American Woodturner

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

A Report on Last June's Board Meeting

At each year's annual symposium the board of directors arrives several days early for a series of meetings. Some of the most critical decisions for the organization are made during these sessions. I would like to offer a recap of some of this year's important determinations.

One of the most sweeping decisions was how to handle future board elections. Following considerable work by an ad hoc committee, the board voted to submit to the membership for approval an election reform proposal; the referendum appeared in the July 15 newsletter. I am happy to report that you passed this referendum by a very large margin—though not without voicing some legitimate concerns. The greatest fear was that the nominating committee could become self-serving—whether it be towards professionals, regional favorites, or just those on the "inside." The change from a situation where anyone could run (you did not even have to be in the AAW!) to one where candidates are screened and limited in number certainly has the potential for abuse.

But like hiring in the world of work, an organization has an obligation to engage those people who are best for it. Although favoritism and discrimination can occur, it is cynical to hold that it is inevitable or even common. No, it is possible to screen folks to run for the board ensuring that they have talent, time, energy, and heart in the right place. I ask all of you to give the new process a chance and to serve as watchdogs that it does function as it should.

Next, we made a decision regarding assistance to individuals in the field who suffer a loss through injury, fire, theft, natural disaster, and the like. Bad luck happens, and it always raises the question, what can we do to help? Financial assistance poses a number of problems due to our non-profit status, our stated mission, and the general difficulties of deciding who should receive aid and how much. However, there is an organization already providing loans and other assistance to folks working in the crafts: Craft Emergency Relief Fund. CERF approached us with the idea of establishing a fund specifically for woodturners, requiring our involvement to verify that applicants really are who and what they state. The board decided to work jointly with CERF and the Wood Turning Center to establish such a fund, specifying that only funds generated voluntarily would be included—no membership dues or symposium revenues. I am excited about this project because it allows those in need, regardless of the notoriety, to apply equally for assistance. Also, assistance is to be repaid when the recipient gets back on his or her feet.

How do we do right by those chapters that require 100 percent of their local members to also be in the national? This question, which has been with us for years, is really two questions: Why should a local member be in the national? And what can the national do to encourage and acknowledge chapters that require national membership? The first question is never ending—we figure the best argument is to provide an excellent journal, fulfilling symposia, valuable scholarships, a useful resource directory and other special publications, assistance in forming and operating chapters, and all the other things the AAW does. The second question is more difficult. We are not a chapter organization, and therefore we must be sensitive to those who are not in a local chapter.

The board chose to recognize and thank the dozen or so chapters that have 100 percent national membership by offering one registration to each for next year's symposium in California. This is a modest gesture; it does not include travel or lodging. But it should encourage their efforts. The better we evolve as an organization the easier the job of requiring or even asking for membership in the national. I always felt these two issues were connected.

The board approved several changes that will impact us administratively. First, we have grown large enough to need a full-time assistant for our administrator—Eunice Wynn came on board on August 1. We will also be shifting our calendar, conducting renewals for each year in the fall rather than in January—but without any impact on the cost or duration of your membership. This change will spread the work more evenly and help in the timing of the directory and March journal, which have been dependent on renewals running their course.

Another decision worth singling out was the determination to give half the revenues from the symposium auction to the Arrowmont building fund. That school, a non-profit organization like our own, has been important to the growth of turning. The very idea of this organization was generated at a conference held there in 1985.

Finally, but of no less importance, the board chose Merryll Saylan as president-elect and Charles Alvis as vice president-elect. Our by-laws have no formal provision for a transition in leadership; they specify only that early each year the board will select a president, vice-president, treasurer, and secretary. We thought it best, given that my and Bonnie Klein's terms will end in January, to use the time until then to lay the groundwork for a smooth transition.

All in all we had a very productive meeting. To say we agreed on everything would be far from true. Nevertheless, we covered a number of critical topics, and discussed, thought about, and rethought our decisions. We are now working to implement those decisions.

—Alan Lacer, President of the American Association of Woodturners

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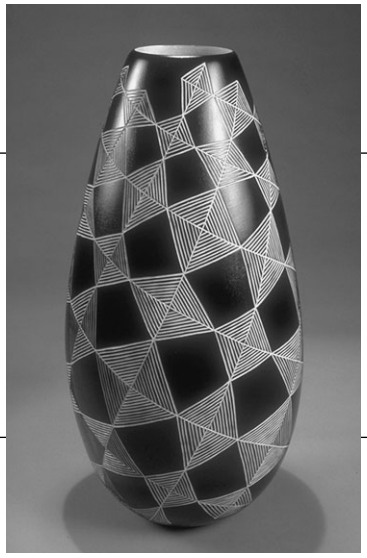

On the cover:

Symposium demonstrator Clay Foster hollows a tall form using an extra-long-and-strong gouge counterbalanced, by means of ceiling-mounted pulleys, with a pile of bricks. At left, one of Foster's pieces (19" high), made using this tool. The surface decoration of this piece, carving and then coloring with white primer and printers' ink, Foster also discussed in demonstration. For more on last June's symposium in Ft. Collins, see the articles beginning on page 14. Cover photo: Rick Mastelli.

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POSTMASTER: Send address changes to AAW Administrator, 667 Harriet Ave., Shoreview, MN 55126

Dear Palmer:
I read with interest your "Dear Herb" column in the June 1994 issue. The week before I had started using water-based polyurethane on my turned items, and I was having problems with discoloration. After reading your method, I realized what was causing the problem. For the past several years I have been using one coat of lacquer sanding sealer and two or three coats of gloss spray lacquer.

When I switched to gloss water-based polyurethane, I continued to begin with lacquer sanding sealer. This is a no-no. The lacquer sanding sealer imparts an amber color to the wood. When I inadvertently sanded through the sealer on ridges, beads, and edges, I unknowingly removed the amber color in these places. I proceeded to apply the water-based polyurethane, which is "water-white clear," and, unlike my usual gloss lacquer top coats, imparts no color to the wood. The result is rings of clear-colored wood along with the amber-colored wood. And for some reason, the rings are opaque on dark woods such as walnut.

Fortunately, I don't turn works of art, just small craft items, because the only remedy seems to be to remove the finish and start over, or put the turning on a shelf as a reminder of lessons learned.

—*Phil Grames, Lacey's Spring, AL*

From the other side of the pond
I have been reading with some interest the AAW column in the British magazine, *Woodturning,* and it is high time I thanked the various contributors for putting across a different perspective on the craft. It seems the American and Canadian turners exercise their skills within far wider parameters than most of their British counterparts, and their efforts are generally met with far greater appreciation among the general public.

I run a craft training facility here in Clun where we teach people from all walks of life, from all over Europe. To augment the coursework we have a large gallery area where we exhibit work by tutors, past students, and guest craftspeople. While we must stay fair to all the disciplines we represent, I personally favor turned work, as it is closest to my heart. I would welcome the chance to exhibit some of the more progressive work by North American turners. Perhaps your readers have slides of such work they could send to me. It would be a step toward showing more of their work here and it would forge another link between craftspeople in your countries and ours.

—*Richard Rawlings, Pen y wern Farm, Black Hill, Clun, Shropshire, England SY7 0JD*

Pens again
When you contribute an item to your local chapter newsletter, where everyone knows you, you don't think about what someone who doesn't know you might think of it. Such is the case with the recently published tip of mine on shortening the pen fillers on turned pens (in the March 1994 issue, page 11, and commented upon by Jerome Vaillancourt in the June issue, page 2). As I run a woodworking equipment store, I use the pens that I have had to "cheat" on as samples to show people what the pens look like and for the laser engraving we do. They are never sold or given to anyone, for the very reason Mr. Vaillancourt details. I do not scrap them, as that would be a waste of good pieces, and I have yet to win the Texas lottery so that I can afford to throw away what for me are perfectly usable pens.

—*Clayton Cochran, San Antonio, TX*

With reference to Mr Vaillancourt's letter, I think it is not necessary to "scrap" the pens. When I install the half-twist type pen mechanism in too deeply, only because of carelessness, the fix is to remove the mechanism and replace it with another. Leave the barrel spacer on the mechanism and clamp the mechanism tightly (crush it) in a vise about $1/16$ inch away from the spacer. Twist and pry a screwdriver between the vise and the spacer until the mechanism moves. Reposition the mechanism in the vise and twist with the screwdriver again. Continue until the mechanism pops out. I use the same spacer (now slightly damaged) for the next careless mechanism installation.

To remove the one-and-a-quarter twist mechanism, install a round-head screw into the mechanism, same thread as the ballpoint refill. Clamp the screw head in the vise and, using the screwdriver, back it off enough to fit the refill properly. This method cannot be used to remove the half-twist mechanism because of its inferior quality.

—*A. Wayne Nakoneczny, Cheshire, CT*

You scream, I scream
Being an ardent fisherman and fish carver, I take offense at Gary Zeff's characterizations (June 1994, page 18). I wonder, if trees could scream, would we cut off their limbs?

—*Anton Stetzko, North Eastham, MA*

Usable goblets?
I have turned a number of goblets from both green and dry wood over the years and finished them in different ways with the intent of using them mainly as show pieces or for giving, as Bob Street describes in his article reprinted in the *AAW Project Book.* Recently I have received numerous requests for goblets that can be used. I have yet to see an article or hear the details from anyone for a simple way to finish goblets so they can be used for wine and such. I

would appreciate any information members may have.

—Martin Groneng, Scarborough, Ont.

Call for lathe reviews

Please, please review some lathes, as there are some of us who need assistance in deciding which lathe will do the job for us. Do we need to go all the way to a Woodfast or General, or will a Jet or Delta do?

—Don Hindman, Clarkston, MI

EDITOR'S NOTE: *How about a forum? Send in your critical review of a lathe you know well, detailing its pros and cons, with special attention to the work it's best suited for. I'll edit and publish.*

Faster than a speeding...

For those interested in gauging the advancement of woodturning in our culture, consider this fax I recently received from a friend:

I went to see a movie a few Saturdays back to try to escape the horrendous heat we are having. The movie was Speed. *In the opening minutes of the film in the lobby of an office building in LA, as the heroes go rushing in to try to do away with the villain, they go dashing around a corner past—do you already know this?—a Ron Kent bowl which is displayed on a pedestal. I was so excited, I almost jumped out of my seat. Sarah, who was with me, said, "How do you know it's Ron Kent?" and I said, "I just know! No one else does it like that!"*

Not only that, but it's a good flick—edge of your seat for the full two hours!

—Sally

You gotta look *fast.*

—Ron Kent, Honolulu, HI

Symposium Acknowledgments

Last June's AAW symposium in Fort Collins was a great success. No symposium would be possible without the energetic and generous support of many individuals and companies. Special thanks go to the following:

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Sharon Jones
Johnny Jones
Frank Clement
Gary Pearlman

Among the dozens of items donated for the AAW auction were these baseballs, turned by Duane Blake.

Lathes

Craft Supplies

Demonstrator supplies

Liberon Supplies
Wayne Knutson
Loren Ballard

Band at barbeque

Austin Hardwoods
Front Range Lumber Co.
Paxton Lumber
Sears Trostel
Wood Emporium

Distributors of symposium brochures

Craft Supplies USA
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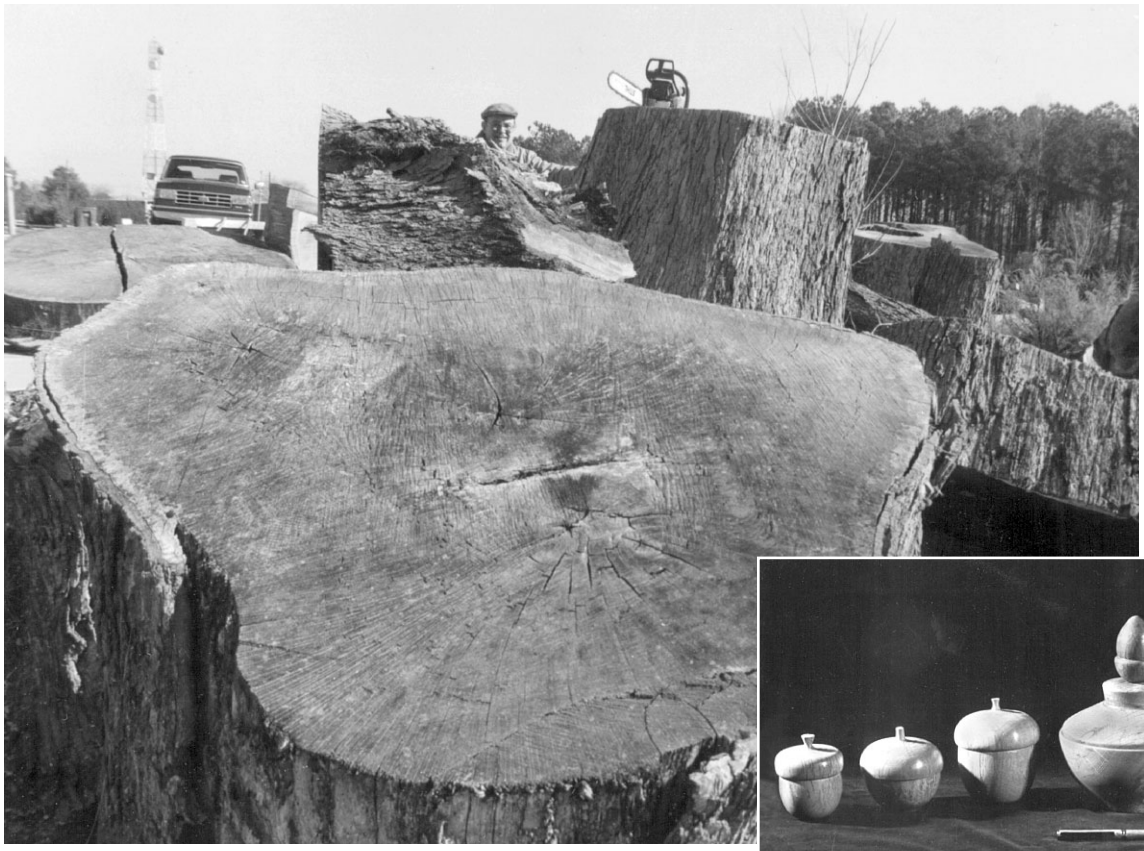
Packard Woodworks
Paxton Lumber
Woodcraft Supply Stores
Woodworkers' Stores

LEGACY OF THE HENRY CLAY OAK



Author Darrell Rhudy takes a breather amid the trove of historic oak, left. Below, some of the work created from this wood by members of the Triangle Woodturners of North Carolina.

RALEIGH, NC, OFTEN REFERRED TO AS "The City of the Oaks," lost its oldest resident in September 1991. A white oak measuring $6\frac{1}{2}$ feet in diameter and over 120 feet high succumbed to a major fungal infection and was felled. Although estimated at about 350 years of age, actual ring count confirmed 200 years, old enough to sustain a local legend. It is believed that Henry Clay sat in the tree's shade in April 1844 and composed a letter opposing the annexation of Texas without the consent of Mexico. Some historians believe that that letter cost him the 1844 presidential election. Hence the tree came to be known as the "Henry Clay Oak."

Recognizing the historical significance of this grand old tree, I felt that some of it should be used for functional and decorative turnings. A group in the midst of founding the Raleigh City Museum was also eager to see the story of the Henry Clay Oak passed along to future generations. So a cooperative effort was organized. Since the tree grew on state property and had been removed to a state research farm, the museum had to obtain state permission to get some of the wood.

With the wood stored at my shop, members of the Triangle Woodturners of North Carolina began using it to turn out a variety of items, including bowls, acorn-shaped boxes, ballpoint pens, bookends, letter openers, goblets, and holiday ornaments. Each item is inscribed with the turner's name, the date it was made, and the notation: "Henry Clay Oak."

All the items are purchased by the museum and sold in its gift shop. The revenues accrue to the Triangle Woodturners, and the person who turned the item is given a credit toward his club dues equal to half the piece's sale price. In 1993 the club received over $1200 from this project. The money will make possible workshops with renowned turners and scholarships to advance our members' skills.

This project has boosted camaraderie and motivated members to take on new turning challenges. Some of the more experienced turners have held Saturday sessions to help others turn Henry Clay Oak into useful and artful items. The project is one good example of what a local chapter can do to grow in strength, interest, and number We are more than sixty paid members today, up from fifteen charter members in February 1992. *—Darrell Rhudy*

Darrell Rhudy is a co-founder of the Triangle Woodturners who teaches at the John C. Campbell Folk School and at his shops in Raleigh and the NC mountains.

Seattle Chapter Tool Fest

Have you ever wondered who has a lathe similar to yours so that you could get together with the owner and discuss mounting ideas? How high the table should be? How to minimize vibration problems? Or, have you considered buying a certain type of bowl-turning chuck, but before doing so wanted to talk with someone who already has one? Maybe you've wanted to see one in operation, or wondered where you could buy one for the best price. Or, maybe you've wondered what sort of handmade lathe accessories and jigs other members have and you know nothing about.

To increase the possibilities for such awareness, the Seattle Chapter of the AAW planned an all-member Information Exchange and Equipment Show-and-Tell for both the January and May monthly meetings. I coordinated these events, which were held at the Overlake School's Campus Center in Redmond, WA.

This program consisted of two parts. One involved the collection of data from the members regarding the lathe equipment and dust collectors that they use. The members were also asked to submit a picture of their equipment—either a copy of a catalog picture, one from their parts list, or a snap shot. This material is now included in a club notebook entitled, "Lathe and Dust Collection Equipment, AAW Seattle Chapter." The inventory covers approximately thirteen major brands of lathes and five homemade lathes. It also includes two portable and five permanently installed dust collectors.

The second part of the program was an equipment show-and-tell. It provided all of the members an opportunity to display and share information about special or unique commercial or handmade tools or other goodies that they have in their shops which no one else knows about. These are the accessories or turning aids that help to make woodturning more fun. Of particular interest were those accessories which the members had made themselves and which can be duplicated by other members, possibly with the originator's help.

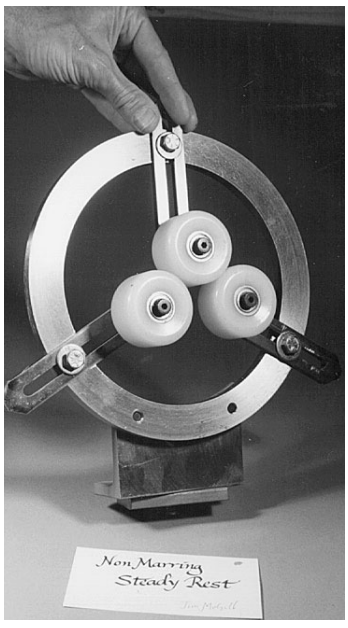
For the program's display, these items were divided into the following nine categories: commercial chucks, hand-made chucks, commercial tools, hand-made tools, steady rests, turning jigs, electrical devices, safety devices, and a miscellaneous category. Spacious arrangement of display tables provided a lot of room for people to circulate between them. Each table had a mounted sign indicating the category of items displayed. A lot of one-on-one conversations developed amongst the members regarding the different items, their features, their uses, and how they were made.

I photographed all of these items so that color prints of each item could be added to a second club notebook entitled, "Unique & Handmade Lathe Accessories, AAW Seattle Chapter." This notebook also includes a complete table of contents that lists the items and their owners in each of the nine major categories. To identify the owner of each item and to help judge its size, I tried to include in each photo the owner's name and, where appropriate, a ruler.

The January and May meetings were among our most popular to date: more than 60 members brought items to display, and over 70 members and friends attended each. A total of more than 150 items were displayed. These items ranged from antique turning tools to innovative bowl reversing jigs. A lot of hidden talent and creative ideas were brought to light. By referring to the photos and tabular data in the two notebooks, many future programs can be put together from our own resources. The two notebooks will be retained by the chapter secretary, available for all members to refer to at the monthly meetings.

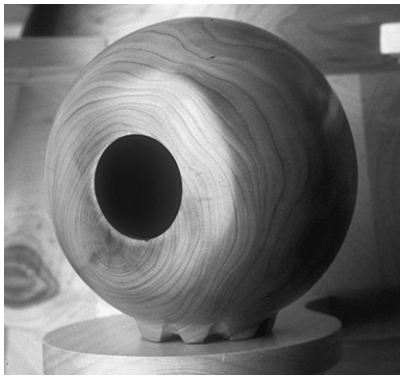
—Allan Rumpf, Duvall, WA

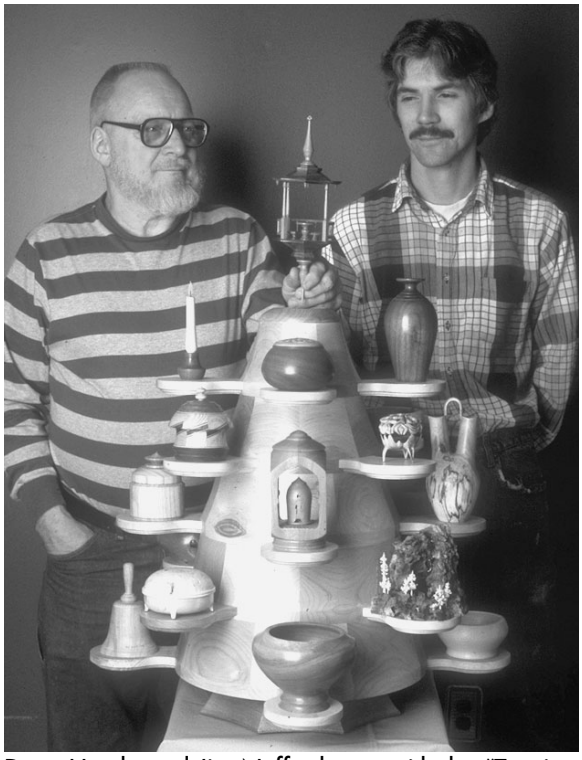
Allan Rumpf welcomes inquiries from other chapters considering similar equipment information exchanges. You can contact him through the Directory.

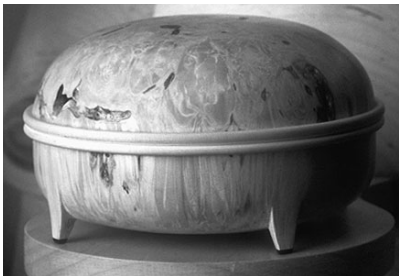


Two of more than one hundred photos now available in notebooks held by the Seattle chapter secretary documenting members' shop-made as well as commercial lathe accessories.

Dave Hardy's Turning Tree of Knowledge







Dave Hardy and Jim Neff, above, with the "Turning Tree of Knowledge." Hardy is holding Neff's Inside/Outside Gazebo, inspired by a dream Hardy had. Individual contributions to the tree include (clockwise from upper right) Chip-Carved Box by Jim Logio, Carved Box by Rick Kehs, Footed Box by Mark Krick, Inside/Outside Turning by Michael Kehs, and Hollow Form by Norris White.

WOODTURNER, WOODCARVER, MACHINIST, teacher, and nurturer, Dave Hardy is all of these and more. When it comes to woodturning or woodcarving, no one I know has influenced, taught, and cultivated more craftspeople than Dave has. For fifteen years he has given so much of himself to so many that it was only fitting to give back at least a token of our appreciation for his dedication. The "Turning Tree of Knowledge" is our way of saying "Thank you, Dave."

For the past fifteen years, on the second Tuesday of each month in Sellersville, PA, twenty to forty turners have gathered in Dave's shop to learn, teach, and exchange woodturning tips and ideas. Every Thursday of each week woodcarvers come to do much of the same. Each year Dave offers several workshops including hands-on woodturning sessions to anyone seriously interested in learning woodturning. He has helped some of us build and repair lathes and to design and make tools. He gives freely of his time, shop, materials, knowledge, and experience to anyone who seeks it.

Miss the second Tuesday of every month at Dave Hardy's? Not on your life, as one fellow turner puts it. Over the years we have met many world-class turners on those Tuesday nights in Dave's shop: Reg Sherwin, Vic Wood, George Hatfield, Bonnie Klein, and Hans Weisflog, to mention a few. These are the kinds of encounters any woodturner would relish. But Dave's most powerful influence on all of us has been the way he teaches by his own example: learning by doing.

The "Turning Tree of Knowledge" was conceived by Jim Neff. He is known for his inside/outside segmented turnings. The centerpiece for the tree is an inside/outside turning of a gazebo that Dave dreamed of doing and, typical of Dave's influence on people, inspired Jim to create. The other pieces on the tree were done by various turners as a token of their appreciation for Dave's years of generous contributions.

So, hats off to Dave Hardy! It's not often a friend like him…"turns" up! —*Linton Frank, Perkasie, PA*

HINTS FOR BEGINNING TURNERS

MANY OF OUR MEMBERS ARE JUST beginning the woodturning experience. Even though you may have sound experience in woodworking, art, design, or other areas, there are a number of hints that will make your woodturning more enjoyable. These are issues that I believe are important. They are also subject to correction and interpretation; your own perspective on the guidelines to getting started at woodturning would be appreciated.

Relax.
I have noticed a number of times that beginning turners use more grip on a tool handle than a miser on his money. A comfortable grip on the handle is all that is necessary if you use correct form. You will be able to turn for a longer period of time and will not wear yourself out. A corollary to this is to quit when you are tired. If you are worn out, you will screw up and perhaps destroy the careful work you have accomplished. Learn the correct stance to take at your lathe. Footwork and placement can make you much more comfortable and you can turn longer without tiring. (It will also improve your dancing.)

Learn to use your tools.
The gouges, skews, parting tools, scrapers, and hollowing tools each call for specific techniques. Many of the techniques are not transferable (i.e., the technique for using a skew doesn't naturally follow the technique for using a bowl gouge.) Learn when, why, and how to use a specific tool.

Learn to sharpen.
There is nothing more frustrating than trying to turn wood with dull tools (except of course anything relating to golf). There are good resources on learning to sharpen in books and videos—or learn from a friend. Using less force with a sharp tool will help you relax.

Pick a form that you enjoy turning and learn to do it well.
It isn't very enjoyable to do a lot of mediocre pieces. We all have some ego. For example, if you like to do natural-rimmed bowls, practice on these until you get very competent with them, then practice another form. Over the years, you will become good at many forms.

Get a supply of trash wood and turn a lot of stuff.
The more pieces you turn, the better you are going to get. You aren't going to learn as much from concentrating on one piece for a long time. This doesn't mean you should whip out as many pieces as possible, but don't spend a lot of time nit-picking a piece. If you screw up a piece, throw it against the shop wall and start with another piece of wood.

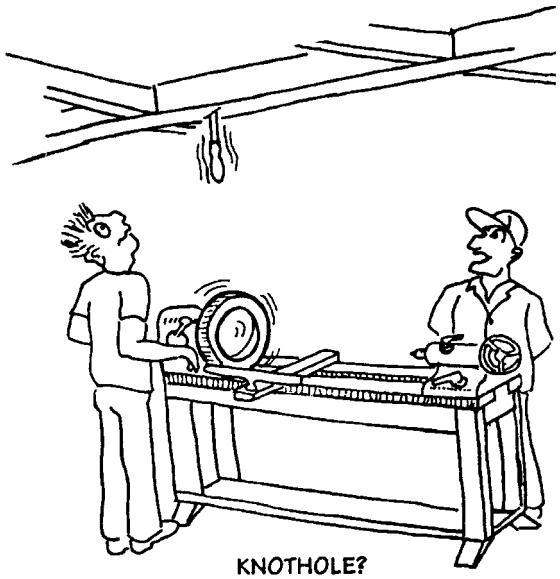
Don't spend a lot of time getting rid of excess wood.
How many times do you turn away just a little bit of wood, then go back and turn a little bit more, and then a little bit more? Get rid of it! Make a decision on the shape you want and go for it. Don't stake your life on the piece you are working on. Sure, it's important to you, but five years from now it will be less important. Over time you are going to get better and your future pieces will show it.

Finish your pieces.
Turning a piece involves a number of steps, from mounting the rough stock on the lathe, to putting the finish on the completed form. Concentrate on learning each step of the turning process. Most turners have a number of half-finished bowls or other pieces around their shop that they just never finish. Likely, this is caused by getting the pieces up to a step in the process of turning that they just aren't comfortable with going through. Make a point to learn each phase.

Learn from experience.
Take advantage of the expertise in your area. Work out an arrangement to learn something from a local turner. Look into turning classes and workshops, which are becoming more common all over the country. Get hold of books and videos on turning and study them in conjunction with your practice on the lathe.

There are a number of other hints that I am sure you will pick up along the way. Put them in a note and send them to me or to the journal.

—Roger Austin



Roger Austin edits Triangle Woodturners of North Carolina Newsletter, where this article first appeared. The cartoon is by Erich Gall and appeared in the newsletter of the Inland Woodturners in Southern California.

Screening your work

When I rough out green bowls, I, like everyone else, like to hog out the wood. The problem is that curls of wet wood end up everywhere in my small shop. I once read about using a window shade to block off the area behind me. I took this idea a step further. Being a teacher and knowing how obsolete movie screens have become in the classroom, I managed to find someone willing to part with a 5-ft.-wide screen. All I have to do is pull the screen down and the curls hit the screen and fall to the floor. The heft of the screen works well, and when I'm done, I just pull on the screen and up it goes.

Here's another idea for shielding lathe spray: Heat an 18x14-inch piece of $^1/_8$-inch Plexiglas on a cookie sheet in the oven. Lay it over the curve of a 5-gallon bucket and let it cool (use gloves to handle the hot plastic). Bend the front 2 to 3 inches back over to form a right angle to the length. This will hook on the bed of the lathe. Glue some strong magnets on the bottom of the Plexiglas to secure it to the bed of the lathe. The curve will keep the spray from the green turnings or from finishes off the lathe. If the Plexiglas is well formed, the waste will run over the lip on the front of the lathe bed.

—Bob Bergstrom, Chicago Heights, IL, reprinted from the newsletter of the Chicago Woodturners

Evacuating shavings

How do you get shavings, which are often wet and compacted, out of a hollow form? If you've tried using a vacuum you've probably encountered clogging at the intake. The stronger the motor, the worse the problem.

The simple answer is to skip the vacuum and use a home-made bent "scoop" made from $^3/_{16}$- or $^1/_4$-inch-diameter brass rod, 12 to 15 inches long. Heat the tip on one end, then pound it flat and bend it into a shallow spoon shape with a hammer. A handle is optional.

The best way is to use a compressor in conjunction with the scoop. Loosen the shavings with the bent rod, then blow them out with a compressor.

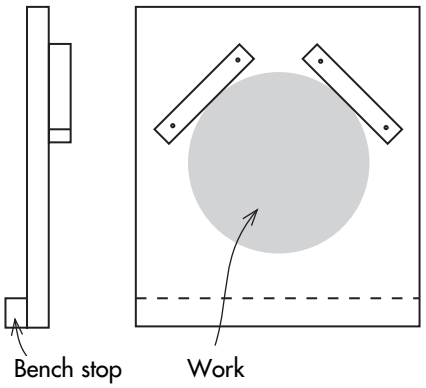
I once met an Australian who recommended I use two hoses on a common shop vacuum. Tape the hoses together, placing one set of ends into the intake and output ports of the vacuum. Place the other ends into the bowl so that the output hose blows shavings around while the intake removes them. Nice idea, but considering what I make, I couldn't figure out how to get both hoses through the opening in my hollow forms!

In any case, be sure to turn off the lathe before sticking *any* device into a hollow form!

—David Ellsworth, Quakertown, PA

Securing rounds

Surfacing a round blank for mounting on the faceplate is difficult because you can't clamp it firmly while you plane it. I use a special bench hook with a V-shaped stop to hold



the pieces. It also helps after you remove a turning from the lathe and wish to work on its bottom with a cabinet scraper.

—Palmer Sharpless, Newtown, PA

On the chainsaw

Holding wood securely during the chainsaw process has always been a challenge. An old-time North Carolinian mountain sawmill man suggested this simple method, and I've been using it for years: Crosscut an 18–24-inch-diameter log 18 inches in length. Stand the piece on end and rip a cut in the center of the endgrain to the depth of your chainsaw bar. Come in to the rip cut from each side at 45 degrees to form a V-notch about 8 inches across. This V-notch will hold round log lengths and allow you to crosscut, rip, and rough-out just about any shape with ease. And the height will save your back.

Getting enough lubricant to the chain bar sometimes becomes a problem during ripping cuts. The long shavings produced tend to pack up around the drive sprocket and impede the flow from the oil gullet. I use a method that professional loggers use in cold weather: Mix one part kerosene to six parts commercial chain lube. The somewhat thinner mixture will flow a little faster and it gets through the packed up shavings.

The trick to keeping your saw sharp is to try to develop the same sensitivities with the saw that you have at the lathe and the grinding wheel. With focus you'll be able to feel the subtle difference between sharp and almost sharp. Dull chainsaws cause tired sawyers which in turn cause accidents. Take the time to learn how to keep your saw sharp.

—Rodger Jacobs, Newland, NC

Seeing the light

The local thrift stores (Salvation Army and others) have proven to be a good source of flexible double-arm desk lights. At a price of about $3.50 (new cost about $14), they make great lights for the lathe, grinder, bandsaw, etc. Before purchasing, check that the switch works and that

all four springs are in place. As a thrift-store hound, I have located fourteen of these for Nor-Cal members. —*Charles Brownold, Davis, CA*

Bulwark against chaos

I am amongst a growing number of Woodfast lathe owners. I believe this machine to be the best machine for my kind of woodturning. But since I am an organizationally challenged turner, I was constantly accumulating all manner of tools, adhesives, and other debris on the bed. Commonplace was putting a cement finish on my tools as they slipped through the opening at the center of the bed, careened off the steel slope of the stand, hit the floor, and rolled just out of reach. I have 25 inches between spindle center and the wall. This also made a wonderful place for my three children to play peek-a-boo with me while I turn. The safety of this concerned me greatly as, given my concentration on the job at hand, I was not always aware of their presence.

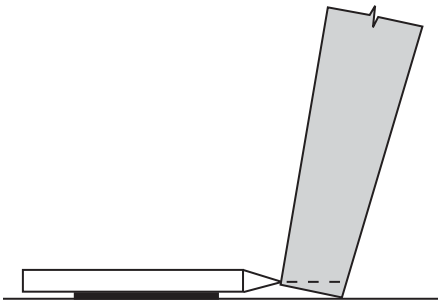
My solution has actually solved four problems while I was only concerned about two. I fitted a 5/4 piece of oak to the rear of the machine. I cut a slot at 45 degrees (or whatever works for your machine set-up). Into this is fitted a $^1/_4$-inch piece of oil-tempered Masonite (the good stuff, not the Harry homeowner stuff) 26x54 inches, the length of the machine. Being a little obsessive about detail I form-fitted the oak to the stepped facade of the machine, drilled and tapped the steel, and bolted it fast. Slide the Masonite into the slot, the other side is supported by the wall (nothing else).

Instant relief from the cement finish on the tools, and no kids sneaking up on me when I least expect. GREAT! Also this area traps 30 percent of the chips, in a much easier place to reach. The most unexpected benefit was that the machine is considerably quieter now. I am drooling over the newer DC motors and controllers available for this lathe, but my budget these days is a bit tighter. My machine has a good second-hand $1^1/_2$-hp AC motor attached to the base but it still vibrates the plate steel. The wood being fitted tightly in place has made a very good machine a little better.

—*Mark G. Krick, Doylestown, PA*

Leveling legs

After assembly of a chair or stool, the bottom of the legs need to be cut parallel to the floor. To mark for that cut, lay a pencil on its side, shim under it with thin scrap until it just touches the top-most part of the original leg end and scribe around the leg.



—*Palmer Sharpless, Newtown, PA*

Pen update

When I wrote my pen article (in the September 1993 issue), I simply cut the pen barrels to length on my table saw and felt that this was adequate in terms of being square. Since that time I have purchased a barrel trimmer from Craft Supplies (I haven't seen them listed anywhere else), and now I wouldn't be without one. It quickly cleans out excess glue and trues the end of each brass tube. The trimmer comes without a handle, but I've found that it works best in a variable-speed drill.

If you make and sell pens, you might want to consider using an oil finish rather than a lacquer one. I occasionally get a pen back for repair. The ones that were finished with lacquer are always worn where the pen is held. In contrast, those pens finished with oil tend to darken uniformly and take on a more natural patina.

—*Robert Rosand, Bloomsburg, PA.*

Epoxy chucking

I turn a number of natural-edged wall medallions, 18 to 24 inches in diameter, and I try to avoid screw holes. Lately I've had great success using about four blobs of five-minute epoxy to fasten the burl slabs to a waste block. I can turn the back of the medallion, then break the glue joint with a sharp rap on the back of the slab. Reverse the piece and glue in the same manner. Then finish-turn the front of the piece and remove the waste block with another rap. You will have only the four areas of glue to clean up by hand. Keep in mind that the epoxy is very strong but brittle. A catch could send the piece flying. A faceshield is highly recommended.

—*Robert Rosand, Bloomsburg, PA*

Grindstone closer to your nose

If you are having trouble sharpening your tools, one thing you may want to try is raising your grinding wheel to the height of your lathe. That is, the shaft of the lathe or grinding wheel should be at about elbow height from the ground. I recently did this with my grinding wheel and was pleasantly surprised at how comfortable the change was: much easier to see and control the grind. After all, you use the tools at one height, why sharpen a foot or so below that? If I am not mistaken, John Jordan briefly discusses this in one or both of his tapes.

—*Robert Rosand, Bloomsburg, PA*

Send tips and question to Tips editor Robert Rosand, RD1, Box 30, Bloomsburg, PA 17815.

ELLSWORTH'S TAPES AND HUNNEX'S PICTURE BOOK

The Ellsworth Library of Tutorial Video Tapes on Woodturning by David Ellsworth. *1378 Cobbler Rd., Quakertown, PA 18951. 1994.* Tape T, *60 minutes, $30;* Tape 1, *105 minutes, $35;* Tape 2, *60 minutes, $30.* Tape 3 *120 minutes, $40.*

BACK IN JUNE OF 1979, READERS OF *Fine Woodworking* were startled to see pictures of a bearded man clad only in overalls sitting astride the lathe creating forms never before seen. The forms were hollowed by turning with tiny cutters through impossibly small apertures. The walls, so thin they were translucent, had been gauged by tapping and listening to the sound. John David Ellsworth had burst upon an unsuspecting world, and that world has never been the same. Quickly, Ellsworth took his place with Prestini and Stocksdale in giving woodturning credibility in the galleries.

Comparing that article with his new tapes, I was struck by how little has changed in his technique and philosophy. Both have evolved but in the direction of simplicity and refinement. He has always been a natural teacher, eloquent and patient. These videos are a teaching aid to accompany his demonstrations and workshops.

Ellsworth has produced the first four tapes in what will be a series, and it seems clear already that they will be a major contribution. He explains in considerable detail each procedure and each alternative and then he explains why each works. When he is telling you what to do, one has the feeling of being instructed by a master; when he explains why—that's a bit different. He still has a strong preference for the poetic justification ("I talk to my pieces and they talk to me" or "angling the tip downward gives it a sense of forgiveness"). No matter—what he tells you to do is exactly right, who cares if his reasons are slightly romantic?

These tapes carry an important subliminal message. One sees it in the various tools and jigs which have a certain disregard for appearance, a kind of innocence or naivete. The handle produced in *Tape T,* for example, never gets far from the sapling from which it comes and is almost ludicrous in appearance. But as it becomes clear how sophisticated a design it is, how thoughtfully it has developed, you are reminded that the work is the thing and all else is means to that end. He warns us, without saying a word, that it is all too easy to be captivated by an exciting technique, a new tool, a new skill, but that path is barren. Only the final work matters.

He has chosen to produce these tapes himself. It is a remarkable achievement, but they are technically flawed. The sound is sometimes "boomy," and often there are sudden changes in sound level, including occasional and startling bleeps and whistles. Video editing is often abrupt. On the other hand, the camera angles are as good or better than the best tapes I've seen, and I hasten to add that none of these defects interferes with the clarity of the content. It is only that the end result falls far short of the technical excellence he demands in his own work, and that work deserves a better showcase.

And now for the tapes themselves. *Tape T,* on tools, covers much of the history of blind turning, how Ellsworth scrapers have evolved over the years, and the aforementioned highly refined, low-tech tool handle. He rejects the usual set-screw mounting of the tiny cutters in favor of a glued mount, and just when the objection rises that one needs to unmount the cutter for sharpening, he shows a method of sharpening that is as easy as it is effective. As a side effect of demonstrating the use of the two main tools plus a homemade caliper, he also gives an excellent demonstration of hollowing through a small opening. Incidentally, the homely, shop-made caliper outperforms the best factory-made ones and costs a dollar or two.

Tape 1 comprises gouges, parting tools, faceplates, sanding, and chucks. It is clear from the perfunctory coverage that Ellsworth has little interest in the incredible variety of chucks being offered today, discussing little more than the shortcomings of the Nova and Glaser Screw Chuck. There is, however, an excellent demonstration of turning an open bowl using the Ellsworth-grind gouge. (I know the side-ground gouge was brought to its present state by Liam O'Neil who may or may not have gotten it from Richard Raffan. I use "Ellsworth grind" because that's what it is called throughout the tapes.) Ellsworth prefers a big faceplate and after the outside is finish-sanded, he reverses the bowl between centers using a wooden disk mounted in the headstock to drive the work. He calls this wooden disk a jam chuck, but most of us mean something quite different by that term.

Tape 2 is a bizarre potpourri of small issues. They are much like those Workshop Hints that appear in woodworking magazines, except they are drawn from Ellsworth's own shop and practice. He explains with his usual thoroughness how he heats and filters the air in his shop and how he fine-tuned his lathe and modified it to receive a vacuum chuck. There is a complete discussion of the use of a jack shaft to increase the range of speeds of the lathe. It is all very interesting, but the information is not revolutionary.

And then there is the Flexion Section. This occupies seven minutes of *Tape 2* and opens with Ellsworth lying on his back on the bed of his Thompson lathe doing chest pulls and emitting loud sighs usually associated with a sea lion in some aquatic delight. This is followed by a lecture on the benefits of hanging from the ceiling delivered while hanging from the ceiling, something

he says he does every twenty minutes. Now, if I thought for one minute that this was truly the way to turn like Ellsworth, I would hang like a bat and do knee pulls on my lathe and to hell with Jane Fonda—but I don't. Therefore I recommend that, if money is a restraint, this tape could be passed over, although the sight of a guy who looks like John Brown, the abolitionist, with the same passionate gleam in his eye, doing chest pulls while lying on a lathe is the most memorable image since that half naked guy in 1979 first rode his lathe like a horse! What a dull lot the rest of us are.

Tape 3, on hollow turning, is the centerpiece of the series. It goes from selecting the piece from the fallen tree to the application of finish. It can not stand alone, however. There are essential things in the *T-tape* that aren't repeated here. What is shown is shown with Ellsworth's usual thoroughness, including the use of the Ellsworth grind to produce an immaculate surface in red oak. Most of the time the gouge is used to scrape, often with a rate of stock removal not associated with scraping.

He also devotes a great deal of explanation to a fastidious method of centering the work on the lathe to get a grain pattern that is balanced, again, emphasizing the dominance of the design of the final product.

These tapes are not cheap. A complete set of the four would total $135. If you are a reasonably good turner already and want to explore blind turning and/or deep hollowing, you could get by with just *Tape T* and *Tape 3*. The two tapes cover some of the same ground, unfortunately, but it is new footage, so it is more like seeing him demonstrate on two different occasions.

If you are just interested in a beginning tape on bowl turning using the side-ground Ellsworth gouge, *Tape 1* is an excellent exposition of how he does ordinary turning with that rather tricky gouge. —*Jack Turley*

Woodturning: A Source Book of Shapes by John Hunnex. *Sterling Publishing Co., 387 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016. 1994. Paperback, 144 pp. $16.95.*

I EMPATHIZE WITH ADOLPHUS FREDERick, Duke of Cambridge. His major recorded utterance?—the groan, "Not another damn book!" Yet even this seventh son would not have been dismayed at the prospect of *Woodturning: A Source Book of Shapes,* a slim volume that demands little of its readers and gives little in return.

The text occupies about two of the 144 pages. "Containers, like bowls, can be functional or decorative or both" typifies its contribution to aesthetic debate and its exploration of the design process. The remainder of the book is devoted to color photographs of John Hunnex's bowls, containers, vessels, and platters. No spindle turning. Most often one object occupies a page, in focus, strongly lit, colors true—none of the obligatory shaving curls to soften and distract; no hackneyed resort to coin or matchbox to give scale. This is full frontal photography at its most competent, about 120 pages of it.

The objective of the book is clarified on the back cover. It is "to act as a source and inspiration." There are far worse sources, although the added rings and rims in contrasting woods distract rather than enhance, and the detailing and silhouettes sometimes lack refinement and tension. Many of the basic forms are pictured in different woods and with differences in proportion and detailing. Whether some of these variations are so subtle that they require explanation, or whether they are insignificant and merely padding is a matter, perhaps, for individual judgement.

About half of the pieces pictured are associated, at least in my mind, with particular British, American, and Australian contemporary turners. Yet there are no attributions. Hunnex ignores this absence except on page 6 where he states: "in the contagious world of woodturning we are bound to be influenced by the work of other turners—we should, however, always try to interpret this influence with our personal vision." In my view the personal vision shown in the book is insufficient to overcome the need for attribution.

—*Mike Darlow*

MANY TURNERS APPROACH THE ART OF woodturning from the craft perspective and have minimal art background. With practice, they can develop excellent technical skills, but they struggle to understand the artistic perspective. This book would be a good place to start learning.

It consists of three pages of text and the rest good color photographs. Woodturners who want to improve their photographic composition skills could learn from these pictures.

The shapes depicted, mainly bowl forms, are interesting, too. They provoked considerable discussion among informal groups of woodturners to whom I showed the book. Some felt they were rather ordinary, almost incomplete in that they lacked that "extra something" that separates art from craftwork. Others felt that the shapes were good examples and artistically inspired. I found some of them average but several distinguished and even inspiring.

For the neophyte turner struggling to understand the differences between art and craft, including a brief discussion of each design would have been helpful. But discussion can also be had as I found it—by using the book as a focal point among opinionated colleagues.

—*Ralph Sprang*

Jack Turley, a retired architect, coordinates the Woodworking Section of the Crafts Forum on Compuserve. Mike Darlow is a professional turner, teacher, and author. Ralph Sprang is an amateur turner in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Turning Discoveries

Perspectives on the AAW '94 symposium

RICK MASTELLI

Alan Lacer, left, shows a participant how easy it is to hollow endgrain with a hook tool. Video monitors provided demonstration audiences with larger-than-life views.

On day one I ran into Russ Oliver, who was responsible for all the closed-circuit video equipment in the demonstration rooms, and he had that dazed but determined look that comes from chasing details that are beginning to chase you back. Nevertheless, "I think I'm on top of it," he told me. I smiled and mentioned something else that needed doing and he said, "You know you're still at it when you go into a room for the third time and it still looks different."

The 1994 AAW symposium in Fort Collins, CO, last June 23, 24, and 25 was many things to many people. To the record keepers it was the largest and longest symposium ever. Attendees numbered 543, and the event lasted a full three days, including some 125 rotations. To those who helped put it together (the thank-you list is on page 3), it was a prodigious task, or rather a seemingly endless series of tasks.

To those who come to these get-togethers regularly and write up reports in their chapter newsletters, this year's Turning Discoveries was "the best symposium yet." Sure, there were aspects that left something to be desired (like the inadequately sized space for the Instant Gallery and the endless door prizes that brought the banquet to a tedious close—I won six smoke detectors after midnight!), but the core of the symposium was perhaps stronger than ever. (And the Instant Gallery folks took pride in the fact that not one piece was lost or damaged.) It was three intensely full days devoted to some of the best turning education in the world. There was no holding back. Those who stood up to demonstrate gave their all, sharing tricks, pitfalls, and joys in abundance. What else would you expect from turners today?

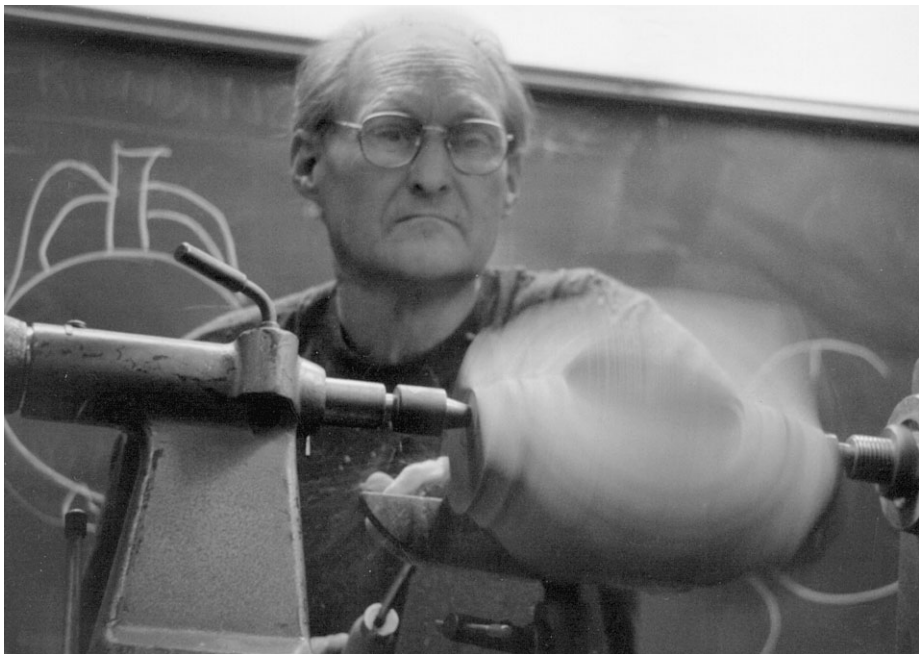
To first-comers, it was a more surprising exhilaration. I met two initiates who stood out amid the rush of information and inspiration for their stalwart notetaking. I notice notetakers and, being only a part-time editor, I value them. I asked the two to write up their impressions of the symposium, and these appear on the following pages.

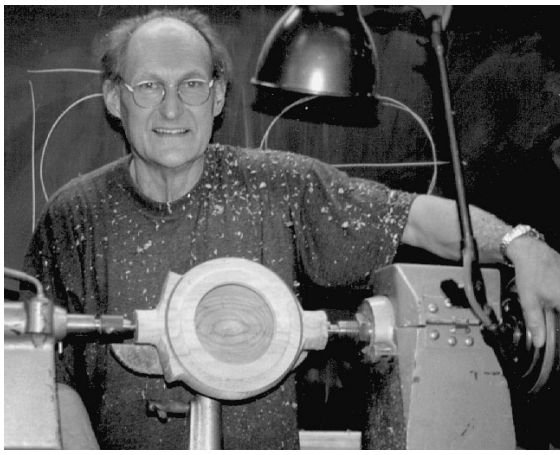
I didn't take many notes myself, popping in and out of as many as four demonstrations per rotation. Besides taking pictures, I was directing the two camcorders whose footage I will edit into an overview of the symposium. (Look for a progress report in the next issue.) So my own impressions of the symposium are rather scattered. I was given a blue symposium hat early on and that was very considerate, I thought, seeing how hot the sun was those three days—it was only later I found out that this meant I was an official who could be approached with questions and problems. I should have handed the hat to whoever I was interviewing, eh?

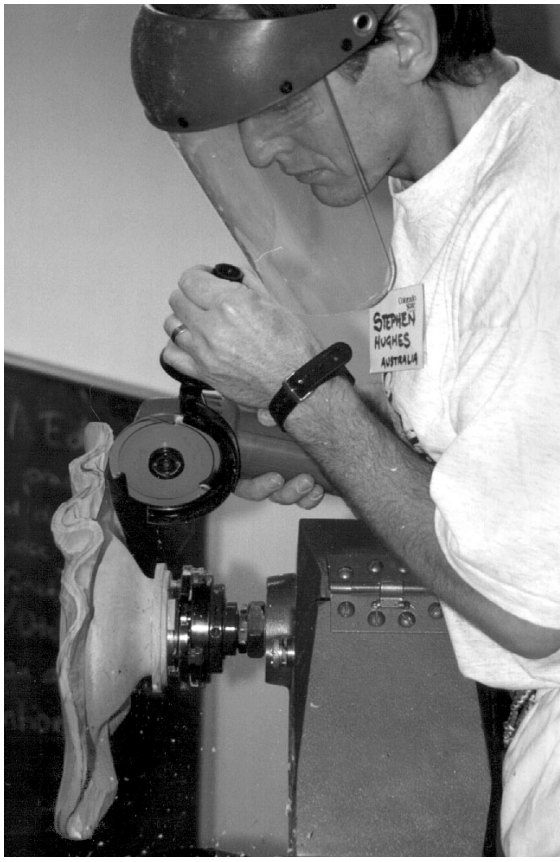
Nevertheless, here are some high-points from my perspective on this remarkably eclectic and good-spirited affair.

International flavors

I was thrilled by Johannes Rieber, the German now living in Norway who had ants in his pants. He was bursting with information, and passionately committed to conveying it. Fortunately, he is a consummate craftsman, too, so what he did not manage to verbalize, he communicated by doing. "Have a look," he'd say after a frenetic encounter with the spinning wood, and it would jar you into realizing your eyes were still in your head, so astonishing had watching him been. To evidence the fact that "there are so many things for a woodturner to do," Rieber turned a canteen modeled after an ancient Roman artifact. Which was more amazing—that Roman soldiers making their own equipment between campaigns turned these to an exact and consistent volume, or that this dynamo in the space of 30 minutes on unfamiliar equipment hollowed the form on a spigot chuck, reori-







Johannes Rieber, above, demonstrates the making of a canteen modeled after an ancient Roman artifact. The piece is hollowed on a spigot chuck and then rechucked between centers to turn the contour. The aperture, photo above right, is rimmed with a groove that receives a disk for a water-tight fit. At right, Stephen Hughes sculpts a wavy-edged bowl using a carbide-tipped disk. Below right, Harvey Helmke discusses lace bobbin production.

ented it on offset centers to shape the outside, and popped in a watertight lid without even a hammer?

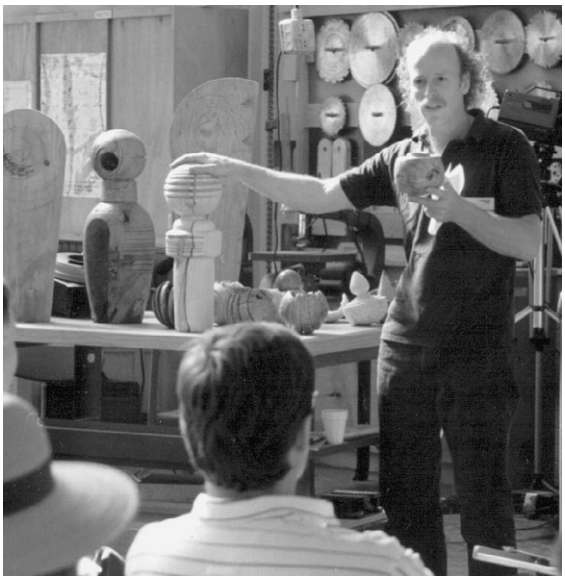
I was fascinated by Stephen Hughes, the endlessly resourceful Australian who turned technique into taste over and over, whether in a fretworked box lid or a wavy-edged bowl or a torch-charred rim or a checked piece salvaged by riddling it with holes. His ability to combine issues of design, safety, marketing, and wit surpassed the best TV chefs. What a feast!

I was in awe of Ray Key, the production turner from England who seemed to have the whole world in his hands. He could turn a box, tell a story, offer up the kind of design dictum you could work by for the rest of your life, save you untold time with an off-hand sanding tip, and sell you (showing slides of his early work) on the idea that you, too, could make a good living becoming a better turner. Just like him.

New and auspicious encounters

It may not be unusual in central Texas where Harvey Helmke lives, works, and demonstrates, but his easy, thorough-going approach made for an outstanding introduction to lace bobbin making. Lace bobbins are tools, he stressed, valued in large number by those who make and appreciate lace. They're also lucrative production items when turned with the efficiency and deftness that Helmke demonstrated. (How about using a file instead of a skew to smooth the straight section of a spindle?) En mass, as they could be seen in the Instant Gallery in the service of a piece of lace in progress, these bobbins encompass an awesome variety of intricate detail, from spirals and free rings, to chatterwork and applied decoration. Art has a way of asserting itself where it can take form unprepossessed. So Helmke's lace bobbins have the charm and poise of works of art, and so, it seems to me, does the way he works. High craft, indeed.

Christian Burchard, who wrote on the relationship between his limited-production bowls and his sculptural pieces in the March 1994 issue, brought a lot of seriousness and



Typical of the combined attention to design and technique throughout the symposium, Christian Burchard demonstrated offset turning and discussed the relationship between limited-production bowls and sculptural pieces.

heart to the challenge of depicting and explaining his creative procedures, this his first time out as a demonstrator. He showed how he offsets the work on the faceplate and adds shims to throw the piece off center and out of plane. The process is incremental and interactive, and watching him demonstrate it afforded a glimpse of how he must work. He would stop, look, and then explain what he saw and how next he would react. It was a brave endeavor, and largely successful.

Frank Sudol, who had established himself as a sensitive creator of delicate, nature-celebrating forms on the back cover of the December 1993 issue, rose to the occasion of his first national demonstration as a comic, sometimes irreverent, entertainer. He may have been, as he suggested, compensating for shyness, but it was endearing, watching him enjoy his own self-deprecating humor in big belly-laughs that ended in thoughtful pauses and further punchlines. He blamed his balding head on all the revelations he'd had, inducing him to smack his palm to his forehead, and then noted how much more than him his audience must have learned, given their own hairlines. But he was as sincere as his work when he described the meaning of what he does. And he was

Revelations of a flat-wood convert

MARGE PFLEIDERER

AFTER TEN YEARS OF MAKING CABINETS DURING THE HEIGHT of European Style design, I got pretty sick of rectangular carcasses with slab doors. I also didn't want to be hauling sheets of plywood around for the rest of my life. So with no particular plan, I decided I'd learn how to turn wood. Because it seemed like the most fun, I started out trying to make bowls. The results were mixed, and I never had enough time to practice. In the three years since I bought my lathe it has functioned primarily as a high-priced tool rest.

But earlier this year, I found myself with both the time to practice and a good teacher, and sure enough, I discovered that turning is indeed a lot of fun and not quite so hard to learn after all. Armed with some new skills and the beginnings of a business plan to re-orient my woodworking company toward turning, I attended my first AAW symposium. Staggering! For three days to watch some of the best turners in the world, to have them share their experience, to discover that they still seem to love what they do, it was an amazingly positive experience. Inspiration is difficult to distill. If you want a more complete impression, take a couple days off and stop by the shop and I'll try to fill you in. Better yet, just come to California's symposium next year. Meanwhile, here are some of the tips I picked up from the demonstrations:

- There's no one right way to grind tools: traditional, Irish, Australian, Brooklyn—whatever you work with effectively and comfortably is right. FYI: easily over 75 percent of the demonstrators grind their tools freehand. I started out grinding freehand and now sometimes use the grinder's rest. But if you're interested in the extreme styles, the experts agree that it is wiser to invest in yourself than in the tool companies. You never know when

you'll need some bizarre grind one time only.

• You can vary the burr on your scraper to meet different needs. Right off the wheel is a little coarse, but clean it off and re-define it by hand with a stone, and you can get a fine cut.

• When truing up the ends of irregular pieces or large platters, start from the center and work out. You have a much more consistent point of entry that way. Once true, you can feel much safer working in from the edge. Now I know where some of the problems started on that 14-inch platter I attempted earlier this year. Guess I should finish that 10-inch plate, too.

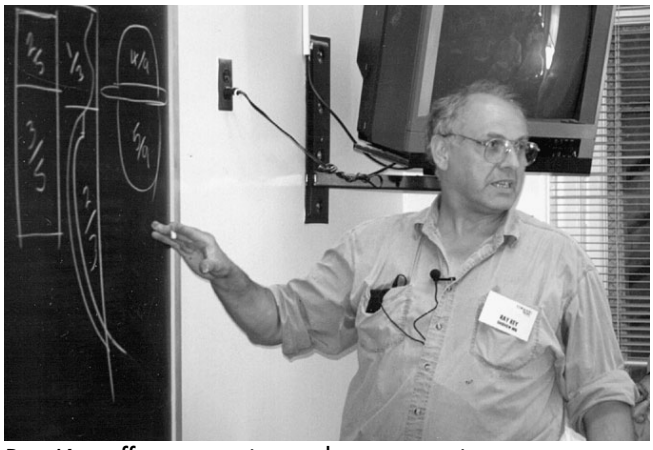
• Though accurate measurements are important, it is more critical to train your eye in order to free your imagination as you work. Johannes Rieber made this point and is living testimony to its value. He was incredible to watch as he compensated for unfamiliar chucks and created a sphere using minimal measurements and a lot of eye, while talking us through it—in less than 45 minutes. The ball was darn close to perfect!

• Coves and beads will look much more crisp when highlighted by delicate shoulders or V-grooves. Such a simple statement! Ray Key, the British master of elegant platters and dry humor, drove home how such attention to minute details can make the difference between an ordinary and a superlative piece. Give it a try with an acute skew and a light touch.

• Sand small details on the far side of the lathe so you can see what you are doing. (Have you flattened the sides of small beads as much as I have?)

• When creating a lidded box, never divide it exactly in half. The proportions will be more pleasing if asymmetrical: $^2/_5$ to $^3/_5$, $^1/_3$ to $^2/_3$, $^4/_9$ to $^5/_9$, etc. This is another Keyism, though you can find a host of references to back it up. Again, the details are what make or break a piece.

• Don't forget to stop and really look at what you're doing! Is the grain shown off to best advantage? Does the form work? And don't be afraid to try for greatness.



Ray Key offers some tips on box proportions.

You may end up with a piece very different from what you intended, but it might just be a whole lot better.

• From Clay Foster on hollowing deep vessels: For safety in fixing endgrain to a faceplate, insert dowels through the sides of the piece and screw through faceplate, endgrain, and crossgrain of dowel. Now I don't have to wait to buy a fancy chuck to start working safely on some of those logs cluttering the shop.

• You should check the wall thickness of deep vessels with calipers, but you may also be able to judge it as you work by the sound of the cut. Foster showed how this can be more accurate than light transmittal through the vessel wall, especially if the wall includes both long- and end-grain sections, which exhibit quite different degrees of translucency. The reverberating pitch when a tool is in contact with a particular wall thickness is remarkably consistent. Whether by calipers or by ear, start with a registration point near the opening.

• The Dale Nish rule of thumb for lathe speed: diameter in inches multiplied by rpm should equal a number between 6,000 and 9,000. If you have an 8-inch log that you're running at 1200 rpm, you're running too fast: 8 X 1200 = 9600!

• Maintain your lathe daily. File the toolrest smooth and give it a few licks with WD-40 and sandpaper. Clean up the backs of your tools the same way. Spray WD-40 on all moving parts of the lathe. I know, I know, but once you make it a habit…think of it like brushing your teeth. Besides, if John Jordan does it….

• Also from Jordan: If you have to turn a log with the pith in it, make sure the pith is centered. To be safe, when you are finished turning, drill the pith out of the bottom, let the piece dry for a couple of days, clean up the hole, and fill it with a turned plug. Aha! Something to do with all those spindles full of practice beads.

• For texturing, try every tool in the shop—from nails to files to carving tools—with the piece both on and off the lathe. Jordan stressed using your imagination and what's at hand to solve turning problems. Over and over the message was creative thinking in the face of fiscal reality.

• If you want to earn a living turning wood you'll most likely have to do some kind of production work. Figure out what you enjoy making quickly, what you can sell, and have an organized production system. Bonnie Klein can crank out eight tops an hour. Mike Hosaluk takes only an hour per bowl. For both, organization is the key.

• Practice the basics, open your mind to what others are doing, and always push yourself, your tools, your hands, and your imagination to new limits. Don't be content. Enjoy!

Marge Pfleiderer owns and operates Shade Tree Woodworks in Brooklyn, NY.

Another first-time perspective

CONNIE MISSISSIPPI

COMING FROM A BACKGROUND IN FINE ARTS AND ART HISTORY, I was curious to hear what was being said about creativity, inspiration, and the design process, as well as the technical concerns that would apply to the sculptural forms that I turn.

Clay Foster's lecture on creativity was more than a graceful analysis of the process, which he outlined to include skill development, experiment and play, finding new ways to think about things ("avoiding hardening of the attitude"). He also discussed overcoming frustration, being persistent, being passionate about what you are doing, and allowing an incubation period outside of your conscious awareness. Foster's session was also a stimulating experience that helped each of us to recognize an important source of our own creativity. He believes that our unconscious mind is much better suited to problem-solving than is our conscious mind, something we all know, but often don't allow. Everything that has ever happened in your life is brought to whatever you do through your unconscious. To get hold of this protean resource, Foster recommends keeping an idea book, which he wrote about in the March 1994 issue of this journal. In following your intuition, you may have what he describes as a "eureka" experience, the insight for the piece, but then this must be moved into action or "translation" to complete the process.

The Sfirri/Hosaluk hands-on design session included drawing to different pieces of music and discussing the results.

Mark Sfirri and Michael Hosaluk held a session called "Hands-On Design" in which we were given large sheets of paper and markers. The music of Mozart followed by AC/DC was played at penetrating volume. We were asked to draw a self portrait and an experience of running to each piece of music. Some people saw a person running, some saw water running; some saw running as restful, others as frenetic. Mozart appealed to some, AC/DC to others. The next exercise was to design two vessels to the same two pieces of music. The vessels ranged from spiked and chained cylinders with jagged edges (inspired by AC/DC) to open, voluptuous forms (Mozart's evocations). People were forthcoming about their insight, and those of us who didn't like AC/DC came to find in it some redeeming qualities. As Sfirri said, "The more one can open up to new ideas, the more one can grow." I look forward to translating some of my drawings into sculptures.

I also attended Ron Fleming's slide lecture on creativity. Fleming, who primarily uses nature as his inspiration, showed us slides of daffodil tops which he compared to Frank Cummings' lace-edged vessels; Robyn Horn's geode series, which appears to take its shapes from nature's geodes sliced open; and Michael

good for a number of practical ideas, too. He demonstrated the use of a dental handpiece rotating at 200,000 rpm to virtually disintegrate areas of his thin-walled vessels into filigrees, independent of grain direction.

Foster Giesmann, another seemingly reticent soul, offered a compellingly detailed slide show on oval turning. You can read the gist of his presentation on pages 21–24.

Tried and true

To balance the exotic and unexpected were the familiar and dependably superior performances of John Jordan, Mark Sfirri, Michael Hosaluk, Clay Foster, Ron Fleming, and David Ellsworth. (The last two are discussed in the sidebar, above).

Jordan tried to be realistic in assigning himself two rotations to demonstrate the making of one of his hollow vessels, from outside to inside and then back out for texturing. He offered a separate rotation on bowl-gouge technique alone. Nevertheless, he has so much to offer that his audiences were still there after these sessions ended. Jordan, whose videos are known for their careful production, deserves commendation for the way he utilized the closed-circuit camera, always conscious of its location and framing so that it might best convey information to his audience. He's a popular teacher because his teaching is intelligent and perspicacious. But I wish he could explain more about why his forms work as perfectly as they do.

Sfirri and Hosaluk made a good team in their hands-on design class, Sfirri the analytic visualizer and Hosaluk the more instinctive and impromptu creator. Where they overlap is in their playful enjoyment of problem solving. In their individual rota-

Peterson's organic turned, sculpted, painted, and sandblasted forms, which seem influenced by the landscape of the Southwest. Seeing the richness of nature captured photographically and the piece as a response was a lesson in the all-encompassing appeal of nature's bounty.

Fleming, a designer trained as a civil engineer, is also influenced by ceramic pots, architectural elements, scientific glassware, science fiction, all affect his work. He shared with us the constant struggle the artist has to keep from shutting down. He described how every time he sits down to a blank piece of paper or stands before a wood blank on the lathe he has the moment of, "Can I really do this?" It was comforting to hear that someone else shares this moment of doubt, what Clay Foster calls, "the critical voice within."

Fleming may work on up to fifteen pieces at one time to break up the tedium of one kind of carving or texturing. "I don't keep track of how many hours a piece takes me," he said, "because if I did, I would get a job at McDonald's and make more money." What a relief to hear someone else say that!

In a session he called "Making Changes," David Ellsworth showed us a walnut platter he had made in a 1958 high school shop class. (I was reminded that in 1958 my high school didn't allow girls to take shop.) We saw his first vessels when he began using bent tools in 1978 and the influence of Stocksdale's thin-walled bowls on his work. He talked about learning from what we are doing at present as a method of moving into the next stage of development. When he began to allow the interior of his vessels to be seen, for instance, by using bridges created by spalting, it was, he realized, a symbol of what we do in our work: open up and make ourselves as well as our pieces more accessible. It reminded me of a line in a song by Leonard Cohen, "There is a crack, a crack in everything, that's how the light gets in."

I happened luckily into the critique which John Jordan, Mark Sfirri, and David Ellsworth were giving of pieces in the Instant Gallery. Each of them picked pieces that piqued his interest technically or aesthetically and discussed them with good humor, knowledge, and sensitivity. Their insights were impressive and the honor they paid to many of the pieces and their makers was generous and, to my mind, right on.

David Ellsworth discusses a decorative detail at the well-attended Instant Gallery critique.

The keynote speaker at Saturday night's banquet was Dr. Thomas Sutherland, a hostage in Beirut for six and a half years. Sutherland talked about cherishing our freedom, appreciating the simple things in life, being patient with ourselves and others, keeping our minds active, and the value of community and family.

Maybe by the time I've been to eight AAW conferences I won't be as enthusiastic as I am about this first one, but I found it a real brain boost and a joy, meeting people I hope will be long-time friends and colleagues.

Connie Mississippi turns sculptural forms in Topanga, CA.

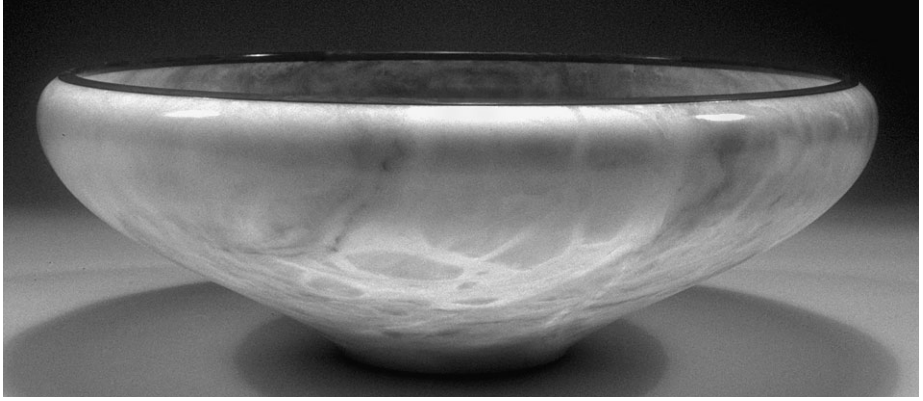
tions, Sfirri made the process of multi-axis turning accessible, although the actual shapes on the lathe were best apprehended only by those who had a straight-on view of the work. And Hosaluk offered a stream of production projects "for fun and profit," variations on a theme limited only by imagination.

Foster epitomized the woodturner's penchant for low-tech, economical solutions. You see him on the cover jousting with a 1-inch-square steel bar about $5\frac{1}{2}$ feet long. It weighs over 30 pounds, and this mass allows him to hang the business end of the tool up to 18 inches over the tool rest to hollow tall forms (an example of which appears on page 1). But he doesn't labor the weight around. Most people would just show you a slide of their shop-built solution. Foster installed a couple of pulleys in the ceiling of his demo room and counterbalanced the lance with a pile of bricks. The tool practically floats, and moving it around in the work is effortless. Clever, too, is the duct-taped license-plate light bulb near the cutting end. It illuminates deep interiors at a fraction of the cost of a fiber-optic system.

Foster stands out in my mind as best representing the broad range that a symposium of this scale calls forth from a major demonstrator. Besides his deep-hollowing techniques, his sessions included a primer on green woodturning, a presentation of low-tech decorative techniques, and a refueling stop on the nature of creativity. Thus his topics spanned the gamut from technical to artistic, serving those needing initial support as well as those ready for wonderful, fresh ideas.

This balance and openness to all aspects of the craft is the surest sign

Nick Cook



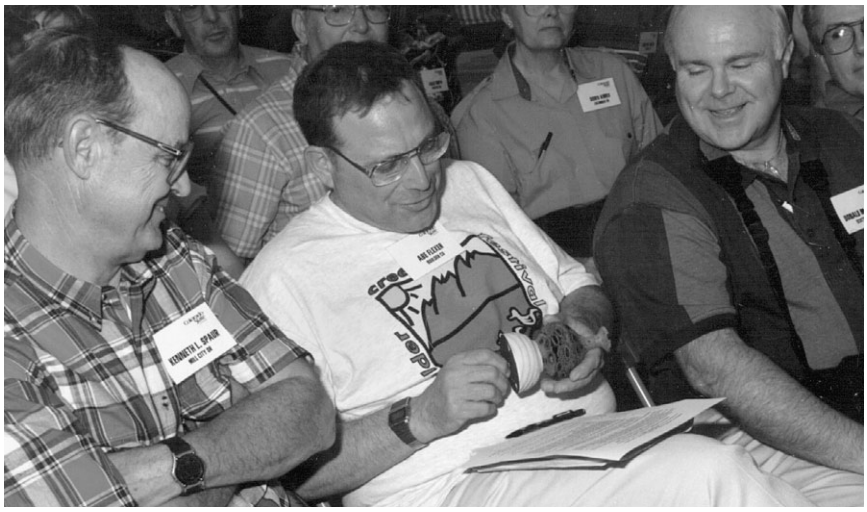
Max Krimmel

This alabaster bowl by demonstrator Max Krimmel was displayed in the invitational exhibit at the Show of Hands gallery in Denver, timed to coincide with the symposium.

Paul "Doc" Thode showed how he turns the parts for his fascinatingly realistic scale furniture.

Nick Cook

Dave Hout, right, introduces a young participant to spindle turning at Friday night's hands-on session.



Nick Cook

Attendees sampling Jerry Brownrig's session on turning banksia pods.

that woodturning is in good health. After all the debate there has been in the pages of this journal on the questions of originality, influence, and plagiarism, another step was taken at this symposium. Beyond philosophical forums, there was here plenty of hands-on work in design, creativity, and critical analysis. I counted almost twenty sessions devoted to these topics alone, not to mention substantial attention included in almost every rotations. I mentioned this to Foster, who noted, "if all you're going to teach is technique, then you have no right to complain if people take your techniques and copy your designs. We have a responsibility to teach design, too, and to cultivate creativity." No one did a better, more committed job than Foster.

Rounding things out

Demonstrations represent only the heart of a symposium, but it's difficult to describe how big that heart is. No new demonstrator offering a show-and-tell has ever been turned down at an AAW symposium. Among the additional topics offered this year were turquoise inlay, one-piece pens, a slide survey of the history of European turning, multi-axis rose engine work, chainsawing, segmented bracelets, chapter newsletters on the computer, tool sharpening, inlaying with bronze, scale furniture, and turning aspen, banksia pods, and alabaster (including a field trip to a local quarry).

And of course there was more. There was the Instant Gallery (glimpses of which appear on the back cover); the open board, OTA, and local chapter meetings; the panel discussions on pricing, demonstrating, and the state of the craft; the barbeque, banquet, and after-hours beer communions; and the trade show, the auction, and (new this year) a hands-on session.

And there was the planning already taking place for next year.

Rick Mastelli is editor of American Woodworker. *Photos by the author, except where noted.*

Ornamental Oval Turning

Shop-made equipment from the glass trade

FOSTER GIESMANN

A number of years ago (it was May 1986 to be precise), *Fine Woodworking* magazine did a cover story on the oval turning at the Old Schwamb Mill in Arlington, MA. The article described how rare elliptical faceplate lathes are and how rough and inaccurate is the work turned out on the 19th-century machines at this mill, now listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

I was reminded of my apprenticeship in 1932 as a glass mold maker. We turned oval molds from cast iron weighing as much as 100 to 150 pounds. It was and still is a viable trade. We would make the molds in sets of 20 or 24, and they were matched to a tolerance of one thousandth of an inch. In wood you have to take into account the expansion and contraction of the material, but there is nothing inherently sloppy about the technology of oval turning.

Giesmann's work in walnut and maple burl.

Since retiring in 1978, I have applied my experience in the glass trade to my woodturning. I have an old metal lathe whose design was patented in 1880 and have rebuilt it to do oval work, ornamental work, and combinations of the two. I made all the parts for the eccentric mechanism, which is modeled after the machinery I used to work on, the same basic design as that of the elliptical lathes at Old Schwamb. I've also made all my own indexing mechanisms, cutting frames, pulleys, and cutters. Using these I decorate my oval turnings with the kind of flutes, miters, and tracings you're used to seeing on fine glass tableware.

How an oval lathe works

Transferring the circular motion of the headstock into elliptical motion is accomplished by a mechanism that consists of four plates: a base plate, a ring plate, a drive plate, and a faceplate (see the illustration on page 22). The baseplate is attached to the lathe chassis, and the ring plate is mounted on the base plate, its position in relation to the drive shaft determining the course of the faceplate's motion. The drive shaft passes through these two plates and attaches to the drive plate, which is captured within a pair of brass dovetail ways on the back of the faceplate. The ways allow the faceplate to travel back and forth as it rotates.

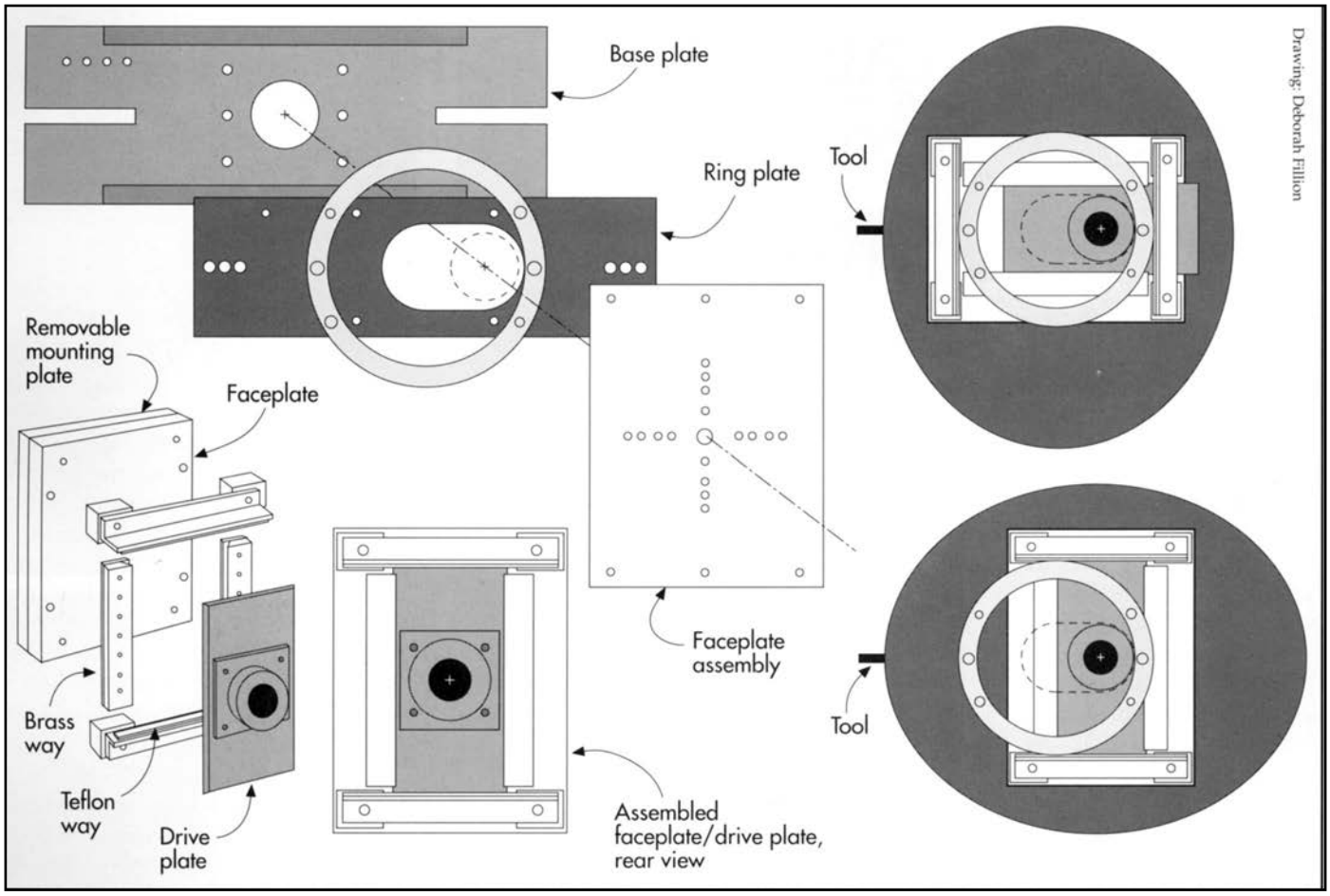
The back and forth movement results from a pair of Teflon® ways on the back surface of the faceplate riding on the ring of the ring plate, which is offset from the drive shaft. The amount of offset determines the narrowness of the ellipse. On my lathe, locator pins allow the offset to be fixed at one of four distances: 1.000, 1.480, 1.550, and 1.775 inches. I choose the appropriate set of mounting holes, and bolt the ring plate to the baseplate.

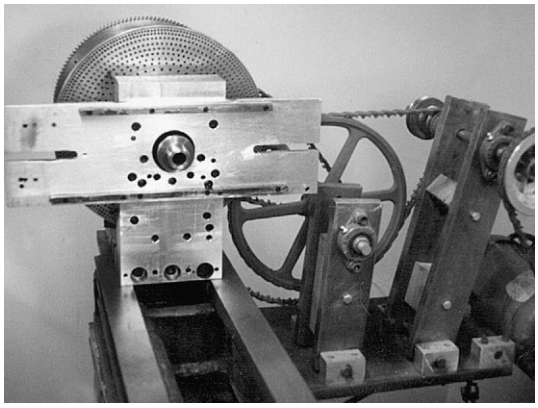
Shaping a piece

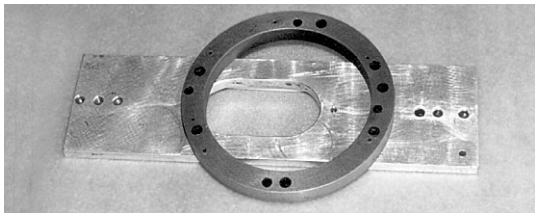
In the glass trade, we shaped the cast-iron molds using a fixed cutter mounted on a compound tool rest. For my first wood pieces I therefore used the same metalworking tool holder to position a fixed bit that scraped the wood away. Later I made a holder for my router and mounted it on the compound tool rest. Like the fixed cutter, the bit must contact the stock directly on the centerline of the spindle for the ellipse to be true. With the router I can run the lathe slow and yet remove the stock quickly and smoothly. I use a ball cutter and run the lathe as slow as 34 rpm.

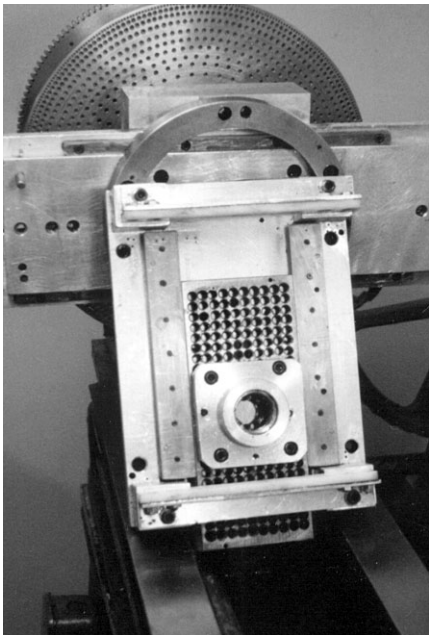
I have a number of oval templates of various sizes and shapes which I use to lay out my stock before sawing it roughly to shape on the band saw. I mount all my work on $^3/_4$-inch plywood backing plates, gluing with 6 to 12 drops of Hot Stuff, de-

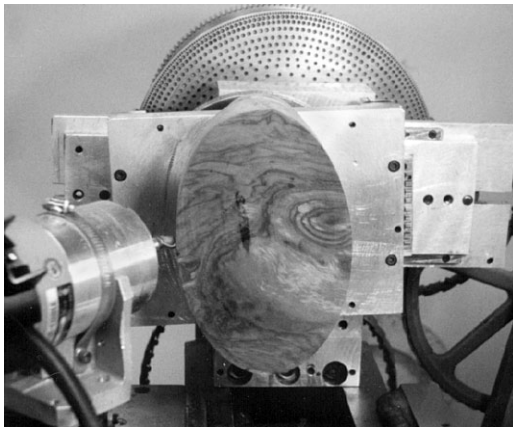
Photos this page: Rick Mastelli

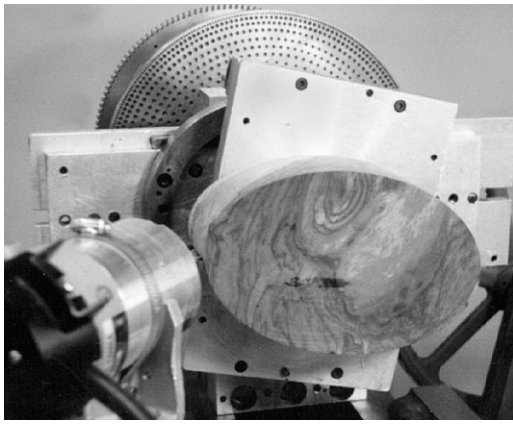






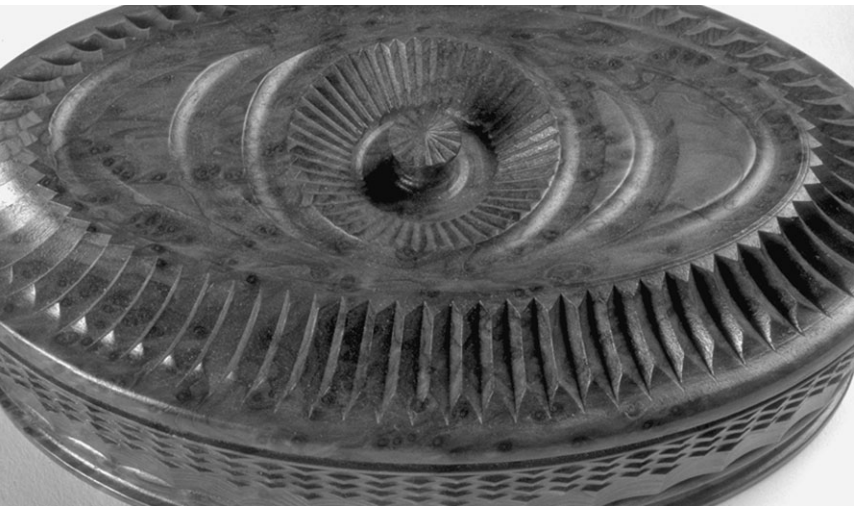
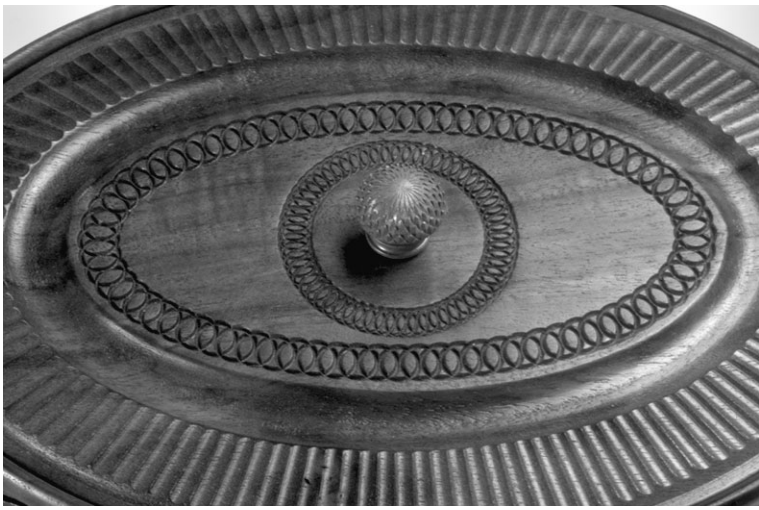






The oval mechanism consists of four plates: Top left, the baseplate is attached to the lathe. Above left is the ring plate. Above right, the ring plate has been attached to the baseplate, and the faceplate, oriented backwards, leans against it. The drive plate rides between two brass ways (here vertical). The Teflon® ways of the faceplate (here horizontal) will ride on the ring of the ring plate and thus cause the faceplate to move back and forth as it rotates. Photos at right show the mechanism in action: a router on a compound slide rest allows quick stock removal with lathe speeds as low as 34 rpm.

Photos, except where noted: Foster Giesmann

Oval forms can be ornamented with miters and grooves, left, and flutes and barleycorn, right, using the indexer shown below.

pending on the size. The backing plate, which is drilled to correspond to a pin configuration on the faceplate, helps in replacing the blank on the lathe after I've removed it. I'll sometimes rough several pieces on the same oval, and when I put them back on the lathe for final shaping or decoration, they will run true. When I'm done with a piece, I take two putty knives, ground with a taper on one side, and break the glue joint. I sand the glue off the bottom with a disk sander.

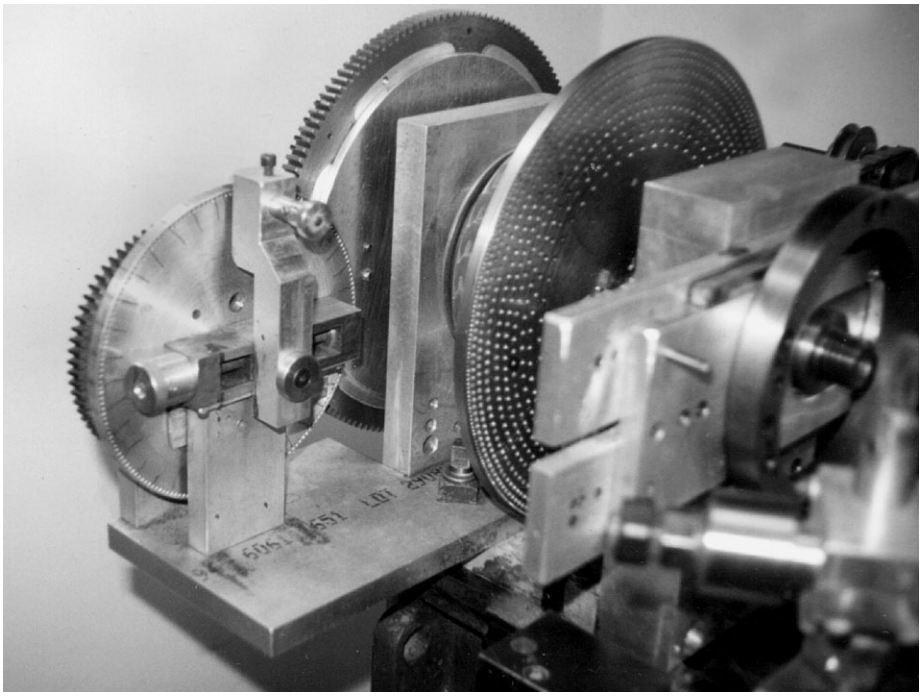
I cut the outside shape first, working from the top of the form down toward the faceplate. Then I finish the top surface of the form, which will become the lid, decorating it with whatever grooves, flutes, miters, or barleycorn look good. Before cutting the lid off, I use a $^1/_4$-inch flat cutter in the router set parallel to the faceplate and cut a shoulder $^1/_4$ to $^3/_8$ inch deep. This is used for seating the lid in the bowl. I then cut off the lid with a saw mounted in my drilling frame and turning the work by hand.

With the lid off, I go ahead and finish the outside of the bowl. Then I fit the lid and turn the inside to final wall thickness. I finish the inside using a flexible shaft and pad sander.

I usually finish the inside of the lids, too. I mount a scrap block on the faceplate and turn out a recess for jam-fitting the lid into. For my domed lids, the recess must be deep enough to accommodate the whole shape plus clearance. With the lid so mounted, I can finish the bottom.

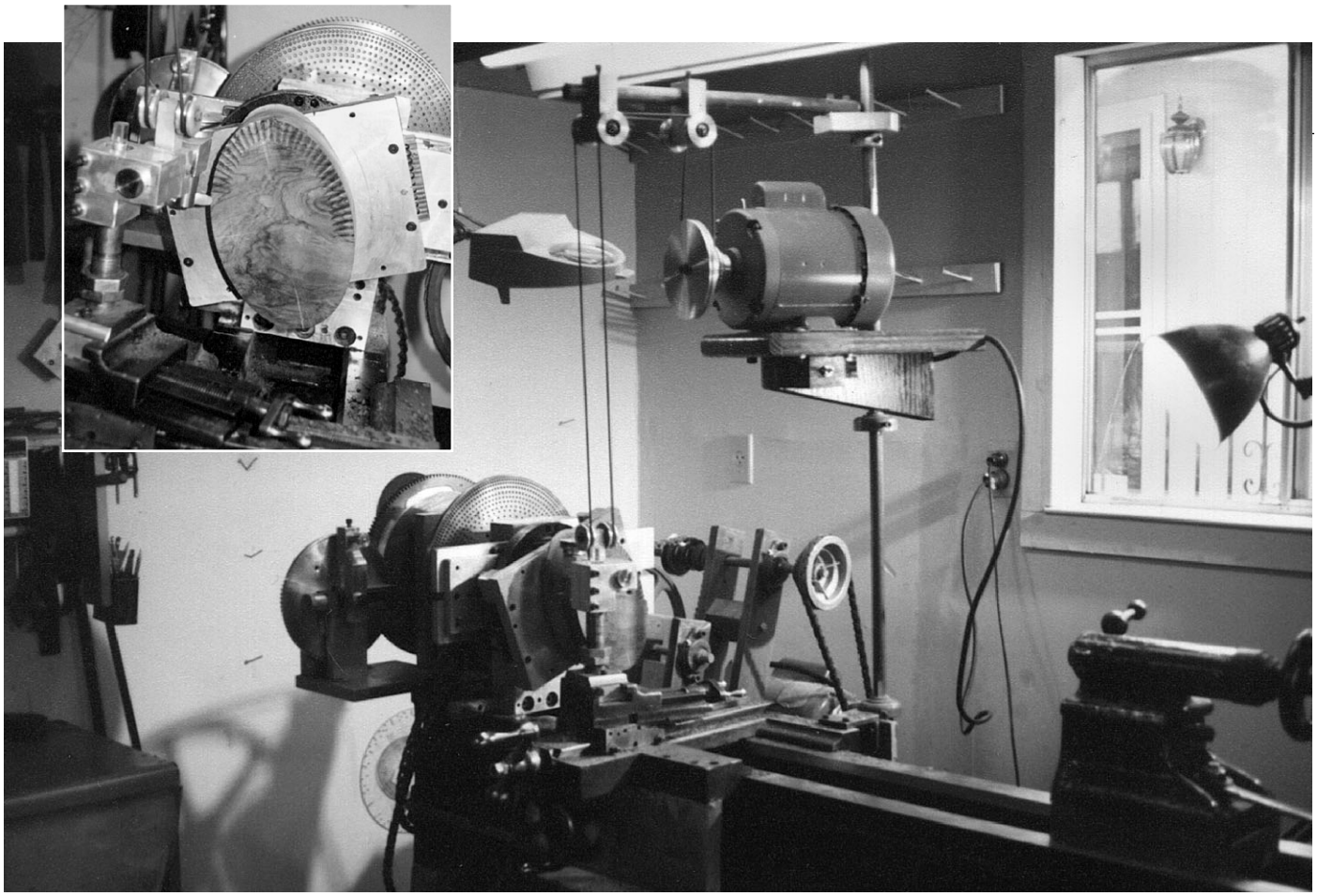
Indexing an oval

Ornamenting an oval form requires special indexing techniques. My indexing attachment consists of two gears and an indexing plate (photo below right). The design was developed in the mid 1870s. The larger 144-tooth gear is mounted on the lathe spindle, and it is meshed with a 72-tooth gear mounted on a separate post: two rotations of the smaller gear equals a single rotation of the headstock spindle. The indexing plate, which turns on its own post centered at the same height as that of the smaller gear, is keyed to the smaller gear by a pin and slot. The pin protrudes from the face of the indexing plate and engages a slot cut on the centerline of the smaller gear. The perimeter of the indexing plate is bored with 180 equally spaced holes. A pin attached to the post engages these holes to index the headstock spindle. So far, the mechanism functions no differently than an in-



The two-plate indexing system with a slotted post for offsetting the smaller plate.

Photos at top: Rick Mastelli



Giesmann's cutting rig is powered, through a belt and pulley system, by a 1/4-hp motor. The cutting frame, which can be oriented in various planes, is mounted in the compound slide rest for stability. Inset photo shows the fluting of an oval top.

dexer for a circular form.

What distinguishes this indexer is that the indexing plate can be offset horizontally from the 72-tooth gear. The plate and the indexing pin are centered in a slot on the post so that they can be positioned to correspond to the ellipse that the faceplate is set up to turn. To give you an idea, I shift the indexing plate .320 inches for a 1.000-inch off-center oval and .430 inches for a 1.550-inch off-center oval. The result is that equal spacing on the circular indexing plate results in equal spacing on the oval form.

I arrived at these offsets by trial and error: The oval chuck has to be square to the bed to start. The two gears are notched so that the same teeth always line up. When laying out the divisions I first mark the major and minor axes on the face of the work. I use a flat plate set on the bed of the lathe to support my small height gauge set on the lathe's centerline. I usually coat the face of the work with white chalk so that the lines are easier to see. I throw the indexing plate off center, choose some indexing division, and put a line near one of the centerlines. Then I index a corresponding division in relation to another centerline and put a line there. Using dividers I can check for the equivalency of these divisions and adjust the offset of the indexing plate accordingly. I find it difficult to plan the decoration of an oval turning and therefore prefer to work one step at a time, seeing what looks good on the actual piece.

Cutting the ornamentation

The photo above shows the apparatus I use to cut the ornamentation. It might remind you of the rig dentists used to use. It consists of a 1/4-hp motor that drives a cutting frame via an 1/8-inch belt running over a series of pulleys. The motor and the pulleys can be repositioned to ensure that the belt is tight in various arrangements. The apparatus allows considerable articulation of the cutting frame, which I stabilize by mounting it to my compound slide rest. The cutter can be oriented to rotate on a horizontal axis or a vertical axis, depending on the kind of decoration I'm making, but always the cutter must align with the centerline of the lathe.

One of my favorite ornamentations is the barleycorn design, which is made with the eccentric cutting frame mounted in the drilling frame. Again, you have to lay out the divisions and set the cutter off center to make a radius the same size as the width of the divisions. Then set the depth of the cut and index it for each cut.

Foster Giesmann, who lives in Roseville, CA, is happy to share information on oval turning. Also, there is the Oval Turning Club recently formed by Johannes Volmer, Salzstrasse, 09113 Chemnitz, Germany.

Spice Boxes

After goblets

PETER M. SMITH

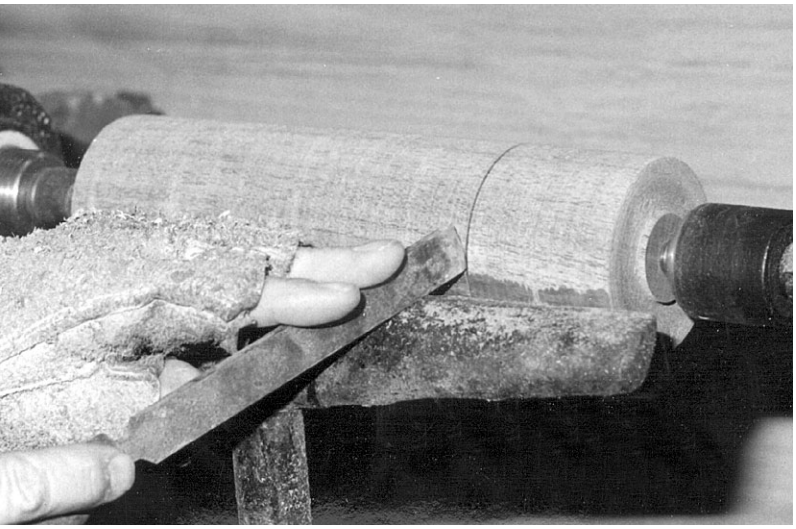
After turning a few wine goblets, which provide an excellent lesson in technique, I had the bright idea to develop them into eminently more functional spice boxes. My Jewish friends had introduced me to the Havdalah ceremony, which marks the end of Shabat, when we smell the sweet spice box to remind us of the fragrance of Shabat whose spirit we hope will linger.

Traditional spice boxes were made from filigree silver. My idea was a design based on the goblet shape, but turned in wood to enrich and enhance the intimacy of this beautiful tradition. Natural clove pods, replenished every few months, are used for the aromatic scent.

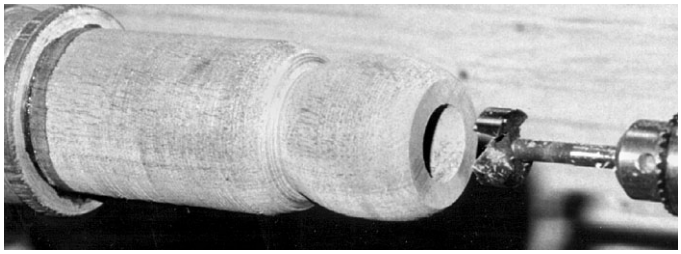
A spice box allows the turner to practice a wide variety of techniques from end-grain hollowing to chatter work and lid-fitting. The result can be a delightful and delicate piece. The photos depict the steps for making one.

Peter Smith is a turner and photographer recently moved to Princeton, NJ. Photos and drawing by the author.

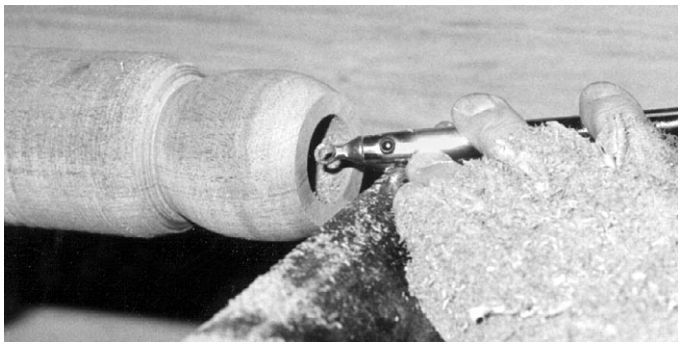
Spice boxes are a variation on a basic goblet design. They provide interesting opportunities for practicing lid fitting and chatter work as well as end-grain hollowing.



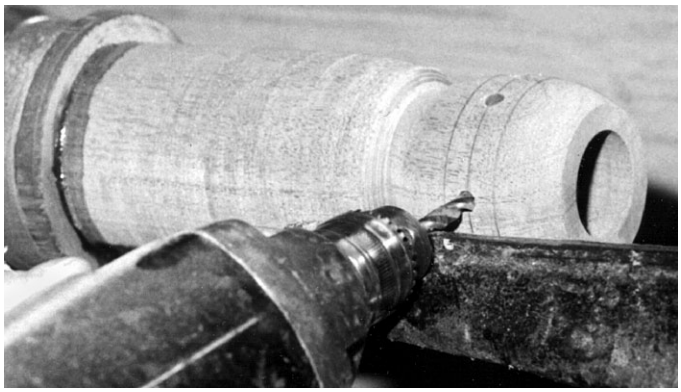
1. Begin with a piece of dry turning stock, in this case mahogany, 3 inches square by 10 inches long. Mount it between centers and turn it to a cylinder. Using a skew, mark a line 7 1/2 inches up the cylinder, where the stock will be bandsawn into body and lid. The 1-inch-diameter-by-1/8-inch tenons on the top (shown) and bottom sections will be used to position the blanks in waste blocks.



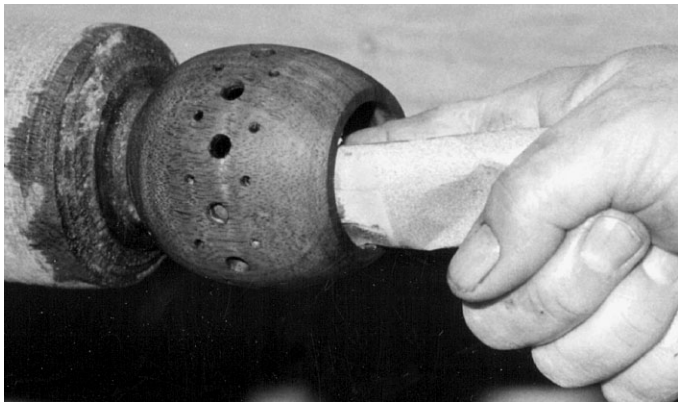
2. Mount a waste block on a screw chuck, and cut a mortise to receive the tenon. Glue the body blank onto the block with Superglue, true it up, and using a 1 1/4-inch Forstner bit, drill a central hole to approximately 2 inches deep. Form the rough shape of the container using a spindle gouge.



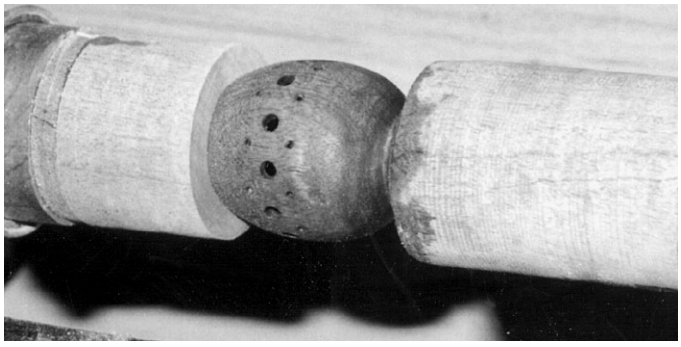
3. The new ring tool, the Termite, is great for end-grain hollowing. Ellsworth-style bent tools are also effective. Finish hollowing the inside of the container. The mouth of the container can be enlarged here to approximately 1 1/2 inches.



4. Lay out the holes to be drilled by first drawing three pencil lines around the circumference of the turning, one at maximum diameter, the others about 3/8 inch on either side. Using the index wheel on the lathe, drill twelve 1/4-inch-diameter holes on the centerline. A spur bit will not wander. Then drill pairs of 1/8-inch holes between the larger holes on the outside lines, judging the spacing by eye.

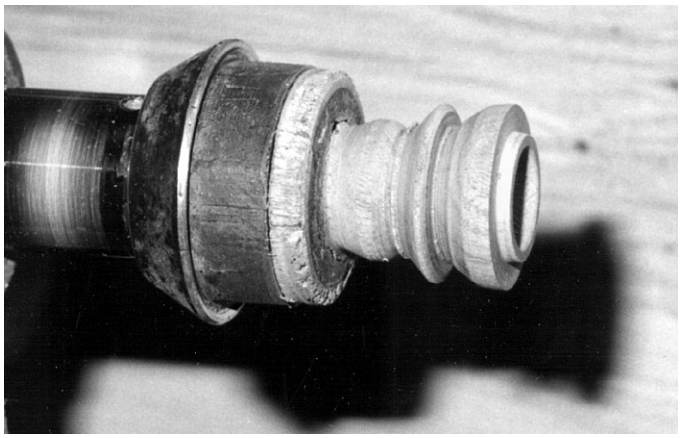


5. Complete the container section by turning down the outside and working the inside to match, a wall thickness 1/8 inch or less. (Drill marks are cleaned up in this process.) Oil the goblet, sanding and finishing the inside. After this stage there should be no more work on the inside. Remove the body (including the waste block) from the lathe.

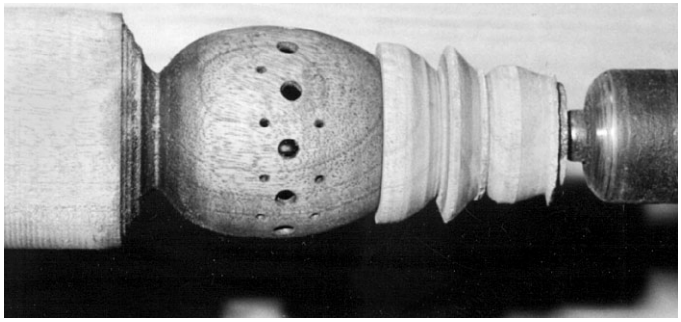


6. Glue the lid blank to another waste block on a screw chuck, again using a matching mortise to center it. Using a 1-inch square, sharp scraper, raise an 1/8-inch tenon stub, matching the inside diameter of the container. The container should fit this tightly, so that it stays on by itself (the lathe is off, of course). If it's too loose, raise the tenon further with a slightly wider diameter. The more you do this, however, the less the grain of the lid and base will match.

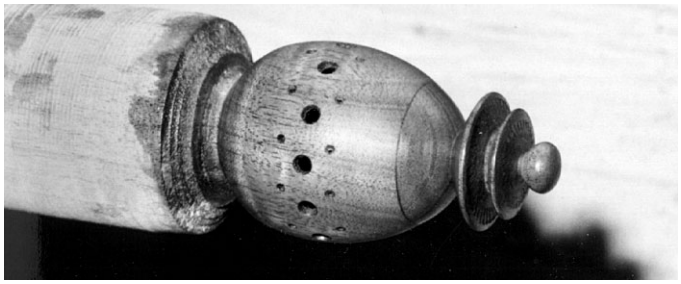
7. I like to hollow out the inside of the lid and add a ring or two of chatter decoration using the Stewart chatter tool.



8. Rough-turn the lid and part it off from its waste block.



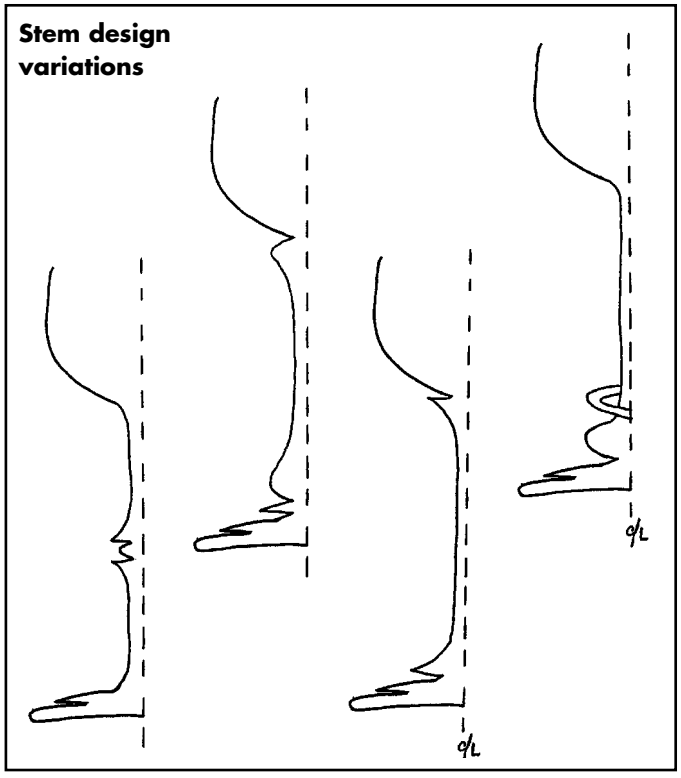
9. Remount the body, and push home the lid with the tailstock to keep it in place and true.

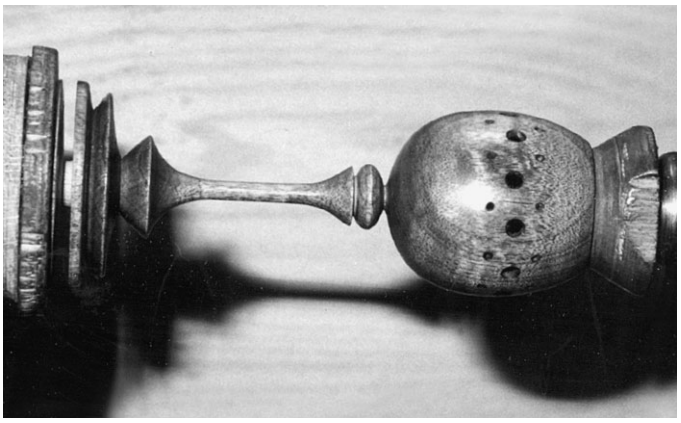


10. Using a skew, match the lid to the shape of the body. Chatter work can be added to the flats on the finial. Remove the tailstock stub, and sand the top knob smooth. Here the tight fit is critical to keep the lid in place. Oil and sand the rest of the lid. Remove the lid and set it aside.

11. Mount a wooden cone, 2 inches in diameter, in the tailstock revolving center, and bring it up to steady the body. Shape the stem and the base.

12. Refine the shape, thinning the stem to about $^{3}/_{32}$ inch. Delicate cuts with spindle gouge and skew are necessary. See the drawing below for variations on the stem design. Chatter work decorates the bottom flats. Smooth the transition from the underside of the container to the stem.





13. Oiling and sanding complete the finish. Part most of the way off, leaving the bottom of the base concave. I finish cutting the final $^{1}/_{2}$ inch using a Japanese saw with the lathe stopped and remove the remaining stub using a 2-inch disk sander on the drill press. The intrepid might use a skew.

14. Let the completed spice box dry for a week before buffing and waxing. Then charge it with cloves or other spices of choice.

NATURAL EDGES

Locating forms in burl and root blanks

BILL JOHNSTON

A GREAT PIECE OF ODD-SHAPED wood, particularly if it's a burl or root section, can defy your imagination. Encompassing forms that do not readily relate to lathework, these natural wonders can entice you with unusual possibilities. A simple solution is to square up the piece, getting rid of the sloping and irregular areas that interfere with basic concepts of bowl and vase design. The result may be a couple of small traditional pieces, but those with some experience ought to stretch their skills and imaginations to do right by these special blanks.

During my early years of turning, I would encounter work from our more skillful and artistic woodturners and puzzle over how they had made pieces with such unusual and interesting natural edges. Through experiment and practice I've solved some of those questions, but working with irregular pieces is always full of surprises. There is often a subtle difference between a finished piece that works and one that is not quite right. Here are some of the ways I've come to understand how to locate form, in both technical and design terms, within irregular blanks.

Technical concerns

Figures 1 and 2 are simple natural-edged bowl shapes. They are not extraordinary, but certainly worth a try. Using the downward or angular slope of a burl in this fashion allows for a fairly symmetrical top. Usually, however, it will require chainsawing or bandsawing a base roughly parallel to the proposed top, followed by some manipulation of the piece between centers in order to get the top of the piece as near perpendicular as possible to the lathe bed.

Figures 3 and 4 are hollow vessels with natural-edged tops. The slope across the rim has created an angular void. As in all pieces in this series, the turning is started between centers. It may be necessary to chisel out a flat at the top for seating a spur center. This is particularly true when the slope is extreme. I sometimes use the tip of the chainsaw for this purpose. Use caution. Catching the top of the chain will cause a kickback. After mounting the piece on a spur center bring the tailstock in to support the bottom, and, once again, some manipulation between centers may be necessary to locate a desirable centering axis.

In many turnings of this type the high corner will not clear the headstock and may need some cutting back. An alternative is to use a morse taper extension on the spur center to move the piece away from the headstock. Cutting the corner away is probably the easier solution, but be cautious. It is possible to eliminate some great design possibilities by cutting off too much.

Angular voids require another caution: While the overall opening at the top could be fairly large, the opening for hollowing on the lathe may be very small. Note how the opening at the top of Figure 3 closes in from the left side. As the piece rotates on the lathe that closure from the left will determine the diameter of the entry for hollowing.

Root burls, with their highly irregular shape and long root extensions, offer a special challenge. They are certainly not for the faint-of-heart. At the outset, the design is almost impossible to predetermine, but, again, the unexpected may be far more interesting than that which can be envisioned in advance.

The harvesting and preparation of roots are important. I prefer, as much as is reasonable, that the roots remain intact. It is easy to cut off those that are not needed. On the other hand, it can be heart-rending when you realize you've cut one off just where you wanted it to be. I've also found that taking them to a do-it-yourself car wash is a great way to clean away stones and dirt that will otherwise wreak havoc with chainsaws and turning tools. Whether you clean with water or air pressure, be sure to wear a face mask. This is a messy job and dirt will fly everywhere including into your face.

These pieces are turned "upside down," with the roots forming the top of the turning. Prepare a place for seating the spur center, in this case in the midst of the roots. Then cut off the tree trunk roughly parallel to the imagined top of the piece. Bring the tailstock in to form a desir-

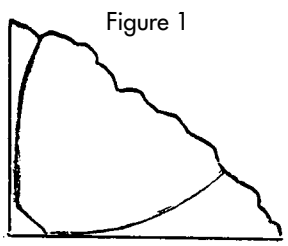


Figure 1

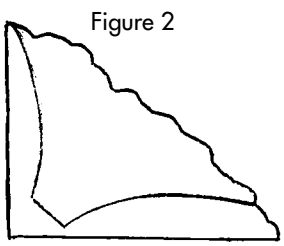


Figure 2

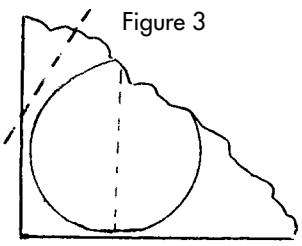


Figure 3

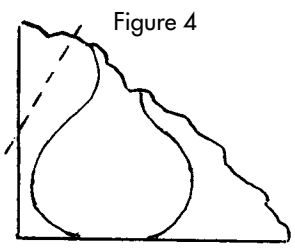
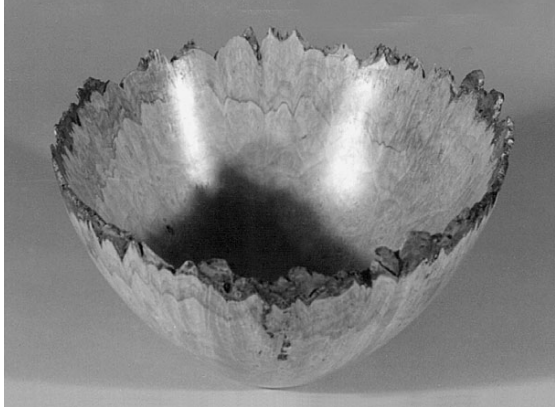


Figure 4



Two forms from symmetrical blank orientation: Left, maple burl, 8″ dia. ,left, and right, rhododendron root, 13″ across.

able centering axis, and turn a bottom to accommodate a faceplate or other mounting device. At this point I prefer to turn the entire bottom of the piece and sand it (if dry enough). Then I use a four-jaw chuck for mounting to turn the top. Whenever possible, use the tailstock for additional support.

Design issues

In all orientations, symmetrical as well as angled, it is important to consider the relationship between the natural edge and the form you are turning. Because the edge is irregular, it will complete more or less of the form, depending on how high or low the edge is at particular points. Such an edge can therefore add interest to an otherwise plain form. It can also compromise the presentation of a good form by revealing too much or two little of it. It is a question of balance.

In the bowl above left the form is still rising and opening when it reaches the irregular burl edge. The points of the edge can be seen as pointing in the direction of the continuing form. There is a nice tension here between what you can see and what is suggested. Similarly, in the piece above right the irregular edge accentuates the feeling that the form is growing upward and outward.

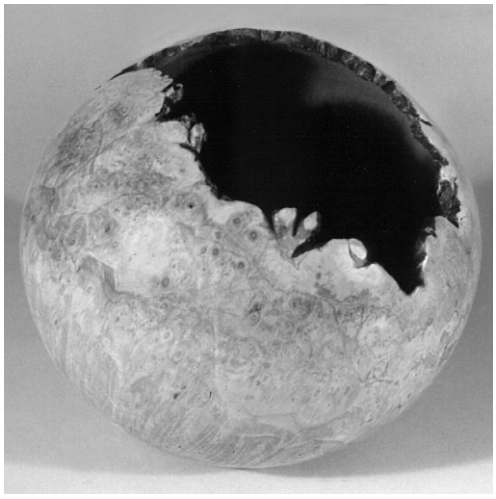
The hollow form below left has an offset natural-edge that creates an angular void. Balance here is a more dynamic affair, the form going one way, the edge another. This adds intrigue to an otherwise simple shape.

The vase below center is a less successful piece. Combining a natural with a shaped edge is always an extra challenge; if you don't get the balance right, you create a confusion. Here, the vase seems interrupted—broken rather than complemented by the natural-edged void. Put another way, the shaped edge shows too much of a traditional form and thus precludes imaginative interaction.

In contrast, the same basic form below right is teased into being by a natural edge that reveals as much as it withholds. The balance here between negative and positive space has a rightness that goes beyond what I could fully have planned. In fact, I found this form in the midst of turning it, allowing the shape of the burl to yield the two wings that merely suggest the lip of the vase.

That's why turning irregular pieces is so much fun. They are a challenge, both technically and aesthetically.

Bill Johnston, of West End, NC, is a founding member of and demonstrates at both North Carolina chapters of the AAW. Photos and drawings by the author.



Forms from angled blank orientation: Above, maple burl, 7 1/4″ dia.; center, maple burl, 10″ high, and, far right, madrone burl, 8 3/4″ high.

Composite Bowls

Building turnings from small rounds

GIANFRANCO ANGELINO

A composite bowl of ebony and pitch pine, 14" dia. Note the translucency that characterizes the resinous pine in thin endgrain section.

There are many beautiful woods that are too small to be turned in a bowl. The lower branches of larch or spruce, for example, are as fine textured and deeply colored as horn. They contain the same life history as the bole of the tree, but in a cross section a hundred times smaller. In the pine family it is easy to find small wood sections so fully impregnated with resin as to be almost transparent in the thickness common to bowls. Laburnum, lilac, boxwood, and juniper surpass the character of many exotics, but are unlikely woods for the bowl turner owing to their shrubby nature.

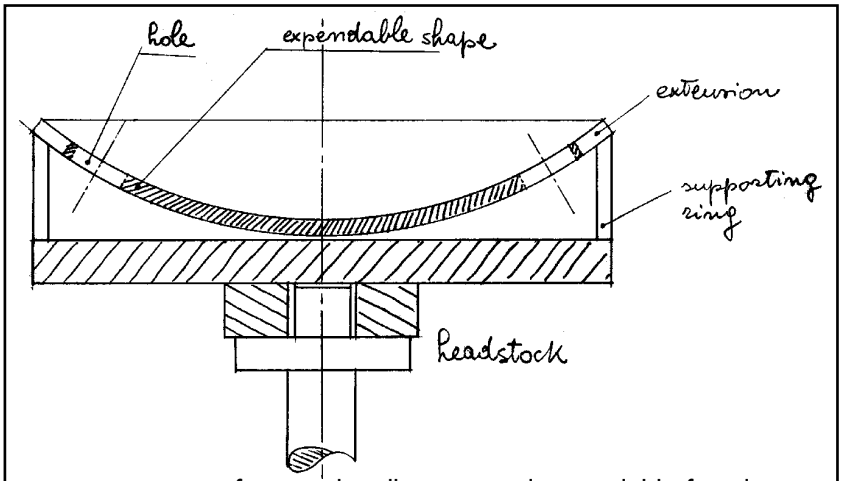
I began exploring methods to compose bowls from small pieces of wood for another reason, too. It's a way to overcome wood's anisomorphic and anisotropic character, that is, its widely different structural strength depending on grain direction and its dimensional instability in response to changes in humidity. In ordinary faceplate turning, where the grain runs across the diameter, the artifact will be very strong along the grain and rather weak across it. Furthermore, changes in moisture content will result in some degree of warpage, often compromising the character of the artifact. If the same stock is cut into small pieces that are combined with the grain in random directions, the piece will be fortified and stabilized—a sort of plywood effect will be obtained.

Additionally, composite construction offers the opportunity to combine different colors, tones, and textures; that is, it affords interesting design choices.

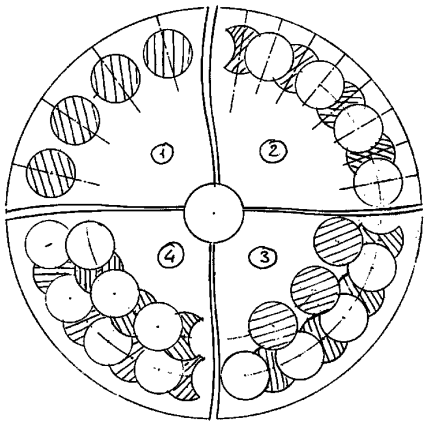
Nature and technology are often in conflict. When an old tree is felled and sawn without regard for its unique character, technology is being used to empty a large portion of the meaning and grace of nature. But technology can also be used in a more subtle way, to unveil the inner, unspoiled beauty of parts of the tree that are almost invisible in nature. That is the purpose that informs the methods I describe here.

The principle means

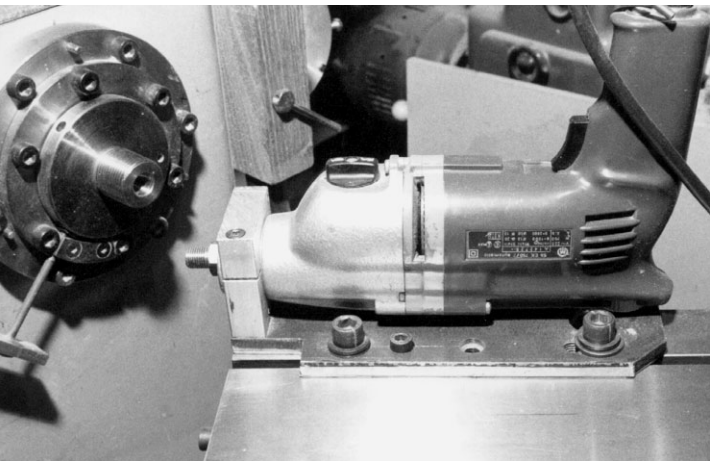
Somewhere also among the characteristics of an attractive methodology is that it be reasonably quick and easy. The first way I experimented with leaves something to be desired in this regard, but being conceptually simple, it serves well to illustrate the idea.



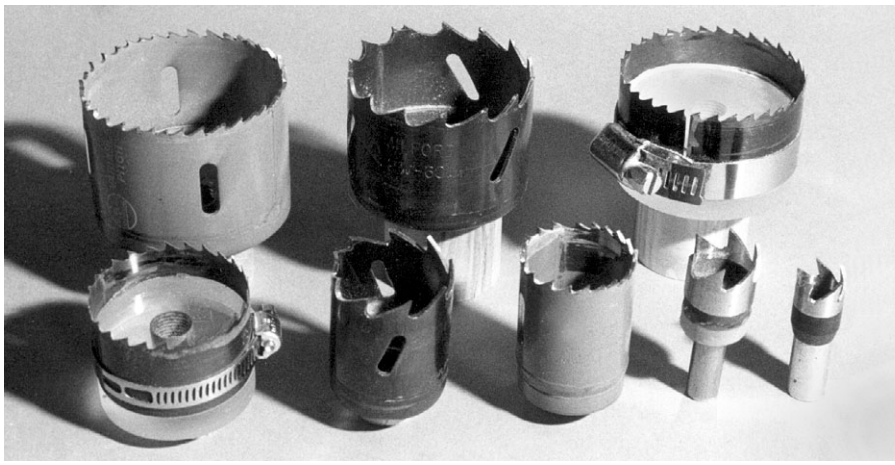
1. Cross section of a peripherally supported expendable foundation with the first series of holes drilled.



2. One method for ordering the drilling of holes and the insertion of rounds: from edge to center in overlapping series.



3. Compound sliding table with drill rest.



4. Commercial, modified, and custom-built hole saws.

First I turn a foundation bowl from a softwood blank, exactly the shape I finally want and with a moderate thickness, say $3/8$ inch. The shape includes a wide outer rim which is used to mount the bowl by means of a supporting ring on a platform fixed to the lathe headstock (Figure 1). Excepting the outer rim, the shape does not touch the platform, which helps in determining when the holes have been cut completely through.

Using a hole saw powered by a portable drill, I cut a number of small holes, $1\,1/4$ to $2\,1/2$ inches in diameter, in a regular pattern around the bowl. I then fill each of these holes with a snugly fitting disk cut from the material I wish to make the bowl of and glue them in place. When the glue is dry, I cut a second series of holes overlapping the first, fill these, and so on. Figure 2 depicts the several steps that ultimately yield a bowl blank completely composed of added disks; the whole foundation bowl is replaced. I then turn the composite bowl to final shape and thickness.

The tools

Even if it were possible to cut the holes in the bowl shape on a drill press, an indexing device on the lathe makes the task easier. I use a portable drill mounted on a compound sliding table with a screw feed. The table must pivot, too, so you can orient the hole saw perpendicular to the surface of the foundation bowl (Figure 3). The drill must have sufficient torque to cut with a hole saw at low speed. You cannot use the pilot drill in sawing the rounds, and it is a problem, too, in positioning the overlapping holes, so I remove the drill chuck and mount the hole saw directly on the drill shaft. This ensures sufficient stiffness. Some commercial saws fit the drill shaft threading directly. When this is not so, a proper adapter should be made.

I use two different saws: one for cutting the rounds and one for cutting the holes (Figure 4). These must complement each other such that the round that is cut with one saw fits snugly in the hole that is cut with the other. There are commercially available matching pairs of hole saws, but these usually have to be fine-tuned by grinding the set of one or the other. I find I have greater control of size and fit by creating the pairs as follows:

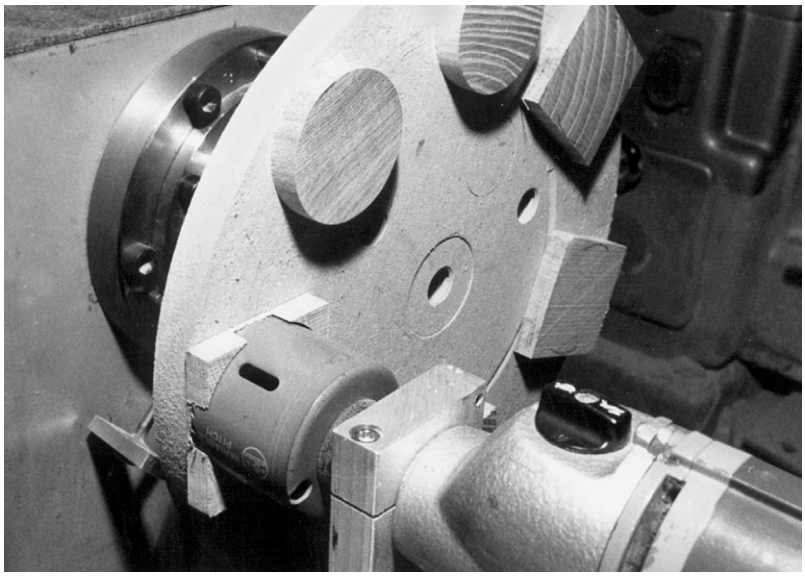
For the rounds, I use metal-cutting saws, which are strong and withstand many re-sharpenings. For the holes, I build my own saws, each of the exact matching dimension. To do so, I wrap a piece of toothed spring steel, 0.012 inch thick, around a plastic disk that attaches to the drill shaft by means of a threaded hole. The blade is held in place around the disk with a hose clamp. The kerf of such a saw is about three times smaller than that of a commercial saw (0.031 inches, rather than 0.1 inches), which guarantees a very gentle cutting action. This is important when working on a delicate piece. Furthermore, the hole diameter can easily be fine-tuned by wrapping the plastic support disk with one or two layers of masking tape. I always use these hole saws at very low speed and, although I've never experienced a rupture, I always protect myself with a faceshield.

Cutting a hole in solid wood is often a long task because the sawdust, which has no way out, clogs the saw. I have found it helpful to reduce the number of teeth and increase the gullet space between teeth by grinding off two out of three teeth in commercial saws. (Removing one tooth out of two would destroy the set and make the saw useless.) For the smallest hole diameters I have found it effective to build hole saws by cutting a few deep teeth in thin cylindrical tempered steel punches.

An improved method

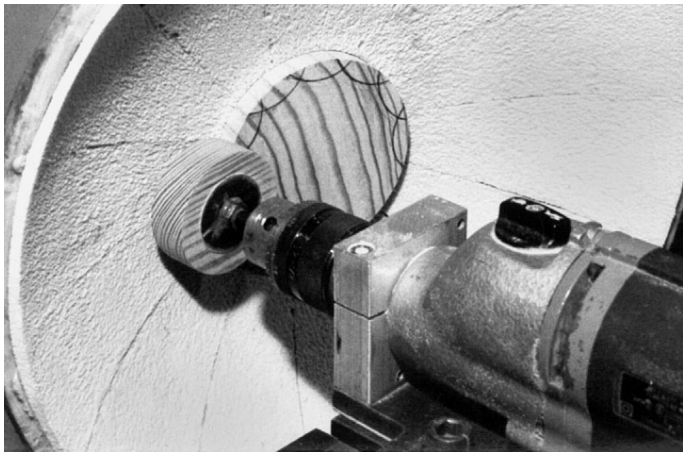
The method so far outlined gives good results but has two main drawbacks: First, a shape must be built for each work, and second, all the holes are cut in solid wood which is a rather slow operation. I developed a second procedure in which the rounds are applied *onto* rather than into a shape.

The first step is to prepare a reusable mold of a suitable material (medium-density fiberboard, plywood etc.) and then line this with a

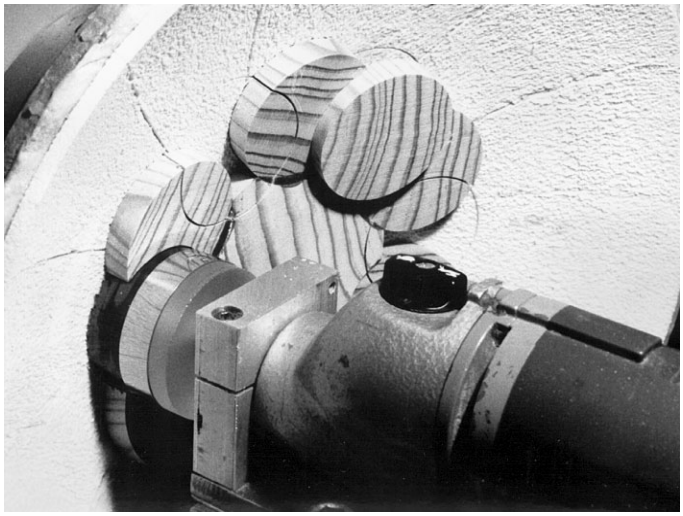


5. Cutting of the rounds at low speed. The saw should clear the edge of the stock to allow waste to clear.

6. Polystyrene-lined MDF mold with a central recess to accommodate a bowl foot.



7. Positioning the drill and determining the number of rounds for the first ring with the aid of a dummy round. Pencil marks on the round that will form the foot of the bowl help in indexing the stock.



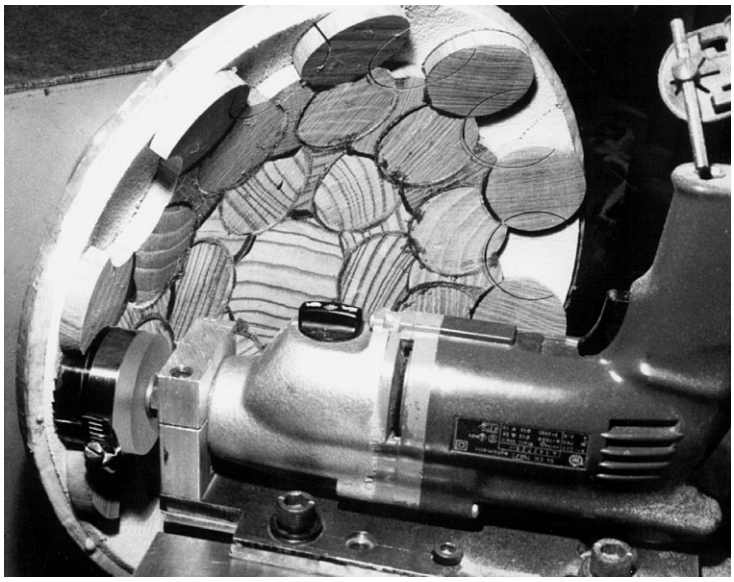
8. Cutting the second series of holes in the first ring. The proper hole dimension is dry-tested before gluing.

layer of polystyrene foam, 6 to 8 mm thick. The polystyrene ensures a weak bond between work and mold for the final separation. Only high-density, homogeneous, extruded polystyrene (in general, blue, green, or pink, not white) is suitable.

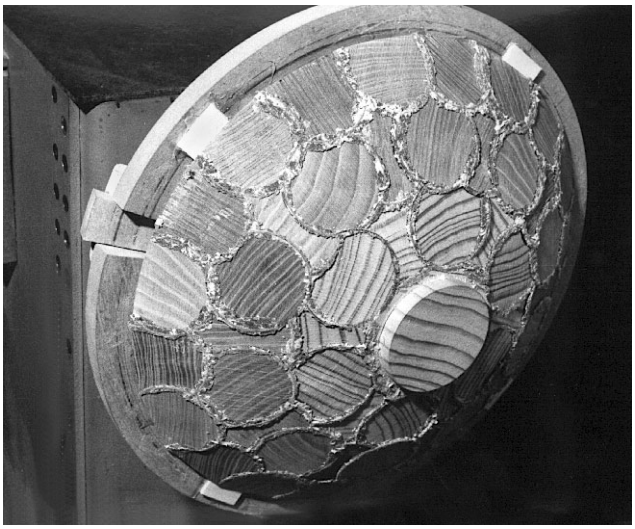
For small pieces I build the mold directly from a thick polystyrene slab glued to a wood platform. The stiffness of such a structure is modest, and it is therefore even more important than with the solid wood foundation that the hole saw operates gently.

The photos on these pages detail the steps I used to fabricate a 14-inch-diameter bowl of larch (for the inner section) and black locust (for the outer), both in endgrain sections. I started with $1/2$-inch-thick bandsawn squares which I hot-melt glued to a platform mounted on the headstock (Figure 5). I sized the squares only marginally larger than the diameter of the rounds (which are about $7/16$ inches) to allow the sawdust to clear.

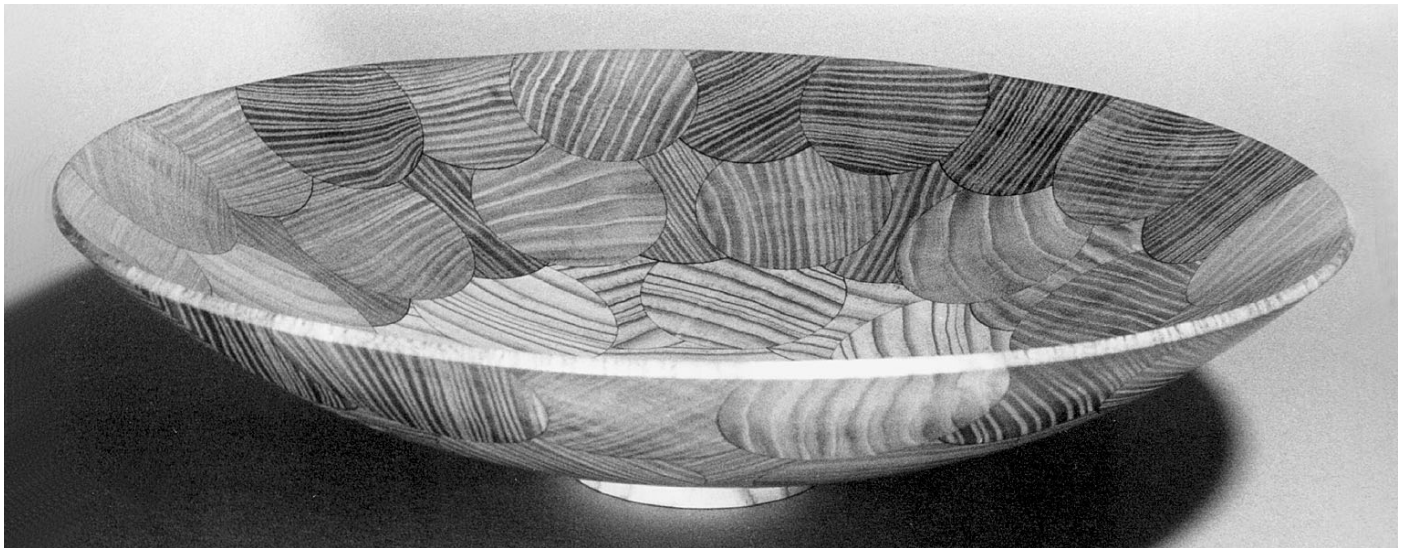
I wanted a foot for this bowl, so I included a recess in the center of the mold (Figure 6). After gluing the 4-inch diameter foot in the right position I had to find out by trial and error how many rounds (always even in number) were needed to build the first ring. I solved this problem with the help of a "dummy" round mounted by means of a shaft in the drill chuck, marking with a pencil the cutting circle for each drill position (Figure 7). The cutting circles need to overlap some to be sure that on the outer (and slightly larger) bowl surface the coverage will be complete. In this example twelve rounds were needed for the first ring. I cut the first series of six and glued the rounds onto the foot and, in spots, to the polystyrene lining. I use a quick-set epoxy spread on both surfaces, which allows for



9. Cutting the last series of holes. All holes overlap.



10. Centering the bowl for outside turning. A radial slit allows for gauging the thickness of the bowl. (The inside has already been turned and finished.)



11. The finished bowl. 14 ″ dia., in larch (for the inner section) and black locust (for the outer).

practically uninterrupted work. Water-soluble glues are ill-advised, since water tends to swell the wood and jeopardize the fit.

Now, without changing the drill position, but only re-indexing the lathe spindle, I cut and glued the second series of six rounds (Figure 8) and the first ring is completed. I repeat the procedure for the second and third ring (Figure 9), after which I turn and finish the inside of the bowl.

Using a curved saw blade inserted within the polystyrene lining, I detach the work. To turn the outside I center the upturned bowl by means of four plywood pieces which are attached to a faceplate and turned to the rim diameter. I tack the bowl rim using hot-melt glue applied with the aid of a toothpick. The platform has a radial slit (Figure 10) which allows the introduction of a gauge for measuring the wall thickness. The slit is closed when the gauge is no longer used, so that there are no sharp edges to interfere with sanding. After turning and finishing is done, a light coat of wax completes the piece.

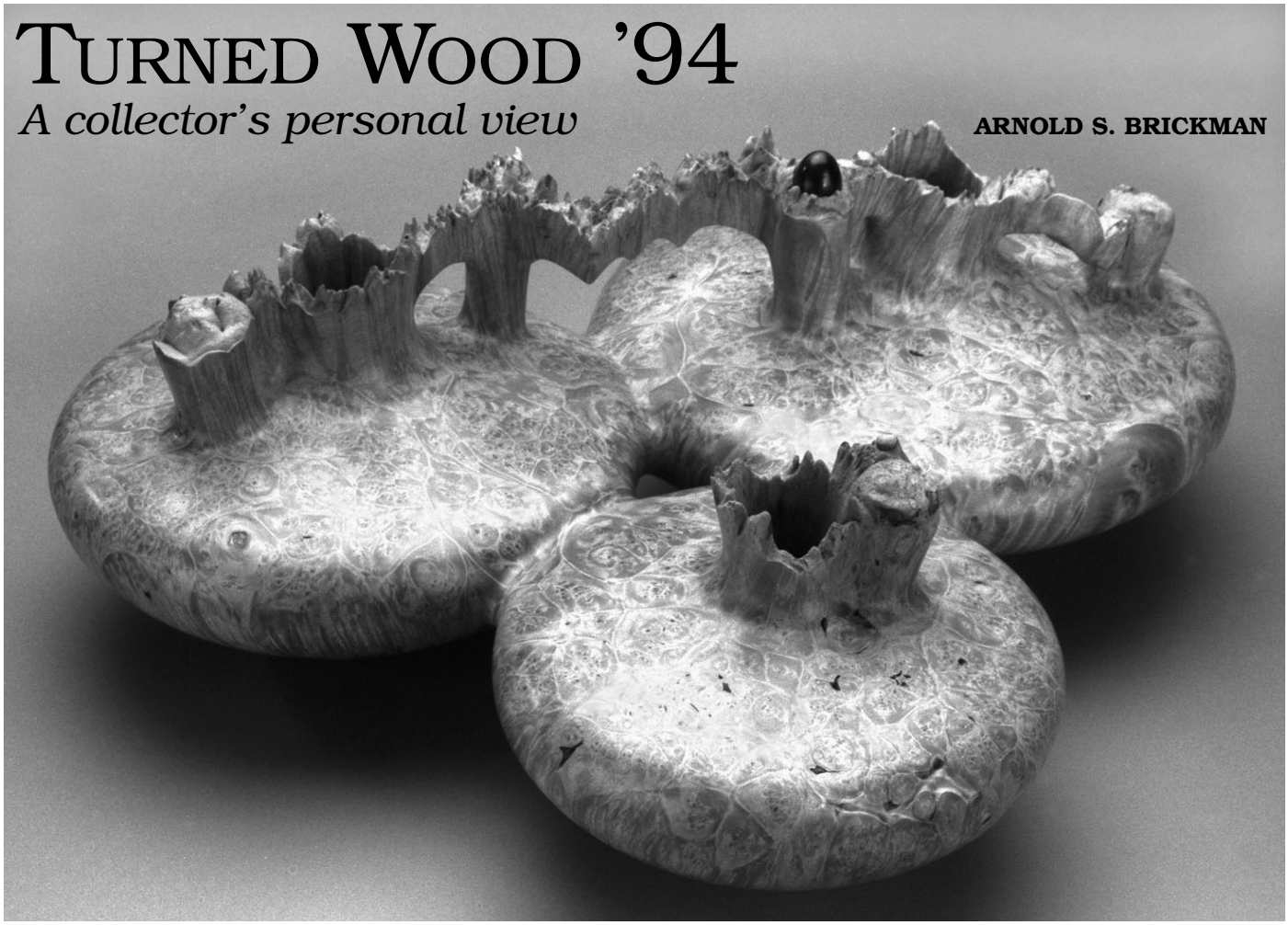
Looking at the finished bowl (Figure 11) you can see that only a portion of each round is actually left in the piece. This means that it is not necessary to use only complete rounds and that small defects are acceptable provided the rounds are used in such a way that the faulty or incomplete part is removed during construction.

Gianfranco Angelino is Professor of Engineering at the Politecnico di Milano in Italy. Having been turning for more than sixteen years, he has recently begun to exhibit his work. *The author wishes to thank Ron Kent for his advice and friendly but firm encouragement in writing this article. Photos and drawings by the author.*

TURNED WOOD '94

A collector's personal view

ARNOLD S. BRICKMAN



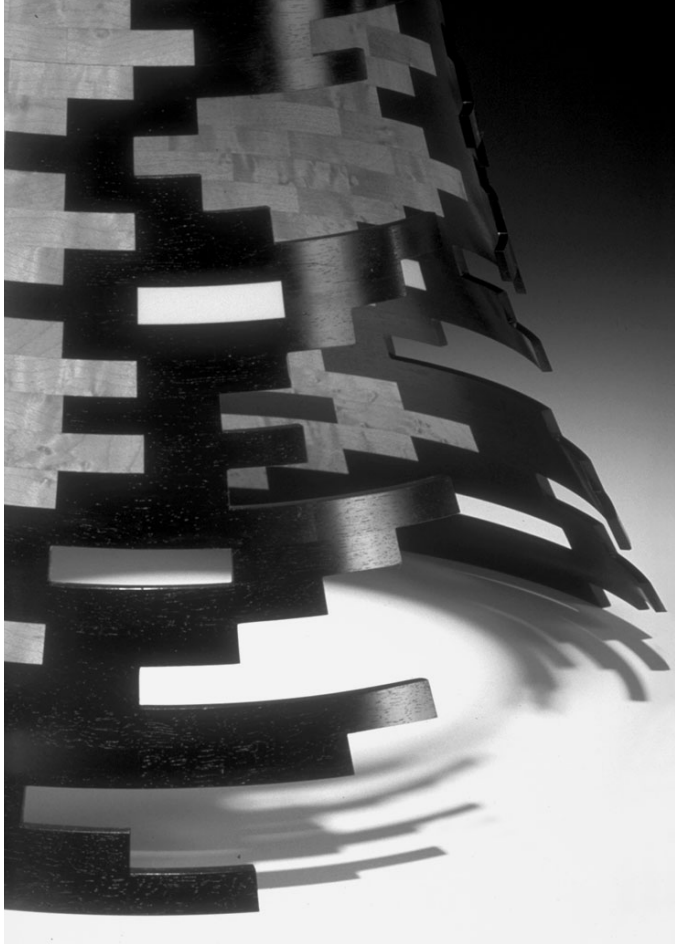
Hugh McKay (Gold Beach, OR) showed several pieces in his new interconnected vessel series which suggests a unique concept of the biogenesis of the vessel form. "Tripot 1" is the most impressive technical tour de force. Spanning 19 inches, it was turned on three axes from a single piece of myrtle burl, carved and judiciously adorned with pieces of soapstone. Beyond technical virtuosity, the piece celebrates the organic origins of both material and form.

TURNED WOOD '94, AT THE DEL Mano Gallery in West Lost Angeles last summer, was a major show of wood art. In contrast to single-artist shows, this show featured the best of a wide range of current work. The annual Small Treasures show, reviewed in the June 1994 issue of this journal, presents special, often exploratory work, which may not reflect the work for which each artist is known.

Long before I began acquiring pieces for a collection, I developed an appreciation for turned wood through early encounters with the work of Bill Hunter, Bob Stocksdale, and Rude Osolnik. I was attracted by the forms themselves, by the innate beauty of the wood, and by the technical achievement that served the wood so well. Bill Hunter has referred to some of his creations as personal meditation pieces, and this speaks to my own wonderment, passion, and spirit in response to turned wood. As I look over the collection that has been taking shape these past two years, these are the qualities that characterize the pieces my wife and I prize most. As my knowledge of this art form increases and my tastes evolve, I continue to be taken by the feelings a piece can evoke, as well as by the pureness of its form.

In organizing this year's show, del Mano Gallery co-owner Ray Leier asked the invited artists to focus on vessel forms. The show nevertheless evidences a great variety of approaches, including many carved, colorful, and sculptural pieces. With more than eighty pieces by thirty-two artists, the show had something for collectors at all levels, work from internationally recognized masters as well as newer artists. Among the better known were Virginia Dotson, Dennis Elliott, David Ellsworth, Giles Gilson, Bill Hunter, John Jordan, Mel and Mark Lindquist, Bruce Mitchell, Philip Moulthrop, and Al Stirt. Most of these artists have been featured in smaller exhibits at del Mano. But this was the largest gathering of work by such high-caliber artists I've ever seen.

As in previous years, the gallery has provided an excellent narrated video which gracefully depicts overall and detailed views of each piece.



Bud Latven (Tajique, NM) describes this piece, entitled "Transient Global Amnesia" as a "virtual vessel," part of his "degeneration series." Standing 15 1/2 inches high, it is reminiscent in shape of a nuclear cooling tower, composed (or decomposing) of segments of bird's-eye maple, ebony, and white Avonite. If McKay's connected vessels evoke the genesis of bowl (and other) forms, Latven's work depicts the other end of an evolutionary cycle.

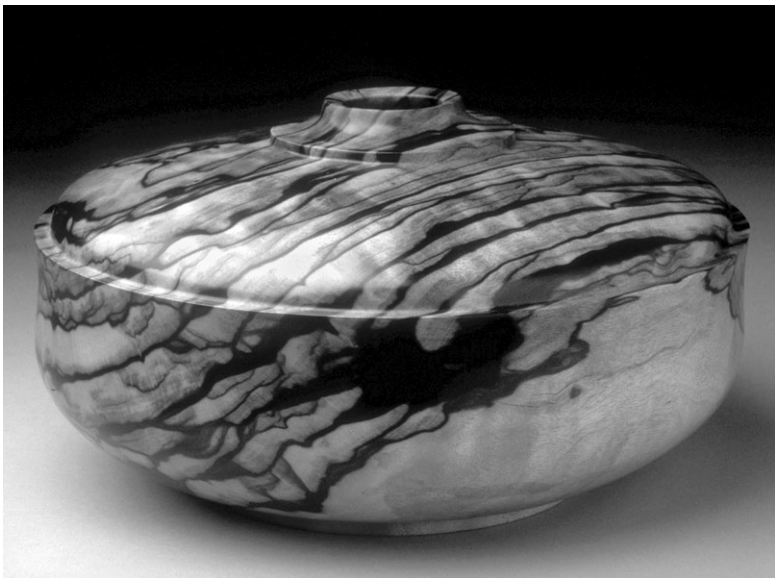
This video catalog is helpful for the collector unable to see the show in person, although for the deep appreciation these pieces deserve, they should actually be seen.

For me Turned Wood '94 provided an excellent opportunity to see and compare work from turners I've come to admire. In addition I was introduced to the talents of several new individuals. My wife and I selected three pieces for our collection. Pictured here and on the following pages are other pieces I found outstanding.

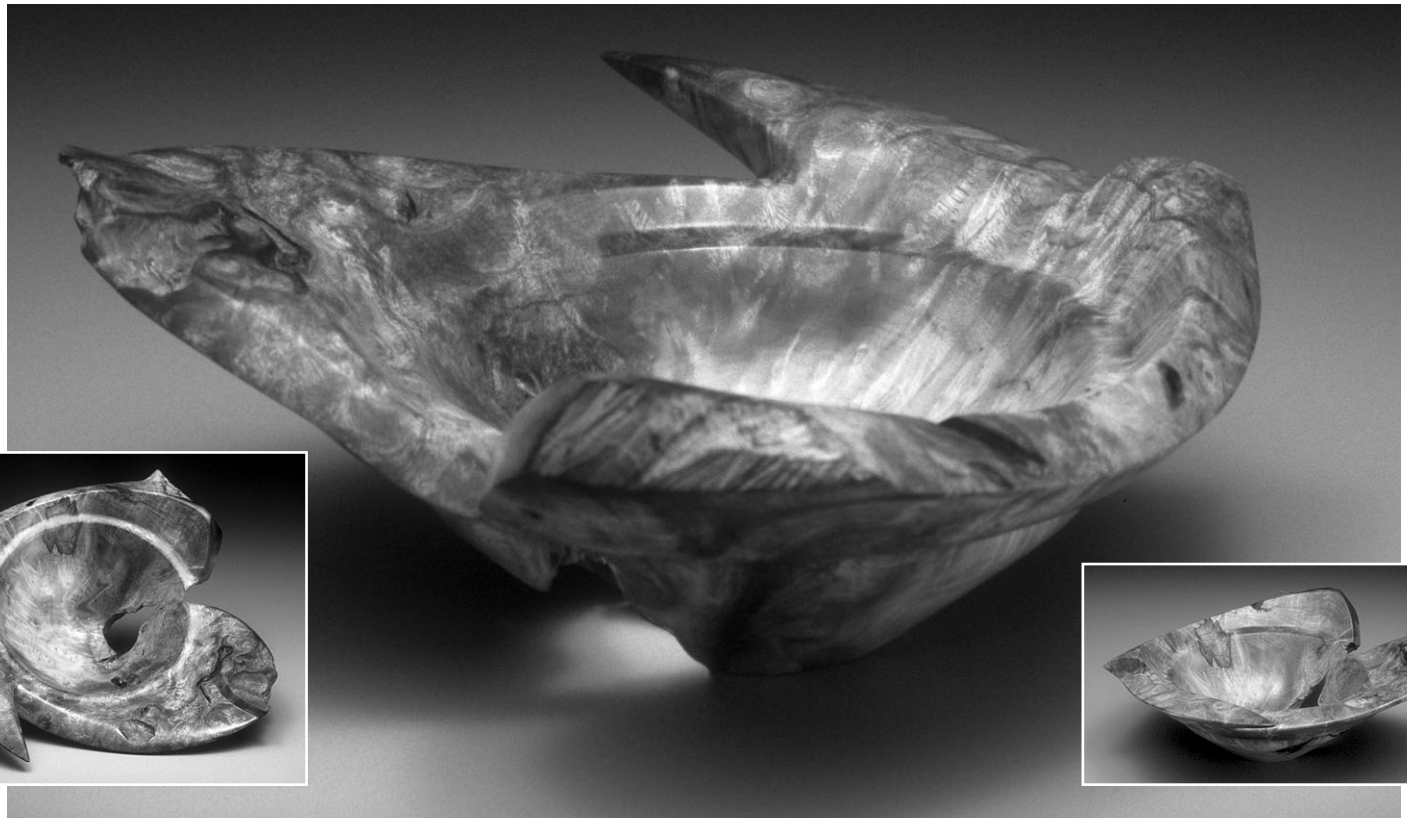
Arnold Brickman is an academic physician in Los Angeles, CA. For a video catalog, write del Mano Gallery, 11981 San Vicente Boulevard, West Los Angeles, CA 90049. The cost is $25.

Richard Sarjent

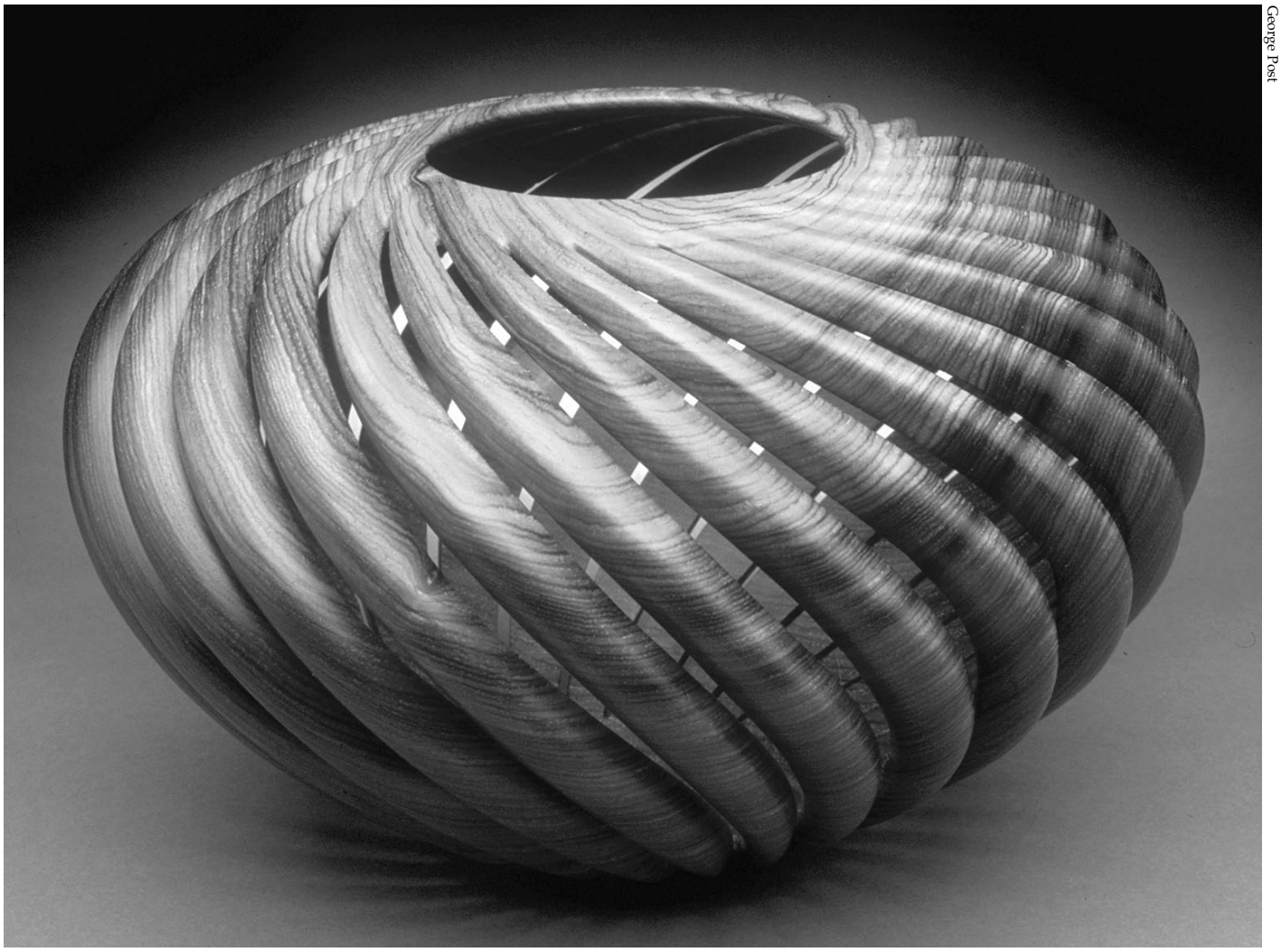
In contrast to the sculptural were the more classical wood turnings of Gene Pozzesi (Concord, CA). Pozzesi's forms, typically 3 to 5 inches high, in ebony and pink ivory wood, are simple and elegant. A signature feature has been a two-point flaring at the rim or textured carving at the foot or rim surface. In this show he introduced the slightly flared, five-point scalloped rim, lively and pacific.



Dan Kvitka (Portland, OR) also works in simple, classical shapes, but he favors straight sides and flat tops in closed forms to maximize the display of stunningly beautiful pieces of wood. The Macassar ebony piece, above (13″ dia.), is from a 12-foot log Kvitka imported himself, a superb specimen. The banded form at left (11″ high) is of vera-wood, a very dense species exhibiting pronounced sapwood/heartwood contrast. Kvitka's forms handle such contrasts well. They are straightforward and planar with strongly pronounced details.

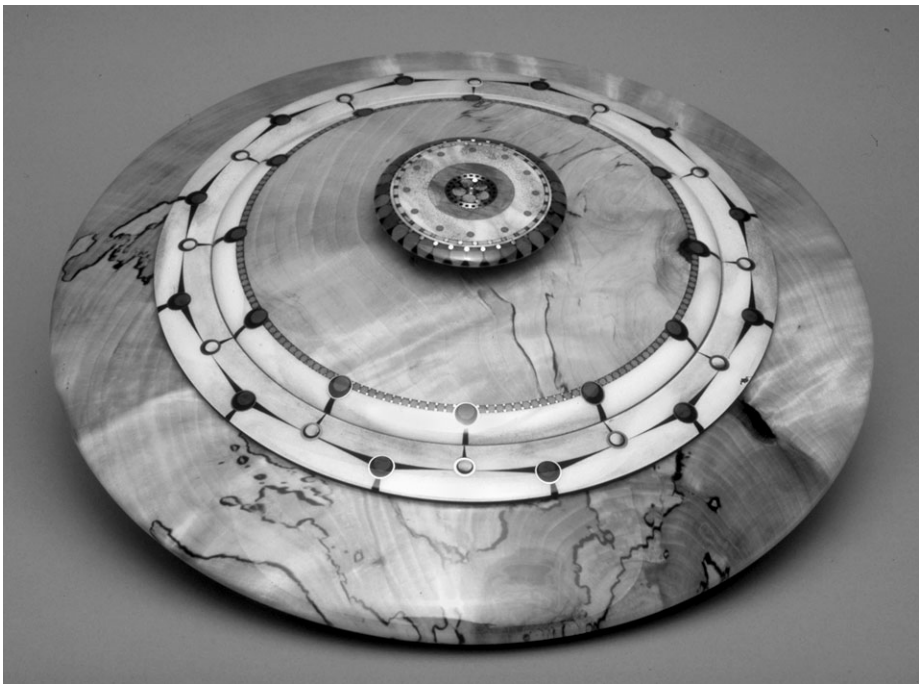


Bruce Mitchell (Point Reyes, CA) is a master of motion in the vessel form. "Taking Flight #1," a powerful piece $16\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide in bay laurel burl, is a case in point. The bowl (shown here from three points of view) is massive but relieved by voids and natural edges, while the rim, shaped from thick, substantial walls, is acutely angled, projecting the form out into space. Like his "Fin Spin" series, two larger pieces of which where included in this show and diminutive versions in the Small Treasures show, this work has an anthropomorphic dimension. Whether stout or sprightly, these pieces translate shape into character.



George Post

Bill Hunter (El Portal, CA) has achieved the ethereal in his turned and sculpted forms. "Spiral Vessel," of cocobolo, 8 1/4" dia., is only half substance. The play of light and spaces as this bowl is rotated is almost hypnotic.



David Peters

Robert Cutler (Kenai, AK) appeared for the first time at del Mano in this show. His four lidded containers, each composed of inlays of from 600 to 850 pieces in various materials, including birch, willow, mahogany, lacewood, and Hawaiian koa as well as brass, copper, sterling silver, moose antler, and prehistoric mammoth ivory, are remarkable examples of marquetry applied to the turned vessel. The piece at right is birch burl, 13 inches in diameter, decorated with more than 750 pieces of inlay. The ornateness of these bowls and their specular finish are reminiscent of 19th-century Russian lacquered boxes.

FLORENTINE LAMPS

A bright idea for the holidays

ROBERT ROSAND

WELL, IT'S ALMOST CHRISTMAS time again, and all of your friends expect you to dazzle them with some marvelous turned item. You've mastered every turning in the AAW Project Book, so what do you do next? I'd like to suggest a Florentine oil lamp. These lamps are relatively inexpensive and they are functional as well as attractive. If you participate in the craft show market, they are also a good seller.

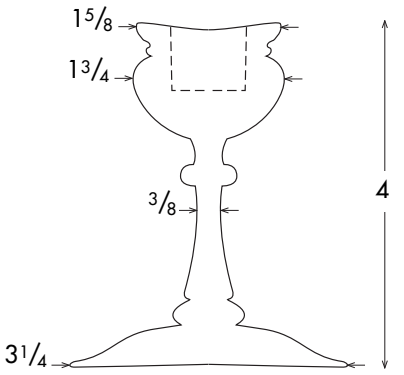
A drawing of the bases I make, along with a couple of variations, appears below. They are approximately 4 inches tall with a finished diameter of about $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches. The cup that the glass base sits in is $2\frac{3}{8}$ inch in diameter and includes a hole that receives a tenon at the bottom of the lamp. I start out with a block of wood about $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches square and 6 inches in length. I use a three-jaw chuck, and that requires extra wood for the tenon as well as waste. Most of my oil-lamp bases are of glued-up scraps, generally $\frac{7}{16}$ inches square. I find that squares much larger look a bit heavy, but if you're feeling meticulous, smaller squares are visually effective. I have also found over the years that laminated oil lamps far outsell the plain ones. The candlestick oil lamp component can be purchased from Craft Supplies USA (1-800-551-8876). The last time I checked, they were $13.95 for a set of two. I haven't noticed them listed in other catalogs.

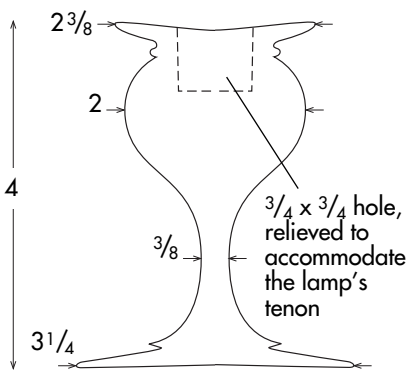
Author's production candlestick oil lamp. Many base variations are possible within the general dimensions that will stably support the lamp. For examples, see drawings below.

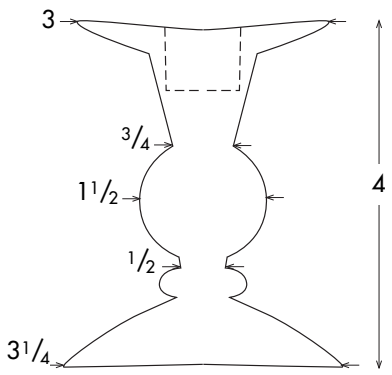
When you have selected or laminated your chosen stock, true it up between centers. If you will be using a three-jaw-chuck, true up one end and secure it in the chuck. If you will be using a faceplate and waste block, drill a hole in the waste block, turn a tenon on the lampstock, and glue the two together. At this point, I true up the cylinder again, and rough-turn the base and top close to their final dimensions. Remove the tailstock and turn a concave surface to receive the oil lamp base. Next, drill a $\frac{3}{4}$-inch hole approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ inch deep to receive the tenon on the lamp. You will have to widen the hole a bit with a flat-nosed scraper. The lamp base should fit snugly, but not too tight. Bring up the tailstock for stability while you turn the remainder of the base.

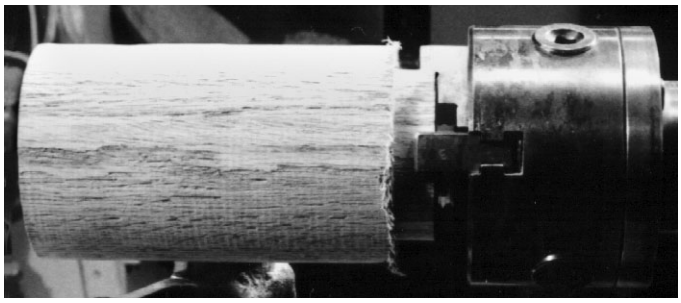
At this point, I turn the upper rim and the decorative feature just below it using a gouge and a small skew. Then I use the roughing out gouge to rough-turn the urn shape and switch to a spindle gouge to rough out the thinnest diameter. I blend the base in using a gouge and small skew.

All that remains is to finish-turn and refine the shape a bit. Feel free to be as creative with beads and coves

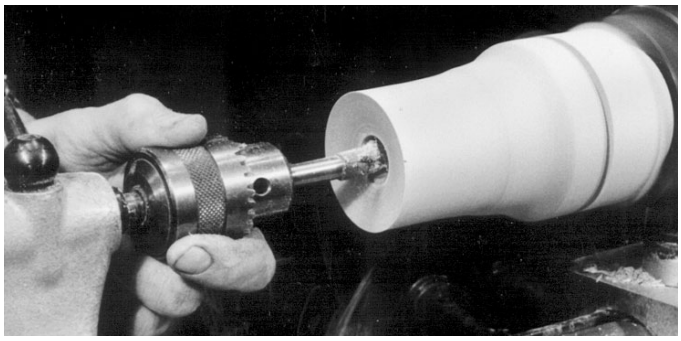








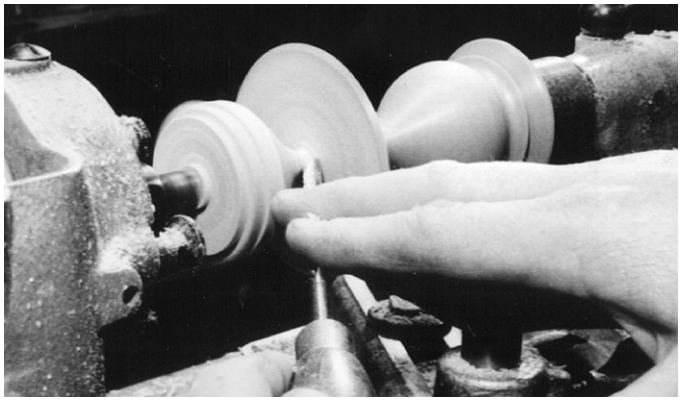
1. Mount the $3\frac{1}{2}$-inch-diameter blank in a three-jaw chuck.



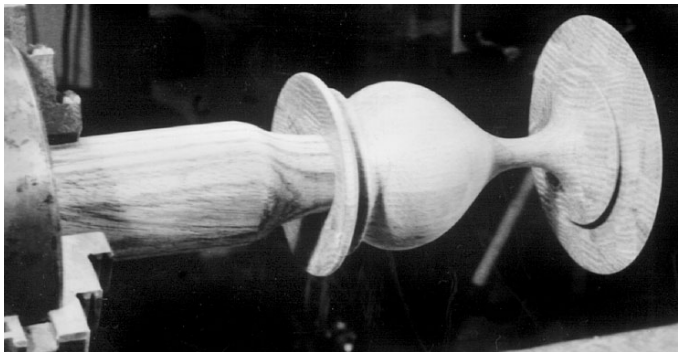
2. Drill the hole to accept the lamp's tenon. This hole must be opened a bit at the top with a flat-nosed scraper to accommodate the shape of the tenon. Note the concavity in the end of the blank to receive the curve of the lamp's base.

3. Rough-out the shape with a spindle gouge. Bring up the tailstock for support.

4. Sand to 400 or 600 grit.



5. Turn down to a stub at the base, and twist it off.



6. Friction-fit the base on a tenon to sand the bottom.

as you wish. As with all turning, keep proportion and balance in mind. The shapes and detailing I use are ones that I have become comfortable with over time, but no two lamps I turn are identical, and you should adjust and experiment, too.

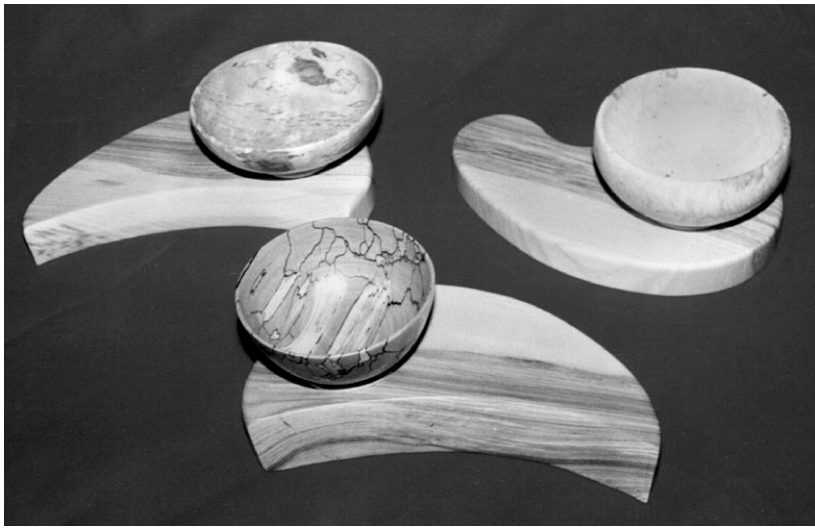
After I have sanded to my satisfaction (to 400 or 600 grit), I apply a coat of sanding sealer and allow it to dry. I generally follow that up with three coats of Water Lox applied at slow speed on the lathe.

To finish the bottom, I place the turning between centers again and use the skew flat to "peel" away most of my waste wood. Then use the gouge to make the bottom slightly concave, finishing up with a stub about $\frac{1}{8}$ inch in diameter. Be sure not to apply too much pressure between centers, or you may crush the stub. Sand as much of the bottom as you can and remove from the lathe. Twist the remaining stub of wood from the base and clean up any remaining fibers with a skew held flat or a corner of your belt sander. Friction-fit the hole in the top of the candlestick to a piece of scrap held in your three-jaw chuck and finish sanding the bottom at slow speed. Remove from the lathe and finish the bottom by hand.

If you don't have a three-jaw-chuck and you are using the glue-and-tenon method, cut in below the base with a parting tool until you have a tenon about $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter. Cut through that tenon with a parting tool, bandsaw, or other implement of destruction, and use a center-finder to determine the center. Place the lamp base between centers and finish as described above.

Robert Rosand is a professional turner in Bloomsburg, PA.

Turning Trophy Bowls



A trophy bowl, mounted on a display platform with a commemorative plaque, uniquely honors special contributions.

The gold wristwatch, a framed certificate or engraved plaque have long been the standard gifts for retiring employees in recognition for years of outstanding service. At Colorado State University we have been honoring individuals for special contributions by presenting them with wood bowls, each mounted on a display platform and accompanied by an appropriate plaque.

One-of-a-kind woodturned objects are highly valued. Many of the people who have received a customized trophy bowl have expressed deep appreciation for such a unique and original gift. These trophy turnings are exhibited in prominent settings in homes and offices or board rooms. In one case, a large trophy bowl was hand carried across the country in its own first class airline seat and is currently on display in a corporate board room.

These bowls are generally 5 to 7 inches in diameter and vary from 3 to 4 inches deep. Some larger bowls up to 24 inches in diameter and 14 inches deep have been produced for special awards. Both domestic and exotic species of wood are used in turning the trophy bowls. Small bowl blanks are first mounted on a screw chuck while the outside and base is turned, sanded, and finished. The inside is completed on a jam chuck and then the bottom of the bowl is cleaned up on a reverse jam chuck. All the bowls are finished on the lathe with Mohawk Super Rapid Pad which produces a very smooth semi-gloss finish.

Over the years a wide variety of base shapes and sizes have been designed and constructed to display the trophy bowls. The majority of the bases are made from $1^1/_2$-inch stock and range from 10 to 12 inches in length and 7 to 9 inches at the widest part. Shaping is typically done freehand to set off the bowl to best advantage. A base support that includes a recess to hold the bowl is turned and mounted on the base. This elevates the trophy bowl and also prevents it from sliding around on the base. The larger trophy bowls are not mounted on a base.

Trophy bowls are signed by the artisan with a permanent, waterproof, fine-point marker on the underside, and the specie of wood is identified as well as the year it was turned. A brass plaque is mounted on the display base inscribed with the recipient's name and appropriate accolades. The plaques are available from any local trophy supply company. The following is a standard inscription for a recent retiring professor:

Dr. Joseph Smith
In appreciation for 14 years of
dedicated service to
Colorado State University
Department of Industrial Science
May 1994

Designing and turning a trophy bowl is a unique way to show appreciation to a deserving recipient. By putting some effort into marketing, this kind of award would be well received by local trophy companies who are eager to obtain one-of-a-kind custom-designed trophies for their special clients. This could provide a good market for bowls produced by an artisan, club, or other organizations.

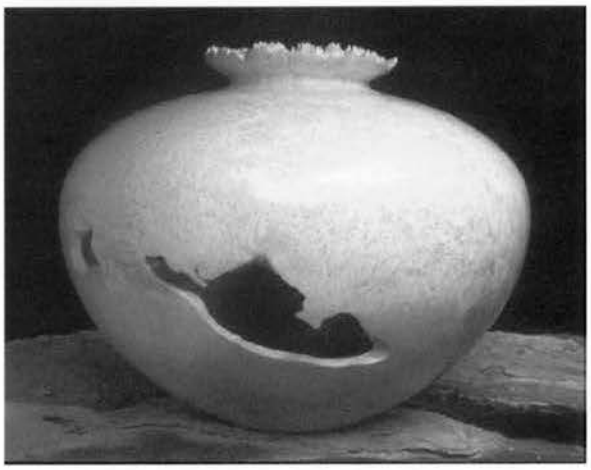
—Dr. Lee Carter and Dr. James Parnell

Lee Carter and James Parnell are professors at the Department of Industrial Sciences, Colorado State University, Ft. Collins, CO. Lee Carter was surprised and delighted to receive, along with Gene Kircus, a trophy plate from the AAW in recognition for work in hosting last June's symposium at the university.

PHOTOS FROM THE MAILBAG

I developed the carving style in this piece when I was building guitars, mandolins, and banjos. It is similar to neck decorations common to banjos made early in this century. The piece is approximately 10 inches in diameter, it is osage orange, and the carved ring consists of eight sections of rosewood.

—Dale Ludewig, DeKalb, IL



At right is a 13-inch-diameter box elder piece which recently won second prize at the Poudre Valley Art League Exhibition in Fort Collins, CO. I lived in that area for many years, and it was nice to be there again for the recent symposium. I attended as many rotations as possible in hollow turning, and the message I got was to take my piece off the lathe and do something else to it: add to it or subtract from it. In my own demonstration on Saturday, I concentrated on beginners' concerns. The loose structure, which had allowed me to get so much out of the demonstrations I'd attended, also allowed me to shape my own demonstration better. Congratulations on a well-organized event!

—Rick O'Ryan, Silver City, NM

WINNING IDEA FOR ARROWMONT'S NEW STUDIO

Here's how it all began. An ongoing tradition of the Florida West Coast Woodturner's has been a "Bring-Back" raffle. During each meeting, a turning is raffled off and the winner is then expected to bring a piece for the next month's raffle. Stoney Lamar happened to be a guest at our March meeting presenting the plans and garnering support for the proposed Arrowmont woodworking studio. The craft school, which happens to be the birthplace of the AAW, has received a conditional grant of $352,000, with December being the deadline to match that amount in additional funds. As luck would have it, Stoney managed to win our raffle! Being a good sport, he offered to turn a piece and send it to us for the following month's raffle. Then came the idea! Wouldn't a much larger raffle be a great way to generate some of the needed funds for the Arrowmont building project? Stoney loved the idea and a few weeks later the prize piece arrived and was unveiled at our next meeting. Wow! It was clear that the entire AAW membership should be given a chance to win it.

John E. May

Stony Lamar's "Invitation to Openness" measures 23" high, 10" wide, and 11" deep and was turned on multiple centers out of California pear.

Bob Bahr, left, and Bob Lipp with some of the clocks they worked with their local chapter to make and sell in order to raise money for the Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts building fund.

To kick off this campaign, the piece was put on display at the recent AAW Symposium in Fort Collins, where the first several hundred tickets were sold. In addition, a supply of tickets has been sent to each AAW chapter for sale to their members at local club meetings.

Tickets for the raffle will be on sale until October 22 for $2 each or three for $5. Net proceeds will go to the Arrowmont wood studio project. The winning ticket will be drawn on October 22 at Arrowmont during the fall woodturning conference. To obtain tickets, contact Larry Hasiak, 2037 N. Pt. Alexsis Dr., Tarpon Springs, FL 34689 (813) 937-2582.

AND A TIMELY APPROACH TO THE FUNDRAISING

The clocks that now hang in the studios and library at Arrowmont were made in support of the place by enthusiastic workshop alumni Bob Bahr and Bob Lipp of the Chislers and Turners of NE Indiana. So it didn't take long for them to conceive the idea of turning clocks into contributions for the building fund. They bought the works for 100 clocks and secured a generous amount of kiln samples from a local hardwood mill. At one of their chapter meetings they demonstrated their clock-making techniques and asked members to make clocks from the materials provided. They organized a production line in Bahr's shop and with two weekends' work had 100 clocks.

Their intention was to market these at $20 to $30, a price that sells well at craft fairs. But in response to the fund raiser, most people insisted on paying $50. At a house party sponsored by a friend, they showed slides of Arrowmont (supplied by the school) and sold 10 clocks. With $1,855 collected, they have 63 clocks left and still haven't found time to schedule a craft fair.

HUNGRY FOR PLATES AT YALE-SMITHSONIAN

Last April, treenware quietly stole the show at the annual conference of the Yale-Smithsonian Symposium Material Culture Study Group. Organizers of the conference, entitled "Wood: Timber, Transformations, and Design," decided to provide a turned wooden plate for each attendee to eat meals from. Ned Cooke, conference coordinator, con-

tacted Albert LeCoff, Executive Director of the Wood Turning Center, for assistance in obtaining fifty-three wooden plates. LeCoff called Betty Scarpino, Bonnie Klein, and Merryll Saylan and discussed how to find turners to supply plates on such short notice. They all agreed to help spread the word. Within four days enough pledges were obtained to meet the number of plates needed.

Cooke was astonished that there was a network of turners who could deliver the desired treenware in barely three weeks time. And what a hit the plates made during the conference! Cooke summed up the reactions of people attending the symposium in a letter to LeCoff: "When I first laid out the plates on Friday morning, I watched a few people pick up those with the most brilliant figure or fine grain, then more people crowded about the table. By lunch time, people had looked and handled enough that they began to appreciate some of the subtler examples also. The sight of people waiting in a buffet line, caressing and studying their plates, was a true joy."

In addition to the visual impression, the fifty-three plates provided a handy example of what the conference was about: wood and its transformation and design. Fingers explored smooth surfaces, beads, and coves. Musicians were able to play wooden recorders undisturbed by servers clearing tables. The soft sounds of wooden plates and chopsticks being moved around created appropriate ambiance for mealtimes. People were able to try out different plates at lunches and dinners, and it didn't take long before each person began to pick a favorite.

When Cooke announced that the plates would be sold at the end of the symposium, serious commitments began. Before the end of the last luncheon discussion, many people had left their tables to make sure that they would be able to purchase "their" plate or plates. An excerpt from LeCoff's thank-you letter to the eighteen contributing turners points to the value of a project like this: "Congratulations! You have turned-on a whole new group of people to lathe-turning. Your spontaneity and quick response to Ned Cooke's unique request reflect well on the turning field."

Here are those who supplied plates: Warren Atkins, Andrew Law Barnum, Brenda Behrens, Dick Codding, Nick Cook, Bruce Friederich, Richard Gohrke, Rodger Jacobs, Rich Johnson, Bonnie Klein, Chuck McLaughlin, Robert A. Morelli, Mark J. Salusbury, Merryll Saylan, Betty J. Scarpino, Palmer Sharpless, Bob Sievers, and Alan Stirt.

OTA ANNUAL MEET

The Ornamental Turning Chapter of the AAW met during the Fort Collins symposium last June. More than 30 members of the chapter gathered for three days of demonstrations in a room provided especially for the chapter. It was an opportunity for other symposium attendees, too, to see what's going on in OT. There was a table full of ornamental turnings, lots of show-and-tell and an organizational meeting at the end to tie it all together. The Friendship Cup, a gift from Roger Davies of the Society of Ornamental Turners of England, was awarded to Charles Wilcoxon for an exquisite goblet and Richard Miller for a pair of ivory candlesticks.

Ray Lawler provided one of his most recent lathes for the demonstrations at last June's meeting of the Ornamental Turners of America, an AAW chapter.

It was approved that this gathering would be a regular event at the AAW Annual Symposium. For more information, contact the AAW Office or Bonnie Klein (206/226-5937).

TREE PROGRAM GROWS

Board member Gary Roberts reports the following progress on the AAW/National Reforestation Program:

- The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department is ordering more than 30,000 trees in 30 species.
- Also in Texas, the National Audubon Society is working with the AAW to reforest their lands.
- Difficult-to-find indigenous species for reforesting the Davis Mountain State Park, badly damaged by forest fires, have been located.
- Other areas with projects under way include New Jersey, Tennessee, California, Georgia, Iowa, Idaho, and Washington. Thus far, 48,000 trees have been shipped or are being processed.
- Over fifty people requested information at the National Tree Trust booth at last June's symposium.

As Roberts points out, this is an excellent program for gaining good press for your chapter and the AAW, it does good, and it makes you feel good. If you wish to join in, call Scott Nye with the National Tree Trust at 800/846-8733 and be sure to mention you're part of the AAW effort.

WTC ANNOUNCES ITE

The Wood Turning Center has established the International Turning Exchange, a promotional/educational program that includes an eight-week residency for five turners and one

scholar, critic, or photographer. For more information, contact Albert LeCoff at 215/844-2188.

AND IN CLOSING

The closing ceremonies at last June's symposium included a number of newsworthy items. Turner of giant bowls, Ed Moulthrop of Atlanta, GA, was honored with a lifetime membership in the AAW. Dick Gerard and Palmer Sharpless were awarded pigtail gouges for their six years each of service on the board of directors. And President Alan Lacer and Vice President Bonnie Klein were thanked for their energetic leadership with a presentation of special versions of the pigtail gouge, designed and made by board member Dave Hout. Lacer and Klein conclude their second terms in January, so this was their last symposium as board officers.

The auction that capped the closing banquet was a great success, bringing in more than $10,800 for the AAW education fund. The board decided to donate half of that money to the Arrowmont building fund.

Bulletin Board is available for all announcements of interest to AAW members. Thanks to Wayne Hartman, Bob Bahr, Betty Scarpino, Bonnie Klein, and Gary Roberts for information here.

CALENDAR

Arizona

Arizona State University: "Turning Plus…Redefining the Lathe-Turned Object III," mini-conference featuring Ray Allen, David Ellsworth, Michelle Holzapfel, and others. December 10–11. Call for exhibition entries deadline September 30. Tempe. 602/965-2787.

Arkansas

"Marriage in Form: Kay Sekimachi and Bob Stocksdale," Decorative Art Museum, through September 25. Little Rock.

California

"A Celebration of Sierra Woods": Exhibition and seminars, October 21–November 12. Nevada City. 916/292-2826.

"Challenge V," California Crafts Museum, through September 29. San Francisco. 415/771-1919.

Connecticut

Brookfield Crafts Center with Bill Gundling: Woodturning, October 1–2; Advanced Woodturning, October 22–23. Brookfield. 203/775-4526.

New Canaan Society for the Arts: Woodturners Exhibition and Sale, November 25–December 18. Waveny Park. 203/972-3909.

Call for entries: Craft America '95, cash awards, slides due November 1. Silvermine Guild Arts Center, New Canaan. 203/966-5617.

Kentucky

Rude Osolnik, three-day workshops, September 9–11; special session with Ray Key, October 28–30. Berea. 606/986-4440.

Maryland

Chesapeake Woodturners Regional Conference '94: David Ellsworth, Giles Gilson, John Jordan, Johannes Michaelson, and others, September 9–11. 410/263-5544.

Massachusetts

One Cottage St. School of Fine Woodworking with Michael Coffey: Spindle and Bowl Turning, Tuesdays, October 4–December 6; Turning Lidded Vessels, October 9. Easthampton. 413/527-8480.

New York

YWCA Craft Students League with Bill Gundling: Introductory Bowlturning Class, Wednesdays, September 28–December 21; Intermediate and Advanced: Mondays, September 26–December 12. New York. 212/735-9732.

North Carolina

Craft Fair of the Southern Highlands, October 20–23. Asheville. 704/298-7928.

Group or individual classes with Rodger Jacobs. September 7–8; also, will schedule others on demand. Newland. 704/733-9819.

John C. Campbell Folk School: Turned Boxes with Marcus Collier, November 27–December 3. Brasstown. 800/FOLK SCH.

Turning/toolmaking classes with Darrell Rhudy, September 16–May 15, Raleigh. 704/782-5009.

Pennsylvania

Ellsworth School of Woodturning, September 16–18; October 28–30. Quakertown. 215/536-5298.

Tennessee

Appalachian Center for Crafts: Attainment of the Effective Bowl with William Stephenson, October 29–30. 615/597-6801.

Arrowmont: "A Tribute to the Osolniks" Conference, featuring Todd Hoyer, Ray Key, John Jordan, Del Stubbs, and Rude Osolnik, among others, October 20–22. Gatlinburg. 617/436-5860.

Texas

Third Annual "Texas Turn or Two," October 8–9, Maricopa Ranch Resort, New Braunfels. 210/545-5885.

Vermont

Luke Mann, two-day workshops at Yestermorrow Design/Build School, October 1–2; also, will schedule others on demand. Waitsfield. 802/496-5545.

Russ Zimmerman, two-day workshops every Wednesday–Thursday and Saturday–Sunday. Putney. 802/387-4337.

Alberta, Canada

Edmonton Wood Show, September 30–October 2. Edmonton. 519/351-8344.

New Zealand

Nationwide Seminar/Exhibition, featuring Prof. Daniel Ellegiers and Stephen Hughes, October 15–17 (seminars) and October 16–24 (exhibition with cash awards). Putururu. 07/883-7782.

Deadline for the December Calendar: October 15, 1994.

Instant Gallery '94

In less than a day, most of the more than 400 pieces that comprised last June's Symposium Instant Gallery were logged in, tagged, and situated. Here are a few snapshots. If you got good feedback, why not share it with the rest of us? Send a more detailed photo along with a description to run on our Gallery page.