American or white elm (*U. Americana*), rock elm (*U. thomasii*); birches—yellow birch (*Betula lutea*), sweet birch (*B. lenta*), red birch (*B. nigra*), white birch (*B. papyrifera*); and apple (*Malus sp.*).

Considering the technical characteristics of the above woods, one might speculate that magnolias, gums, and West Coast maples might be forgiving in their relative tendency to crack from the pith.

Turners have found the following species to be somewhat fickle, meaning that they sometimes crack and sometimes do not crack from the pith:

Fickle woods: black cherry (*Prunus serotina*), white ash (*Fraxinus americana*), green ash (*F. pennsylvanica*), and many of the hickories (*Carya sp.*).

Other woods that might also be fickle are red mulberry (*Morus rubra*), serviceberry (*Amelanchier sp.*), or any of the hawthorns (*Crataegus sp.*).

Expect the woods listed below to be unforgiving and almost always crack from the pith:

Unforgiving woods: persimmon (*Diospyros virginiana*); hard maples—sugar maple (*A. saccharum*), black maple (*A nigrum*); red oaks—northern red oak (*Quercus borealis*), black oak (*Q. velutina*), pin oak (*Q. palustris*); water oaks; some white oaks—post oak (*Q. stellata*), chestnut oak (*Q. prinus*).

Woods that are also expected to be unforgiving are black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) and the live oaks (*Q. virginiana*), which have the highest specific gravity of all the native woods, 0.70.

If any general conclusions can be derived from experience with these woods, it would be that the denser woods are somewhat more prone to cracking from the pith, especially those with a specific gravity greater than .60. But then there are exceptions: Dogwood is one of the more dense domestic woods, but it is more prone to crack vertically rather than horizontally. And, as expected, there is a great deal of variability within a species. Some professional turners have had good experience with white oak, such as David Ellsworth and his white oak piece on page 43 of the June, 1993 issue of *American Woodturner* (Vol. 8, No. 2). Other turners have not had good success, however, with white oak which might suggest variability due to regional growing conditions (see *Wood*, No. 61, June 1993, "Tracking Down Good Wood").

Also expect variability within a tree. Limb centers are more likely to crack and split than stem (trunk) centers. Look at the end grain of a limb and note that the pith is off center relative to the total diameter, versus the end grain of a stem or bole. The off-center growth is due to a variety of factors (best left to a later discussion) which results in more stress wood caused by tension and compression growth. Trees of the same species grown on wetter sites tend to be more prone to cracking. Faster-growth trees in the southern

limits of the natural range tend to be more prone to cracking from the pith. You may have noted trends about the species and trees that grow in your locality.

With all that you have experienced and with what you have just learned about the problems associated with turning pith-in objects, you might be asking yourself, "Why bother?" Consider the following:

—Some of the highest figure in wood occurs around the piths, especially the areas where limbs grow from the main trunk. Too often this segment of the tree is simply discarded or is relegated to the firewood pile.

—Natural defects, such as birdpeck and the associated stain from fungus growth, usually occurs on the main stem around the bole. To maximize the design effect in using these natural features, the object is often best turned with the pith in the center of the object.

—Small limbs and stems can often be used for turning with the pith in the center, expecially the hard-to-find woods like orchard prunings.

—As we begin to turn a piece of wood, we often encounter knots and other hidden growth defects. Knowing how to manage the pith in the knots permits us to complete an otherwise discarded object.

By understanding the shrinkage and distortion characteristics about the pith, new opportunities for design can develop, creating new avenues of expression. If you have always turned the pith out of turned objects, select a wood from the forgiving list and give it a turn, pith and all.

The author greatly appreciates the information and experience about turning the pith in and out of wood that have been shared by Alan Stirt, Judy Ditmer, Charlie Hutson, Peter Smith, Betty Scarpino, and David Ellsworth.

Bill Stephenson is a professional forester who has been a serious woodturner since 1988.

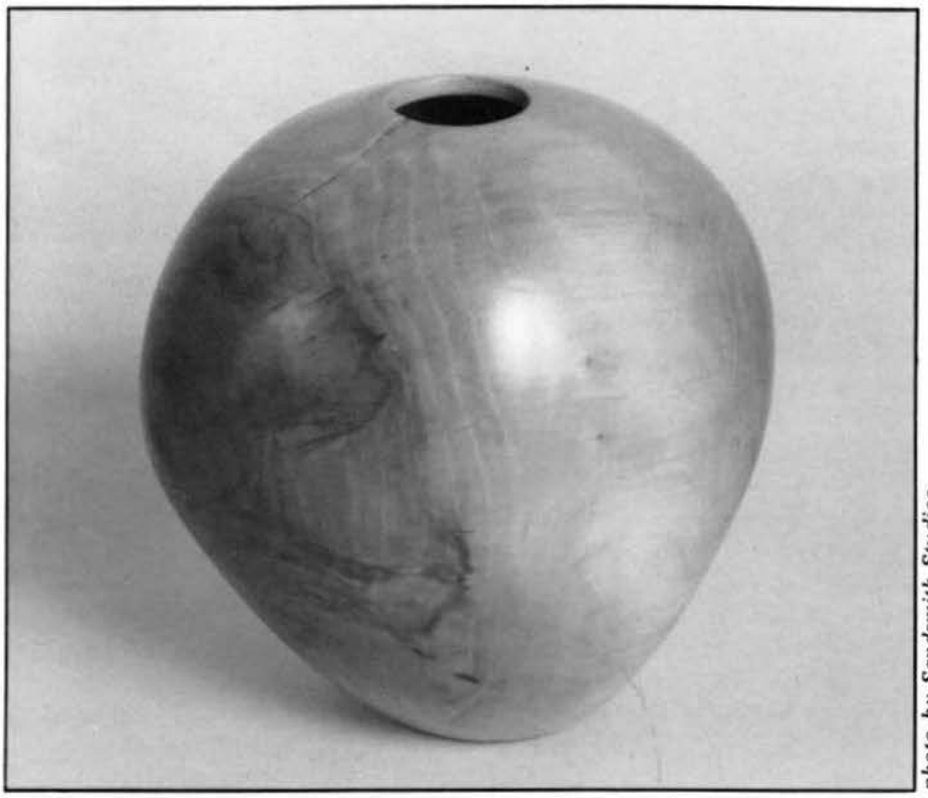


photo by Sandsmith Studios

Apple vessel, 5" dia. x 5 1/2" h., Peter M. Smith. Note the distortion in the area of the pith and juvenile wood.

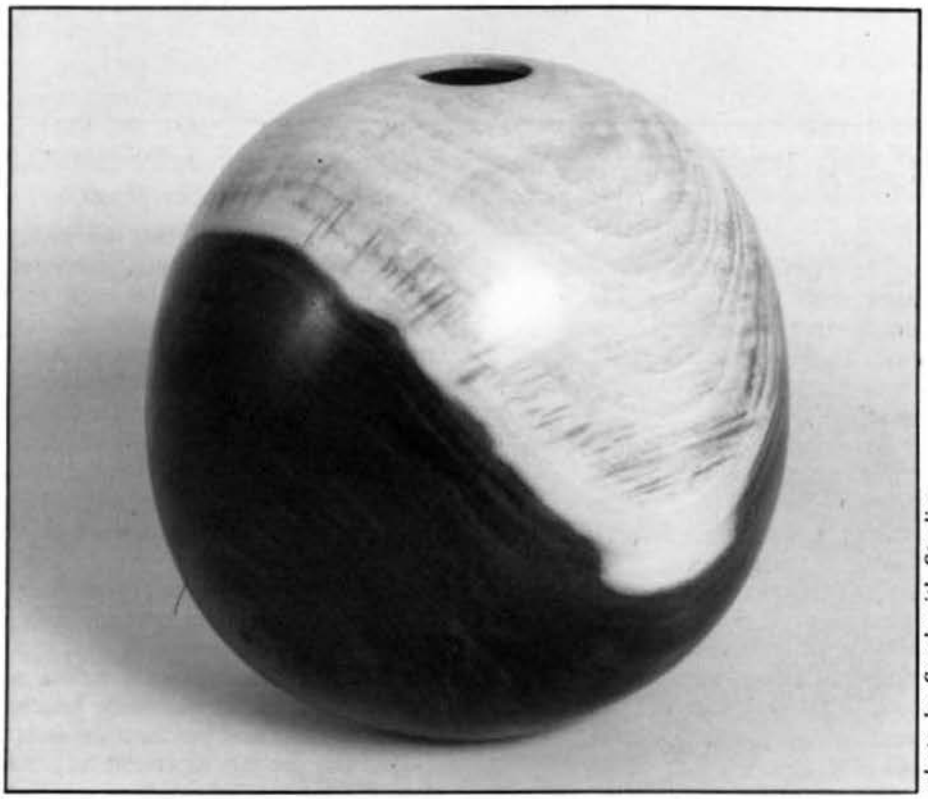


photo by Sandsmith Studios

Walnut vase, 4 1/2" dia. x 6" h., Peter M. Smith. The pith is located near the base on the right side.

CENTERING THE PITH FOR TURNING

William L. Stephenson, Jr.

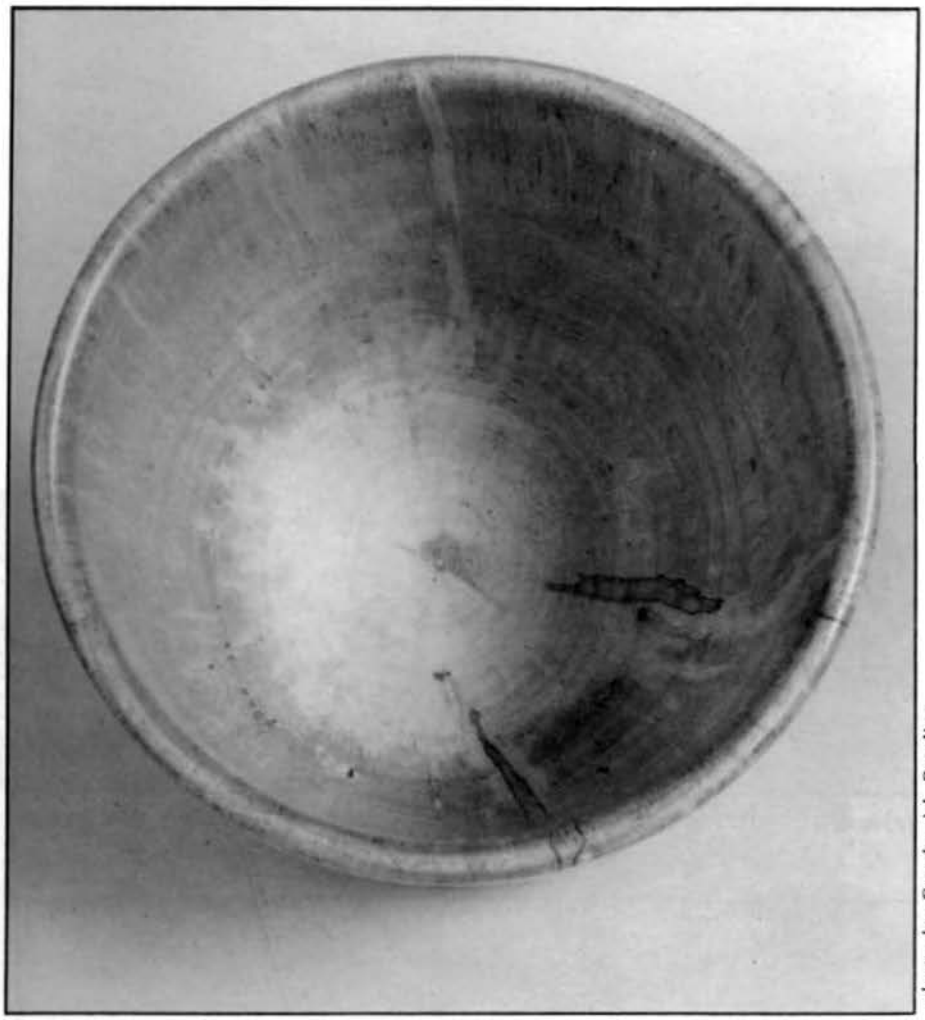


photo by Sandsmith Studios

Red maple vessel, interior view, 6 3/4" dia. x 7 1/2" h. The pith is approximately centered in the bottom of the bowl.

Do not expect to find a turning blank with the pith exactly in the center—trees do not often grow that way. Therefore, when you turn a whole section of wood and want to orient it so that the pith is as close to being centered as possible, some compromise and adjustment is necessary.

For end-grain turning, where the grain and the pith are parallel to the lathe bed, select a green log with the pith as near the center as possible. Using a center finder or a 45-degree square, mark several lines across both ends. The lines will not necessarily cross in the measured centers, they will surround it.

Note the location of the measured centers relative to the pith. Select a point about midway between the measured centers and the pith, but not more than 1/2 inch from the pith. These points will be used for centering the turning blank on the lathe. The pith will be just enough off center to minimize problems with the pulpy pith in final turning and finishing. Now that you have marked your centers, use them to mount the wood between lathe centers to prepare it for attaching to a chuck or a faceplate.

For face-plate turning, where the grain and the pith are perpendicular to the lathe bed, centering the pith is a bit more complicated. Select a blank that is about the same length as the diameter and bandsaw the ends so that the piece is as round as possible. Mount the blank between the lathe centers as though the tree grew up through the lathe bed. Eyeball the location of the pith as nearly perpendicular to the lathe bed as possible. Rough turn the piece to the approximate shape of the finished object, taking into consideration a design that permits centering the pith longitudinally.

Turn off the lathe and check to see if the pith is actually 90 degrees to the lathe bed. Here's how to go about checking for the 90 degrees and for making adjustments. Position the toolrest so that it is parallel to the lathe bed and is about at the center height of the wood. Line up one end of the pith with the toolrest and mark its location on the toolrest. Rotate the piece 180 degrees and note the location of the other end of the pith relative to the mark. If the pith does not line up with the mark, an adjustment needs to be made to bring the pith to 90 degrees within the turned piece.

You can reposition the wood from either the headstock side or tailstock side or both. Here are the steps to reposition the wood from the tailstock side, as that is generally the easiest to accomplish. Loosen the tailstock and get ready to move that side of the wood. If the pith is to the left of the mark, shift the wood toward the back of the lathe. If the pith is to the right of the mark, move the piece of wood toward the front of the lathe. Repeat this process several times if necessary. You may end up with several center marks on the wood from the tailstock center before you get it right.

Now that the wood is positioned so that the pith is centered, finish turn the piece or prepare it for a faceplate or chuck for final turning. It is best to turn the piece completely from start to finish before you set it aside because the pith location and the shape of the juvenile wood can change due to the wood movement. (See *Fine Woodworking* No. 78, Sept./Oct. 1989, p. 59.)

These centering techniques will also work for positioning other pieces of wood to take advantage of symmetry of sapwood in natural edge turnings or the location of spalting lines for design purposes. Do remember, however, that the wood will move as it drys.

Art From the Lathe Exhibition

Hagley Museum and Library Wilmington, Delaware

Article reprinted from Philadelphia Inquirer, June 27, 1993, courtesy of author, Victoria Donohoe, Philadelphia Inquirer Art Critic.

One of the claims that might be made for an exhibit such as *Art from the Lathe* at the Hagley Museum in Wilmington is that it stops art criticism cold. The predominance here of clean, clear work that must be absorbed, each individual piece at a time, should render a commentator speechless. Featured are 150 such items by 90 artists.

These are all lathe-turned objects — the lathe being a basic machine tool, its products found in industry and nearly every room of the house. It is easy to say, "Oh, lathe-turned objects," and pass this show by entirely.

Yet the challenging thing is that this presentation is more to be imbibed than chewed over. You will want to drink it in slowly. And much of it is gourmet fare. For the only affinity the finest pieces have to traditional production-turning of table legs, bed posts, rolling pins and toy animals ends with the method used. Turning produces both those and one-of-a kind objects so plentiful here.

The show happened because a world wide revival of interest in wood-turning is underway. This region has a strong presence in that movement, especially because of the initiatives of the Wood Turning Center.

For a moment, consider the rich heritage of wood-turning on our shores.

It began with European lathe-turning practices imported to Pennsylania from Germany and Britian and put into effect here as early as 1700. Those coalesced into a new and distinct American tradition with an Eastern Pennsylvania accent.

Adaptations of this tradition were made during the Industrial Revolution, especially as demand for wood turners slackened with the advent of automated lathes heralding mass production. With few exceptions, arrival of mass production meant wood-turning's survival only when it became a hobby instead of a trade - as it did in Chester County, Lancaster County and Philadelphia.

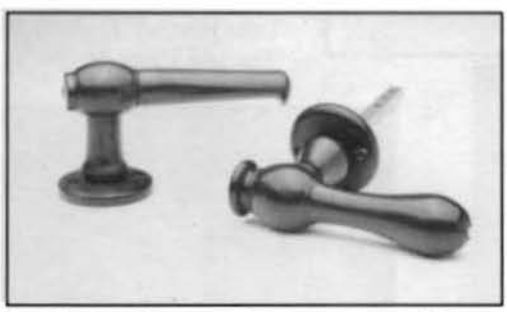
After World War II, wood-turning of useful objects started to recapture some of its lost ground, and a full-fledged national movement was launched. More than a dozen years ago that wood-turning movement expanded to include not just useful objects but also nonfunctional and purely sculptural pieces. Major craft artists in the woodworking field in this country and abroad became involved. And one of the more recent developments is participation by artists specializing in other media in which "turning" may be a feature.

The setting of the show is especially congenial, for the Hagley collects vintage examples of wood-turning by artisans and is displaying supplementary material here as a useful counterpoint to the new. Thus, this display is a model of its kind, both in overall quality of the one-of-a-kind pieces by celebrated woodworkers recognized as artists here and abroad, and as a balanced effort - one that includes a few new works carrying on historical traditions, glimpses of German methods today, and examples of production turning.

Moreover, the exhibit reflects considerable growth in the sophistication of the movement during the last five years. Much that is ambitious, uneven and real is on view.

Most of the artists, of course, are using wood. But it's significant that the exhibit spreads the net sufficiently wide to engage several different media, including copper, aluminun, alabaster and plastics, lending promise of a future consistency that won't be redundant.

Carrying on European traditions...



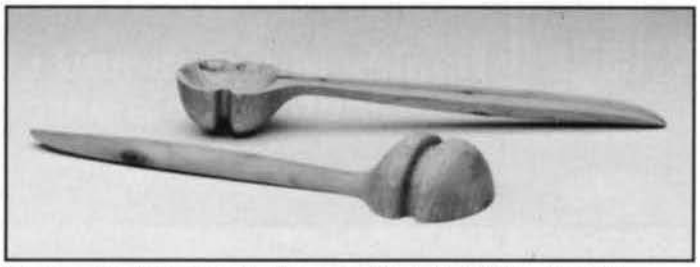
Karl Decker, Germany. Door Handles (1987).
Ebony, rosewood and bone.

Jake Brubaker, U.S.A.
Saffron Container (1976).
Rosewood.
H. 6" x Diam. 2½"

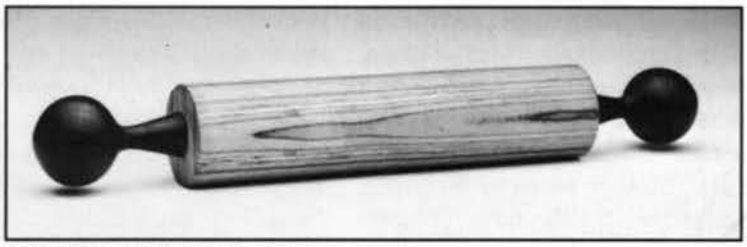
Michael Korhun, U.S.A.
Plate (1992).
Mahogany, silver.

Unique 20th Century production work...

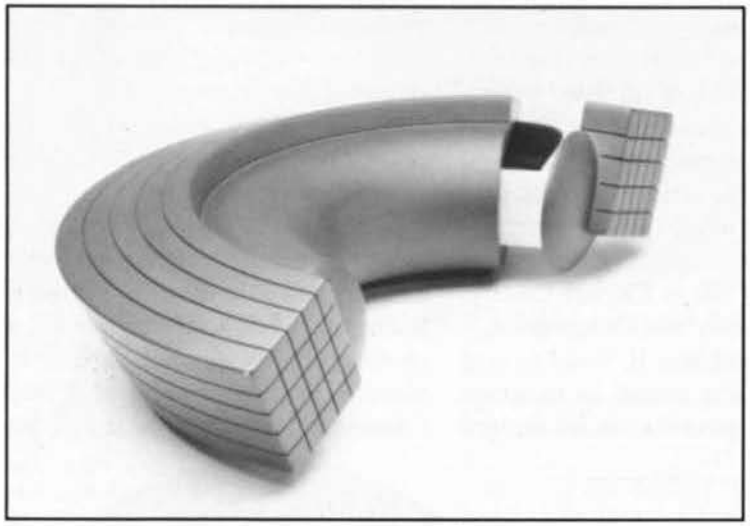
Leo Doyle, U.S.A *Matched Candlesticks with Matched Drawers* (1987).
Bird's eye maple. H. 14" x Diam. 4"



Stephen Hogbin, Canada. Spoons. Birch. L. 15¾" x W. 1¾"



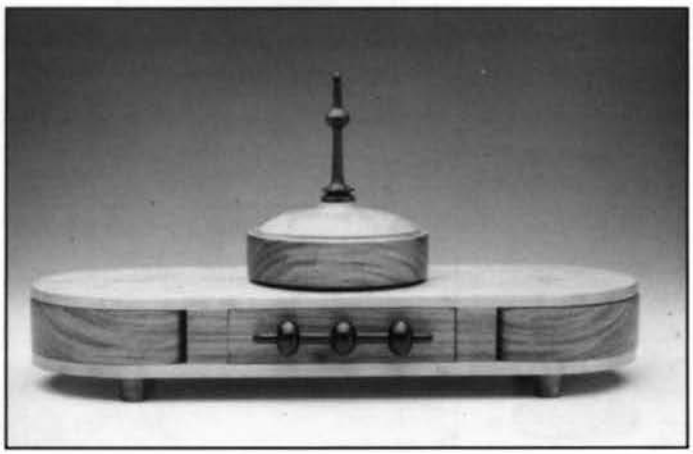
Rude Osolnik, U.S.A. Rolling Pin (1977).
Birch plywood, and walnut rosewood. L. 18¾" x Diam. 2½"



Michael Graham, U.S.A. *Circle/Square #15/35* (1987).
Basswood, paint. H. 4⅛" x W. 9" x L. 18"

Useful and decorative boxes (containers)...

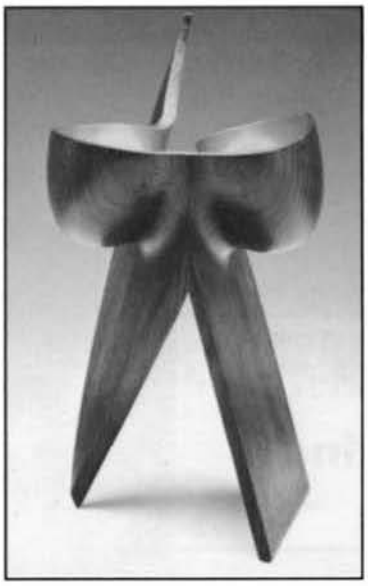
Colin Haysom, England. Box (1989).
Yew and Thuya. H. 3¼" x Diam. 8"



Robert Leung, U.S.A.
Jewlery Box (1988).
Birds eye maple, andaman, Brazilian rosewood, paduk. H. 7" x W. 16" x D. 6"

Hap Sakwa, U.S.A. *Against That Which All Else is Measured* (1985).
Poplar, maple, lacquer, violin neck circa 1780.
H. 17½" x W. 17" x D. 12½"

Sculptures depart from functional tradition...



Stephen Hogbin, Canada.
Walnut Bowl of Walnut (1981).
Walnut.
H. 10¼" x W. 6½" x D. 10¼"

Rude Osolnik, U.S.A.
Birch Plywood/ Walnut Veneer Bowl (1977).
Birch plywood, walnut veneer.
H. 11" x Diam. 8½"

Decorative polychromatic vessels...

Bud Latven, U.S.A. *Wenge Bowl* (1987).
Wenge and holly.
H. 4¼" x Diam. 3¾"

Virginia Dotson, U.S.A. *Calligraphy Bowl* (1990).
Baltic birch, wenge, walnut. H. 5¾" x Diam. 14¾"

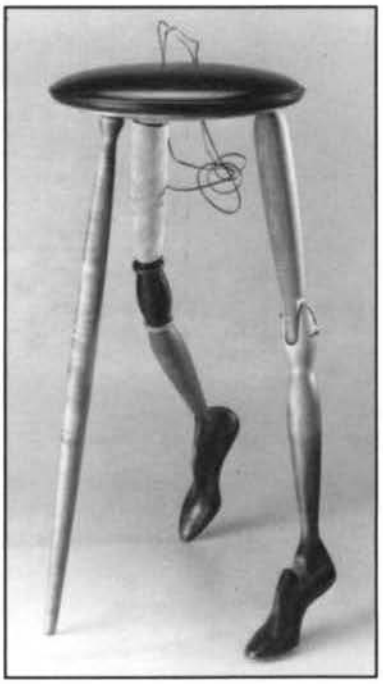
Beyond function in metal...

Lynne Hull, U.S.A. *Basket #5* (1987).
Copper spun with chemical patina. H. 8" x Diam. 15"

Michael Hosaluk, Canada. *Mach IV* (1986).
Colorcore, anodized aluminum, glass, lacquered maple
H. 24" x Diam. 18½"

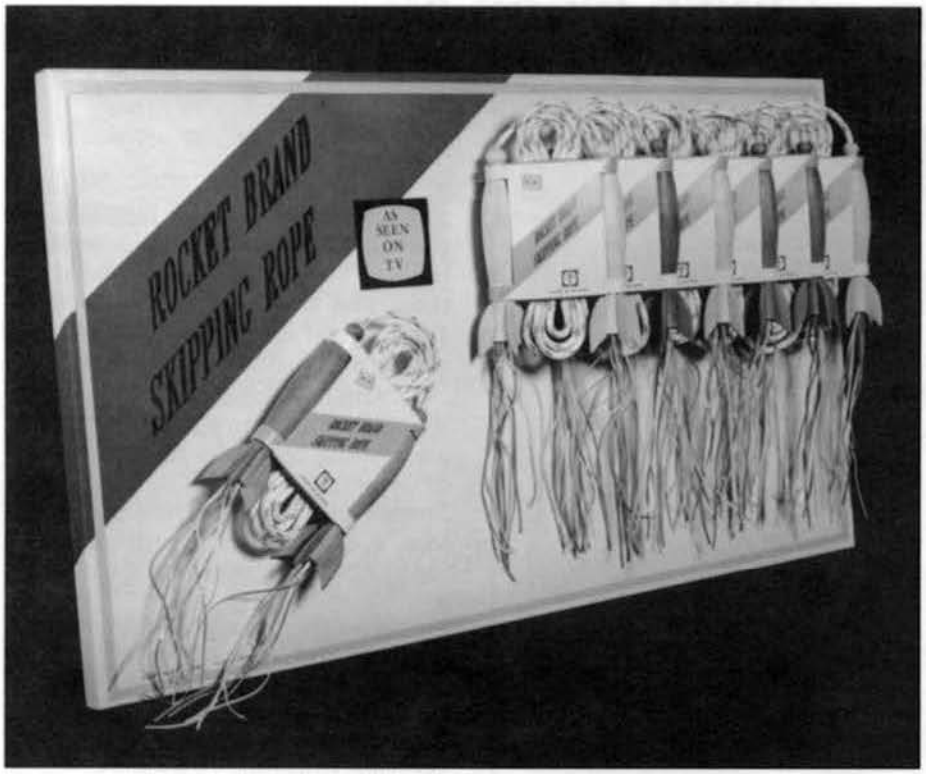
One-of-a-kind furniture...

C.R. "Skip"Johnson, U.S.A. *Floor Walker* (1987).
Cherry. H. 29"



Neil Donovan, U.S.A.
Walking Stool (1990).
Mahogany, oak, maple, suede, leather lace, antique shoemaker lasts.
H. 28" x Diam. 12"

Mark Sfirri, U.S.A. *Vanity Table* (1990).
Wenge, bubinga, maple. H. 29" x W. 38" x D. 18"

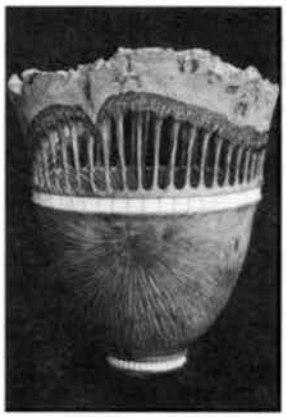


Ted Hunter, Canada. *Our Children Watch* (1990).
Mixed media H. 17¼" x W. 30" x D. 4½"

One-of-a-kind political statements...

Alan Stirt, U.S.A. *War Bowl* (1990).
H. 5¾" x Diam. 9"

Sophisticated vessels...



Frank E. Cummings, III, U.S.A
Nature in Transition (1989).
Cork oak, 18K gold, exotic material.
H. 6¼" x Diam. 5¾"

Michelle Holzapfel, U.S.A *Fishes Vase* (1987).
Cherry burl. H. 12" x W. 14" x D. 4½"

William Hunter, U.S.A.
Rio Dunes (1988).
Cocobolo rosewood.
H. 17" x Diam. 11"

The *Art from the Lathe* Exhibition is an adjunct of the World Turning Conference—an educational forum for artists, historians, scholars, and curators in the field of lathe-turning, jointly sponsored in by the Hagley Museum and the Wood Turning Center. The exhibit corresponds with 1993 as The Year of American Craft, and combines Hagley's historical objects and images with the contemporary work owned by the Wood Turning Center. *Art from the Lathe*, Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, Delaware, runs through November 28, 1993.

Objects from the Wood Turning Center Collection. All photos by John Carlano.
Line art: Courtesy Hagley Museum and Library. *L'Art de Tourner en Perfection, 1749.*

OUT OF THE WOODS: TURNED WOOD BY AMERICAN CRAFTSMEN

Martha Connell

"Mesa Wind," 1988, William Hunter, cocobolo, 10" dia. x 5 1/2" h.

In June 1992, the Fine Arts Museum of the South (FAMOS) launched a major woodturning exhibition entitled "Out of the Woods: Turned Wood by American Craftsmen" at its facility in Mobile, Alabama. Six months later, in January of 1993 in Sofia, Bulgaria, this exhibition began its three-and-one-half year foreign tour as a cultural presentation of the United States sponsored by the Arts American program of the United States Information Agency (USIA). As a result, many people in both Mobile and Sofia discovered one of our country's best-kept secrets: the visual excitement and the artistic and technical virtuosity of the American Studio Woodturning Movement.

Joe Schenk, director of FAMOS, conceived of an exhibition of turned wood objects as his museum's celebration of the Year of the American Craft. He approached USIA for funding to tour the exhibition and to publish a catalog to document the event. The outcome is a first-ever exclusively woodturning exhibition for both FAMOS and USIA.

As a guest curator, I visited the venues in both Mobile and Sofia and observed first-hand the reaction of viewers as they toured the exhibition. The universal appeal of the material was obvious, as was the awe and amazement of the museum-goers as they absorbed the visual feast of 61 objects created by the 26 innovative woodturners which make up the show. It was clear that these people would come away with a new perception of the term "woodturning."

USIA art exhibitions are major events in the host country. They are selected and underwritten by the American Embassy there and open with a reception for foreign and national dignitaries hosted by the American ambassador. The launching of "Out of the Woods" in Sofia, Bulgaria, was no exception. The event was heralded by banners strung across several major thoroughfares. The red carpet was rolled out for the visiting curator. The opening was covered live on television. I was interviewed by newspapers, magazines, and even "The Voice of America." As an outspoken advocate of the "ART" in woodturning, I was gratified to see such wonderful recognition being given to American studio woodturning. The original plan called for a two-year tour, but the response to the exhibition has been so great that the time period has been extended to three and one half years (through 1997). "Out of the Woods" will be shown at 27 venues in 17 countries.

"Out of the Woods: Turned Wood by American Craftsmen" documents and celebrates the new breed of woodturners who have transformed an ancient and honored craft into a dynamic contemporary art form. The 26 participating artists are:

Fletcher Cox (Mississippi)
Addie Draper (New Mexico)
Virginia Dotson (Arizona)
David Ellsworth (Pennsylvania)
Giles Gilson (New York)
Michelle Holzapfel (Vermont)
Robyn Horn (Arkansas)
Todd Hoyer (Arizona)
William Hunter (California)
John Jordan (Tennessee)
Ron Kent (Hawaii)
Stoney Lamar (North Carolina)
Bud Latven (Arizona)
Mark Lindquist (Florida)
Melvin Lindquist (Florida)
Ed Moulthrop (Georgia)
Philip Moulthrop (Georgia)
Dale Nish (Utah)
Rude Osolnik (Kentucky)
Stephen Paulsen (California)
Michael Peterson (Washington)
Wayne Raab (North Carolina)
Michael Shuler (California)
Alan Stirt (Vermont)
Bob Stocksdale (California)
John Whitehead (Oregon)

They represent three generations of American woodturners and reflect the myriad of techniques and diverse aesthetic concerns of the movement. Each has produced a unique body of work that has helped redefine and expand the medium. The pieces in the exhibition demonstrate to even the most casual observer that a turned wood object can dazzle, move, stimulate, and/or inspire the viewer as all works of art do. It is a priviledge and an honor to be a part of this project which I hope will broaden substantially the rocognition of woodturning as an art form.

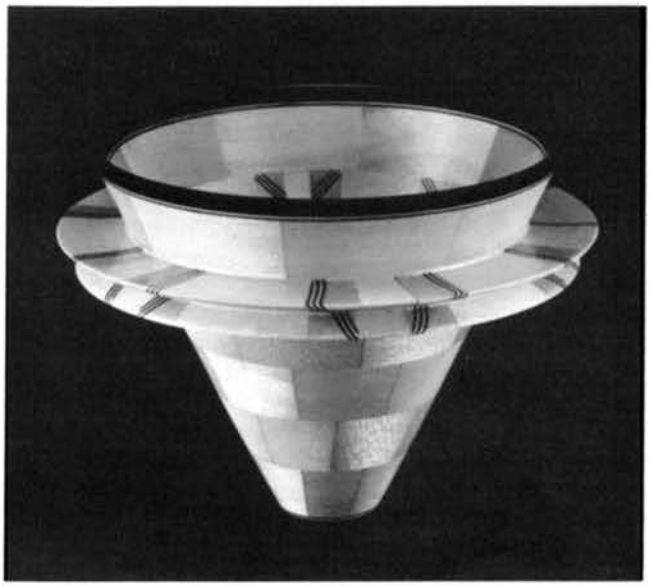
Tentative exhibition schedule:

Bulgaria, Sofia
January 25 - February 28, 1993
Bulgaria, Varna
March 7 - March 28, 1993
Albania, Tirana
April 15 - May 23, 1993
Lithuania, Vilnius
June 6 - August 22, 1993
Poland, Warsaw
September 20 - October 31, 1993
Poland, Krakow
November 15 - December 31, 1993
Norway, Oslo
January 20 - March 15, 1994
Austria, Vienna
March 25 - May 30, 1994
Yugoslavia, Zagreb
June 10 - August 20, 1994
Czechoslavakia, Prague
September - October 20, 1994
Czechoslavakia, Bratislava
November 1 - December 31, 1994
Italy, Rome + another site
January 15 - April 10, 1995
Luxembourg
May 1 - June 30, 1995
Estonia, Tallin
July 20 - September 10, 1995
Latvia, Riga
October 1995
Greece, Athens
November 1 - November 30, 1995
Greece, Thessaloniki
December 6 - December 31, 1995
France, Marseilles/Bordeau
January 15 - April 20, 1996
Denmark, Copenhagen + another site
May 1 - October 1, 1996
Netherlands, The Hauge
October 15 - November 15, 1996
Canada, Ottawa + 2 other sites
January 20 - May 10, 1997

The exhibition includes a 30-minute video on master woodturners Bob Stocksdale, Rude Osolnik, and Ed Moulthrop which was produced to accompany the tour. The 75-page color catalog that documents the exhibition is available only at these foreign venues.

Martha Connell is director of the Connell Gallery/Great American Gallery, Atlanta, Georgia.

"Unsung Bowl Ascending #8," 1989, Mark Lindquist, oak burl, 18″ dia. x 17″ h.



"Return to the Pheus #4," 1992, Addie Draper, pau cetim, ebony, and veneers, 6 1/4″ dia. x 4 3/4″ h.

AAW'S 1993, SEVENTH-ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM

Karen Moody

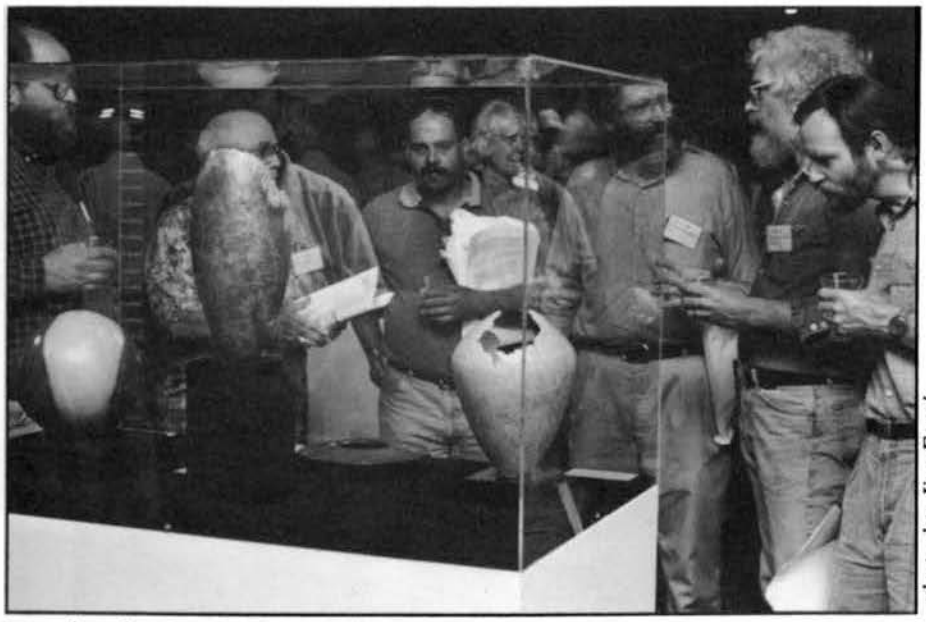


photo by Jim Frank

Reception for the Jacobson Collection, Thursday evening before the symposium, Neuberger Museum, on the campus of SUNY. David Ellsworth was the keynote speaker.

The State University of New York at Purchase hosted this year's annual symposium, coordinated by Dennis FitzGerald. Festivities began Thursday evening June 25, and for three days we were immersed into the art and craft of woodturning. There was so much to do and see that it is impossible to write about everything; this article will discuss some highlights of the weekend.

The instant gallery was truly inspirational. Over 500 turned pieces graced numerous tables and pedestals in a 4,000-square-foot room. Everyone attending the symposium was invited to bring three turnings. This format provided exposure for amateurs as well as for the most well known professionals. The variety of styles, shapes, and colors was awesome. Sizes ranged from smaller-than-a-penny to larger-than-three-feet. Wood was the medium for most turnings, however, some turners made good use of other materials like corian, epoxy, bone, precious metals, and semi-precious stones. People displayed functional bowls, traditional furniture, and art deco sculpture.

Michael Hosaluk brought fourteen of the forty-some collaborative pieces which came out of a project he headed up for the Saskatchewan Craft Council's Woodturning Conference in July 1992. Michael had turned fifty-five functional-type bowls then sent them to craftspeople in all media to be enhanced by each individual. This led to some very creative and exciting new ideas, as well as to some delightfully fun pieces.

Another display of pleasing turnings was Vic Wood's hollow flying-saucer-shaped forms with a quarter inside. There was no hole large enough to get the coin in or out and some did not even have a hole. Vic did show us how to make one of these forms in his demonstration, and we were still impressed.

Many works in the instant gallery had added decoration and color that enhanced the piece. Steve Loar introduced some new colors with his purple and hot pink sculpture. It definitely grabbed the attention of viewers. Melinda Fawver's water colors and finely burned lines on her turned and carved platters created a more subtle effect. Ray Allen used the natural colors of wood to construct his beautiful segmented turnings. One of Ray's pieces weighed only 1 gram and contained 90 pieces of wood! John Jordan displayed textured jars and Jerry Brownrigg showed off his banksia seed pod vases with inlaid turquoise.

The instant gallery has evolved over the years to become a showcase for recent works of AAW members. One of its best features, though, remains the tradition of giving every member the chance to display his or her turnings—beginners' and professionals' work stood proudly together.

A silent auction was part of this year's instant gallery. Demonstrators from past symposiums donated a range of woodturnings to be auctioned silently. The money raised will be used to fund educational projects.

Each demonstration was a highlight in itself. You could choose among offerings that ranged from basic spindle turning to computerized ornamental turning. For three days, morning to evening, and with as many as eleven sessions at once to choose from, the hardest decision of the weekend became, "Who's demo shall I see next?" So many excellent choices. Fortunately, most of the sessions were scheduled more than once.

Several demonstrators covered woodturning basics. Palmer Sharpless demonstrated production spindle turning techniques; Michael Hosaluk showed us basic bowl-turning methods; Alan Lacer performed ten cuts with the skew chisel; and Liam O'Neill covered the basics of the bowl gouge during his functional and one-of-a-kind bowl-turning rotations.

Paul Fennell used fiber optic lights to determine the wall thickness of his hollow forms, and John Jordan demonstrated texturing on hollow vessels. David Ellsworth and Melvyn Firmager showed us their hollow-vessel turning techniques.

Finishing was a popular topic this year. Giles Gilson did lacquering; Michael Mode shared his recipe for French polish; and Sal Marino demonstrated sanding and finishing spindles. Clay Foster and Michael Peterson demonstrated sandblasting techniques.

Lincoln Seitzman and Ray Allen gave comprehensive lectures and slide shows on their segmented turning techniques. Their audiences resembled the last class before a final exam. Some people were taking notes furi-

photo by Rick Mastelli

Robert Rosand demonstrating. A video camera recorded many of the demonstrations, making it easy for conference attendees to see detail work more closely. There is also an overhead mirror.

photo by Jim Frank

Liam O'Neill from Ireland shear-scrapes the back of a bowl. Demonstrators at AAW conferences are always willing to let onlookers get close to the action so that they can see precisely how it's done.

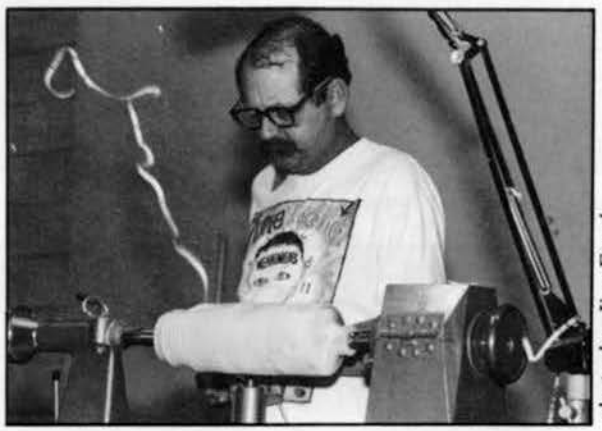


photo by Jim Frank

John Jordan spindle-turning the outside of a vase.

ously while others stared in awe. Other challenging techniques included Johannes Michelsen's bent, turned wood as he made his wood hats; Stoney Lamar's multi-axis sculpture; and the HaWK lathe's elaborate computerized ornamental turning. The HaWK lathe was designed and built with the combined skills of Dave Hardy, Ken Wurtzel, and Mark Krick, purely for the challenge and excitement it generated.

In addition to demonstrations, we were treated to several discussion sessions which included, "Ethics, Influence, and Personal Growth," led by David Ellsworth; "Interpretative Design" with Steve Loar; and a panel discussion titled, "As the Business World Turns."

The trade show was a very popular place. Vendors who came from all over the country offered for sale lathes and lathe parts, turning tools, cyanoacrylate glue, finishing supplies, respirators, videos, and tons of wood. Some of the newer items this year were brightly colored plywood, a new four-jaw chuck, and an end grain hollowing tool.

photo by Rick Mastelli

Mark Sfirri making one of his multi-center candle holders. You can see the edges of the wood spinning around.

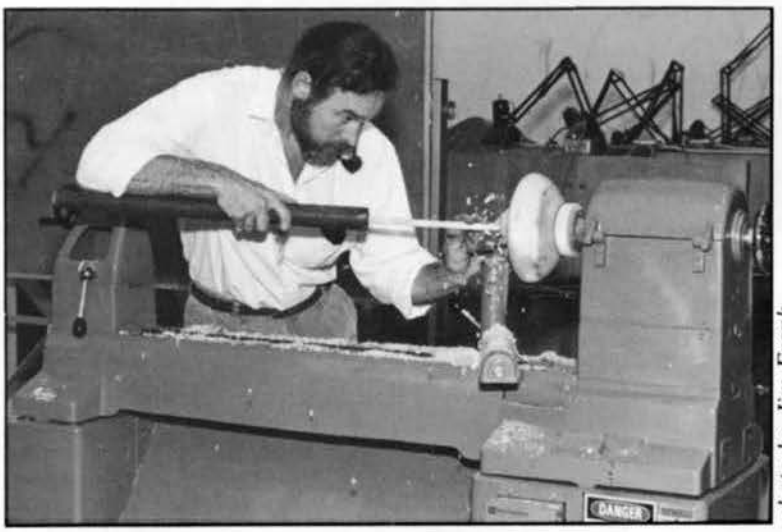


photo by Jim Frank

Michael Peterson hollowing out a vessel.

photo by Rick Mastelli

Johannes Michelson attaches one of his turned hats to a jig for bending the rims.

photo by Rick Mastelli

Stoney Lamar demonstrating his multi-center turnings. As with the photo of Mark, you can see the edges of the wood spinning around.

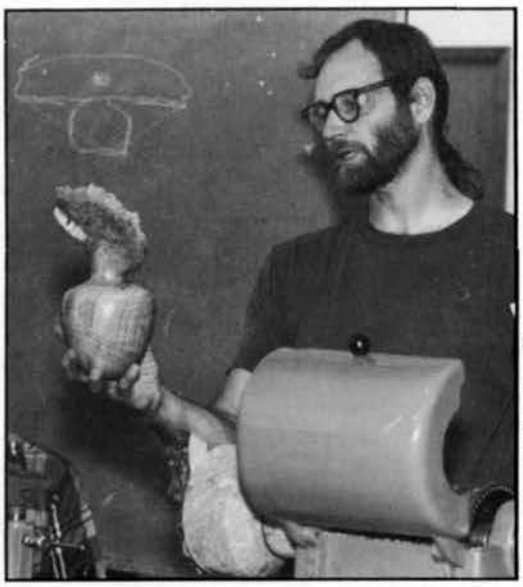


photo by Rick Mastelli

Rod Cronkite shows one of his winged vessels while he talks about design.

photo by Rick Mastelli

One view of the instant gallery. The turnings in the foreground, left to right, were made by Steve Loar, John Jordan, and Stoney Lamar.

photo by Rick Mastelli

David Ellsworth and Steve Loar conducted an instant-gallery critique, which was well attended.

photo by Jim Frank

Ken Wurtzel and Dave Hardy set up the HaWK lathe. Mark Krick (not visible in the photo) is the third person who was involved in the creation of the computerized ornamental lathe.

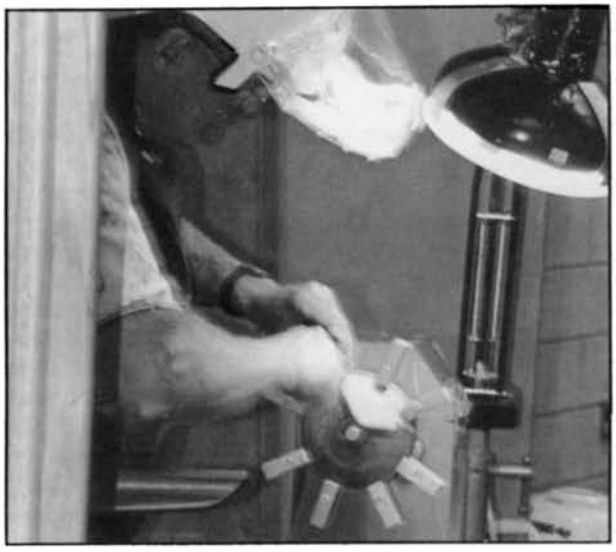


photo by Rick Mastelli

Vic Wood from Australia is gluing together one of his disc turnings, using shop-made clamps.

photo by Rick Mastelli

Not all creatures enjoyed the lobster bake. This collaborative piece was created by several unknown turners and titled "Lobster-lettuce sculpture, #1"

Meals are always an important part of a get-together, and the clam bake on Friday evening provided a time for meeting, mingling, and informal discussions to the sounds of toe tapping live country music. The banquet and auction Saturday night was also very exciting. Jonathan Fairbanks, curator of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, gave the keynote speech on the history of the craft of woodturning in American while showing slides of pieces from the museum's collection.

The banquet was followed by a lively auction where the AAW raised over $8,500 to be used for educational activities. Generous donations from turners and tradesmen made it easy for auctioneers Bob Fleming and David Yeatts to keep the crowd bidding with enthusiasm. We are all sorry to see Bob retiring as our auctioneer. Thanks, Bob, for your dedication and fast talking!

The three days of woodturning demonstrations, panel discussions, instant gallery, festive meals, and trade show provided something for everyone. By Sunday afternoon, most folks were ready to return home to try some of the techniques on their own lathes.

The many volunteers who generously donated their time and efforts made this year's annual symposium a resounding success. Their efforts were appreciated by the 520 registered attendees, making this the largest gathering of woodturners ever.

We are already making plans for another exciting symposium next year. Mark June 23, 24, 25 on your calendar and join us at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colorado.

SYMPOSIUM "THANK-YOUS!"

Alan Lacer

photo by Robert Bahr

Alan Lacer, president of AAW, presided over the "banquet awards and thank-yous" part of the symposium. Here he presents Betty Scarpino with a pig-tail gouge for her three years as editor of the journal.

The American Association of Woodturners would like to make special mention of those who contributed so much to another successful conference. This was the largest woodturning event of modern times held anywhere in the world—and was run primarily by volunteer energy!!!

At the State University of New York in Purchase, we wish to thank Dennis FitzGerald of the Visual Arts Department as well as his student-volunteers, Winston Churchill-Joell, David Zander, and Greg Mason. Cindy Gedeon, Director of the Neuberger Museum, and her staff did a wonderful job bringing the Jacobson Collection of Turned Wooden Bowls to the conference and hosting a reception and speaker.

Six local chapters in the region played a major role in planning and helping with the conference: New York, Nutmeg, Long Island, Hudson Valley, Bucks, and New Jersey. We would also like to acknowledge the eighteen chapters that contributed pieces to the birdhouse project, assembled at the conference. Special thanks to Andy Barnum of the Nutmeg chapter for his early and continued involvement in bringing the conference to Purchase. Andy was also the force behind the birdhouse project, which will leave AAW's signature at the Purchase campus for many years to come. We also thank Andy's wife, Patti, for her strong involvement in locating an excellent hotel and site for the symposium banquet. Iona Elliott of the Nutmeg chapter played a key role in promoting this conference with the media as well as stimulating interest in woodturning exhibitions in the region. Thanks to all of the chapter members who gave so much of their time and energy to the conference.

We would like to make special mention of Karen and John Moody from the Hudson Valley chapter for organizing and managing the instant gallery. This year we had over 500 pieces on display, brought by those who attended the conference.

The effort of handling registration was a monumental task. Our own Mary Redig handled the bulk of this project prior to the conference, and had excellent assistance during the conference by Leslee and Ed Morabito, Anneliese Fox, and Carol Frost. We would also like to thank Gene Roberts and a number of the board members for handling the initial push at opening registration.

We had a full plate of demonstrations, panel discussions, film programs, and slides, with a large number of individuals involved. Among those in this group were Vic Wood, Ray Allen, Rod Cronkite, Dennis Elliott, David Ellsworth, Paul Fennell, Giles Gilson, Johannes Michelsen, Michael Hosaluk, Michael Mode, Steve Loar, Liam O'Neill, Michael Peterson, Lincoln Seitzman, Dave Hardy, Mark Krick, Ken Wurtzel, Mark Sfirri, David Goldenberg, Jim Stapleford, John O'Brien, Bob Rosand, Joe Ferola, Melvyn Firmager, Alan Lacer, Bonnie Klein, James Kephart, Sal Marino, Robyn Horn, John Jordan, Stoney Lamar, Jim Kephart, Russ Zimmerman, Clay Foster, Palmer Sharpless, Dave Hout, Gary Roberts, Nick Cook, Jim Frank, Jerry Brownrigg, Denver Ulery, and Dave Loewy.

The banquet auction was quite successful this year, bringing in almost $9,000 for our educational fund. Special thanks to our auctioneer Bob Fleming. Bob has been the auctioneer every year since the very first AAW symposium. As this was probably Bob's last year in that role, we wish to express our gratitude for so many years of contributing to this aspect of the AAW. We would also like to thank David Yeatts for spelling Bob as auctioneer and serving as an assistant. Thanks also to Palmer Sharpless and the members of the New York Woodturners for their assistance at the auction. Jonathan Fairbanks of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts delivered a very fine keynote address at the banquet.

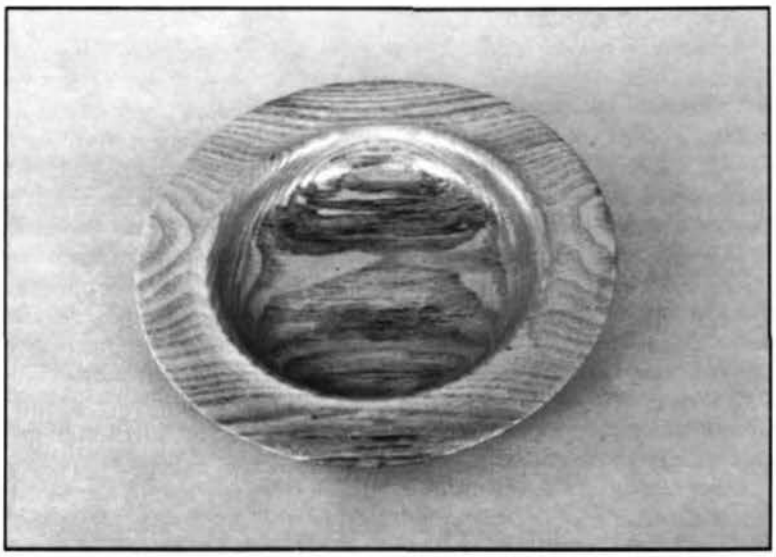
We would also like to thank all the individuals and businesses making contributions to the different auctions at this year's symposium, as well as all of those who made purchases. We also thank Craft Supplies for donating a number of door prizes—making it possible for those not purchasing to at least have a shot at taking something home. In addition to the banquet auction we also held a silent wood auction and a silent auction comprised of turned objects donated by demonstrators from previous conferences. Together the three auctions yielded over $15,000 for educational projects.

Lathe Raffle

We express our gratitude to Record Tool Inc. of Canada for its generous donation of a Record lathe. This event raised approximately $2,000 to be applied to hosting international turners at our symposiums. Thanks to Record and to all of you who purchased tickets! Special thanks to the Minnesota chapter for its assistance with the record keeping and shipping of the lathe to J. Grant Pichon, the lucky winner.

TURNING DOMESTIC: Sassafras

William L. Stephenson, Jr.



Spalted sassafrass platter, 10" dia. x 1 1/4" h.

The search for that rare, unusual, distinctive, and special wood just might be ended once you discover North American sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*) as a turning medium. Globally, sassafras is rare in that there are only three known species: one is native to central China, another to Taiwan, and the third to the eastern half of the United States. Sassafras is distinctive because of the aromatic and flavorful oil deposits in the wood, bark, and leaves. For turning, sassafras is special in that it is attractive in texture and color, it accommodates soft curves and lines, it graciously displays the skill and ability of the artisan, and it gives the entire studio a pleasing aroma while it is being worked.

Sassafras is in the laurel family (*Lauraceae*) which has more than 1,100 species of trees and shrubs. Most people associate laurels with the many species of flowering shrubs or with the many aromatic substances present in the leaves, stems, roots, and fruits—a large number being commercially exploited (cinnamon, cassia, anise, avocado). Sassafras oil can be distilled from the roots where it is more concentrated. The oil is used as a flavoring agent in beverages, confectionery, tooth paste, and as a scenting agent in soaps and perfumes. The root can be used to prepare a tea that has been used as a diaphoretic, stimulant, diuretic, and carminative. In Appalachia the tea is used to treat bronchitis. The bark is reported to be a good insect repellent. Colonial Americans were advised to chew the bark to break the tobacco habit. Sassafras leaves have been used as a soft yellow-tan dye for cloth.

Finding sassafras in the eastern U.S. should be relatively easy. The natural range is from central Michigan and New York, south to central Florida and from eastern Oklahoma to the Atlantic coast. Sassafras is one of the first broad-leaf trees to begin growing in abandoned fields and along fence rows. Regenerating is from seeds scattered by birds and small mammals and by root sprouting. Sassafras is found as single trees which probably grew from seeds and in pure stands which likely regenerated from root sprouting. Sassafras is a small tree, usually not over 40 feet in height or more than 12 inches in diameter, however, in the Mississippi river bottoms it has attained heights of over 60 feet and diameters over 60 inches. Survival is equally good along sandy ridges and in creek bottoms and to elevations as high as 4,000 feet.

Sassafras is unusual in that it is readily available through commercial wood supliers at a relatively low cost. Often it is mixed in with ash or chestnut since the heartwood of these woods are similar in color. The aroma of sassafras on a fresh-cut surface is a dead giveaway. Thicknesses up to two inches are generally available. Larger sizes and thickness will usually need to be obtained through a speciality dealer.

Sassafras is used locally for fence posts, fence rails, and railroad ties. It is often used for general millwork such as moldings. Due to its durability, sassafras is used for building small boats and became world famous during the sailing era as a preferred material for making sailors' sea chests.

The sapwood of sassafras is light yellow and will spalt easily. Quite dramatic design effects can be created between the lighter colored and spalted sapwood and the orange-brown to grey-brown to dark-brown heartwood. The heartwood is quite durable and will not spalt very well, being quite resistant to decay. When trying to force spalting in the sapwood, it is easy to let the sapwood decay too much making it worthless for turning. The heartwood, however, will be unscathed and can be turned into a fine looking piece.

Sassafras has low volumetric shrinkage during drying, 10.3 percent. The shrinkage along the growth rings in the tangential direction is about 35 percent more than the shrinkage across the growth rings in the radial direction, therefore, green-turned objects will have a moderate amount of distortion during drying.

Sassafras drys quite easily and is relatively light weight for hardwoods, weighing about 30 pounds per cubic foot when dry. Green bowls should be turned to a wall thickness of about 1 inch. Coat the turned piece with one of the commercially available, water-soluble waxes or a heavy coating of paste wax (the type used to shine wood floors). If you air dry the piece, allow about six months for each 1/2 inch of wall thickness and add a couple of months. Remember to record the date and the weight of the piece. Periodically weigh the turned object. When it quits loosing weight, the piece has reached moisture equilibrium with the environment. Additional methods of drying are explained in *American Woodturner*, June 1993, "Turning Domestic—Persimmon." The tech-

niques are the same, but the time required for drying will be a lot less.

Although it is uncommon and rare, sassafras can be toxic to some people. The respiratory system and the nose can be affected. The dust, wood, leaves, and bark can be a sensitizer or a direct toxin. Review the article in *American Woodturner*, Vol. 6, No. 1, "Toxic Woods," for additional information. When you first use sassafras, err on the safe side by avoiding prolonged contact, use your dust extraction system, and look for signs of any uncommon reaction.

Sassafras can be turned with the grain running parallel to the lathe bed in spindle-turning mode or with the grain running perpendicular to the lathe bed in bowl-turning mode. As with most woods, sassafras is generally easier to turn in spindle mode and rather striking objects can be produced due to the unpredictable grain patterns. Sassafras is a medium-density hardwood with a specific gravity of .42 and medium-length fibers (1.02mm) indicating that is works easily.

Some care is required in planing-type cuts to minimize lifting the grain. Sassafras is well suited for spindles that are used in chair backs and for decorative turnings such as railing spindles where the turning will not be bearing a load. In repairing antiques, sassafras can be used as a substitute for chestnut for spindles that do not bear a load. Sassafras can be brittle and not very strong. All joints should be glued, as fasteners alone will not hold the wood.

When turning the green sassafras, expect the surface to be a bit fuzzy, which is common with most ring-porous woods. In the annual rings, the large vessels and pores are concentrated in the springwood, 3 to 8 pores wide, creating minute areas of less wood and less strength. The transition to the summerwood is abrupt causing a sudden change in density where the summerwood has smaller pores, either solitary or in multiples of 2 to 3.

Sassafras turns best at around 800 rpm. Expect the end grain near the inside bottom of a bowl to be the area of greater difficulty, as is true with most woods. After turning your object to the final design, sand all the surfaces inside and out to your satisfaction. Since sassafras is of medium hardness, you will find that it will sand rather quickly so do not start with too coarse of a grit.

Apply the finish of your choice, however, if you wish to exhibit the aroma of the sassafras wood, a finish should not be applied. Due to the natural oil content, you may find that oil-based finishes give better results. With most any finish, several coats will be needed because of the large vessels and pores in the wood.

If you have not created a turned object from the rare, unusual, distinctive, and special wood of North American sassafras, then it is time you gave it a turn.

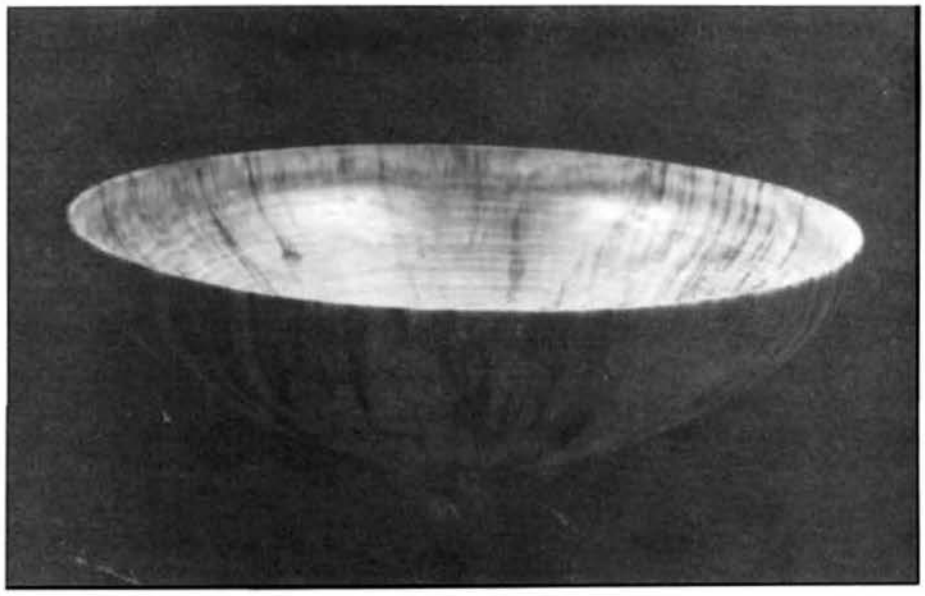
Bill Stephenson is a professional forester who has been a serious woodturner since 1988.

MASTER CRAFTS ARTISTS AT CHICAGO'S NEW ART FORMS EXPO

Ten master woodturners, an enamelist, and a fiber artist will be featured by del Mano Gallery at the Chicago International New Art Forms Exhibition at the Navey Pier, October 7 - 10, 1993. The turners are: Ray Allen, David Ellsworth, Ron Fleming, Giles Gilson, Todd Hoyer, William Hunter, Ron Kent, Michael Peterson, Hans Weissflog, and Bob Stocksdale. This is a special exhibition in honor of 1993 being the Year of American Craft.

The exhibition will be brought to Los Angeles and exhibited at del Mano Gallery in Brentwood, October 23 - November 14, 1993.

For more information about the Chicago International New Art Forms Exposition, contact the Lakeside Group at 312/787-6858.



Ron Kent, Norfolk Island pine vessel, part of the "Masters" Exhibition, 1993

REPORT ON THE WORLD TURNING CONFERENCE, 1993

David Ellsworth

The World Turning Conference was memorably successful. One hundred and fifty attendees enjoyed the presence of over thirty national and international presentors in a compact three-day event.

Co-sponsored by Albert LeCoff's Philadelphia-based, Wood Turning Center and the Hagley Museum and Library in Wilmington, Delaware, this event added a new dimension to all woodturning conferences held so far: Two-thirds of the emphasis was on oral presentations. Turning demonstrations made up the balance.

Some brief highlights: Michelle Holzapfel made a thoughtful presentation on her personal approach to woodturning as a self-educating process . . . Stephen Hogbin discussed the positive relationships that can be formed when craftspeople work in harmony with members of their local communities . . . Vic Wood gave a well deserved tribute to Stephen Hogbin and the influence he and his work have had on Australian turnery since 1975, the year that Stephen moved from Canada to complete a teaching fellowship—a clear message on the importance of understanding and acknowledging where one's influences come from and how we can evolve in our quest for personal growth . . . Jack Lindsey outlined the historical significance of turned elements used in eighteenth and nineteenth century furniture . . . John Fox gave an exceptional presentation with video on traditional Japanese woodturning and lacquer ware . . . Hans Lie of Norway surveyed the history of turned drinking vessels from around 1100 A.D., including hourglass-shaped mugs for both men and women (open at both ends), and bowl forms with 'spouts' carved from the rims. Most of the vessels Hans showed were ornately carved, many used egg-based tempera paints as a functional finish treatment, and some were even made of burl. Again, nothing's new.

Internationally recognized ceramic artist, William Daily chaired an inspiring panel discussion that included Del Stubbs, Michelle Holzapfel, and Dr. Jo-Anna Moore. The focus was on the past, present, and the future of education in the crafts; how we as individuals relate to the process of learning within ourselves and what we can do to help our bumbling public education system to recognize the importance of craft and art in our schools. One only has to ask, "Where will our future craftspeople come from?" to understand the importance of this topic.

High on the list of controversy was Australia's Mike Darlow who laid into just about everyone during hisf presentation on "Craft to Art—The Reality." Darlow has never been known for delicacy when addressing delicate subjects and, here, his tendency to present sweeping generalities based on minor imperfections in the 'system' drew the ire of many in the crowd. I expect he would have been more effective with the topic had he injected more of his brilliant, natural humor. Nevertheless, beyond his cynical style was an important message that "high standards are a desired goal and must never be compromised." What may be most important is that Mike was as much thought-provoking as provoking and that his message, however received, will not be forgotten.

Lathe demonstrations were held in the Charcoal House, a one-room building adjacent to the Soda House, plus an outdoor set-up under tent for the pole lathe demonstrations. Five lathes ran simultaneously, from the silent computer-driven HaWK ornamental lathe to the riveting screams of Lynn Hull's metal spinning demonstraion, and each presentor did his or her best to bark out the step-by-step amidst what seemed to be a sea of white noise. Yes, a better facility would have been used had it been available. But I have to admit that I found this frenetic bash of sound and action highly stimulating.

If there was one major glitch, it was the same problem that is faced by all organizers of major events: How to make x-number of presentations accessible to y-number of participants in z-amount of time. In this case, the presenters, many of whom came from half-way around the world, were given only one 45-minute period for their presentation. Moreover, with two presentations held simultaneously and no rotating schedule, I was faced with the fact that, at best, I would only see half the content of the conference. Why bring so many so far for only one shot, especially when it is unlikely that they will ever again have this opportunity? Or can we expect a succession of World Turning Converences? Stay tuned.

Scot Landis, President of Woodworkers Alliance for Rainforest Protection (WARP), was well chosen to present the keynote address at the banquet. He gave a fact-filled, comprehensive synopsis of the dilemma of the rainforest, our own native forests, and the role of WARP.

Tina LeCoff, wife of Albert LeCoff, presented a raft of good humor awards (24 bottles of Rattlesnake beer) to those who helped make the conference such a success. Albert then followed with an ad hoc update on the general health of the Wood Turning Center, including assurances that all demonstrators would indeed be paid the transportation costs and honoraria they were originally promised. Since the auction was about ready to begin, Albert's message came through loud and clear. Under the expert and undaunting (never a daunt) rapid-fire repartee of master auctioneer, Bob Fleming, the crowd gave its enthusiastic approval to the numerous turnings that were submitted for bid. Final tally: near $12,000. Good job, mates.

Finally, Dan Muir and his staff from the Hagley Museum are to be highly complimented for their participation in this conference. These were the un-sung heros who ran and maintained daily events and took excellent care of our every need. Also deserving credit for a job well done is Martin Kane who designed the installation of the remarkably beautiful exhibition, "Art from the Lathe," located in the Henry Clay Mill Gallery of the Hagley Museum. This exhibit was curated from the Wood Turning Center's collection of turned objects by Muir and LeCoff and was one of the best installations I have ever seen—in any craft medium.

David Ellsworth is past president of the AAW.

TURNERS' TIPS and QUESTIONS

Robert Rosand, Section Editor

Send tips to: Robert Rosand
Dutch Hill Woodturning
RD. 1, Box 30
Bloomsburg, PA 17815
717/784-6158

I had the distinct pleasure of being one of the demonstrators at our 1993 symposium at Purchase, New York. While I was setting up my lathe, Bonnie Klein noticed that I use "bulldog" clips to keep my sandpaper in order. She thought that is was a great idea, but it had never occurred to me that this "tip" would be interesting to anyone. You, too, may have a tip worth sharing, but it has not yet occured to you to send it to me, so keep a note pad by your lathe to jot down your ideas, and send them to me.

Here are answers to two questions asked by a number of people in New York:

I marbleize my ornament globes with a product called Magic Dip. It is available from Latham Studios Inc., 405 W. Franklin St., Baltimore, MD 21201, 410/727-7333.

I purchase my aluminum oxide grinding wheels from Enco Manufacturing Co., 5000 W. Bloomingdale, Chicago, IL 60639, 800/860-3500. The wheels cost about $8.00.

Lathe switches

I agree with Dutch Hollenback in the March issue concerning a foot control for the lathe. I also use the type he suggests; however, I found that it can be inadvertantly stepped on when the wood chips get deep. I have done it a few times, but was lucky not to be injured.

A simple solution makes such a switch much safer: Mount the switch on a piece of plywood and cover it with 24-gauge metal, leaving enough room for your toe to slip in. The dimensions would be determined by the size of the switch and the size of your foot.

The best control mechanism I have seen is the slip clutch of Del Stubbs. He demonstrated this in a class I took at Arrowmont School of Crafts in Gatlinburg, Tennessee. It can be seen on his video.
—Gerald H. Cooper, Kentucky

Bandsaw-blade tension

In the March issue of the journal, I asked bandsaw owners: "How many of you actually release the tension? Do you do this because you have had a problem?"

I was prompted to ask these questions because I don't release the tension on the Delta bandsaw that I've owned for six years nor did I on the Sears I had for eight years previously. My Delta instruction book does not call for tension release, but Mark Duginske in his *Bandsaw Handbook*, as well as others, recommend release. The reasons sound compelling.

1. Blade breakage is reduced: "When you are done cutting for the day, take the tension off your blades. Bandsaw blades, when heated from cutting never stretch; but upon cooling shrink by tens of thousands of an inch each cooling period. Therefore, blades when left on the saw, are constantly over tensioning themselves and will cause breakage." (*Sierra Saw Shop*—Ray Thomas)

2. To avoid warped wheels and compressed tires: "If you were to leave the tension on the saw all of the time, the wheels would be under constant strain; this can warp the castings of the wheel and compress the tire." (*Bandsaw Handbook*—Mark Duginske)

3. To avoid degrading the tension spring: "Over a period of time, the spring will lose its stiffness, particularly if it is under constant tension. This is one of the reasons why the tension should be released when the saw is not in use." (*Bandsaw Handbook*—Mark Duginske)

Bob Rosand and Stan Pence wrote to say that they do not release the band saw tension. Both have owned Sears and Delta saws for many years without encountering problems. Stan noted a tire problem once in ten years when using 1/8-inch blades. There were no other replies to the AAW Bandsaw Tension Poll.

At the June meeting of the Nor-Cal Woodturners, I asked those attending for comments on the subject. Of about 25 bandsaw owners, 2 or 3 do release the tension. Of the "Yes for Release" votes, the reason given was "it sounds like a way to avoid trouble." Of the "No for Release" votes, no one noted problems.

Finally, if you do want to release tension: "How much is enough? A turn or two or a totally slack band?" The vote was for a turn or two, with a reminder to re-tension the blade before use. Gene Pozzesi, who does release tension, places a spring-clip clothes pin on the blade at table level as a reminder.

Thanks to all who supplied information for this unscientific report. I still don't release my tension, or should I?—*Charles Brownold, California*

Where there is smoke, there is fire!

When I was in high school, I read a story about an arsonist, whose motto was, "Keep the home fires burning." I have thought of it every time I have seen a house fire.

Of course, house fires always occur at someone else's house, don't they?

A couple of years ago, when my two-bag dust collector was still a roll-around, part-time dust collector and part-time shop vacuum, I used it to clean up what I thought were some cold ashes from the floor in front of my wood-burning furnace. About half an hour later, my smoke alarm when off, and I began frantically looking for the fire. What I found was that the lower bag of my dust collector was burning. The innocent-looking ashes that I had vacuumed up apparently had been hot enough to be fired up by the the draft of the dust collector, and the shavings in the lower bag were burning. What if I had left home after the clean-up job? Horrors!

Recently, another thing happened which seemed innocent enough

Child, Peter, The Craftsman Woodturner, Sterling, 1993, paperback, $14.95

This new, revised edition of Peter Child's woodturning classis is a positive amplification of this well-known instructional text. It is a comprehensive exploration of the various tasks and skills necessary to produce quality woodturning. The new edition, with "up-to-the-minute revisions by Roy Child," defines modern and classic methods of woodturning. It is filled with superb black-and-white photographs clearly illustrating each technique described.

The text has three main divisions. The first covers "Principles of Turning" in 126 pages. Under that heading the major skills are explored. Turning between centers, bowl turning, chucks (classic and modern), and safety are delineated. The second main division is titled "Practical Examples." This is a project section devoted to 17 woodturnings which include goblets, egg cups, peppermills, serving boards, jar lids, hour-glasses, table lighters, napkin rings, and laminated turnings. Each project is presented in-depth and is illustrated by photographs and/or well-defined line drawings. The third division is an "Appendix" covering timber, converting timber, turning green logs, and making turning pay.

There is one downside to this text and texts like it. In my opinion it attempts to do too much. Reading Child's book is an overwhelming experience; it covers a hugh amount of material in 247 pages, reminding me of an encyclopedia. The plus side, though, is that it is an excellent reference and resource text for woodturners of all experience levels.

I would recommend *The Craftsman Woodturner* as a solid instructional text to members looking for ideas or for those wishing to discover the masterful techniques of Peter Child. This text has stood the test of time. The new edition will continue that tradition by enhancing the woodturning world.—*reviewed by Warren E. Wyrostek, Three W's Woodshop, Pinetta, Florida.*

Asa, Warren J., Making Boxes, Baskets & Bowls, Sterling, 1993 paperback, $12.95

Making Boxes, Baskets & Bowls is a delightfully diverse text. Its primary audience is not woodturners. Asa's target readers are "those who know how to use their tools . . . and who love to work on projects." This is a project book, pure and simple, filled with ideas and directions for making vessels and containers. The author finds containers "marvelously practical." He has included a variety of projects, revealing the broad scope of this subject.

As a woodturner, I looked at this book, initially, with skepticism. I did not think there would be much in it that would interest me. I was wrong. It was fascinating. It was like a good novel. The more I read, the more I wanted to read. The text is clearly written, filled with a generous number of black-and-white photographs and is accompanied by simple-to-understand line drawings.

Asa's book appeals to woodturners in three ways. First, it has a section devoted to bowls and vessels turned on the lathe, giving woodturning a fair showing. The second appeal has to do with the wonderful ideas that he offers through text and pictures. For example, he explains in detail the fabrication of stave-constructed vessels and shows several that can be turned on the lathe or simply used as they are. The third appeal is the integration of woodworking techniques used on the projects. Asa does not limit himself to any one form of woodworking, nor any one tool, which will interest woodturners who wish to expand the scope of their turnery.

I would recommend *Making Boxes, Baskets & Bowls* to woodturners who are looking for ideas or simply a change of pace. It is a fascinating book well worth exploring.—*reviewed by Warren Wyrostek, Three W's Woodshop, Pinetta, Florida*

at the time, but gives me chills when I think of it now. I was turning a hollow form and had my shop light positioned low, turned horizontally to light the inside of the turning. My dust collector, now located permanently behind a nearby wall, was nicely drawing away most of the dust and small shavings being thrown out by the tool. Once or twice, I smelled something hot and noticed that some fine dust had gathered inside the rim of the shop light's reflector and was being heated by the 100-watt bulb. I tapped the light to shake the dust out and went on with my work.

A while later my wife came into the room and asked if I was trying to set the house on fire. She pointed to a small pile of dust and shavings down in the bed of my lathe. It was burning! I had not smelled it because the dust collector had been drawing away the smoke. What if she had not noticed it? And what if more shavings had covered it up? Even worse, what if it had gotten into the dust collector? Horrors again!

I suppose the odds are that some fires are just going to happen, no matter how careful we are; but we can reduce the risk by using common sense. Wood will burn, and wood shavings will ignite easily. Keeping the work area clean and eliminate sources of heat. People who smoke while they are turning are really asking for a fire to start, but who would ever suspect a shop light? Dust accumulating inside the reflector can ignite! I know that now and I want all of you to know it too.
—*Ken Bachand, North Carolina*

SAFETY REMINDER

Woodturning can be dangerous. Keep safety in mind when trying new procedures, and use tools and machines in a appropriate and safe manner. Select wood that is appropriate for your woodturning skill. Always wear eye and face protection when working in your shop.

I'M A PIG-TAIL-GOUGE-SORT-OF-PERSON

Betty J. Scarpino

photo by Robert Bahr

Betty Scarpino holds up the pig-tail-gouge award she received at the symposium banquet. Alan Lacer came up with the idea of the pig-tail gouge and has plans to make it a traditional award for AAW. The next in the series will have an off-center-turned handle, similar to Mark Sfirri's candle holders. That should make it even more of a challenge to use . . .

In January this year, I resigned as editor-in-chief of the journal, effective after publication of the September issue. Many of you have told me that you cannot imagine how I could be replaced as editor. It is special to hear your kind words, as it is verification of what I have believed to be true in accomplishing my goal of making our journal better. But the journal has a long way to go yet. Rick Mastelli will take this fledgling publication and make it better. Of this I am sure.

When I announced my resignation, AAW's board of directors immediately appointed a search committee to look for a new editor. I am pleased to have been part of that committee. Fifteen people applied for the position, and we asked the six top candidates to edit the same short article. Based upon how he edited the article, as well as topnotch professional qualifications, we offered the job to Rick Mastelli.

Rick attended the board meeting and symposium this June in New York, so I have spent a good deal of time talking with him about the journal, woodturning, and the American Association of Woodturners. Now I am even more convinced that Rick will do a great job as editor.

During closing ceremonies of the symposium banquet, Alan Lacer presented me with an award on behalf of the AAW: a pig-tail gouge. It was perfect! Alan was right when he announced, "Betty is not a plaque-sort-of-person." It's excedingly special that over the last three years Alan has come to know this.

As I become re-acquainted with my lathe and pursue woodturning full time, the "pig-tail gouge award" will assume a place of honor in my shop, forever reminding me of my stint as editor-in-chief of *American Woodturner*. I mean that in a pig-tail-gouge-sort-of-way.

During my three years as editor, I have learned how to deal with pigheaded people (thank goodness not too many) while learning how to be less pigheaded myself. Of course this is a pig-*tail* gouge, but it will symbolize my personal growth and maturity in learning how to more effectively deal with the variety of people and situations associated with AAW.

More than that, however, the pig-tail-gouge award makes me laugh. It is a statement about the fun part of working with people. When you get to know someone well enough to understand that a pig-tail gouge would be a far superior award than anything else, it is a tribute to a great working relationship. Alan and Mary and Bonnie and many others cared enough to figure it out.

As I hand over the editorship of the journal to Rick, I would like to leave you with the thought that has been central to my attitude about our organization: The American Association of Woodturners and *American Woodturner* is *your* organization and publication. Treat them in a pig-tail-gouge-sort-of-way.

James Prestini Dies, July 26, 1993

August 8, 1993, David Ellsworth

Although most turners knew or have heard of Prestini through the history of his turned bowls, few have had the opportunity to know him personally. To that I feel privileged, but not unique.

I have communicated with James for nearly fifteen years through volumes of letters, conversations, and many bottles of exceptionally good wine. He was the consumate teacher, forever involved in developing images and concepts: words were his tools. He was also a master of consolidating ideas into the fewest number of words, almost as if he were stroking the language to discover its ultimate communicative potential. Like all great teachers his ideas were never finite, for even in his later years he remained receptive to anything that spoke of "growth." Privately, he was curious, inquisitive, engaging, always probing for some new way to understand. He asked his listener to ponder, ingest, digest, interpret, then fire back with his or her own response. "Thinking," he once said, "is the ultimate art object."

What stands out most of all in his writings is the statement: " 'New' is good, but not good enough: New must also be GOOD."

FROM THE NEW EDITOR

Rick Mastelli

How do you do? I come to the editorship of your journal with a lifelong, hands-on interest in woodworking and almost fifteen years experience, in print and video, helping craftspeople communicate with one another. The first road trip I made as assistant editor of *Fine Woodworking* magazine was to the woodturning symposium held at the George School in June of 1979. It was a real kick—enough energy and enthusiasm there to generate dozens of articles in subsequent issues, more good will and gregariousness than I've ever encountered from flat woodworkers, and an exhilarating introduction to the seductive craft of woodturning itself. I went home and started working on split turnings for a set of table legs. Months later I was still hunched over the lathe, looking into the vortex of what woodturning can be—total consumption—and realizing I'd never make a table again if I didn't back away from the lathe. I backed away and later left magazines and corporate life, as well. I was sheetrocking the house I'm building, editing cookbooks, and photographing sheep for a fiber-arts book when you guys called. Last June at SUNY Purchase I found myself returned full-circle to magazine work among a conference of woodturners. You've been practicing, I see.

Enough about me; let's get back to my opening question. This is your journal. I know you span the range from tyros to icons, both amateurs and pros. You need to know what each other is doing, you need feedback, you need to be inspired, you need to learn basic things as well as innovative ones. My job is to facilitate all that. I'm not going to tell you what you'll be seeing as the journal evolves, because it's all going to come from you. My plans have mainly to do with upgrading the technology by which the journal gets produced, and I think that will have a beneficial effect on the look and read of things. But how you do what you do is yours to tell, and the most important thing I can do here is to make you feel your journal is accessible.

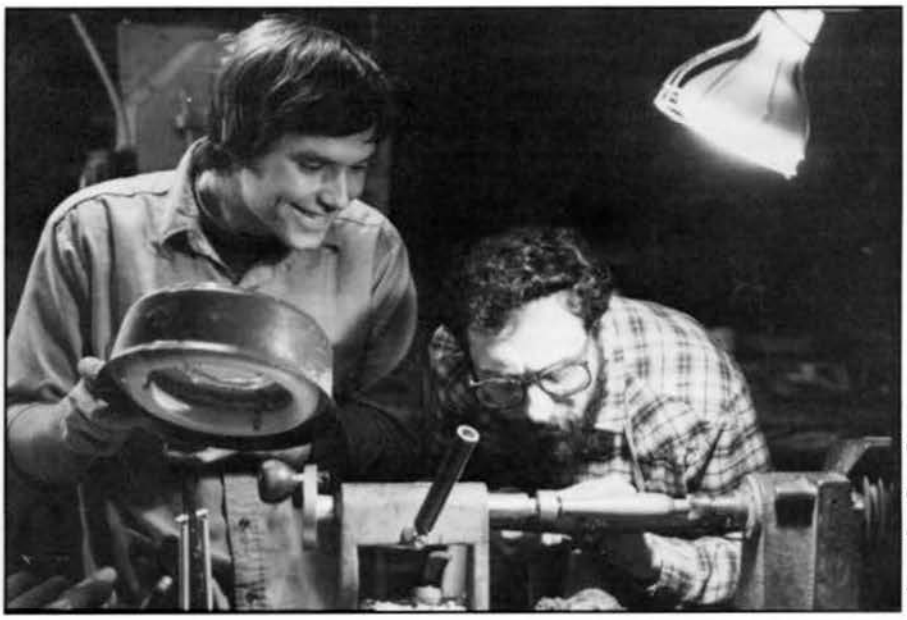


photo by Sue Roman

An old photo of Rick Mastelli, right, giving Del Stubbs the thrill of his life: initiating another turner.

If you have something to say, write me, call me, propose an article, send me a picture, drop me a sketch, finish the article we talked about, read your journal, let me know how we're doing. If you take me up on this, I should have more than I can possibly fit in a quarterly journal, which is the way it should be. The magazine you get in your mailbox is like the tip of an iceberg; most of what goes on is not on display. But it has its effect. Just keep in touch. You'll see. What you complain about as an irritating lapse or dumb idea in one issue will become your article assignment to rectify in the next.

And now some nitty gritty: I can work with all kinds of submissions, including handwritten manuscripts, but I will prefer typewritten pages, and best of all a 3 1/2-inch floppy disk along with a printout. I can translate most word-processing programs, whether in PC or Mac format; please indicate which program you've used. Regarding photographs, we will remain a black-and-white journal for the foreseeable future, which means black-and-white prints will fare better than color slides. But good, clean photos are workable, whatever the format.

I will acknowledge receipt of what you send, usually within two weeks. Then I will be in touch, telling you whether I can use what you've sent as is or that your material would benefit from some rework or something more. I will take pains to explain the direction of any such additional work. I will edit your material, which means I will strive to make it more accessible, clearer, and more appealing to more readers. I will try to retain the gist of your idea and the character of your writing, while I apply worthy editorial standards. So long as there is time and especially where it seems wise, I will send you a copy of the edited version or contact you to discuss questions, aiming to catch errors.

I will not turn out a perfect product, but with your help, the journal will continue evolving into a stronger publication. Meanwhile, enjoy the rest of this issue, put together by the most conscientious predecessor I've ever had, and know that December is already taking shape.—*Rick Mastelli*

Rick Mastelli
RR 1, Box 5248
Montpelier, VT 05602
802/229-1320

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

I am writing in response to Alan Lacer's request for comments regarding product reviews.

I am one of a number of reviewers here in the United Kingdom, my reviews of lathes and ancillary equipment being published in the G.M.C. Publications' magazines *Woodturning* and the late lamented *Woodworking today*.

I agree with just about all of what Alan says. I may even be the ". . . school of thought" which ". . . holds that if you cannot honestly recommend the product, don't even grant it the dignity of a review." I have certainly made this point in print. If the reviewer praises a product which is not good, the reader who buys it is not happy. If the reviewer is too critical of a product then no other manufacturer, designer, or importer will trust them ever again; and only a very brave editor, or possibly one with a death wish, will publish it. A very early review which I did took me a further 12 months of letter writing to get published. And I was writing to the editorial staff, the importer having complimented me on the review. The reviewers' lot is not a happy one.

My own policy when asked to review a product is to have a good look at it, if I have not already done so, and to decide what kind of review I could come up with. Good, bad, or middling. I then respond to the supplier accordingly. If my review would not be good, I offer to make "for your eyes only" comments. This policy has actually cost me work in the past, but I would rather lose work than integrity or credibility. I like to be able to look people in the eye.

Having come up with the review, I then send a preliminary copy to the supplier of the equipment, just to confirm factual details. I then submit the review proper to the magazine editor, with a copy to the supplier. This system allows the supplier the right to reply in the same issue of the magazine in which the review will be published.

I have to trust the editor not to change anything which I have said without prior consultation with me, of course, which is yet another pitfall down which I have plunged on more than one occasion. And often headlong.

Incidentally, the columnist's lot is not a happy one either. In one of my articles I once mentioned a lathe by name, purely as a means of identifying a particular design. Some months later I received an irate letter from someone who had bought the lathe ". . . on my recommendation" and who then proceeded to tell me what he thought of it. And his opinion was not very high.—*Reg Sherwin, Stoke Heath, Broomsgrove, England*

Dear Editor,

The June 1993 'Presidentorial' was both excellent and relevant. I hope that I can add some thoughts of value.

1. I take seriously the manufacturer who offered to write his own review. As one who has sat on both sides of the fence (and currently has a video being reviewed), I have sympathy with the manufacturer who has probably seen far too many reviews written by those who are ignorant, unduly nitpicky, use their review chiefly to promote themselves or their prejudices, or who just cannot write well. I suggest that someone who reviews their own product will generally take great care to be seen to be objective and should have the necessary technical knowledge to be properly informative.

2. The threat of legal action is real. I have been threatened twice by companies who are internationally known and 'respected.'

3. One way to overcome the legal problem might be for a standard form to be sent to the supplier of any product sent in for a review, or any product for which a review is received. The form should state that:

a. The review will not be available to the supplier until the signed form has been returned.

b. In signing the form the supplier agrees not to bring any legal action, whatever the wording of the review.

c. If the form is not signed a review will not appear in *American Woodturner*, but a statement will appear in *AW* noting that a review will not appear because of the refusal to sign.

d. The supplier will be given a reasonable right of reply and this should appear with the review.

4. An important aspect of a review is the timing. One magazine seems to take an unnecessarily long time to publish reviews of publications which complete with its own.

5. A review has, I suggest, two aims: to inform and to entertain. A totally objective review by a committee is likely to be dull and late. Far better one with a few warts which, along with the supplier's response, will stimulate readers to make up their own minds.

7. If woodturners' associations are to truly safeguard the interests of their members then the associations have to be prepared to be active 'against' as well as 'for'; they have to be prepared to use their considerable potential market clout.—*Mike Darlow, Alexandria, Australia*

Editor,

I started turning near the age of fifty and have been at it about ten years. I consider myself to be about halfway down the road to mastery of this wonderful craft. I teach a very basic woodturning course at a local art school and I was the founder of the Chesapeake Woodturners and an early member of the AAW. I, like most members I have met, feel very strongly about our organization and its goals as expressed on the cover of *American Woodturner*: "Dedicated to providing education, information and organization to those interested in woodturning." I feel

that if we are forced by a merchant to stop criticizing products, it will be the start of a downhill slide for the journal.

Not long after reading the March 1993 review of two of John Timby's tapes by Warren E. Wyrostek, I received, unsolicited, a copy of "Fun at the Lathe" for my and my chapter's review. I have read several of Mr. Wyrostek's critiques and have watched the videos he has reviewed. Based on this, I believe Mr. Wyrostek to be very fair, unbiased, and helpful to those he reviews. In other words, someone whose opinion I have come to respect. After watching "Fun at the Lathe," I am even more sure of my opinion of Mr. Wyrostek. He seems to have bent over backwards to be fair to Mr. Timby. He was negatively critical only in his last two paragraphs, and even then he gave a lot of advice on how to improve the videos. A comparison of Mr. Timby's video to those by other turners can only confirm this.

Mr. Timby's subsequent letter to the editor and letter to all chapters of the AAW, with his statement about legal action, is an insult to our membership. These are not the actions of a woodturner interested in sharing knowledge. These are the words of a merchant looking for the buck and wanting no criticism put in the way of making it.

I suggest that we create a form for the people who advertise in the journal to sign. Something that would release the journal from legal action for honest critiques. Those who refuse to sign would not be able to advertise in the journal and the AAW members would be told why.—*Frank Amigo, Secretary, Chesapeake Woodturners*

Dear Editor,

This year's symposium was spectacular! I thought last year's was great, but it was topped. Both Carolyn and myself found that we had many choices to make when selecting a demonstration to view and would have been disappointed if this hadn't been true. The program committee did a spectacular job putting all of this together.

I would like to thank the president, Alan Lacer, the administrator, Mary Redig, and all the members of the board for their hard work throughout the year. Without their efforts the AAW would not be what it is today.

I have a complaint that I would like to bring before the membership. The officers and the board cannot solve this problem; only the members can.

Have you ever been at a demonstration, been very interested in the presentation and had two or more people talk and carry on a conversation right next to you? Not only is this distracting but it is very rude to the demonstrator. I wear a hearing aid and it becomes doubly distractive since the aid amplifies the closer speech, further blocking out the conversation of the demonstrator. Please, if you must talk and talk, leave the room!

I spent several years in the military and learned to despise institutional food. The lunches and the clambake provided by SUNY were marvelous and a reminder that there is an exception to every rule.

My thanks also go to the New York and New Jersey chapters. Y'all (southern word for everyone) did a great job. Sincerely, —*E. Lee Dale, Conyers, Georgia*

Dear Florida members,

If you live near Palm Beach Gardens and would like to be part of a local chapter, I am interested in helping to get one started. Call or write to me.—*Al Gruntwagin, 63 Dunbar Rd. Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33418, 407/625-1280*

Dear Editor,

I was delighted to see Ray Allen's excellent article on segmented turning in the March issue of *American Woodturner.*

I became aware of his work a couple of years ago. I had been looking at a lot of good work and then came upon Ray's and found it absolutely astonishing.

I had the good fortune to spend a couple of days in Ray's shop a few months ago during which he passed on the many techniques he's developed. I also had a chance to see his outstanding body of work.

I feel that we all owe Ray a lot for reviving interest in this fascinating field of segmented turning.—*Dick Binger, Huntsville, Alabama*

Dear lost one,

After the Provo seminar (1992, Utah) a very kind American delegate gave me a lovely piece of redwood burl. I now find I have lost my address book, so if the donor sees this notice, would you please write to me?—*Ken Sager, Box 152, Putaruru, New Zealand*

Dear Editor,

Over the past ten years, with assistance from the Q.E. II New Zealand Arts Council, I have been fortunate to travel on several occasions to Australia, the U.S.A., and Britain. All these trips have been study tours viewing woodturning worldwide and reporting back to our New Zealand crafts people.

More especially in the earlier years, I found it difficult to locate top-grade turners and the best of craft galleries. On my last visit to the AAW seminar in Provo, Utah, I spoke to a number of fellows who have visited New Zealand and experienced the same difficulties I have had. Unless you know where to go and who to see, it can be very frustrating.

So, over the last year I have compiled a list which I consider are the best galleries and turners of quality work. Any visitors coming to New Zealand are welcome to a copy of this list by writing to me. Please enclose a S.A.S.E with international postage.—*Ken Sager, Box 152, Putaruru, New Zealand*

GEORGE HATFIELD STORY/AN AAW STORY

Susan Ellison

On a recent Friday afternoon I received a call from a local lumberyard. An Australian woodturner was in the area for the day and was looking for other turners. Was it o.k. with me if they sent him by my shop?

An hour later a wonderful, energetic fellow from Lidcombe, Australia drove up. George Hatfield had some free time before heading to Washington D.C. later in the day. I was the lucky recipient of his time. Accepting only a cup of coffee for his three-hour visit, Mr. Hatfield cheerfully shared with me many tricks of his trade. A spindle turner and teacher of turning for over 35 years, George gave freely of his time and many talents.

When he got back on the road late that afternoon (with a final reminder from me to drive on the right-hand side of the highway!), I walked back to my shop shaking my head at my wonderful luck to have chosen turning for my living. After all, George Hatfield is not the only generous craftsman I have met since I began turning.

What a switch from the career I left behind in the sciences where information and discoveries are often carefully guarded. I think there is something unique about the person who turns wood, but in addition, the field itself nourishes and expects this generosity from its members. The leaders of our craft, by example, demonstrate to all that this is an open, beneficient society and it is expected that all who participate in it will do the same. That is what binds all of us together and propels us to find one another and share our skills and knowledge. Let us hope it will always be this way.

It is, of course, up to us. For as more of us become a part of this wonderful world of woodturning, each of us is indebted to those who made this knowledge available. After all, it is this sharing environment that keeps our creative juices flowing and our ideas fresh.

It seems only fitting that I attended my first national AAW conference in Purchase, New York, last week and found the same sense of giving and sharing that I expected.

I am still a woodturning novice and have a great deal to learn. I am ready. Thank you George Hatfield. Thank you to the AAW. Thank you everyone.

AAW MINI-CONFERENCE: The Novice Turner

October 8, 9, 1993
Akron, Ohio

This conference is the first in what we hope will become a series of mini-conferences on various topics, held all over the United States. The objective of the Ohio conference will be to present a strong foundation for those who are at an early stage of their development as a turner. Registration will be limited to 60 individuals, as we plan to incorporate a portion of each day to hands-on activities.

Instructors for the event:

Palmer Sharpless	Del Stubbs
Rus Hurt	Alan Lacer

Registration fee is $110 which includes admission to all sessions, materials, and a small banquet on the evening of October 9. For further information or to register, contact:

Mary Redig, AAW Administrator
667 Harriet Ave.
Shoreview, MN 55126
612/484-9094
612/484-1724 fax.

AAW VIDEO PROJECT LAUNCHED

With the 1993 Symposium in Purchase, New York, the video-tape program was started. We taped a number of the demonstrations and expect to generate about 20 films which should be available for loan late this fall. The films on VHS format will be unedited reproductions of the live demonstration, not slick, professionally produced films. They should, nonetheless, be very instructional. Watch future issues of the journal (and our new national newsletter) for lists of subjects, titles, and demonstrators as the videos become available.

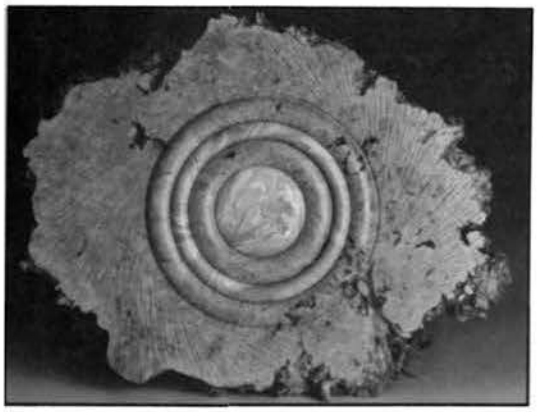
Donations from two sponsors help initiate this program: Delta International Machines and Crafts Supply, USA.

Both of these companies have historically been big supporters of the AAW, and the video program would not exist without their financial help. Thank you Delta International and Crafts Supply!—*Dan Ackerman*

Brenda Behrens, Phillips Ranch, California, "Ribbon," 6 1/2″ dia. x 5 1/4″ h., olive burl, turned and carved

Brenda Behrens, "Yes," 6″ dia. x 5″ h., myrtle burl, turned and carved

Brenda Behrens,, "Lotus," 4 5/8″ dia. x 4 1/4″ h., olive burl with turquoise inlay, turned and carved

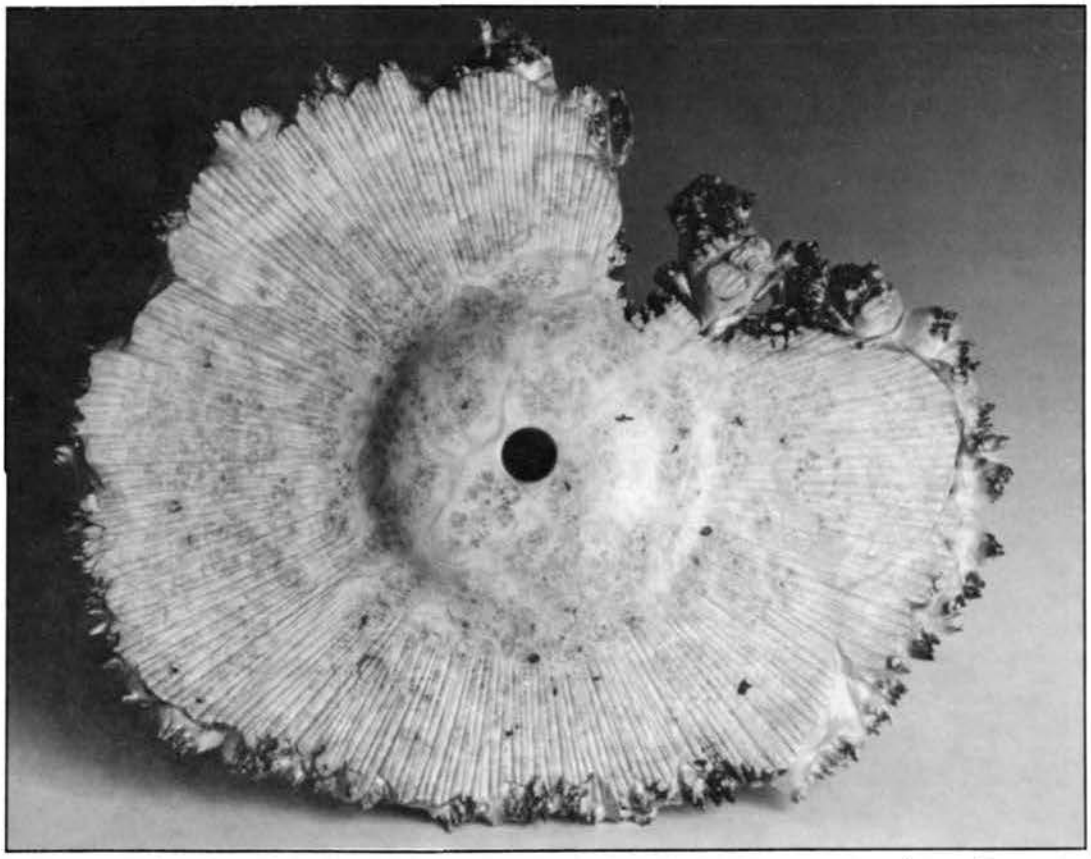


Robert Rosand, broadleaf maple burl, 26″ dia., turned, carved, and marblized

Robert Rosand, shallow platter, broadleaf maple burl, 14″ dia., turned and carved

I can't tell you how impressed I was when I first saw Dennis Elliott's wall medallions: The size, the visual impact, the skill to turn an object that large, the lathe required to turn it. It's said that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery; but I didn't want to flatter Dennis too much.

I initially turned medallions significantly smaller than those made by Dennis, but that's not much of a variation. Once I felt comfortable with the technique, I added color in the form of marblized rings which were dipped in a color bath. In other medallions, interest was added by introducing color to the carved lines radiating out from the piece. More recently, I have begun doing a hollow turning in the center of the medallion, followed by the usual carving. Some are no longer wall hangings, but shallow platters or round-bottom "medallions." My great hope is that evenually these pieces will not be seen as variations on Dennis Elliott's work, but will come to have an identity of their own. —*Robert Rosand*



Robert Rosand, hollow vessel, broadleaf maple burl, 24″ dia., turned and carved

AAW Gallery . . .

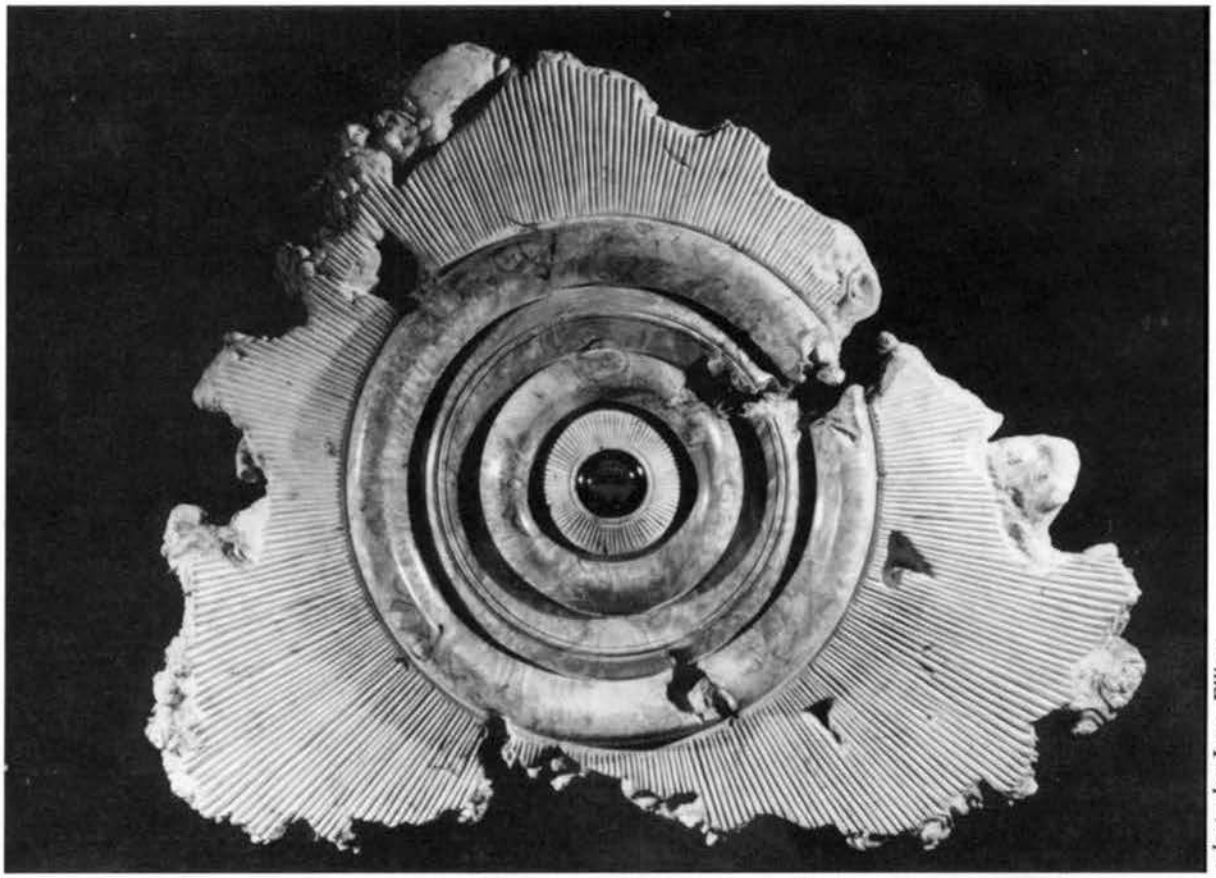


photo by Iona Elliott

Dennis Elliott, "Wall Sculpture," 1992, bigleaf maple burl, African blackwood, emerald jade avonite, metal, 33″ h. x 40 1/2″ w. x 2 1/2″ deep. Permanent collection of The Renwick Gallery of the National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

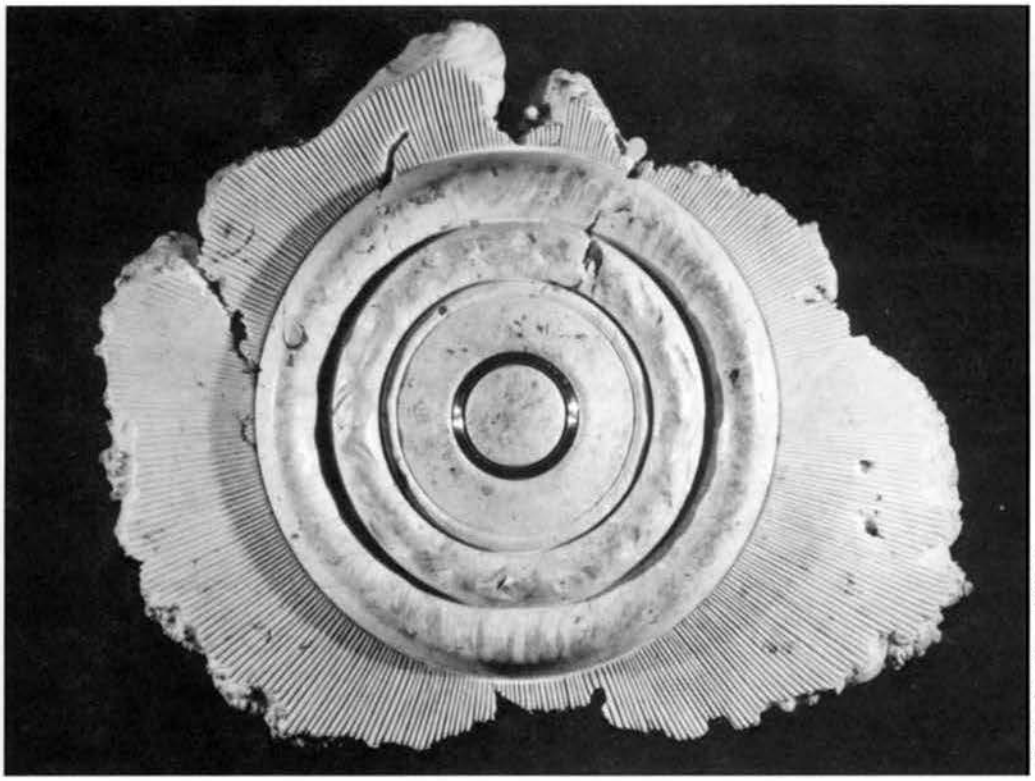


photo by Iona Elliott

Dennis Elliott, "Wall Sculpture," 1992, bigleaf maple burl and pewter, 34 1/2" h. x 43" w. x 3" deep. Permanent collection of American Craft Museum, a gift.

photo by M. Bilal

Bonnie Klein, turned earrings with chatterwork, 1989.

AAW Gallery . . .

A story told me by an old Swedish man many years ago goes like this: When a couple were courting in the old days the man would carve two spoons, connected by a wood chain, all carved from one piece of wood, for his betrothed. After they married the symbol of their togetherness was a goblet with two rings on the stem, made out of wood, metal, or even china. When people are looking for a wedding gift at a craft show, the above story usually results in a sale for me.—*Henry Muenz, San Antonio, Texas*

Ben Fisher, Santa Monica, California, "Small Reflections, #2," 7 1/2" dia., bubinga, zebrawood, ebony, purpleheart, maple, padauk, dichroic glass

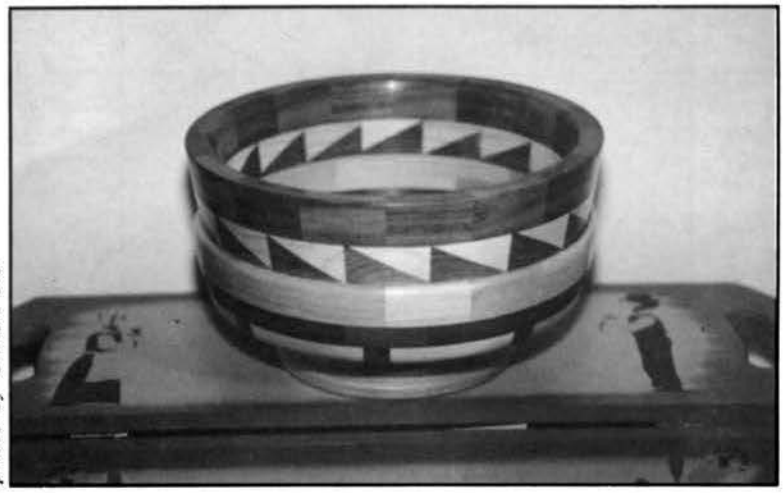


photo by Chris Polo

Phil Polo, Huntington, New York *photo by Chris Polo*

Phil Polo is 71 years old and has been turning since 1991.

photo by Chris Polo

George Radeschi, Doylestown, Pennsylvania, received first-place award in the "Art of the State: Pennsylvania '93" for a wood and sterling-silver vessel. The exhibition at The State Museum of Pennsylvania in Harrisburg ran from May 21 - August 9. The vessel measures 15 inches by 14 inches and is made from hundreds of solid pieces of quilted maple, mahogany, padauk, and purpleheart. A carved sterling-silver band surrounds the top of the vessel.

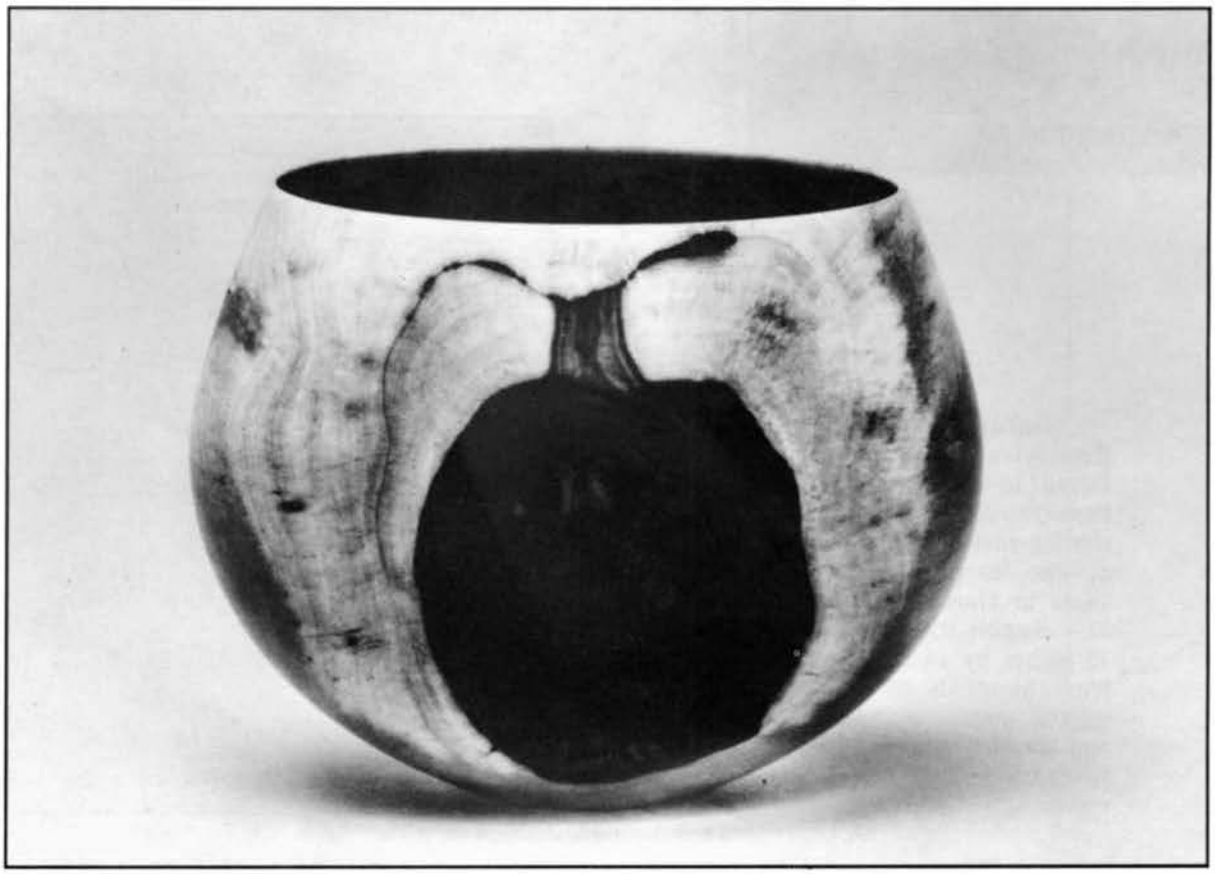
MARRIAGE IN FORM: KAY SEKIMACHI & BOB STOCKSDALE

photo by Christopher Dube

Bob Stocksdale and Kay Sekimachi, 1992

In celebration of "The Year of American Craft," the Palo Alto Cultural Center is honoring Kay Sekimachi and Bob Stocksdale, two of the twentieth-century's pre-eminent artists in their respective media of fiber and wood. The exhibition is a 30-year retrospective for these two pioneers of American craft.

Bob can see in a piece of wood what others search for and cannot find. He reads the grain, and notes imperfections that would seem to be a loss, but by his eye and his hand they become the focus of the piece. He approaches wood much as a diamond cutter does a rough stone—the placement of the wood on the lathe, the study of what will be revealed in the piece that is to be turned—with the result that a hunk of wood on the floor, meaningless to someone else, becomes a jewel in wood.—*Sam Maloof, woodworker*



Bob Stocksdale, 1983, Texas persimmon, 5″ dia. x 4 1/4″ h. Collection of the artist.

American Association of Woodturners
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Shoreview, MN 55126
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photo by Rick Mastelli

The birdhouse project from the American Association of Woodturners' symposium, 1993, stands proudly on the campus of the State University of New York, Purchase. Eighteen local chapters contributed individual birdhouses. Andy Barnum coordinated the project.