■ On Quality ■ Skewing a Bead ■ Applied Molding ■ allTURNatives ■ Big New Lathes

American Woodturner

The Journal of the American Association of Woodturners December 1996 $5.00 Vol. 11, No. 4

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

As We Grow, So Do the Benefits of Membership

The eleventh annual AAW Symposium, next July 18–20, is shaping up very nicely. I am excited about our family reunion being in San Antonio. It will be a great place to visit and hold our meetings. The theme of this conference will be "A Woodturning Fiesta." Dave Barriger and Larry Hasiak have a great deal of enthusiasm in putting things together. A preliminary list of demonstrators includes Al Stirt, Ray Key, Mike Lee, John Jordan, Palmer Sharpless, Alan Lacer, Clay Foster, S. Gary Roberts, and Helga Winter. More names are in the works. Of course, we will have regional demonstrators on up-and-coming lists. On page 52 of the September journal there is a call for demonstrators. If you are interested, contact our Administrator.

An exciting event being planned in San Antonio is a juried show of turned utilitarian items. "Turned for Use" will open at the prestigious San Antonio Museum of Art the evening before our symposium begins. We're also proud to announce the jurors: Steve Loar, turner and director of the R.I.T. School for American Crafts; Richard Raffan, turner, author, and demonstrator; and Charles Hummel, former curator the Winterthur Museum and a director of the Wood Turning Center. I urge all turners to enter their work (see box at right).

It is hard not to talk about numbers, since things are going so well with your organization. We now have 6,318 members, 371 of whom are from 25 foreign countries.

Growing membership means growing resources, and you will see some of what those resources have made possible in the quality of our symposiums, exhibitions, educational grants, and publications. Take a look at the inside back cover of this journal and see how many new products we have developed! Keep in mind that all this comes from your support and may be counted among the benefits of membership.

Last fall, the Smoky Mountain Woodturners invited me to visit them and possibly do a demonstration. A few days before my visit, I learned that Arrowmont would like the AAW president to be the first to turn in the new studio. I considered it a great honor to AAW and to me personally for being asked to christen the studio for which we have all waited so long. Thanks Arrowmont! It is a great building!

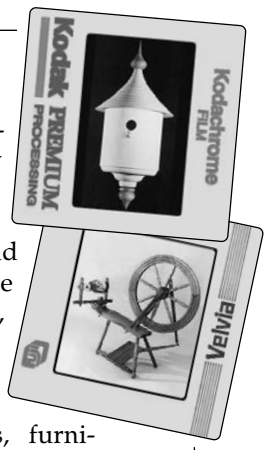
Another unusual thing happened a few weeks ago. Rude Osolnik was invited by a leading tool manufacturer to consult with them on the design of a new lathe they are planning. On one of Rude's trips to the factory I was also invited. It was a very interesting day, to say the least. You will learn many things if you listen to Rude advising design engineers about the master's tool of his trade. It is my understanding the prototype has been finished and was introduced by Rude at the "Texas Turn or Two" mini-symposium last October. It is good to see tool manufacturers consulting with professionals, and you'll see more evidence of this kind of thing on pages 40–43 in this issue.

I must give some people additional recognition. Linda and Reuben Everett from Virginia were room assistants in Greensboro. I'm sure I have heard from every demonstrator they assisted, and all the comments were positive. Stan Harris was more than diligent in selling AAW merchandise at the symposium. Thanks to all three on behalf of the Association.

AAW membership cycles with the calendar year. Renewals are coming in at a very good pace, but we will be sending out reminders early in January so please help us save on that expense by renewing now. Please join us for another year.

—Charles Alvis, President, American Association of Woodturners

Call for Entries: *deadline February 14, 1997*



"Turned for Use," The AAW's second invitational international exhibition, will celebrate utilitarian work reflecting fine craftsmanship, innovation, and personal expression. Everyone is invited to submit work for inclusion. The postmark deadline is February 14, 1997.

Send up to four slides for each entry (up to three entries per person), along with a complete description and a $5 entry fee for each entry (check payable to AAW) to the following address:

Rick Mastelli/"TfU"
RR 1, Box 5248
Montpelier, VT 05602

Each entry may be one piece or a set of pieces, if function calls for multiple pieces (as in a chess set, for instance). Your slides and description should help the jury accurately understand the quality of your work as well as its functional excellence. You might include a picture of the piece(s) in use. Sculptural pieces that only refer to useful objects are not called for. Real-world use would include (but not be limited to) bowls, platters, utensils, accessories, containers, tools, toys, games, musical instruments, furniture, and inventions. Surprise us!

Chosen pieces will need to be shipped in early July to the San Antonio Museum of Art—show opening July 17, the evening before our annual symposium. The exhibition will run eight weeks, possibly traveling to other venues. Photographic materials will be returned after a show catalog is produced.

We reserve the right to reject any object juried in by slides or descriptions that we feel did not accurately represent the actual object eventually shipped.

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Editor-in-Chief Rick Mastelli
RR 1, Box 5248
Montpelier, VT 05602
802/229-1320 (ph. & fax)
mastelli@plainfield.bypass.com

Art Director Deborah Fillion

Administrator Mary Redig
Eunice Wynn, Assistant
612/484-9094
fax 612/484-1724
75037.2123@compuserve.com

WWW page
http://www.RTPnet.org/~aaw

A Note about your Safety
An accident at the lathe can happen with blinding suddenness; respiratory problems can build over years. Take appropriate precautions when you turn. Safety guidelines are published in the AAW Resource Directory. Following them will help ensure that you can continue to enjoy woodturning.

On the cover: *For holiday visits, wine stoppers (which can be used to cork all sorts of other bottles as well) make great, quick house gifts. A little more challenging are a sheathed cork puller and a wine bottle stand. For detailed directions on these projects, see the articles beginning on page 12. Turnings by Nick Cook, S. Gary Roberts, and Phil Pratt. Photos: Rick Mastelli.*

Subscribers: If your issue arrives damaged through the mail, please contact the Administrator.

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Can't we all just get along?

In response to Steve Loar's "We're not in Kansas anymore"(*AW* December 1995) and subsequent letters from Mike Darlow, Betty Scarpino, and Judy Ditmer, it's time to realize that woodturning is a wonderful skill contributing to a vibrant diversity of styles and is not merely a noble craft in and of itself. If we adopt this mindset, issues of purity, both of craftspersons and craftsmanship, dissolve; *woodturning skill* is the key that unlocks the door to acceptance.

From my perspective, the "craft" of woodturning in contemporary times has become increasingly polarized and fragmented since the AAW symposium of 1990 held at Arrowmont School in Tennessee, my first exposure to a mass showing of lathe-turned works that included other skills and materials. That occasion established for me two truths about woodturning: Firstly, that woodturning could be safely taken beyond treen, traditional furniture, and architectural components; it is a skill that can open a myriad of doors, limited only by the craftsperson's own energy, inquisitiveness, and enthusiasm. Secondly, that craftspeople who have these diverse interests can find common ground through a shared interest in the skill of woodturning. Arrowmont 1990 was a rich, energizing experience that instilled in me an ongoing passion for woodturning.

I've come to see woodturning not as a "stepping stone" but as a building block. "Stepping stone"suggests a consciousness of purpose and direction that simply wasn't there at the time. Like many of us, artistic creativity and design sense grew from a desire to improve my woodturning skills. As I became more comfortable with them, I ventured further. Along the way I found that woodturning alone was restrictive, and I needed to incorporate other skills in order to advance. Woodturning has been and will continue to be the foundation for this travel.

Having travelled as far as we have in these few years, appreciating the products of our collective journeys need not be tempestuous. "Art" and "craft" both have their places in the world of creativity, given a relaxed gaze and an accepting mind. The issue of what is good and what is bad will resolve itself quite naturally just as it has since the beginning of time: the good will be accepted and exalted, the bad will disappear after the public and grapevine have had their editorial say. The spawn of plagiarists will be minimal and damned; they will be forced to create legitimately or quit the course.

Betty hits the issue of acceptance squarely when she asks about "drawing lines" under the heading of woodturner. Drawing lines polarizes, fragments, quantifies and qualifies "us" from "them." We've all been guilty of this. Now is the time to erase the lines, stand back and look at the big picture. So... how to embrace the "we?"

If I may employ an analogy, we have a wonderful family here that stretches around the world. Over the years, there have been marriages and other unions which have diluted the pureness of the bloodline. This generation of craftspeople have grown up and taken their place as contributors within the family. As in all large families, there is diversity. We have role models, rebels, traditionalists, and fledglings, all needing to coexist harmoniously while demonstrating their individuality. We are all family, and we deserve to be accepted for what we are and how we contribute rather than how we arrived.

—Mark Salusbury, Unionville, Ontario

Mike Darlow responds

The following statements were made in last September's issue:

- "Darlow expressed the desire to have all the big-A art makers go away or separate from mainstream woodturning." *—Rodger Jacobs*
- "Darlow's compass…promises we can locate TRUE WOODTURNING." *—Betty Scarpino*
- "Darlow would have us exclude people based upon certain types of work." *—Betty Scarpino*
- "Darlow has found the Big Book of Woodturning Rules, Laws, and Covenants." *—Judy Ditmer*

Although I am flattered that my letter in the June issue should receive responses from three such prominent turners, I am concerned because their statements have no foundation and because mud sticks. I have searched my letter for the views I am supposed to have expressed. They aren't there. Only three sentences seem to have the slightest relevance: "There has understandably been a flow of turners who have used turning as a stepping stone, and now call themselves sculptors. This makes more sense than making turning infinitely accommodating." And totally ignored earlier in the same paragraph: "The widening of turning horizons described by Steve [Loar] is good."

Betty's implications that I am some rabid self-appointed defender of pure historicism who only turns reproduction spindles are also false. If you don't have one at home, pop into a library or bookstore and look at my book, *The Practice of Woodturning*. Are "The Bush Potty," and "The Russian Caravan Teapot" mere reproduction spindles? Look also in *Fine Woodworking Design Books 3* and *5*. Pictured on the next page are recent functional pieces of contemporary design that I sell in quantity. Perhaps Betty and Roger should have done a little homework and pondered why I would want to exclude my own work from turning. My work may be humbler than that of big-A art turners, but its attributes

Darlow's candle snuffers: "No naughty traditional details such as fillets."

are those that turning needs to value if it is to have a healthy future.

My main concern in this debate is the mainstream, the bulk of turning. It is not healthy because of a lack of foresight by its practitioners. We have failed to focus on developing contemporary styles that have a market appeal matching that of the antique. The result is that the majority of turnings produced today are 18th and 19th century in style. The market prefers these styles because they are applied to functional items, are affordable, and when well designed delight the eye. There are also romantic overtones that may be unjustified but are nonetheless real. This failure of the mainstream is not the fault of art turners; the reasons are more complex. But the excessively high and unquestioned profile of art turning promoted by a glamour-desperate media and the bigotry of art turners is compounding the problem to the ultimate detriment of all.

Big-A art represents a minute proportion of annual woodturning output. It is an important area for experiment and development. It should feed and feed off the mainstream such that both are healthy. The focus on outward expansion is starving the mainstream center. When the inevitable realities of the market and the majority's frustrations assert themselves and a correction happens, there may be no strong center to carry through and support the viable branches of art turning that remain.

Like my three critics, I support inclusiveness, but it is not the simple concept that some would have us believe. Like any freedom, it carries with it the responsibility to consider others and especially the mainstream, and to value truth. I have not sought to exclude any from the turning community. I don't believe that it's possible to produce criteria for exclusion on the grounds of turning content, and if it were, I wouldn't support their use

—Mike Darlow, NSW, Australia

Betty Scarpino responds

Perhaps Mike Darlow and I are not so far apart in our concern about the growth and development of the field of woodturning. We both want woodturning to be known for well executed, good designs. As stated in my letter in the September issue of this journal, I believe that the way we achieve this is through inclusiveness and education, with critiques being part of that education.

The question posed in my last letter remains: who does the critiquing and how is it accomplished? Mike suggests that the marketplace is where the decisions about what is good and what is not good, will be made. Certainly in many cases that will be true. If you can't sell it, you probably won't make it.

This is where the educational role of the journal and other craft publications comes into play, because we should not always trust the buying public to know what is a worthwhile turning as opposed to simply a pretty chunk of wood, a derivative creation, or worse yet, a trendy novelty. Much of the turned wood that is being included in art and craft galleries and woodturning exhibitions is deeply rooted in the medium and the lathe, with some turners experimenting with carving, painting, texturing, and multi-axis applications. We call ourselves woodturners. To be better at what we do, we need ongoing discussion about what works and what does not work—from inside and outside the field.

I would welcome articles in this journal about the process of critiquing. We will then be better equipped to utilize critical commentary—in our own work as well as in relating to that of others.

Who gets to critique and how is it done? Critiques at AAW's Instant Gallery and discussions at the end of class sessions at Arrowmont are both valuable in their own way. Galleries critique by deciding what the public is offered for sale, as do art and craft fair juries, when they select or reject our slides. What do these people and others (educators, critics, historians) have to say that would benefit the whole field of turning?

I would like to hear from anyone who can help us better understand how to talk about our work in ways that go beyond tools and techniques.

—Betty Scarpino, Indianapolis, IN

Sharp is useful

After giving it some thought, I've decided to renew my membership, though I'm not entirely convinced it's worth it to me.

I'm a novice woodturner, having bought my lathe only a little over a year ago. I haven't used a lathe since high school shop, forty years back. I live in a small, relatively isolated community with no other turners nearby, and I have limited funds for out-of-state seminars, so I have to rely on self-teaching from books, videos, and magazine articles. Looking though the last three issues, I don't find very much of what I need. For example, on the subject of sharpening, the authors of the several books I have frequently contradict one another. I could pick a method at random and see how it works, and that's what I've done, but it would be really helpful if someone were to do a comparison of the dif-

ferent methods and explain their advantages and disadvantages. *Fine Woodworking* does this on a regular basis on other topics, and I had hoped for the same from this journal. So far, I'm a little disappointed.

In the last issue, a fair amount of space was devoted to discussion of whether turning is or is not art. It's an interesting question, and I'm glad someone thought to ask it, but personally, I would rather have read about how to get my tools sharp.

—Dave Shombert, Elkins WV

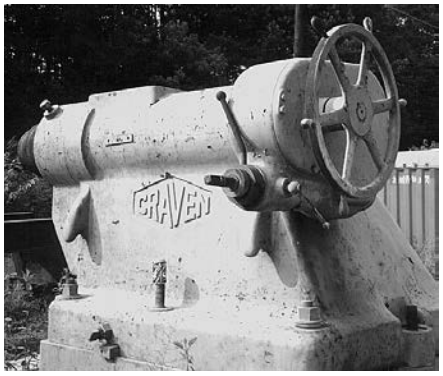
Let's face it

I'm an old newspaperman, and I think you're doing a great job on the magazine. I suggest you include more personality features. What is Todd Hoyer really like? David Ellsworth? Mark Lindquist?

—Bob Parks, Flint, MI

Craven, indeed!

Inspired after reading recent articles in this journal about homemade lathes, I went in search of parts in nearby salvage yards. Bingo! I hit the jackpot! Now all I need is a headstock to accompany the tailstock and steadyrest (note Sprite can in this photo of the tailstock, for scale).

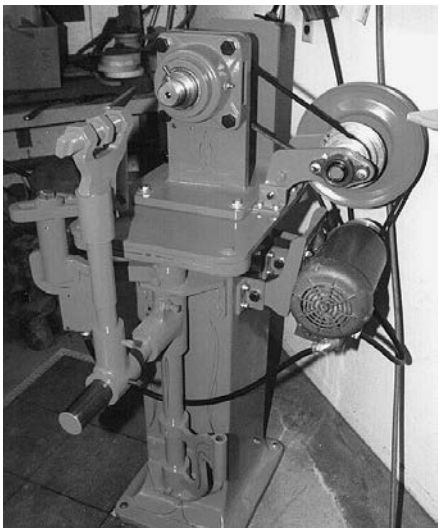


The spindle height is approximately 6 ft. Any suggestions as to horsepower or how I get it into my garage?

—Clark McMullen, Acworth, GA

Quality first, last, and always

Here's a photo of the lathe I recently made using my own shop facilities.



The machine uses a $2^{15}/_{16}$-inch shaft turned to 2 inches with $4^{1}/_{2}$ threads per inch at the shouldered end. The headstock bearing is good for 90 million revolutions. The cast iron base is filled with concrete to preclude vibration; the whole machine weighs around 1,200 pounds The tailstock is retractable, and there are various tool-rest configurations. There's a stepped-jack-pulley speed control of the $1^{1}/_{2}$-HP motor, a 60-position indexing sprocket, and a lock to keep the faceplate from unscrewing in reverse mode. Out-of-pocket expenses came to about about $950.

—Bill Kaline, Whittier, CA

Thanks for the lathe help

In the September journal, I requested contacts from people who had successfully built their own large lathes. I wish to thank all who responded with so very much information. I have sorted through it for all the best tidbits (much as a woodturner does a woodpile) and will incorporate them in my lathe when I build it. I look forward to sharing the results in a future issue of this journal.

—Chris Christenberry, Oklahoma City, OK

Thanks for the piece(s)

I want to thank Will Hunt for his articles in the March and June issues. As a teacher I admire how clear and easy to understand the directions were. I was ready to take the "segmented step," and my first urn turned out to be one of the best pieces I ever turned.

I'm now working through a box full of old plaques, the best clear, dry, #1 select 4/4 black walnut you ever saw. I look forward to another article by Will.

—Bob Deal, Jamestown, CA

EDITOR'S NOTE: *See pages 50–52 for Will Hunt's review of a book on segmented turning.*

Merci

I am 16 years old, I am French, and I began turning when I was 12. I have just finished the "summer of my life," visiting woodturners, collectors, and various woodturning events in the U.S., including the AAW symposium, where I was honored to be invited to demonstrate. It was wonderful to find my picture twice in the last issue of this journal!

American woodturners have all been so generous and so encouraging, I want to thank you for introducing me to such an exciting situation. I knew America was "the woodturning country," but I never imagined many of the things I saw. Particularly, I want to thank Albert LeCoff, Michael Brolly, Terry Martin, Hugh McKay, Mark Sfirri, John Jordan, Clark McMullen, Nick Cook, and Betty Scarpino, many who I visited with and all who I learned so much from. And, of course, my friend and teacher, Jean-François Escoulen, who encouraged me to do this. I hope you will all see my appreciation in the growth of my work.

—Remi Verchot, Digne, France

A smaller Instant Gallery

Having just finished reading the

LETTERS

September issue's coverage of the great Greensboro symposium, I would like to add my praise for and frustration with the Instant Gallery. It was awesome, exciting, and inspirational, but also overwhelming. There were almost too many pieces to adequately admire each. Talent is growing in leaps and bounds—a tribute to the AAW and its members' sharing attitude.

I think it is time to limit the Instant Gallery to one piece per participant. This would make the exhibit more manageable for the organizers and, more importantly, more viewer-friendly. Each piece of turned treasure has something to give. I for one would like to spend more quality time with the best an artist has to offer.

—Lyle Jamieson, Traverse City, MI

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The Board is discussing ways to improve the organization of the Symposium Instant Gallery, and would welcome hearing more on this issue from other members.*

Traveling by the book

We've just come back from an 8,500-mile trip through several states. We took our little green book, to meet turners and harvest native woods in various areas. I won't list all the wonderful people we met or the great turning ideas we encountered along the way or the particulars of the ton of turning wood we brought back in our little pick-up truck, but I encourage other turners to try traveling this way. It's not called a Resource Directory for nothing!

—Don Stewart, Santa Rosa, CA.

Erratum

In last June's issue, we neglected to note that the article, "Your Hearing,"was reprinted, with permission, from the newsletter of the North Florida Woodturners. The author, John Penrod, is now president of that group.

AAW NEWS & NOTES

WOOD PRIDE WEST/96

NOR-CAL WOODTURNERS INVITED THE other northern California chapters to join them in the second annual "Wood Pride West" judged exhibition, held last October at the Crimson Raven Gallery in Elk Grove, CA. Sixty pieces, representing some of the best work of the Nor-Cal group, the Redwood Empire Woodturners, the Bay Area Woodturners, and the East Bay Area Woodturners, were accepted. We hope this show will continue to grow until eventually it includes all the California clubs and those of neighboring states.

Judging followed a method being pioneered and perfected by Nor-Cal. Three judges independently score each piece on a scale of 0 to 10 in each of five technical and five artistic criteria. With a possible total of 300 points, 204 are required to qualify for a first place award. If none of the turnings scores 204 points, no first place ribbon is awarded Turnings are entered into various categories (boxes, carved turnings, closed vessels, open vessels, etc.) and the categories are further broken down into novice, advanced, or expert class, depending on the turner's experience. Each class is held to the same minimum score, and only one first, second, or third class ribbon is awarded in each category/class.

The technical skills are as follows:

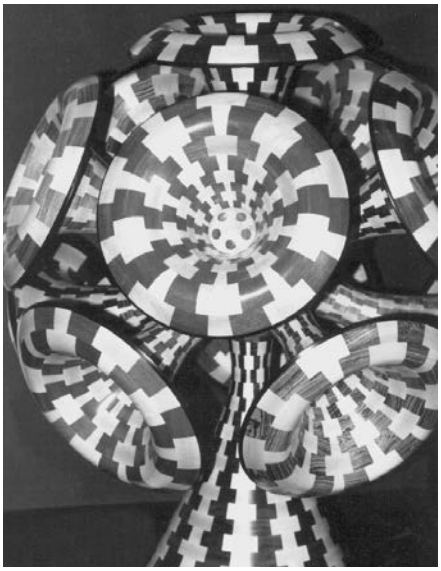
1. Degree of difficulty—the complexity of design and materials.
2. Technical skill—execution of detail, texturing, cleanness of cuts or joints, and use of color and figure.
3. Care in execution—smoothness of transitions, continuity of curves, the inside of hollow vessels, uniformity of wall thickness, etc.
4. Finish and techniques—quality of sanding, finishing, grain enhancement, etc.
5. Craftsmanship as an indication of the overall level of the turner's skill.

The artistry skills are as follows:

1. Utilization of materials—color, surface quality, texture, lamination.
2. Formal features—size, proportion, lightness/heaviness, curvature/flatness, transitions.
3. Correctness—visual and physical weight, unintentional warpage, movement, and use of properties.
4. Composition—unity/contrast, curves/lines, visual movement.
5. Artistic impact—overall effect, boldness in attempt, imaginative interpretation, subjective feeling (would I like to own this piece?).

The advantage of this scoring method is that it distinguishes and objectifies the criteria, rather than forming a decision on a first impression. It also minimizes individual bias, since the score is the aggregate of the three judges acting without conferring with each other. Each judge must establish in his or her own mind what kind of work is required for a given score in each criterion. We're excited about this scoring method and want to promote the concept among the woodturning fraternity. We welcome questions and comments from interested clubs.

—Jim Stout, Newsletter Editor, Nor-Cal Woodturners



Malcolm Tibbetts won first prize in the segmented/expert class with his four-thousand-piece "Alice's Garden."

BRANCHING OUT '96

THE THEME OF "BRANCHING OUT '96" was adults reaching out to share their experience and talents with our youth in woodturning—and vice versa—using found materials, like firewood and branches. Involving students was a key aspect to the grant we requested and received from the AAW. Students were involved from the beginning, from helping to write the grant to planning and conducting the workshop.

On a Saturday morning late last April, cars rolled into the parking lot of Craig County High School in New Castle, VA. Members of the Blueridge Woodturners had helped equip the school shop with nineteen lathes, three grinders, all sorts of turning stock and accessories, and a coffee table with doughnuts.

A nearby classroom was equipped with nine computers, on which the students showed the rest of us how to run lathe CAD programs and visit woodturning sites on the Internet. This classroom also served as an Instant Gallery. And running throughout the day were various woodturning videos.

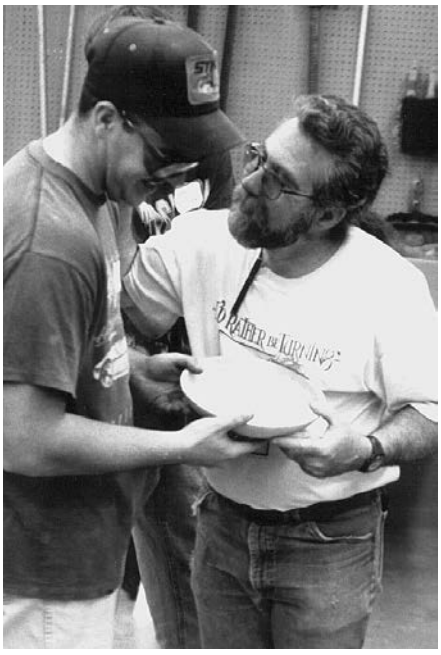
Our guest demonstrator, Dan Saboe of Horsham, PA, did an excellent job starting things off by taking us step-by-step from a chunk of curly maple to a delightfully detailed 6-inch goblet. The kids, as the rest of us, were inspired.

We assigned ourselves to the nineteen lathes, at least one youngster and one adult at each. Attendance included twenty-five current students, ten graduates, fourteen club members, two out-of-state turners, and several school officials, parents, and grandparents.

We made bowls, weed pots, candlesticks, tops with chatter work, platters, mushrooms, pens, yo-yos, and miniature birdhouse ornaments. Forty-five turnings by the students alone! And we photographed and videotaped it all, yielding a slide presentation set to music, an edited videotape, and a 125-picture album, selections from which appear here. Testament to the success of Branching Out '96 is the fact that in the months since, five participants have purchased lathes.

Thanks to the AAW for a truly educational experience—for students and adults alike.

—Mark St.Leger, New Castle, VA



Student Justin Brown and Deanna Brown guide their 20-month-old daughter on the Klein lathe, above. At right, Trent Bell helps student Tracy Cadwell to turn a cedar bowl. And far right, author compliments Daniel Crawford on his first bowl.

THREE TAKES ON QUALITY

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Here are three essays that address the issue of quality in the presentation of turned work, each from a different direction. Roger Austin, President of the Triangle Woodturners of North Carolina, has adapted a statement he made in his group's monthly newsletter in response to work submitted for exhibition at a local gallery.*

Alan Hollar, a wood finisher and turner in Newland, TN, writes his response to work at the "Turning Ten" Instant Gallery. (*For more on finishing, see Hollar's article, "Finishing Overview," in the June 1996 issue of* American Woodturner.)

And Stephen Garavatti provides a report on the "Mock Jury," one of the more provocative rotations of "Turning Ten." (For more on photographing your work, see Steve Meltzer's article in the June 1996 issue.)

These essays are particularly valuable now, as we approach our first international juried show, "Turned for Use." For more on that exhibition opportunity, see the President's Page, inside front cover.

Gallery wake-up call

We had a good discussion at our July meeting about dealing with galleries: approaching them, pricing for them, and shipping work to them. I spoke, too, about the quality of work that is appropriate to send to a gallery. The question was particularly pointed, as it relates to the work submitted for the show our exhibition committee arranged, July 18–August 22, at the Art Connection gallery in Raleigh, NC.

We had a problem with some of the pieces not being finished off appropriately for gallery display. I hated to pass judgement on folks, but it seemed to me that they had gotten lazy, not finishing pieces to completion. Sometimes, we all need to get jogged.

The two biggest problems were sanding marks and bruised wood. Design was another problem, but that will improve with time. I just couldn't live with the questionable workmanship, and so I held a handful of pieces out of the show, and here is why.

Obviously cracked, poorly sanded, or otherwise technically flawed pieces should be dealt with in the shop. Perhaps the exhibition committee could have made clearer the stature of this venue, and that it deserved the best our members could make, not pieces wanting to be unloaded. When dealing with a gallery, it's a good idea to visit, see the work on display, and talk with the management. You can tell what types of pieces would be suitable and possibly forestall difficulties. In the future, the exhibition committee will make sure that everyone has a good sense of such things.

Those of you who have taken art classes know that one typical segment is the critique. Critiques can be disheartening or invaluable, depending on your attitude. All the work in progress is spread out on display and the members of the class and/or the instructor critique it. Expansive egos are not a worthy trait when you are in this type of exercise!

As painful as this may sound to many, critiques can be eye-opening and stimulating experiences. They can open new directions in your work. I know. I had pieces in one class that I was very proud of and I was taken to task for some poor workmanship. I saw right away what my fellow students and instructor were saying and improved dramatically because I could focus on these problems after hearing someone else describe them. It would have been very difficult to recognize these problems by myself; after the critique there was no alternative but to confront them. The ideas I speak of here are meant in the spirit of that type of exercise.

What is quality? I want to discuss two types of quality issues that are important for any art or craft: objective and subjective.

It is important that we freely discuss and critique pieces that will be sent out into the public, first, by objective standards. We should look the pieces over and make sure that all the mechanical and physical criteria have been met. For example, in photography, a speck of dust on a print is just as unacceptable in an Ansel Adams print as in a Roger Austin print if it is for sale to the public. The public deserves (and expects) a technically perfect piece. In woodturning, poor finish, scratch marks, wood bruises, and other technical flaws are unacceptable in a gallery setting. If you are going to sell pieces in a gallery, technical excellence must be assumed.

Of course, you can sell a technically imperfect piece, but the purchaser should know that he or she is buying a second, just like a customer that shops in an outlet store. The gallery shows in which the Triangle Woodturners of North Carolina is involved are not in this category. Since our craft is still early in its acceptance by the public as a fine craft, we need to make sure that our gallery pieces are technically perfect when we submit them. Even if you lower the price to reflect the flaws, the public is not educated enough to know that they are purchasing a second. I realize that this is not universally accepted by all turners, but this is my opinion.

Is it pretty? Subjective quality issues are a different matter altogether. Once the technical issues are completed, you move to the issue of what makes a piece beautiful and/or exciting. The criteria that determine a masterpiece or a mediocrity are subjective. Why do we feel that one bowl is superior to another in form? Why does one bottom look better than another? Why is lift of the piece

THREE TAKES ON QUALITY (CONTINUED)

Last July's exhibit of the Triangle Woodturners of North Carolina at the Art Connection gallery in Raleigh featured almost a hundred pieces.

from the surface it rests on important, and how does it affect the piece? Do colors and texturing add to the woodturning or do they detract from the piece? Should the thickness be consistent? These are subjective issues. I may find a piece very interesting and pleasant to look at, and you may feel the opposite. These issues usually run in several directions.

First is form. I have turned some shapes that I later looked at, and they stunk. It was obvious that the form didn't work. Experience taught me not to repeat them, but it wasn't clear why the piece looked so bad. Later I realized that the piece seemed to be glued to the surface and didn't have lift. This appears to be a universal truth now, but it took me some time to get it through my head.

Another trait is curve. I have made a number of pieces where the curve was discontinuous for no good reason. Some of my pieces had flats and variations that became obvious only months after I made them. One way that I have found to deal with form is to eliminate the texture of the piece. Put the piece on a stand in a doorway, and turn off the lights so you see only the silhouette. What does the form look like? Is it pleasant to look at, or do areas catch your eye, wanting to be reduced or enhanced? This is also a good way to look for the "lift" of the piece on the surface, absent the beautiful wood grain interfering with the analysis.

Another exercise that I perform is to set the piece aside for a time and go back to it later. This might seem obvious, but many of us are preoccupied with getting finished and going on to the next piece before we have completed the current one. Some of the problems I had with the pieces I held out of the Art Connection show were characterized by this impatience. The turner was so anxious to get on with it that he did not do all the work needed to complete the piece. Time will take care of impatience, and you will go back to the piece with a fresh attitude.

—Roger Austin, Raleigh, NC

Five ways to turn a silk purse into a sow's ear

When I first returned from last June's AAW symposium to my shop in the mountains, I must say that I found the event to be exciting, exalting, and exhausting. While the heat outdoors made me ever so thankful for air conditioning, the experience indoors was well worth the trip off the mountain. I especially enjoyed the Instant Gallery. The quality and variety of work created on the lathe was nothing less than awesome, and the urge to drop everything and rush back to my own lathe was nearly overwhelming.

Which is not to say that every work was perfect—some turners seemed to be more comfortable with that portion of their work done on the lathe than they were with the part that comes afterward. Since some of you may know that my particular skills include twelve years experience as a professional wood finisher, it should come as no surprise that I took specific note of the finishes on all the work, and I felt the need to pass along some comments on the use of film finishes on turned objects.

I am a firm believer in film finishes, using them on nearly all my own work. I believe that no other finishing process offers as many options to enhance the appearance of wood. On the other hand, nothing can detract and distract from the nature and appearance of an object than a finish chosen or applied improperly. With that in mind, I would like to describe five ways to ruin a project.

1. "Make it look like plastic." Wood surfaces, even when sanded to "micro-mesh" smoothness, are not free of texture. A defect-free piece of wood still has pores, and film finishes can be used to highlight or eliminate this feature. Unfortunately, there is no middle ground between

these options. As a film forms over a porous surface, it will follow the contour of the pores, dips, and fissures. Each coat will ease the edge formed by these features, making them shallower. As the dips that create the texture are filled with finish, the surface area of the apparent depression is increased. If you fill the depressions all the way, eliminating all texture, you will have a finish like that on fine furniture, and that's okay, if that is what you are after. You will need to cut each coat of finish down by sanding, in order to fill the pores without building up a film that looks as thick as glass.

But if you keep the finish thin, say 2 or 3 mils (thousandths of an inch), you will ease the edges of the pores without filling them, and the film thickness will not be seen as a layer above the surface of your work. A bit more film thickness, and the pores and fissures will have lost depth and definition. Cutting back the finish at this point will not help much, as the film will have built up in the pores of the wood and much of the texture will be lost. From this point, you have three choices: strip it and start over, continue coating and sanding until all texture is gone, or stop and have an object that looks as if it were cast from plastic!

2. "Show the light, not the work." Glossy finishes are simple to achieve with films, but a piece that looks good under the shine of a high gloss is seldom easy. If your work is more vertical than horizontal, with smooth flowing curves, and a texture-free surface, then high sheen can be appropriate. Classical, refined forms lend themselves to a high polish, too. And small items are fairly safe for gloss film, assuming that surface preparation is impeccably done.

Larger pieces, however, especially those that spread across the table rather than reach for the sky, all too often end up as lumpy, distorted mirrors. A big, sprawling bowl with natural texture, voids, bark inclusions, and other "defects" will not be enhanced by the glare from lights bouncing off the surface and obscuring the features you hope to enhance. The degree of gloss should match the fineness of the piece, its form as well as its surface.

3. "Fix it with the finish." With opaque films like paint or colored lacquer, some minor surface problems can be hidden well enough that they cease to be noticeable. Transparent finishes, whether oil or films, will not compensate for poor surface preparation, and in many cases will magnify the problems. Oils and stains, especially, will darken scratches from sanding, as well as torn fibers and peck-out. Combine that with the lens effect from a film finish, particularly a shiny one, and these small problems become major eye-catchers.

4. "It works for a Corvette!" Automotive finishes are often deep, multi-coat colors with many layers of clear coating applied over them. These deep, glossy finishes are meant to catch the eye as well as to protect from long exposure to direct sunlight. If form and color are the primary features of your work, the ones that you really want to be noticed above all else, then they will work for you as a turner. If texture and grain, as well as other natural qualities of wood are your interest, deep shiny finishes are probably not for you.

5. "Make a funhouse mirror." Film finishes are wonderful things. Film finishes can also provide some surprises that are less than wonderful. Smooth arcs or long, even planes will reflect light in interesting ways, but if the arc or plane is not really a smooth sweep, but instead a series of shallow arcs within the longer surface, the shimmer of a film finish will magnify every deviation from the intended shape. This can actually be used to good effect in a few applications, but pay close attention to fair curves if that is what you intend. Otherwise you'll end up with a funhouse mirror made of wood.

Film finishes are not quite as simple as oil finishes, but they offer possibilities that can be achieved with no other product. Success will require that you know what you want to see before you start. You must develop as critical an eye for the results of your finish as you have for the results of your woodturning. Keep remover or stripper handy and be ready to yank the finish off and go back to square one. Practice your finishes as you practice your turning, and soon you will surprise yourself with the results.

As always, I invite your questions or comments. I can be reached at 704/733-9157 or 704/765-7375, or at 789 Tennant Road, Newland, NC 28657, or at AHollar789@aol.com.

—Alan Hollar

Mock jury, real world

Very often in today's litigious world, a jury will hold a person's future in its hands. After deliberation, a decision is made. At the mock jury presentation during this year's AAW symposium, celebrated woodturning artist Frank Cummings and crafts photographer Steve Meltzer told their audience how the jurors for art shows can make or break a woodturner's future.

Reviewing a set of slides submitted by participants, Cummings and Meltzer gave the audience a no-holds-barred enactment of the jurying process—clicking through the slides in real time and passing judgement on them without explanation or mercy. Then they went back to share with us their jurors' experience and evaluate the slides individually for image quality. It became evident

THREE TAKES ON QUALITY (CONTINUED)

how different a juror's perspective is from that of a maker.

So what should you keep in mind as you begin to shoot your work for future shows? In a sobering session, Cummings and Meltzer offered some sound advice that, if followed, will improve your chances of being juried into shows.

First, you cannot overemphasize the importance of the slide itself. Most jurors will never see the actual work. The slide is all they will see, and it must make a good impression—quickly and against great odds. Jurors sit in a dark room for hours on end viewing hundreds of images. Your slide must not trigger any negative reactions. There is no time for a second chance. You don't want to elicit even a maybe. You want the juror to have a positive impression of your piece immediately, despite whatever fog may have been induced by the dozens of slides that preceded it. Remember—all decisions about you and your career are based on that photograph. To a jury, it's more important than the piece itself.

Therefore, *don't treat your film like gold!* Practice shooting, and record what you did, frame by frame, so that when you get a picture that's right, you can duplicate the set up. It's a lot easier to know what you did to get a successful photograph by writing it down than to guess how you got there days or weeks later. And when you know a particular set-up is right, shoot multiple frames of the same piece so you can send out originals. Dupes are notoriously inferior to originals in color quality, latitude, and/or resolution. Do not rely on dupes to convey the impact of your piece.

Present the largest image possible. Fill the frame with the object. Orientation is not critical—in most situations it is acceptable to submit vertical slides of vertical work. Photographing a vertical piece in a horizontal slide leaves far too much space in the viewing area. If you are shooting miniatures, fill the frame with the image and *do not include references of scale* such as a coin or a pencil—they are distracting.

A serviceable photo—the piece fills the frame, the lighting conveys the shape and features of the piece, and the background is neutral—from the 1994 National AAW Chapters Exhibition. The piece is spalted beech with walnut inlays, 10¾" dia., by Charles A. Sheaff from the Central New England chapter.

As a general rule, *include only one object in a photograph.* Don't try to show the jury too much—keep it simple! Group shots call more attention to the arrangement than the individual pieces, they can't be read quickly, and they get rejected. (Of course, there are exceptions, when a work consists of multiple pieces, as in a chess set.)

What about background? *Aim for zero distractions in your background. The less color the better.* Blue is the hardest color to work with. It has a tremendously negative affect on the warmth of the image and will often make white woods look green. Red is too hot. Be safe instead of sorry—neutral grays usually work well, preferably graded from light to dark, from bottom to top.

Cummings and Meltzer offered some final advice about applying for any show: *Read and understand the application and any exhibition information.* Many people are juried out because they didn't follow the instructions or understand the nature of the show. Know something about the jurors, who they are, how they think. Jurors have track records, just like anyone else. Do a little homework and find out what the jurors value. When your presentation matches the jurors' expectations, you have a much better chance of success.

So what was our mock jury's verdict? Viewing fifty-seven slides, one at a time, took only ninety seconds. Only six of the slides were deemed "in" after this first run, and twenty were interesting enough to take a second look. The two jurors were in almost complete agreement on the choices. Thirty-one slides were rejected, never to be seen again in this mock contest, after only one-and-a-half seconds on the jurors' retinas! You don't have time for anything but the very best impression you can make.

There are several levels of review in juried shows. The "ins" and "maybes" would have been subjected to further review and culling, as the size and character of the show determined. But the first cut is always dependent on your slide. Remember that a good photo won't guarantee that you will be juried in, but a bad one will guarantee that you won't.

—Stephen Garavatti, Salt Lake City, UT

EDITOR'S NOTE: *All that said, you should not be intimidated from participating in the AAW's first juried exhibition, "Turned for Use" (see the inside front cover). We have allotted ample time for jurors to do right by your work, and in addition to studio-quality images, we are encouraging participants to use a variety of ways (written statement, photos of the object in use) to convey the quality and character of their pieces. The essays here are meant to encourage and direct participants toward making the best presentation possible.*

Mist it into submission

When I run into a recalcitrant piece that is showing all sorts of tearout and a rough surface despite my best efforts with the chisel, wet sanding it will hurry the surface repair over dry sanding. Just mist the work with a spray bottle, wait a minute or two (maybe apply a little more water) and you'll be surprised how fast you can get rid of the offending surface—as well as how fast the abrasive will load up! Use 80–120 grit, depending on how bad the situation is. As soon as the stock has dried, the usual sanding will be needed following this wet procedure.

—William G. Kissel,Yankton, SD

Another wet idea

I routinely wet the surface of most of my turnings with a 50/50 mixture of sanding sealer and turpentine prior to taking a final cut. As near as I can tell, the sanding sealer mixture wets the surface of the wood allowing it to be cut, not unlike wet wood. I use turpentine to thin down the sanding sealer because I have found that mineral spirits will gel in the can in a few days.

Occasionally, I do get a little loading up of the sandpaper, but once the sanding sealer has dried, I have no problems. Remember to put this preparation on wet and make the final cut or two while it is still wet. The showers are free!

—Robert Rosand, Bloomsburg, PA

Eliminate vibration

Making cuts on the outside of a bowl or platter (from its base to the rim) causes vibration between the tool and the wood because the tool is moving away from the mass of support provided by the headstock and faceplate. To solve this problem, use the ball-bearing center in the tailstock to apply pressure against the face, or the top, of the workpiece. This stabilizes the object by compressing it between tailstock and headstock.

Always use the tailstock to support the work when roughing out a form that's held by a mechanical chuck or a faceplate. Mechanical chucks work well, but they also position the object several inches away from the the headstock, thus increasing the potential for vibration. Using the tailstock will eliminate vibration and keep the wood from flying off the lathe.

—David Ellsworth, Quakertown, PA

Vicmarc fix

I found that in use, the screws holding the interchangeable jaws on the Vicmarc 6-inch chuck tightened to the point where they were impossible to remove with the supplied Allen wrench. The sockets stripped out and after trying various methods to remove the screws I finally resorted to drilling them out and replacing them.

When I inserted the new screws I used an anti-seize lubricant (available at auto supply stores). I use this each time I change jaws. This allows easy removal of the screws and quick and painless jaw changes.

—Ray McAdams, Ashdown, AR

PVC Expansion Chuck

I have been using PVC schedule-40 pipe for making spigot chucks, which has led to my using the same pipe to make expansion chucks. Using 4-inch i.d. pipe as an example, mount a 2-inch-thick waste block to a 6-inch faceplate. Drill a hole through the waste block to match the centerhole in the faceplate. Turn a $1^1/_2$-inch-deep groove into the waste block to receive the pipe (4-inch i.d.—$4^1/_2$-inch o.d.). Epoxy the pipe to the waste block being careful to center the pipe. When the epoxy dries, true up the o.d. and the end of the pipe using standard turning tools. Now turn the desired bevel groove on the end of the pipe and lay out and cut four equally spaced slots down the length of the pipe, from the outside edge all the way down to the waste block. Slide the appropriate size hose clamp over the PVC and tighten the clamp to shrink the o.d. of the pipe. Slide a prepared bowl blank over the chuck and loosen the hose clamp, allowing the PVC to expand into the bowl blank.

So far I have used this PVC expansion chuck to turn bowls as large as 12 inches in diameter by $3^1/_2$ inches deep without any problems. I can think of three improvements that may someday become necessary:

1. A 4-inch plywood disc inside the PVC pipe that could be pushed out or pulled back to expand or allow the pipe to be contracted as needed.

2. Drill and screw from the outside of the waste block thru the PVC for added security.

3. Use the hub end or piece of a PVC fitting to take advantage of the thicker wall.

—Wane Shearon, Burlington, NJ

Get a grip on it

To remove a small turning such as a drawer knob from its screw-center mounting, I use a set of pump pliers, over the serrations on the jaws of which I tape a strip of pine or basswood. This gives a strong grip without danger of dents on the finished surface.

—Palmer Sharpless Newtown, PA

EDITOR'S NOTE: *An even simpler idea may be to use a rubber jar lid remover, available in grocery stores.*

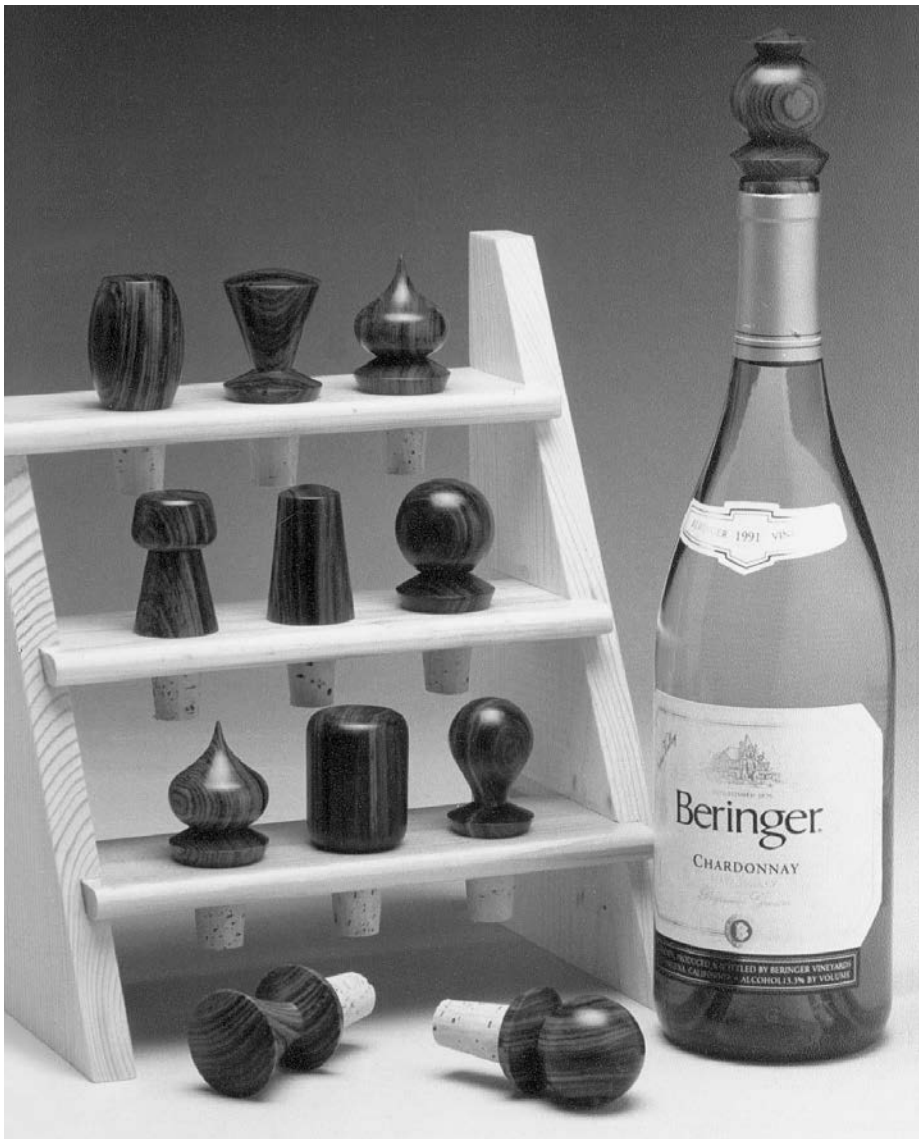
There's no end to good turning tips. We need to hear from more of you. Just take a minute, jot down an idea that's saved you time, made things easier, or improved the quality of your work, and share it with the rest of us. I'm happy to receive any and all contributions at Box 30, Bloomsburg, PA 17815.

—Robert Rosand

WINE-BOTTLE STOPPERS

Production techniques for speed and efficiency

NICK COOK



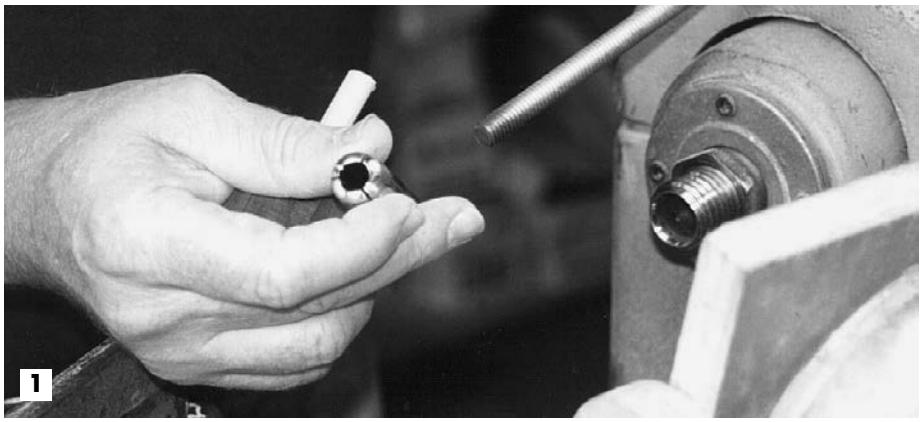
I STARTED TURNING MORE THAN twenty-five years ago, first as a hobby, then to help out with my furniture making. Currently, I turn full time. At first I wanted to produce one-of-a-kind bowls and vessels for the gallery market. Then I started to do craft shows and got more exposure. My work sold fairly well, but as I turned bigger and better pieces, and tried increasing my prices accordingly, I found that the market for high-ticket items became smaller and smaller. I needed some less expensive work to fill in the gap. It was time to start limited-production items.

I met Rude Osolnik, the grand old man of woodturning, in 1972. He became my mentor over the next few years. He told me early on that if I wanted to make money with my turning, I would need to do more than just bowls and vessels. He suggested twig pots and candlesticks, two of his more successful items. He had always had very good luck with both. I have never really liked the idea of twig pots, and I still struggle with candlesticks that are unique and do not resemble Rude's. But there are a lot of other possibilities.

I started my production work with a version of the French pastry rolling pin, then a baby rattle, honey

Sources of Supply

- Craft Supplies USA, 800/551-8876: corks, dowels, Briwax.
- Nick Cook–Woodturner, 770/421-1212: corks, dowels, collets, Briwax.
- Packard Woodworks, 800/683-8876: corks, dowels.
- Tropical Hardwoods of Latin America, 619/434-3030: cocobolo.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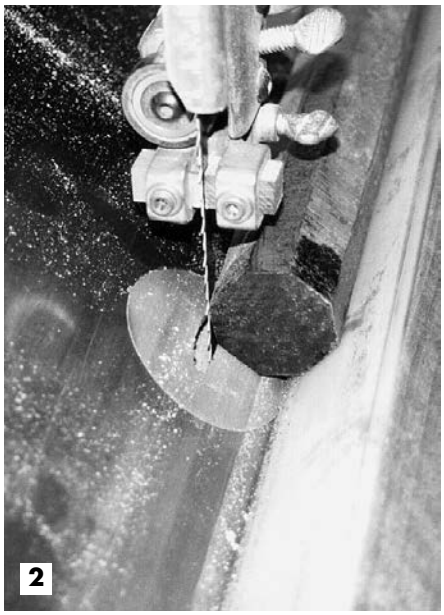


dippers, and the list grew. It was not until 1989 that I started working on the idea of producing wine stoppers. I had seen all sorts of stoppers made from a variety of materials including clay, pewter, glass, and, of course, wood. All the ones I had seen had the same problem—the cork would not stay attached to the decorative portion; it would simply break off when pulled from a bottle. There had to be a way to reinforce the connection and keep the stopper from breaking.

I found a source for laboratory corks with a hole through them and thought of putting a dowel through the hole and into the turned top. The first ones I found had a $1/2$-inch hole through the center and were a little too large for most standard bottles. I tried a variety of methods for holding the wood for turning and for connecting the cork to the top. I experimented with drill chucks, screw chucks, and end-mill chucks for metal lathes. All worked to some extent, but they also caused various problems.

Then I remembered having seen Del Stubbs use a machinist's round collet for holding his small goblets and spinning tops. It should work just as well for bottle stoppers. The machinist's round collet is not as commonly used today as it has been in the past, having been replaced by a variety of other specialized collets. Unlike a drill chuck, with its individual jaws, the round collet surrounds the dowel completely and thus holds the work much more securely **(Photo 1)**. The collet is made with a Morse taper to fit into the spindle of the lathe and is available in sizes from $1/16$ to $1/2$ inch for a standard No. 2 Morse taper. I use a $3/8$-inch collet for bottle stoppers and spinning tops. I also have other sizes for other applications. The collet must be fitted with a draw bar to pull the collet into the spindle of the lathe to close it around the dowel. The back of the collet has $3/8$ x 16 internal threads which fit standard all-thread available at any hardware store. Cut the all-thread to fit your lathe, allowing enough to extend on the outboard side of the headstock to accommodate a knob you can use to close the collet. You can make one from wood or order a plastic or metal one from a local supplier. You can now prepare your stock and turn your stoppers.

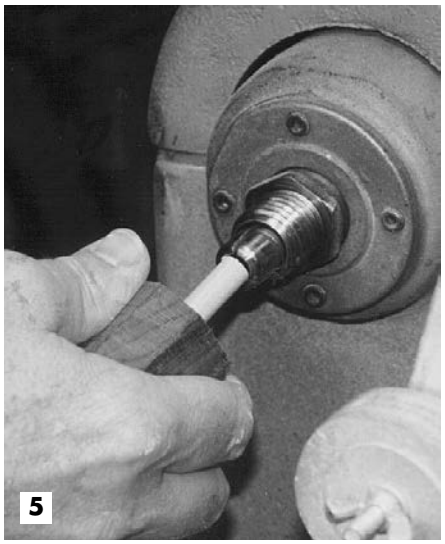
I use cocobolo from Mexico almost exclusively for my stoppers. It is not only colorful and has beautiful grain but it also cuts and finishes very well. Most any hardwood will work. Many turners use natural-edge burl, tagua nuts, Colorwood, and Dymmond wood, as well as Corian and combinations of several materials.

I take 6/4 squares of cocobolo and, with the bandsaw table tilted at 45 degrees and the fence positioned $1\,1/2$ inches from the blade **(Photo 2)**, cut the corners off. An octagon is much faster and easier to turn than a square. It's also faster to cut the corners off before cutting the material to length. I use the bandsaw to cut the blanks to length as well. A sliding table with a permanent stop ensures that each blank will be the same every time without taking the time to measure for each setup. I cut my blanks $1\,15/16$ inches long, but you can adjust the length as needed for your own designs.

I have another sliding table set up for cutting the dowels to $2\,5/16$ inches long. You should avoid dowels from do-it-yourself and hardware stores. They are generally cut green and distort as they dry, leaving them undersized and out-of-round. Maple and birch dowels made for the furniture industry will be much more consistent.

The drill press is the next stop. A vertical v-block is attached to the table and the blanks are centered in the block. A $3/8$-inch-diameter by 1-inch-deep hole can be drilled in the end of each blank **(Photo 3)**. Use care in choosing drill bits. Many of the imported woodworking/brad-point bits are inconsistent in size and do not hold up well. I prefer parabolic bits used in the metalworking industry. I have them reground to a brad-point by the local sharpening service. The parabolic shape will cut faster and clear the chips better without overheating your blank.

A drop of superglue in the hole and a hammer to drive the dowel into the blank **(Photo 4)**, and you are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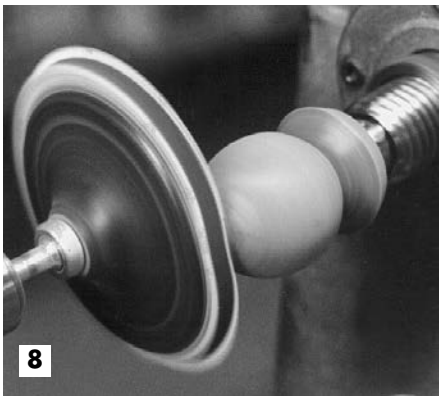
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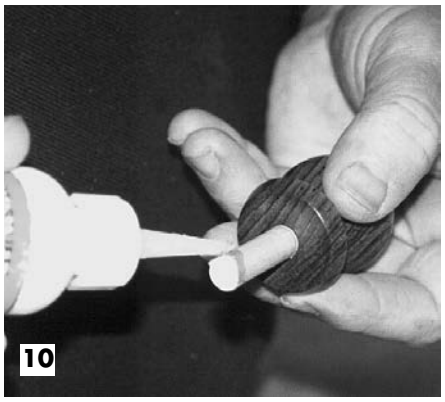
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ready to turn wine stoppers.

The collet may be tight at first but you should be able to get the dowel into it **(Photo 5)**. Leave about $1/8$ inch between the stopper blank and the collet so you can undercut the bottom. Any more than $1/8$ inch will cause the blank to vibrate too much, causing unintended chatter. Any less than $1/8$ inch and you will not be able to make a finishing cut on the underside.

Set the lathe speed at 1500 to 2000 RPM and adjust the tool rest just below center. Turn on the lathe and start roughing the blank with a 1- to $1\,1/2$-inch skew or a $1/2$-inch spindle gouge. I use a $1\,1/2$-inch oval skew with a long, flat bevel **(Photo 6)**, a $1/2$-inch spindle gouge with a fingernail grind and a $1/2$-inch skew for fine detailing. Use the skew and/or your spindle gouge to turn the blank to your own design **(Photo 7)**.

If this is your first attempt at turning stoppers, you may wish to bring up the tailstock with a live center to stabilize the work and help avoid breaking the dowel. As you gain confidence and experience, you can turn without the tailstock. You can make the shape as simple or detailed as you wish. Your imagination is your only limitation. As a production item, I tend to keep my shapes fairly simple. I can't spend any more than two to three minutes on each stopper, start to finish.

Finishing is quick and easy with

Wine stoppers can take all sorts of forms in all sorts of materials. In this sampling, from left to right, the mushroom stopper and Santa stopper are by Robert Rosand, the Colorwood stoppers are by Stephen Garavatti, and the spalted maple stoppers are Rodger Jacobs'.

cocobolo, but beware of the dust. Many are highly allergic to it. I use a very efficient dust collection system to remove sanding dust. I start with 180-grit sandpaper on a disc sander **(Photo 8)**, go to 220, then 400, and finish up with 600 grit. Wet/dry sandpaper works best with exotics due to their inherent resins. I use Briwax to finish the cocobolo stoppers. I apply it with 0000 steel wool **(Photo 9)** and buff it with a dry soft cloth for a final finish. Other finishes may be more appropriate for other varieties of wood.

You are now ready to attach the cork. Put a small drop of gap-filling super glue near the end of the dowel **(Photo 10)** and twist the cork onto the dowel **(Photo 11)**. It should fit tightly against the bottom of the turning.

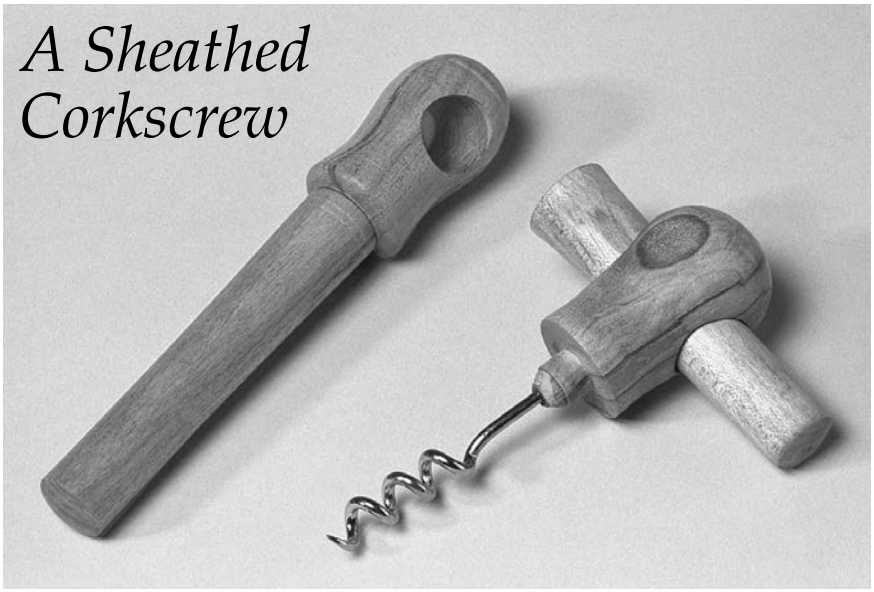
Use a belt or disc sander to flush the dowel with the end of the cork **(Photo 12)**.

The finished product makes an excellent stocking stuffer or a great all-occasion gift for almost anyone. It's especially nice attached to a bottle of wine with a ribbon and presented as a gift to dinner hosts. As a craft show item, a stopper is a perfect high-quality, low-cost impulse-buy. It's equally quick and easy to make!

Nick Cook is a production turner in Marietta, GA. Photos: Cathy Cook.

Photos this page: Rick Mastelli

A Sheathed Corkscrew



TO MAKE A SHEATHED CORKSCREW, start with a 7-inch blank, $1\frac{1}{4}$-inch square. Cut it in two pieces: a $2\frac{1}{2}$-inch piece for the head, and a $4\frac{1}{2}$-inch length for the sheath. On the ends where you made the saw cut, drill a $\frac{3}{32}$-inch hole 1 inch deep in the head and a $\frac{7}{16}$-inch hole $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep in the sheath. Drill a $\frac{5}{8}$-inch hole on-center through the side grain of the head.

Now turn a piece of dry hardwood with a #2 Morse taper on one end and a $\frac{7}{16}$-inch mandrel on the other. Slide the sheath hole over the mandrel and support the other end with the live center. Slightly taper the outside of the sheath so that halfway along its length, it's just under $\frac{5}{8}$ inch.

Mount the head between a spur drive and a tailstock cone that's centered on the $\frac{3}{32}$-inch hole you drilled earlier. Turn a tenon around that hole that will fit snugly into the $\frac{7}{16}$-inch sheath hole. Shape the head (decorating it with a ring or two, if you like), and part it off. Using a two-part epoxy, glue the corkscrew (available from Craft Supplies 800/551-8876 and Woodcraft 800/225-1153) into the head. Et voilà.

—Phil Pratt, Greensboro, NC

Homemade Pin Chuck

FRED HOLDER

WINE BOTTLE STOPPERS HAVE BEEN my best seller at craft fairs over the last two years. In early 1994, I began to experiment with this new product idea using corks that I drilled myself with a homemade jig and a 3/8-inch Forstner drill. I later gave up drilling those corks because I found that I could buy them already drilled. (see Sources of Supply on page 12).

I tried holding the blank in a Nova chuck and parting off at the top. I turned the knob to shape and drilled a 3/8-inch hole to take the dowel for the pre-drilled corks I had made. It was too hard to get a good finish on the top with this method. I tried installing the dowel and then holding the dowel with a regular Jacobs chuck. The chuck always cut into the dowel and made it run off center. That was hardly satisfactory.

I next tried drilling the blank, gluing in the dowel, and then chucking the dowel in the Jacobs chuck. Again, the chuck cut into the dowel and the knob was not concentric with the dowel. It didn't make a very good bottle stopper. Also, with harder woods, I often broke the dowel while trying to turn the stopper knob.

I solved this problem with a homemade pin chuck (see drawing). I took a piece of 3/8-inch mild steel rod about 2 inches long and filed a flat about one inch long that was deep enough that a small nail laid on the flat was just as high as the un-filed portion. I removed the point and head from the nail, cutting it to fit the length of the filed portion.

To use the pin chuck, I chucked the round end in either my Nova chuck or my Jacobs chuck, lay the nail (pin) on the flat area of the 3/8-inch rod, and slip on the pre-drilled stopper blank. Bring up the tailstock to lightly support the blank. Turn on the lathe and turn the blank. That 3/8-inch mild steel will not break. Turn the outside of the blank concentric to the hole, and you have a very nice bottle stopper knob ready to assemble to the dowel and cork.

I had but one more problem: Not all of my stoppers were turned from hard, exotic woods. On softer woods, the pin dug into the blank and allowed the blank to wobble a bit, again not satisfactory.

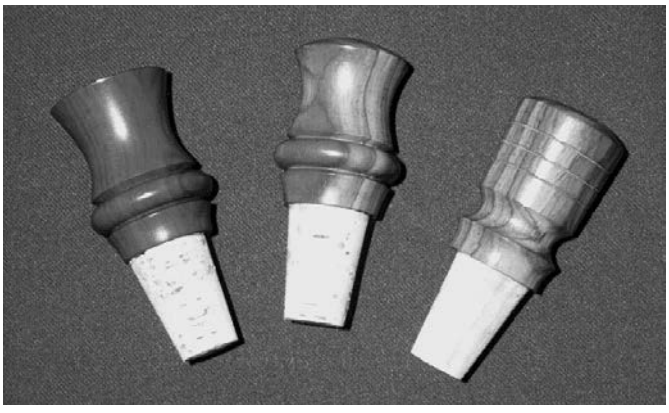
Finally, I laid out the $50 plus for the dowel chuck from Craft Supplies in Provo, UT. That solved my problems. This is a regular Jacobs chuck that has been ground to close on a 3/8-inch dowel without damaging the surface. Now, I could drill the blank, glue in the dowel, mount the blank by means of the dowel, turn the blank, sand it, finish it, remove it from the chuck, apply glue, and install the cork. For final polishing I return the blank to the chuck and part off the dowel with a skew chisel or my special small parting tool made from a concrete nail.

I've now turned about 300 of these stoppers. I finish them with a French polish mixture of shellac, alcohol, and linseed oil in equal parts (I got this from one of Bonnie Klein's videos). Apply this, let it soak in, and burnish it in with the damp cloth used to apply the mixture, and you have a near French Polish finish.

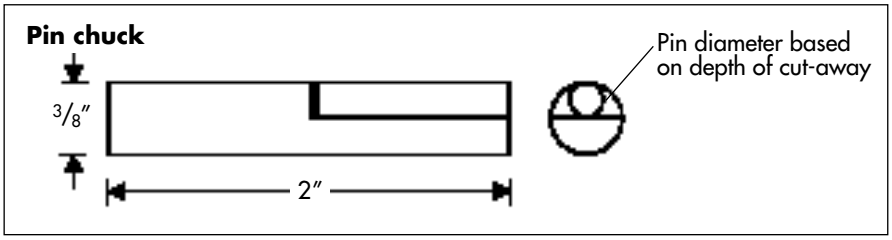
The size of a bottle stopper is a matter of personal taste and balance, unless you choose to use the bottle stopper boxes available from Craft Supplies. In that case, the blank should be 2 inches long by 1 1/4 inch square with a 3/8-inch dowel that is about 2 1/2 inch long. I drill the hole in the blank about 3/4 inch deep. That's deep enough to hold, but leaves enough dowel sticking out to have a good 1/2 inch for chucking after the cork is installed. (I spin the assembly dry of excess glue.)

I still use my pin chuck if I get a very hard blank that could cause the dowel to break while turning. Otherwise, I glue in the dowel, chuck it up, bring up the tailstock for support during roughing and most of the turning, and get on with the job.

These things are fun to turn and you have a lot of flexibility in what you can do with them. They make excellent gifts for friends and family, and they sell well at craft fairs. What more can you ask?



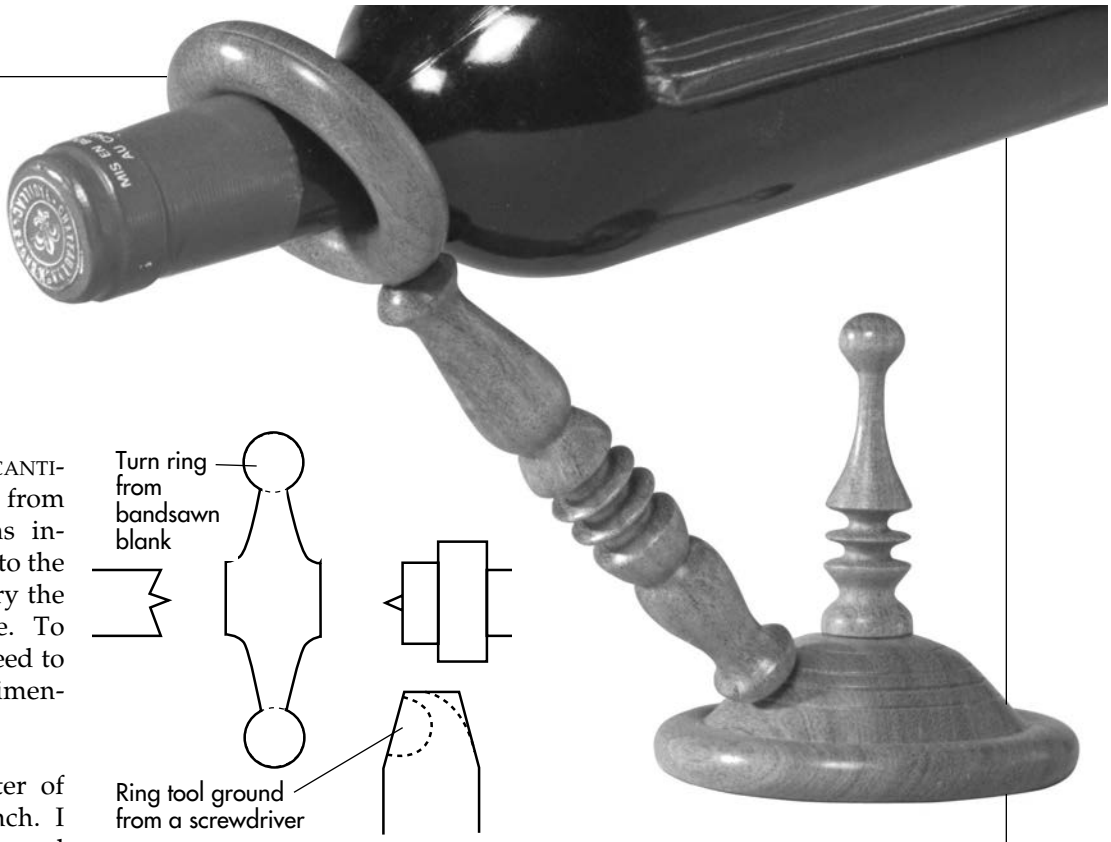
Author's bottle stoppers are his best seller at craft fairs. Below, the pin chuck he made to hold them.



Fred Holder, a retired printer, turns wood in Camano Island, WA.

Turned Wine-Bottle Stand

S. GARY ROBERTS



I HAD MADE SOME OF THE CANTILevered wine-bottle holders from dimensional lumber and was intrigued with people's reaction to the balanced bottle. I decided to try the same principle on the lathe. To make this project work, you need to pay close attention to the dimensions.

The ring—The inside diameter of the ring needs to be $1\frac{3}{8}$ inch. I made mine from mesquite and Texas ebony. Both these woods have excellent lateral grain strength. If your wood of choice has less strength, increase the thickness of the ring, but leave the inside diameter $1\frac{3}{8}$ inch. Remember to keep the center of the hole the same distance from the center of the base. To do this, if you increase the thickness of the ring, deduct that same amount from the length of the support turning.

To turn the ring, a number of procedures are possible. I tried drilling a $1\frac{3}{8}$-inch hole and using a wood mandrel, which requires dismounting and reversing. I used a screw chuck which worked well and allowed access to both sides of the ring. But the easiest method was to bandsaw the blank and mount it between a spur center and a live center, using a ring tool I ground from a screw driver (as shown in the drawing above). You can also use a $\frac{3}{8}$-inch spindle gouge to shape the ring, and part off with a parting tool.

After separation, I use a 1-inch-diameter drum sander mounted in a drill chuck to smooth out the center. Drill a $\frac{1}{4}$-inch hole in the center of the edge of the ring. A good way to position the bit is to add a skew line to the ring while it is still in the lathe.

Support spindle—Between centers turn the spindle into a $\frac{5}{8}$- to $\frac{3}{4}$-inch cylinder. Measure and mark the ends $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches apart. Outside these lines, turn a $\frac{1}{4}$-inch-diameter by $\frac{3}{8}$-inch-long tenon at each end.

The spindle turning gives you a chance to be creative and practice your skew techniques.

The base—Turn the base about 3inches in diameter with an area thick enough to drill a $\frac{1}{4}$-inch hole $\frac{3}{8}$-inch deep at a 45-degree angle. Again, you can be creative and diverse on the base. The angle of the drill hole is critical and needs to be accurate. On a couple, I added a finial to the base, just for looks. Align the grain and with a square make sure the ring is parallel with the table surface. I use cyanoacrylate gap-filling glue. It sets quickly and holds well.

Finish—I use Deft clear satin liquid with about 30 percent lacquer thinner added. This dries quickly, seals the wood well, and a few coats give a nice finish. Let set overnight, and buff with a muslin wheel.

Gary Roberts turns in Austin, TX.

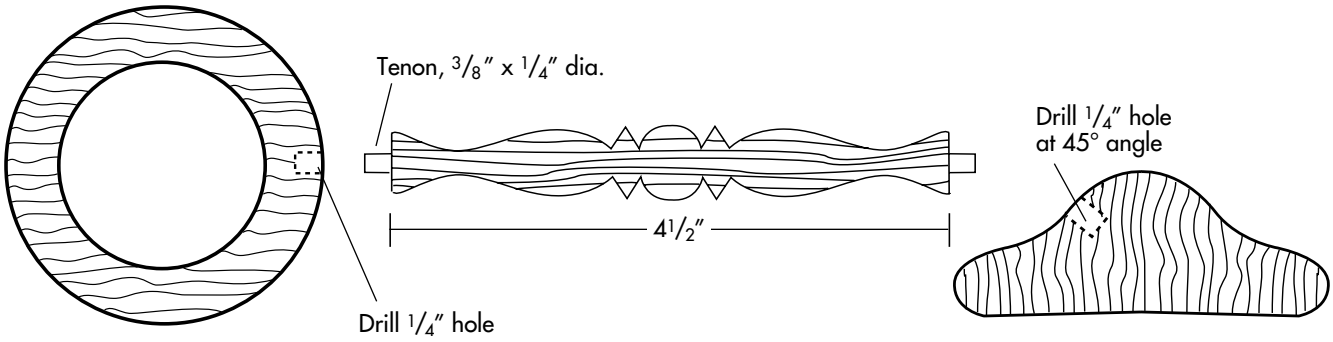


Photo: Rick Mastelli

SKEWING A BEAD

Mastery through practice and understanding

GEORGE HATFIELD

AS A FULL-TIME TEACHER OF WOODturning for twenty years, I can truly say that the one thing I have found most woodturners have difficulty with is turning a bead with a skew chisel. The beginner has difficulty because there are a number of things you have to remember—and they all have to be remembered and applied at the same time. Failure to comply with any of the actions or the smallest mistake and *bang*, you've got a dig-in.

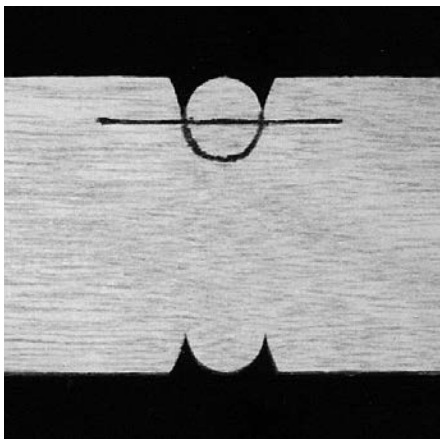
In frustration many people give up and use the gouge. But a gouge has a number of disadvantages over the skew:

- A gouge can't make the deep, narrow clearance cuts necessary to begin a bead; you have to begin with a skew anyway, and it's inefficient to change tools.
- A gouge can't make clean shape-joining cuts between beads.
- A gouge is slower than a skew.

A lot of books tell you what to do to turn a bead—but what you also really need to know is what you are doing wrong when you have a dig-in. With the lathe revolving at around 2500 rpm and the tool being maneuvered in an area the size of a bottle cap, the slightest mistake happens so fast that even a stop-frame video camera can't pick up what you are doing wrong.

In this article I will tell you what is required to turn a bead, plus make some suggestions on how you can check to find out what you are doing wrong.

To practice, I suggest you start with a piece of 2-by-2-inch medium-density timber, 12 inches long. Mount the timber in the lathe and turn it down to the largest-diameter cylinder possible, ensuring that all the flats have been turned off and the cylinder is smooth.



A bead is a semi-circular shape.

Figure 1: 3/4-in. Detail chisel

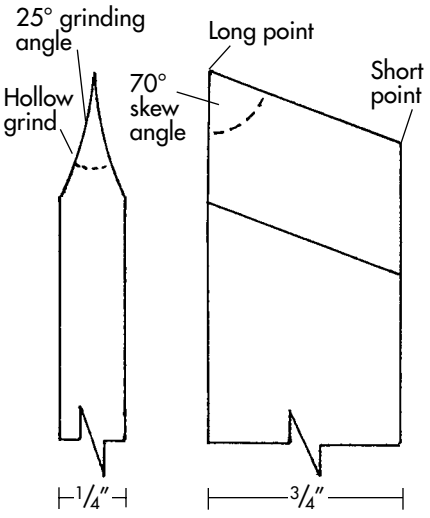
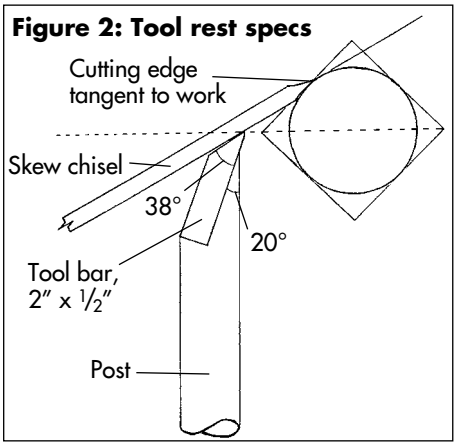


Figure 2: Tool rest specs



The shape of a bead

Before turning any shape, a turner must have a clear concept of what the shape should be. A true bead is the top half of a circle, that is, a full, well-rounded, symmetrical shape with the highest point in the middle and both sides finishing vertical. The depth of the bead should be half the width (photo left).

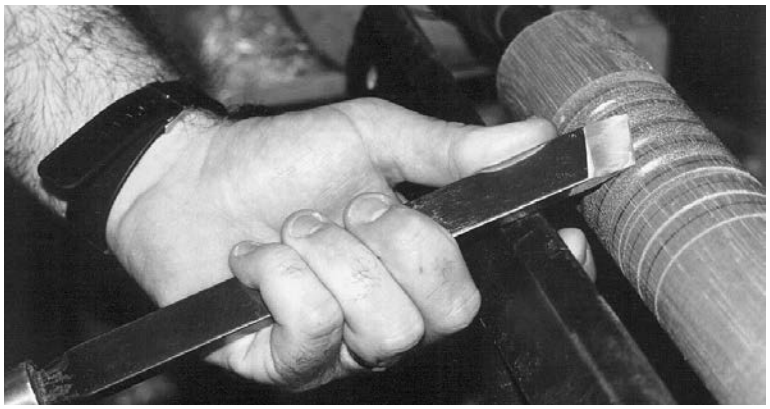
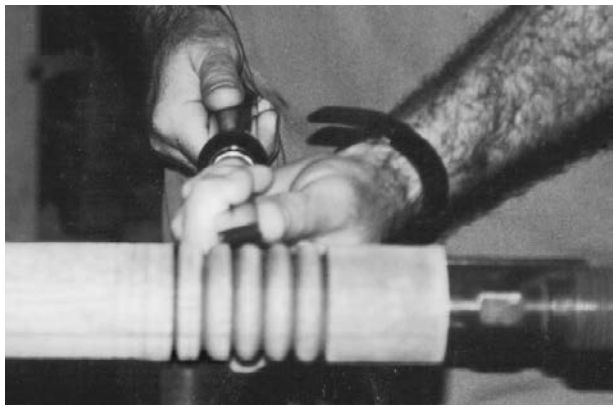
The tool

The first consideration is the tool. It is almost impossible to do any job efficiently without using the correct tool in good repair. Although a 1/2-inch bead may be turned with various size chisels, I prefer what I call a 3/4-inch detail chisel. In fact, I use this tool to do almost all my detail skew work, except for those areas in which it physically won't fit, where I use instead a 1/4-inch detail chisel. The 3/4-inch skew (1/4 inch thick) has reasonable rigidity, fits into most areas, and keeps the long point clear of the work. Figure 1 shows this tool and names its parts. Figure 2 shows the tool in relation to the tool rest.

Stance, grip, and procedure

Face the lathe with both feet about 4 inches out from and pointed toward the bed. Your feet should be spread to about the width of your shoulders to allow you to transfer your weight from one leg to the other without losing your balance.

I find the underhand grip to be the easiest for the beginner to use, as it allows more tool control (photos facing page, top). The chisel is clamped onto the tool rest between the index finger (which is under the tool rest) and the thumb on top; the other three fingers wrap around the chisel for extra support. This gives you maximum control to locate the cutting edge while the other hand grips the

In the underhand grip, left, the tool is clamped to the rest by the index finger and thumb. Hold the handle against the side of your body for extra support, right.

handle about 12 inches back from the tool rest—giving you leverage and the ability to roll the tool. The handle is held against the side of the body to give you extra support (photo upper right).

Turning procedure amounts to three steps:

1. Mark out both sides and center of the bead.
2. Cut vee cuts on either side of the bead for tool clearance.
3. Roll cuts from the top center to either side of the bead. (It is better practice to turn one complete bead at a time.)

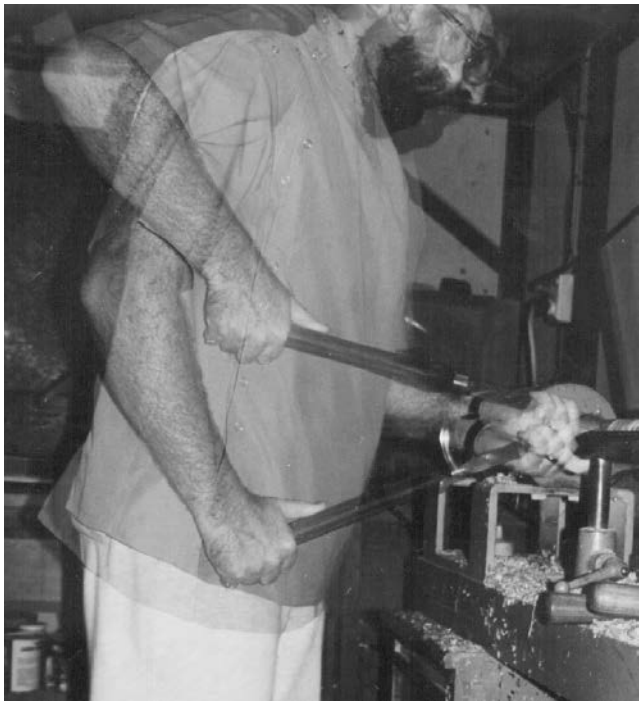
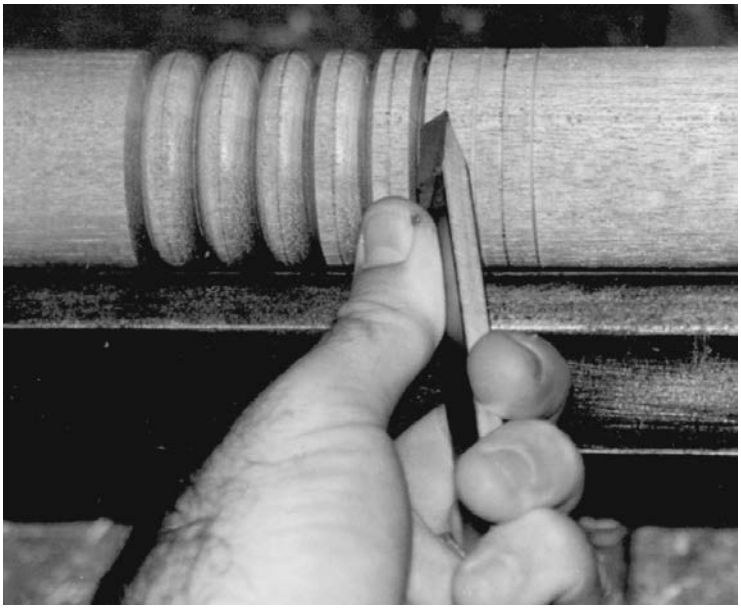
Marking out

Set a pair of dividers to $1/2$ inch wide, support the dividers on the tool rest, and while the lathe is revolving, carefully mark a series of $1/2$-inch spaces along the whole length of the timber, using a dragging action to prevent the dividers from grabbing.

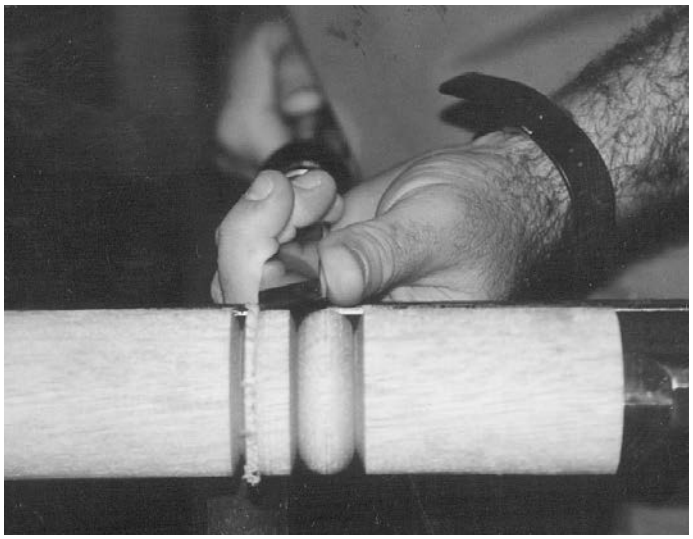
With the lathe still revolving, mark (by eye) the centers of the spaces with a pencil—again, in dragging action. The divider marks will be the side of the beads, the pencil lines should remain when the beads are done; otherwise, you will have lost the diameter.

Vee cuts

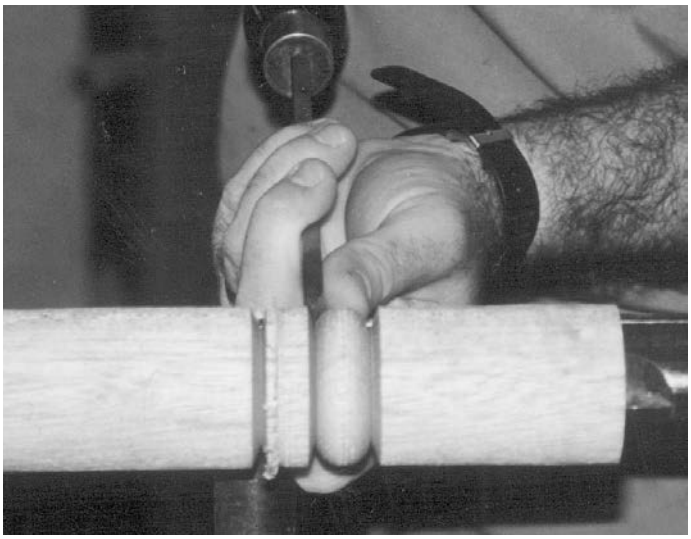
Vee cuts are made to give tool clearance when shaping the bead. Using the long point of the chisel, make a slicing cut on either side of the bead. A slicing cut is made by placing the chisel on its edge (that is, vertical) on the tool rest, with the long point touching the cylinder at a tangent. Now lift the handle so the point cuts, in an arc, about $1/8$ inch deep (photo below left). The slicing action—in contrast to the plunge cut, which pushes straight in rather than arcing down—will reduce the possibility of your chisel point burning. To widen the slicing cuts, position your chisel so the long point is at a tangent and touching the cylinder $1/16$ inch away from the first cut. The chisel should be in a straight line to the bottom of the first cut (photo below right) and tilted on the tool rest so the cutting

Create vee-cut clearance for your bead with a slicing cut, raising the handle, left. To deepen the vee cut, tilt the skew slightly and line up the cutting edge with the bottom of the cut, above.



Begin shaping the bead with the tool square to the lathe axis, flat on its side, and tangential to the cylinder.



End by "tucking the bead," the edge vertical and the handle high.

edge is in line with the chisel. To check this, run your eye down the cutting edge. If the cutting edge is either side of the line of the chisel, there is a chance that the top section of the cutting edge will grab the timber and run along the job in that direction.

Now lift the handle in a slicing action, and you should make a ring-shaped shaving. Repeat the process on the other side of the original cut. The depth of the vee cuts should now be just over $^3/_{16}$ inch.

Shaping the bead

To cut with the grain, you must cut from the center (pencil line) of the bead down on both sides. This is where people have all the fun (the dig-ins), and the reason is simply that they are not cutting on the short point.

Place the chisel on the tool rest, square to the lathe axis, flat on its side, and tangential to the cylinder. Now tilt the chisel up slightly so the short point picks up a shaving, then roll the chisel over onto its edge to cut part of the quarter circle (photo above left). Remember, the cut you are making must be kept on the short point only and it must stay cutting tangentially to the cylinder.

It will take at least two or three cuts, working from the top to the bottom of the bead. As you are approaching the vertical part of the cutting action, you may find it advantageous to tilt the handle about 5 degrees off square to the outside of the bead. You should get ring-shaped shavings.

As you roll the bead over, the chisel should move slightly along the tool rest. When you have finished the cut and the chisel is on its edge (the cutting edge vertical), lift the handle in a slicing action. The cut will run up the cutting edge to ensure a sharp, clear connection to the next bead. This is called "tucking the bead in" (photo above right).

Repeat the action on the other side of the bead. If you think this seems a relatively easy task, I can assure you that there are thousands of people who will disagree with you!

Run-backs (dig-ins) occur when the section of the cutting edge making the cut moves up from the short point (except when the cutting edge is dead vertical). When you are cutting on the short point, the corner of the cutting edge is supported evenly in the cut on both sides. If the cut moves only minutely up the cutting edge and leaves the corner, pressure is applied only to the bead side of the cut and with the cutting edge tilted in that direction, the chisel becomes uncontrollable and runs toward the center of the bead.

Things to check and watch

If you are experiencing dig-ins and run-backs, there are a number of things you should check and watch:

Sharpness—As stated earlier, the chisel must be sharp. However, a chisel may feel sharp, and you can still have difficulty picking up a shaving. This can happen if you have rocked the chisel when honing.

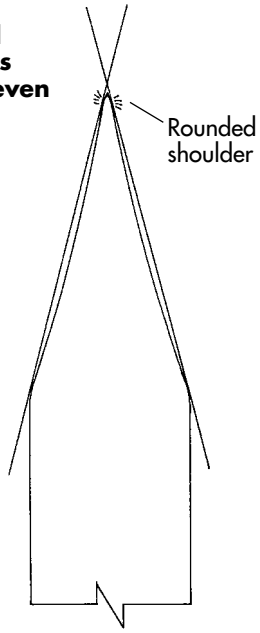
The cutting edge can be sharp, but the chisel will have a rounded shoulder just behind the cutting edge (Figure 3). This rounded shoulder will prevent the cutting edge from picking up a shaving, and this can cause you to force the cut and lose control. Or it can cause you to tilt the chisel further on its edge, which will give you the wrong shape.

If you find that you have a slight round behind the cutting edge, it is quick and easy to lightly regrind the bevel and rehone the chisel flat.

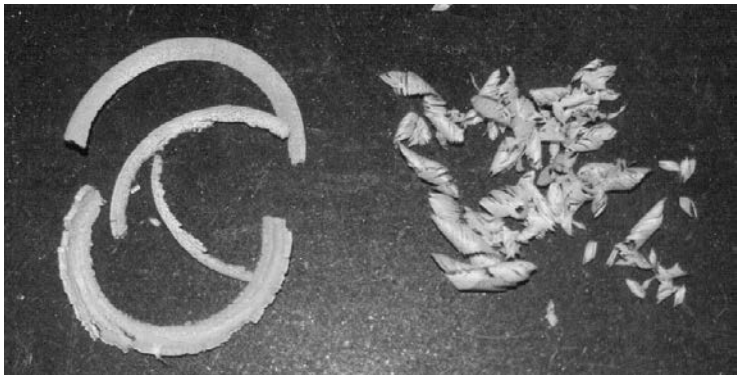
Tool position—If when rounding the bead over you have trouble picking up a shaving on the short point, bring the short point down slightly from the tangential position. (If you bring it down too far, the shaving will be too thick and make it impossible to roll the chisel over.)

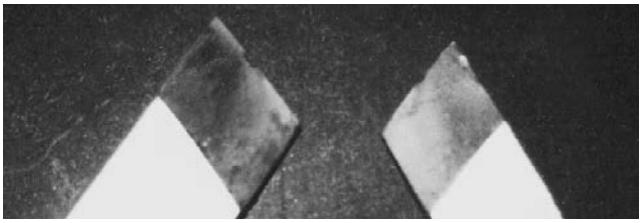
Grip—If you are having trouble keeping the chisel square to the axis of the lathe as you roll the chisel over, check where your thumb is on the handle. When cutting to the right side

Figure 3: Rounded shoulders from uneven honing



When cutting the left side of the bead, your right thumb should start on the side of the handle and be rolled over onto its top.





A couple of ways to confirm that you're cutting on the short point: At left, ring-shaped shavings come from the short point; spiral shavings from just above it. Above, cutting on the short point leaves it clean of shavings (left), not covered with dust (right).

of the bead, your thumb should be on top of the handle and rolled over onto its side. Cutting the left side of the bead, your thumb should start on the side of the handle (photo top right) and be rolled over onto its top.

If you start the cut to the left of the bead, with your thumb on the top of the handle, you will find as you roll the cut over that your wrist will force you to pivot the chisel away from its proper angle (square to the axis), making it impossible to keep the cut on the short point.

Shaving—The type of shaving will tell you if you are cutting on the short point or not. When cutting on the short point, you will make a ring-shaped shaving. If you are cutting just up from the short point, you will make a spiral shaving (photo above left).

Because of the speed of the lathe and the fast cutting action (though you should be making slow, deliberate cuts), after a dig-in you may find it difficult to know exactly which part of the cutting edge you were using. There are two ways of finding out:

First, look at the shavings. If they are spiral in shape, then you couldn't have been cutting on the short point.

If it is difficult to see which shaving was made by the previous cut, look at is the short point of the cutting edge. If you were cutting on the short point, the shavings coming off it would have cleared off any dust, and therefore the point should be clean. If on the other hand you were cutting on the edge up from the short point, you will find it covered in dust (detail above right).

Becoming automatic

Now you will understand what I mean when I say that turning a bead with a skew involves remembering and applying a number of things all at the same time. It is not easy, but learning to turn a bead with a skew is like learning to drive a car. When you begin, it all seems very complicated and difficult. With practice and understanding you will be able to do it without thinking—it will all become automatic. But as in driving, you still have to watch what you are doing, or you will have an accident.

George Hatfield, of Sydney, Australia, is a veteran turner and teacher. He is also associate editor of Australian Woodworker *magazine, where a version of this article originally appeared. Hatfield will be a demonstrator at the AAW symposium next July in San Antonio.*

CONSERVATION & COLLABORATION

Pulling out the stops at Emma Lake

MARK SFIRRI

I HAVE HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF BEING A part of the last three Saskatchewan Craft Council turning and furniture conferences organized by Michael Hosaluk. The format of these symposia has evolved over this period. The 1992 conference (reviewed by Richard Raffan in the December 1992 issue of this journal) was a rather traditional dog-and-pony show, although Michael encouraged the participants to create and collaborate. The 1994 conference (which Merryll Saylan and I wrote on in the December 1994 issue) was much looser, with only about half of the typical rotation slots filled with demonstrations. The rest of the time was open for presenters and participants to create spontaneously designed objects.

Depending on how you look at it, this year's conference in July represented either the total deterioration of the traditional conference structure or the unleashing of a hundred creative souls in one setting with just about everything necessary to make just about anything happen. There was a full woodshop; many lathes; a lot of wood; facilities for metal spinning, welding, casting, and forging; a slide room; and a surface-design area stocked full of materials waiting to be used.

Michael, Don Kondra, and Jamie Russell planned things thoroughly, so that everyone would feel welcome to be creative. There were resource people in every area who were more than willing to share their expertise. Participants could thus get their feet wet the moment their interest was piqued. Facilities were open twenty-four hours a day, which accommodated anyone's work schedule.

I thought that the 1994 conference was great, but this one was twice that. Having so many talented and resourceful people producing work and collaborating with others generated a creative frenzy that just kept growing and growing. It was reminiscent of my college days almost twenty-five years ago, when I first got the woodworking bug, but this was more intense. It lasted only four days, and we pulled out all the stops.

For the first time, this year's conference was held at Kenderdine Camp on Emma Lake, about two hours north of Saskatoon. This camp is an artists' retreat, with cabins, dining hall overlooking the lake, and three meeting halls, the largest of which became the workshop. Another hall was for slides and an Instant Gallery; the third was the surface design area. It was a big advantage that we not only worked but lived together. We had ample opportunity to socialize, while enjoying great food and uniting against a common enemy—the mosquitoes.

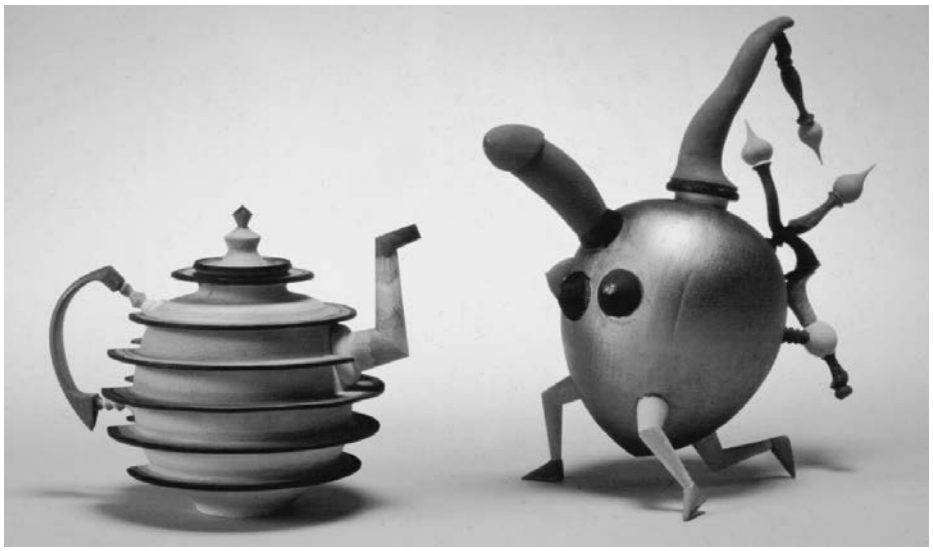
The theme of the conference was "collaboration and conservation." Collaboration is really about education. Working with others on projects that you partially create brings learning into your field of vision and opens you and your work to new directions. The atmosphere of the conference allowed many people the freedom to try new things. Conservation was addressed in two ways. The wood provided was all birch and maple that was local and harvested responsibly. In addition, all of the attendees were asked to bring a part—from studio rejects to found objects—all placed on a central table as fair game for anyone to use.

A key component of collaboration is chemistry. The organizers worked hard to bring in a group that would enjoy working together in this kind of environment. The format's evolution from one conference to the next has involved some giant leaps with no guarantees of success. Yet each one has progressively yielded more and more varied creations and proved profoundly educational to many. A number of participants were intimidated about jumping in. Some who eventually did get into it said that they would be better prepared for the next one, now that they have seen how it works.

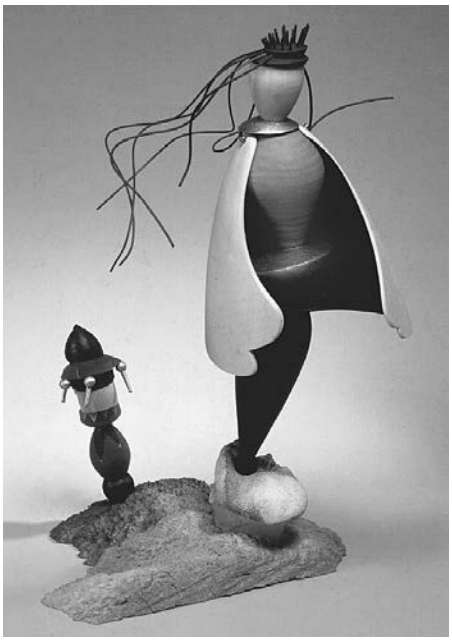
Tony Boase

Human-clamp Jean-François Escoulen and Mark Sfirri assemble a multi-axis spindle.

Grant Kernan



Grant Kernan



Two teapots represent work of John Jordan, Melvyn Firmager, Michael Hosaluk, and Luke Mann (left), and Jean-François Escoulen and Michael Hosaluk (right). At right is a sculptural piece by Steve Loar, Chelsey Kingsley, and Mark Sfirri.

I had some wonderful experiences, including two hours each day working with Jean-François Escoulen on the lathe and in the surface design area. I contributed to ten different projects. I spent about a third of my time in the surface design area. The two resource people—photographer and painter Grant Kernan and painter Heather Cline, both from Saskatoon—were a wealth of knowledge and help as I embarked on my new career as a painter. Painting is quiet, you can't get hurt, I easily sold my first piece…I could go on and on.

All of the work made during our three days together was auctioned off at the conclusion of the conference. Although many pieces were absolute steals, the auction raised over $16,000 Canadian for the benefit of the Saskatchewan Craft Council. That's double the amount raised at the 1994 conference. The Craft Council and the Windgate Foundation are to be applauded for their major support of such a creative and unique endeavor. Thanks, too, to the AAW for its grant. Michael Hosaluk is to be commended for all of his efforts and for his masterful conception of such a daring event.

Mark Sfirri is a woodturner, furnituremaker, and teacher in New Hope, PA.

Another View of Emma Lake

THE LOCATION WAS WONDERFUL. Kenderdine Camp on Emma Lake offered comfortable lodging, tasty food, and a facility that was just about ideal—all set up and equipped through the boundless generosity of local turners (Frank Sudol brought four lathes, a band saw, table saw, and a seemingly endless supply of hand tools and accessories), woodworkers, glass and metal workers, and artists. The superior facility was topped by an exceptional list of talent from near and far—from D.C. to B.C., England to Queensland.

I knew before making plans to attend that the format was to be relatively open with no scheduled demonstrations per se. And sure enough, a sort of collaboration free-for-all was encouraged. Naturally, some took to this more than others.

I, for one, struggled with the format. I can not help but feel that all that talent and expertise could have been better utilized with more structure. We all require some structure in our lives and our work to be productive.

One result of the open format, as I perceived it, was groups of "resource" people gathering to brainstorm, scheme, collaborate, and socialize, and quite naturally so. Unfortunately, this left many of the rest of us looking in from the outside, a bit intimidated and wondering what our contribution was supposed to be.

I stumbled along for two of the four days uncertain where to apply myself with so many new and interesting things going on all around among so many talented people. I found myself torn between various opportunities to contribute, not wanting to miss an opportunity to learn. I wanted to get the most for my time, but there was no way to schedule one of these learning opportunities, as most everything happened at random.

I left Emma Lake '96 having met a bunch of wonderful people, adding many to my list of friends and resources. I learned new techniques and ideas and was certainly stretched in some new directions. I also came away with an increased appreciation for the many structured symposia and workshop courses available.

—Luke Mann, Waitsfield, VT

APPLIED MOLDING

An excerpt from Turning for Furniture

ERNIE CONOVER

ONE OF THE SIMPLEST YET MOST ELEgant ways to incorporate distinctive details into the furniture you build is with applied moldings. Applied moldings are quick and easy to turn and can be as simple as a corner block (an architectural embellishment put at the upper corners of the trim around a door frame) or as elaborate as a medallion (an oval or circular molding used to frame an ornamental fixture such as a chandelier). These and other types of decorative elements can be interesting, profitable work for the woodturner and can be accomplished with a faceplate alone or with the addition of a simple shop-made chuck. Whether you use a chuck or not will depend on what item you're turning and how many you plan to make.

Single pieces

If you're planning on making just a few small items like an escutcheon (an ornamental or protective plate, usually seen around a keyhole) or a rosette (a painted, carved or sculpted ornament that suggests the petals of a rose), it's often easiest simply to fasten a blank directly to the faceplate with double-sided tape or a paper joint. Although many turners use double-sided tape in lieu of the paper joint, I still lean toward paper and glue. Call me old-fashioned, but I prefer the extra holding power glue offers, plus I like the fact that I have a bit of open time to slide things around into perfect position—with double-sided tape, you get one shot. And when it comes time to unchuck, the paper joint also comes apart more easily.

As in all glue joints, a paper joint requires a joinery-level fit. So use a hand plane or a jointer on the mating surfaces to achieve a perfect match. Yellow or white glue will work fine

for a paper joint, but they tend to soak through the paper in spots, making splitting the pieces apart difficult. That's why I prefer to use hide glue for paper joints. Not the liquid hide glue you buy at the hardware store in a bottle; I'm talking the real McCoy that's cooked in a glue pot. Hide glue doesn't soak through the paper as readily, and it's easier to split the pieces apart. Just insert a hot knife in the joint to reheat and liquefy the glue, and then separate the pieces.

Whatever glue you use, coat each joint and position kraft paper (shopping bags work well) between the joints. Then clamp up the assembly, and leave it clamped tight until you are sure the glue is dry (hide glue will take a full twenty-four hours).

If you do decide to use double-sided tape, there are a couple of things to keep in mind. First, make sure to use cloth-based tape. Most of the "carpet tape" sold at local hardware stores is foam-based, which doesn't offer sufficient holding power. Cloth- or fabric-based tape is available through industrial distribution chains or from mail-order catalogs. (There are even some tapes designed specifically for turning, such as Permacell brand, available from Craft Supplies USA— 800/551-8876). Second, you must make sure that adequate clamping pressure has been applied to the tape for proper adhesion. You can do this with clamps, a bench vise, or even the tailstock. And finally, because you're taping the piece directly to the faceplate, it needs to be perfectly flat. If your faceplate has a raised lip at the edge (like mine), you can overcome this problem by screwing a thin block of wood to it and then scraping it flat.

Multiple pieces

For projects that require multiple pieces that are identical in shape (such as corner blocks for trimming out a room, or drawer fronts for a spice cabinet), I often use a screw chuck or a nest chuck. As the name implies, a nest chuck has a pocket in which the blank "nests" for turning. The chuck is just a scrap of wood fastened to the faceplate with a set of cleats to hold the blank. Three of the cleats are glued and nailed to the plywood to form a U. To make it easy to take blanks in and out of the chuck, the final cleat is ripped in half at an angle. After nailing one half to the chuck, the other serves as a wedge to capture the blank in the chuck. The photos on the facing page illustrate the process.

One other thing. To use a nest chuck, it's vital that all the blanks be uniform in size. Because of this, I like to cut all the blanks at one time. And I always cut a few extra in case of mistakes.

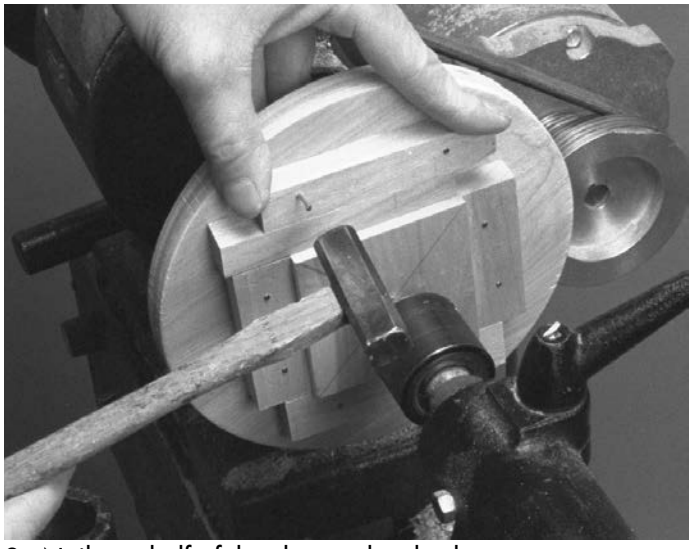
Curved moldings

Another simple way to make identical parts (such as sections of curved

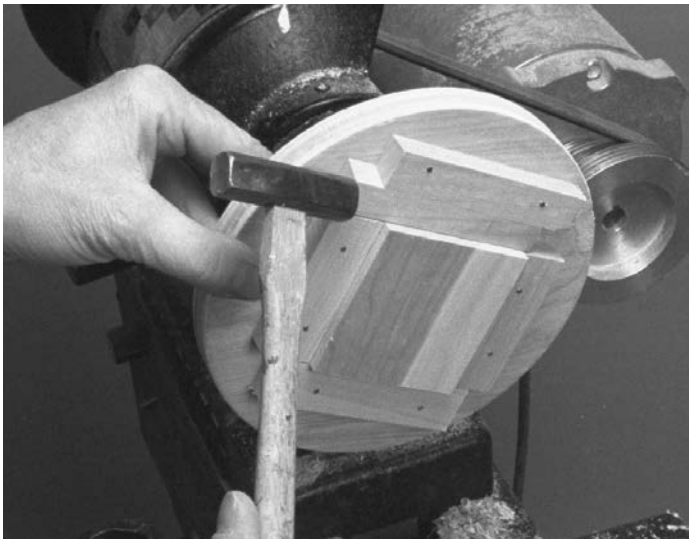
Photos: Ernie Conover

1. Fasten a piece of plywood to the faceplate, then glue and nail three cleats to the plywood to form a U.

2. Rip the last cleat in half at an angle to make it easy to take blanks in and out of the chuck.

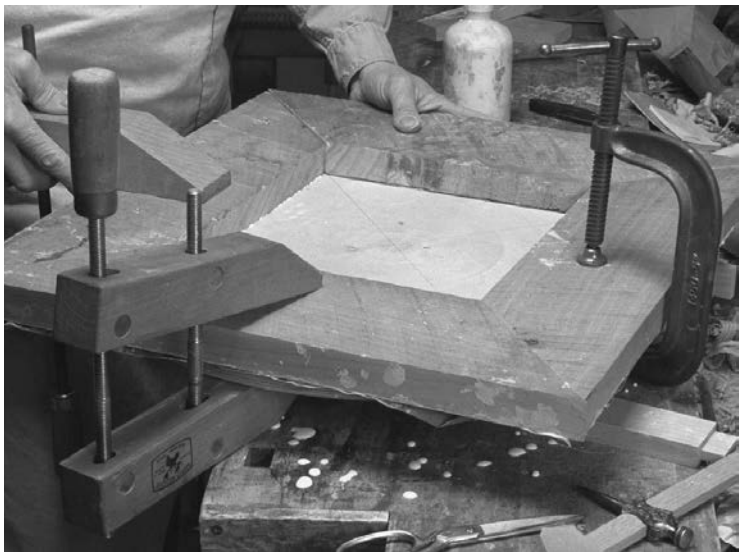


3. Nail one half of the cleat to the chuck.

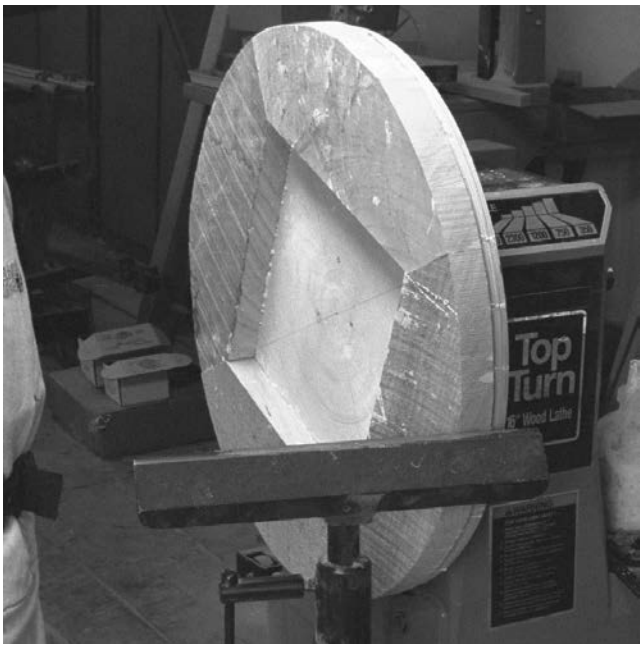


4. The other half of the cleat serves as a wedge to capture the blank in the chuck.

5. As long as all the blanks are the same size, the nest chuck will hold them tightly.



1. To make identical sections of curved molding, start with a chuck, which in this case is simply a circle of plywood of the appropriate diameter mounted on a faceplate. Paper joint mitered pieces to the chuck. Make sure the pieces are wide enough for the molding.



2. Once the glue dries, bandsaw the work to a rough circle to match the chuck and mount it on the lathe.

3. Turn the molding. This can be done inboard or outboard, depending on the size of the molding and your lathe.

4. Insert a chisel between the molding and the faceplate and a give it a sharp rap with a mallet to remove a finished section.

molding) is to start with a "frame" glued up of wide, mitered sections. The important thing here is to make sure the frame pieces are wide enough for the molding. The best way I've found to handle this is to start with a full-scale drawing of the molding, then sketch out the mitered sections.

Start by mitering the pieces and paper-jointing (double-sided tape is okay, too) them to a circle of plywood of appropriate diameter mounted on a faceplate. Once the glue is dry, bandsaw the work even with the plywood circle (chuck). Once the molding is turned, all it takes is a chisel inserted between the molding and the chuck and a sharp rap of a mallet to remove a finished section. The process is shown in the photos on this page.

Ernie Conover teaches at and directs Conover Workshops in Parkman, OH. Turning for Furniture *(softcover, 144 pages, $19.95) is published by The Taunton Press, 800/888-8286, with an accompanying video (55 minutes, $19.95; the price for the set is $34.95).*

Spindles to Climb By

Newel posts of yesteryear for today

BILL STEPHENSON

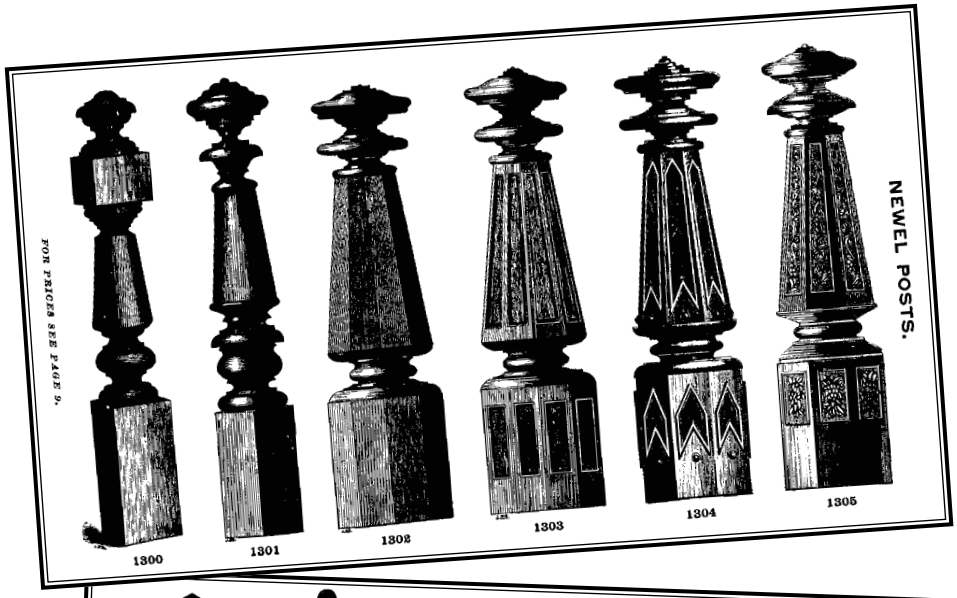
The beginning, end, and corners of a well designed staircase must be accented with an elegant newel post. In 1893, the Blumer & Kuhn Stair Co. understood this important staircase design principle, offering some fifty elegant and eloquent newel designs sampled in these selected illustrations.

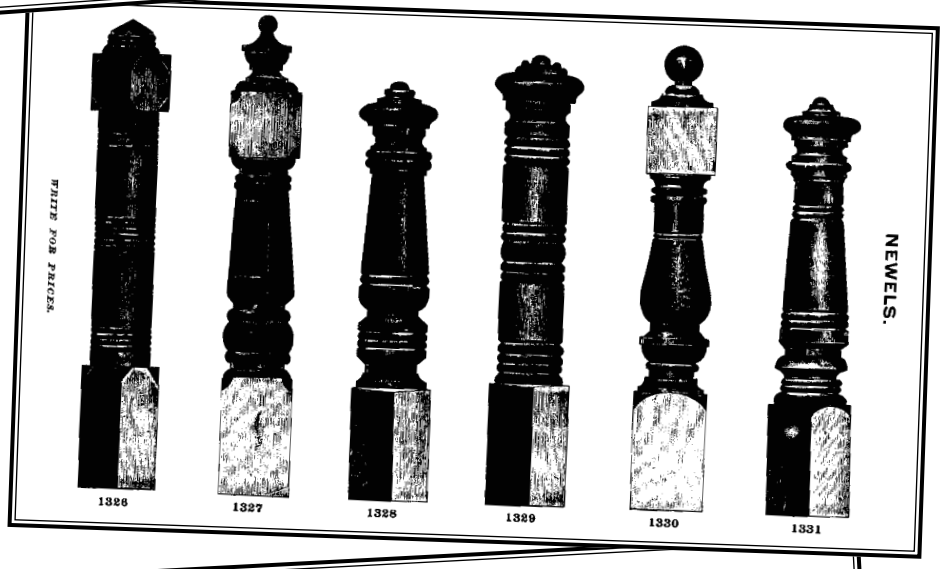
The turned newels nos. 1300 and 1301 were available in pine, oak, ash, walnut, and cherry in sizes from 4 to 7 inches (dia.). The prices ranged from a low of 90 cents for a 4-inch turned pine newel to $5 for a 7-inch turned walnut or cherry newel. Lengths were not specified in the catalog, presumably custom ordered.

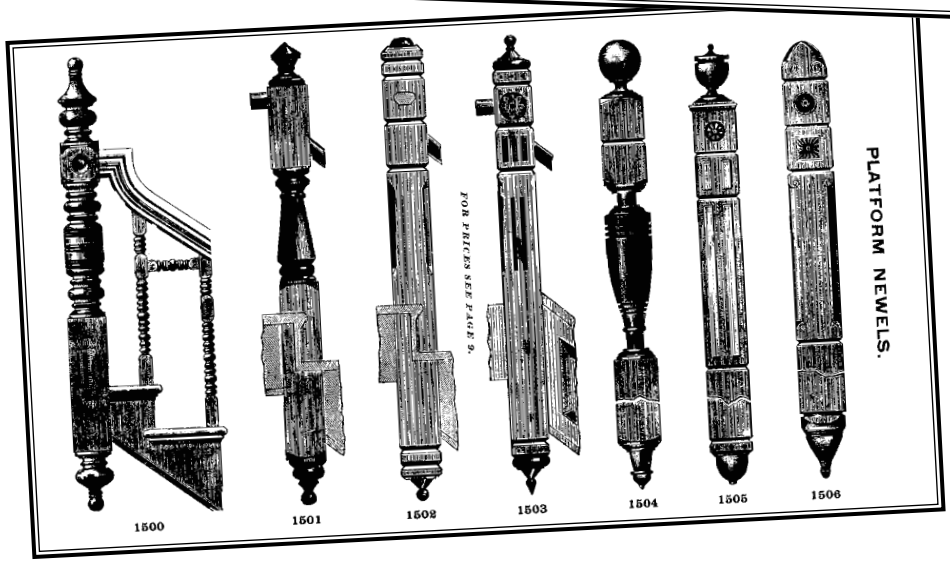
The octagon stave construction newel post (no. 1302) was larger, ranging from 8 inches ($5.75) to 12 inches ($7). Raised-panel construction was $1.50 more. Mahogany cost an additional $4. Fancy molded octagon newel posts (no. 1303) were available in 8- to 12-inch sizes, ranging in price from $8.50 to $10.50. The turned post top added $1.25. The inlayed (no. 1304) or carved (no. 1305) newels cost an additional $4.50.

Platform and angle newel posts (nos. 1501 to 1506) were available in oak, ash, walnut, or cherry from $4.50 to $7.50. Walnut and cherry demanded a 50-cent premium.

For all other designs in the 1893 catalog, customers were encouraged to "write for prices" or "send for estimates." Perhaps you will enjoy recreating these newels for yourself, but don't try to match the prices.







Bill Stephenson is a forester and woodturner who turns, teaches, and writes from his studio in Loveland, OH. He has reprinted the Blume and Kuhn catalog in which these illustrations appeared. To order, send $20.95 to Chestnut Publications, PO Box 844, Loveland, OH 45140.

FIRMAGER WORKSHOP

Peculiar tools for turners intermediate to advanced

JOHN W. COBB

THE MELVYN FIRMAGER WORKSHOP, which I attended in the fall of 1995, was three days in length with a total of two attendees. The accommodations at Nut Tree Farm in Somerset, England, the bed-and-breakfast run by Anne Firmager, were very much to my liking and quite reasonably priced. The workshop fee, also quite reasonable, included lunch at a local pub.

The workshop is conducted in a very relaxed and well organized manner facilitating learning and retention. The workshop started at about 9 AM with lunch around 1:30 or 2 PM (Anne's breakfasts are gargantuan). Tea was served at 4:30 or 5 PM. Following tea we turned until 6 PM and then dinner was taken at the pub at about 7 PM.

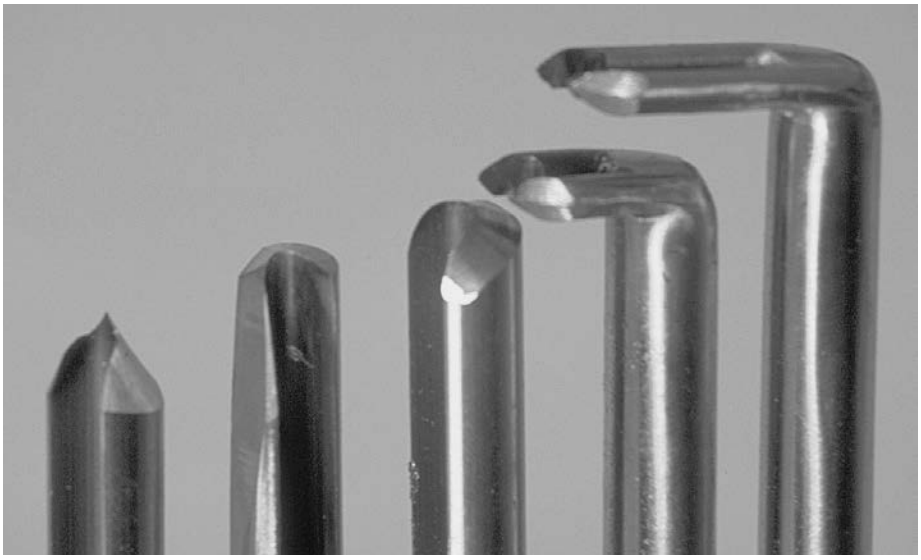
Melvyn is not only very personable but also an excellent teacher. I am an intermediate-to-advanced turner and yet Melvyn pointed out a couple of flaws in my stance that have made a marked difference in the amount of back and neck fatigue that I experience after a full day of turning while standing on a concrete floor. During the workshop, I completed two natural-edge thin-walled bowls and nearly completed a hollow vessel similar to those that Melvyn is known for. In addition several small logs were reduced to shavings practicing the various cutting techniques. Having completed the workshop and now working alone in my own shop, I am able to turn hollow vessels with $1/8$-inch walls through a small entry hole. Although the type of work that I do is different from that which Melvyn does, the techniques I learned are already helping me with my own style of work.

Melvyn's shop is in a converted coop on the grounds of the bed-and-breakfast 16th-century farmhouse. It has a high metal roof with concrete floors and is well lit and quite comfortable. In the shop Melvyn has four very sturdy Moulthrop-style bowl-turning lathes that he has designed and built himself, as well as a light spindle lathe. The shop is equipped with grinders, a large band saw, and effective dust collection plus all the other equipment that a turner needs in his daily routine.

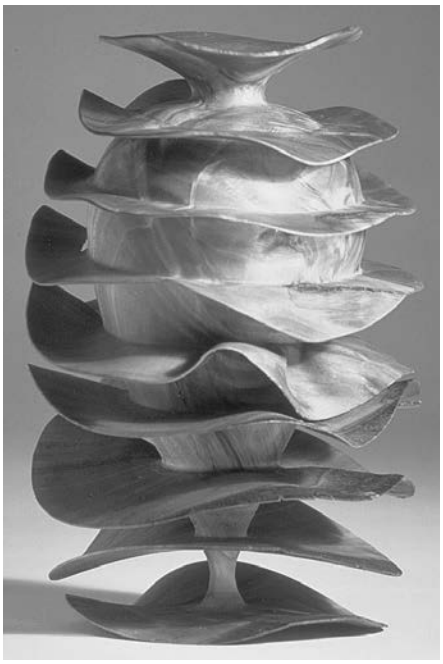
Melvyn's approach is to mount his vessels on a small-diameter faceplate and to turn a vessel in one fixing. Melvyn's hollow-turning technique features tools that he has designed for the purpose. I had bought several of these tools when I met Melvyn at the 1995 Provo Symposium, where he was demonstrating. Having ground them and used them in my own shop, I decided that Melvyn's advice to take a hands-on class was indeed sage.

The tools include gouges with profoundly different grinds than anything I had seen before and a thin, dual-purpose parting tool. The most interesting tool is his double-pronged hollowing tool. This tool has two prongs at right angles to a mild steel shaft. The upper prong is only a guide, or leading bevel, for the lower prong, which cuts. The tool is incredibly easy to use and control once a few basic principles are understood; the upper guide allows one to feel the wood prior to taking a cut.

The gouges consist of a nib gouge, a scrapey gouge, and a swept-back gouge. The nib gouge has a pronounced pointed beak and is very

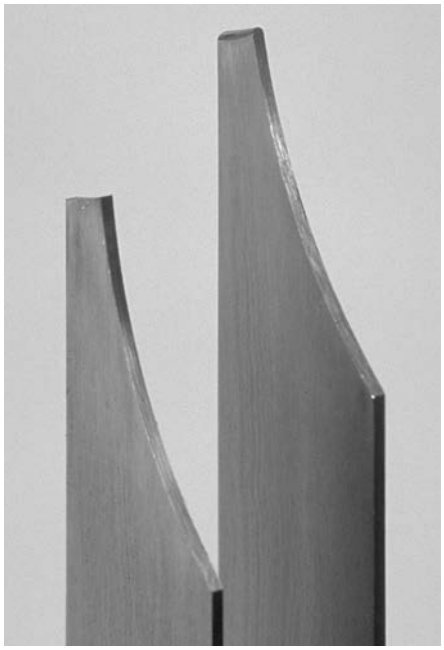


Firmager's peculiar tools, from left to right: **Nib gouge,** for both heavy and fine cuts, is really six tools in one: a bowl, spindle, and roughing gouge, skew, boring tool, and shear-scraper. **Swept back gouge,** for plunging into hollow forms, radius cuts, and bottoming-out cuts, shear-cutting all the way. **Scrapey gouge,** used with the flute facing the work, opens the necks and rims of hollow forms and hollows end grain; the forerunner of the angle tools. **Angle tools #1 and #2,** for hollowing where straight tools won't go. The unique two-prong design provide a guide or leading bevel so that you can feel without cutting, control the depth of cut, and almost eliminate torsion problems.



Firmager's signature "Sea Flower" vessels are as distinctive as the tools he has designed and manufactures. Right, ebonized *Eucalyptus gunnii*, 4½" high, 5" dia., in the collection of Dr. Irving Lipton. Far right, *Eucalyptus gunnii*, 7½" high, 5" dia., in the collection of Dr. Judith and Martin Bloomfield.

useful for many tasks. It is easy to turn natural-edge bowls with this gouge, since the nib prevents skidding. This gouge is useful for roughing out as well as for making finishing cuts. When making finishing cuts, the nib may be in the wood or riding on the wood, acting as a guide for the cutting edge. When cutting with the nib guiding, very smooth cuts are possible. The cut is so smooth that it rivals that of a skew chisel, but the gouge is very difficult to snag.



Shaper/parting tools: The square-tip tool (left) is for parting off and shear-scraping—shaping around to the base of vessels and bowls. The round-top tool (right) is for detailing and working between multiple rims.

The scrapey gouge was the forerunner of the hollowing tool. It is used with the flute facing the wood and, as with the double-pronged hollowing tool, the upper edge acts as a guide for the lower, cutting edge. Very fast, aggressive cuts may be made with this tool. It is also useful for finishing cuts in vessels of an appropriate shape.

The swept-back gouge is by far the most difficult tool to use and to grind. Having been taught how, I can now grind it myself competently. One cannot have too much practice with this gouge, and I practice with it for a few cuts on each standard bowl that I hollow out. This tool allows one to quickly take out material from the sides and bottom of a hollow vessel. The difficulty arises from the fact that a 10-degree twist of the handle dramatically changes the manner in which the tool cuts. Some instruction with this tool is invaluable.

One more piece in the tool kit of Melvyn's own design is a thin parting tool that looks a bit like a reground butcher knife. This tool is used for safely parting off with a minimum of waste, but it is also useful as a shear-scraper for smoothing up around the bottom of vessels where it is impossible to get in with a gouge or conventional scraper.

Melvyn also uses an "Irish grind" on a gouge for exterior roughing and some finishing. Like David Ellsworth, he turns the flute toward the work and uses the wings of this gouge to shear-scrape surfaces.

Another tool I was introduced to at Melvyn's workshop was a ¾-inch roughing gouge designed by Reg Sherwin, a well known English turner. This gouge has no tang; it is ¾-inch diameter its entire length. For this reason, there is very little flexing resulting in nearly no chatter.

I confidently recommend Melvyn Firmager's workshops to any intermediate or advanced turner who wishes to learn to produce hollow turnings quickly and efficiently, using gouges for most of the cutting. Melvyn also spends about half his teaching time with beginners.

John Cobb turns wood in Larkspur, CO. For information about Firmager's workshops and tools, write Firmager at Nut Tree Farm, Stougton Cross, Wedmore, Somerset, England BS28 4QP. Telephone/fax: 011 44 1934 71 24 04.

allTURNatives

Gatherings from a diverse conference

RICK MASTELLI

It was not a big event, if you measure it by the turnout. Less than a hundred people attended last August's allTURNatives conference, sponsored by the Wood Turning Center and held at Ursinas College outside Philadelphia. But it was a far-reaching affair, encompassing woodturning devotees from all over the field—makers, marketers, collectors—as well as representatives of various other disciplines: art history, education, ecology, critical journalism, and the fine arts. It was a deeply interesting symposium, given how seriously and vigorously its topics were discussed. And it was a very creative get-together, yet another example of how well Albert LeCoff, Executive Director of the WTC, can organize events that target woodturning's current needs and interests, at the same time arranging surprising juxtapositions to move everyone further along. This year's theme was "creating, critiquing, collecting."

As last year, the allTURNatives conference marked the culmination of the International Turning Exchange residency program (see *American Woodturner,* December 1995). The ITE, which brings together diverse, internationally recognized woodturners to live and work for a season in close quarters, is a profound idea that promises widespread effects, like those of pebbles tossed in a pond, the ripples radiating out, intersecting, and ultimately affecting the whole pond. The work of the four residents comprised a show of forty-eight pieces, which, along with the ITE residents themselves, provided an intriguing focal point to the conference. The character of the work and the spirit of the makers, like the conference itself, reflected how interesting alternative approaches can be.

Tradition versus creativity

Jean-François Escoulen, the ITE resident from Puy-Saint-Martin, France, spoke from his personal vantage point as a second-generation, traditionally trained production turner on the subject of whether tradition facilitates or stifles creativity. He showed slides of his own work, fifteen years of serviceable furniture and architectural components, work that was indistinguishable for the most part from that which his forebears had turned for centuries. He began his apprenticeship with his father at age 16, using only two tools for the first six months: a large gouge and a compass. Gradually, making thousands of objects of the same shapes, he gained the skill of the "subtle wrist," and command of the various classical styles that are the repertoire of an Old World turner.

He was inspired by the eighteenth-century turner François Barreau to begin flexing his creativity. Barreau had made an impression on Louis XVI with his nested spheres and thin, offset spindles, work which rivaled in finesse and complexity that of the ornamental turners of that heyday, but was done by hand. Four years ago, Escoulen began developing a line of eccentric lidded boxes, and a ball-and-socket cup chuck to turn them (see *AW*, September 1996, pages 16 and 40), but it was not until he was immersed in the work of American turners through the ITE residency that he saw how far his creativity could go.

When he began composing his talk for the allTURNatives conference, he believed that his traditional training had given him the facility (the "fluidity," he called it) to become creative. But after his eight weeks in the ITE residency, he had come to feel a prisoner in his own tradition. "Has it not placed barriers in my way, rather than possibilities? I have to ask," he said, "when I see how far American turners have gone with so little traditional background, whether tradition and creativity are really compatible."

It was a poignant opening to a symposium on creativity. Indeed, the man's work evidences an uneasy relation between creativity and technical capability. His pieces project, literally, in so many different directions at once, they have an almost adolescent energy that seems at odds with the mastery involved in turning them. This unusual combination of exuberance and expertise characterized much of the conference.

The five W's of collecting

The second presentation was by collectors Fleur Bresler and Ruth and David Waterbury. Later in the symposium Bebe Johnson, owner of an East Hampton, Long Island, art furniture gallery, added to the collector's perspective. The presentations were informed by five questions: who, what, when, where, and why collectors collect, the most interesting being the last. Knowing *why* goes a long way toward answering the other four questions.

The presentations revealed how deeply personal is the answer. Collecting turned wood, certainly, is no investment. As Ruth Waterbury affirmed, neither is it an academic exercise or a business relationship. "We are, after all, talking about a love affair," she said. Bebe Johnson talked about the encounter, "when something hits the right chord, and it is with you forever."

It takes two to tango, and the collector clearly sees herself as a participant in the complete cycle of making. From concept and raw materials,

It isn't only collectors who enjoy fine turning. Woodturners Jean-François Escoulen (with his daughter, Emalae, on his right) and André Martel admire a piece by Betty Scarpino, right, in the Instant Gallery.

through process, and all the background development that entails, the object is not really complete until it is appreciated. Or so the collector conceives.

It's not unusual for collectors of handmade things to have hands-on experience themselves—of some sort. Bressler talked fondly of darning socks in her youth, which led to work in needlepoint, embroidery, and quilts, which she also collects. "Collecting them is a lot easier than making them," she said. And she also confirmed that collectors often have eclectic appetites.

Collectors evolve, just as collections do. Bresler came to woodturning by way of duck decoys, which were prevalent in the Chesapeake area which she regularly traveled through in the 1970s. By collecting them, she kept in touch with the evolution of decoys during this period from utilitarian foundations to artistic heights, and her collection reflects that. The same might be said for her relation to woodturning since 1983, when she acquired her first piece.

Collecting is an education. "By collecting we not only acquire wonderful pieces of art," said Waterbury, "but also we learn about ourselves, and we find our way of looking at the world continually expanding." The Waterburys, like other woodturning collectors, attend symposiums and workshops to meet turners and learn about them and about woodturning in general.

For collectors, collecting is an art in itself. The initial choice to acquire may be of questionable creativity, but there are endless other choices, like how to display the piece, how to light it, whether to show it alone or with other pieces. And when you begin grouping pieces, you're soon creating still lifes, statements, and an exhilarating personal interaction with the work that, as Waterbury attested, is "almost as exciting as acquiring a new piece."

Love affairs can be irrational, of course. The collector in possession of a piece can bestow a character on it quite remote from what the maker invested it with. Bressler made a good deal of the importance she places on what the pieces she collects mean to her personally. There are pieces that make her smile simply because they remind her of personal things, things that they remind no one else of. Those are her favorite pieces. This relationship raised the question of expression and communication in making, and there were plenty of opportunities throughout the symposium to pursue it.

Fishing for the artistic experience

You wouldn't think you'd be able to tell a room full of high-end woodturners much about the artistic experience. But LeCoff invited painter-turned-teacher-and-wood-sculptor Roy Superior, Professor of Wood Design at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia, to expound on his lifelong artistic experience. He called his talk "Are Beautifully Crafted Objects Enough? Adventures in Criticism," but he ranged widely, touching on more than the question of beauty in craft or adventure in criticism.

"Woodturning is not an art," he said, "it is a process involving a particular material (wood) and a particular machine (the lathe). The activity can well be termed an obsession for many, and we tend to want our obsessions to be regarded as art.…Writers explain, educators label, critics pass judgement, artists make things for effect, to move people, to have an impact. Much work is done to say: See what I can do with tools? It is filled with novelty." Only a few pieces leap out with expressiveness, transcending the limitations of the material (which, in the case of wood often means getting beyond its inherent natural beauty) or the maker's ego.

Most obsessions, hobby or professional, strike like a bolt of lightning. Artists make because they have to. "There's nothing like a shop full of tools to justify what you do." Superior showed slides of his own shop, built when creating a space for his art was his obsession.

Superior's latest obsession is fly fishing, and he used it to make a number of observations meant to have universal application. "A river runs through all our lives," he said, and "there are three stages in the evolution of a fisherman: First, wanting to catch as many fish as possible. Second, wanting to catch the biggest fish. And third, wanting to catch the

most difficult fish." It comes down to fishing itself: "*Fishing* is what it's all about; the fish is the bonus." The equipment, again, helps justify the obsession. "Fit out in all my gear," he said, "I'm worth maybe $15,000 on the hoof, being outwitted by an animal with a brain the size of a pea.…In the end, it comes down to three words, 'Me fool fish.'"

There was more: "The danger with talent is—that which comes easy often goes no further." "It's not about technique, it's about motivation, which leads to obsession, which leads to more information and more capability." And—the value of criticism is not in the impact it has on the actual value of a piece, but in the clarity it brings to your understanding. Critics have been writing about Rembrandt for centuries, and it still can be valuable reading because Rembrandt is timelessly provocative. "Art is always going to be provocative."

Are we engaged in non-threatening problem-solving yet? Children and adult immersed themselves in a table full of materials to focus the notion that art is necessary for cultivating the most basic qualities of being human.

Why art in education?

We returned from lunch that first day to find a table set up at the front of the auditorium filled with colorful paraphernalia—paper, pipe cleaners, modeling clay, glue—and surrounded by kids and adults, all busy working, playing, making… Actually, what they were doing was our assignment to define. Responses ranged from "Having fun," and "Expressing self, ideas, and feelings," to "Engaged in non-threatening problem-solving."

A panel discussion among woodturners, parents, and educators followed, while the kids continued to do. Susan Ellison sounded the keynote, connecting the ideas in Daniel Goleman's book, *Emotional Intelligence,* with the benefits of art. "How does practice in art enhance a child's readiness for school and life?" she asked. The answer was the session's theme: "Art is necessary for cultivating the most basic qualities of being human."

Steve Loar made the point that schools are about socializing people, making them "normal," and testing them to confirm this, not fundamentally about learning, and certainly not about cultivating creativity. "Despite many studies that point to the importance of *doing* in learning," he said, "we still fail to incorporate *experience* in education." He cited studies that indicate we typically retain 5 to 10 percent of what we hear in a classroom. If we take notes, retention goes up to 20 to 25 percent. But if we actually do a task associated with the learning, we retain upwards of 85 percent of the content. Integrating (or rather *re*integrating) handwork in education, or doing things in general, would have profoundly positive effects on learning. It would also help make art more meaningful throughout a person's life if as a child he or she had some hands-on practice in artistic expression.

Loar made another provocative point when he called for art and craft education to be tied in the public schools with physical education. "Statistically, no one becomes a professional athlete," he said, "which is no different from the state of affairs for professional artists. Yet we see the benefit and find the resources for physical education and extra-curricular sports. Why not art?" Or craft?

Palmer Sharpless, a retired shop teacher whose grown children have good careers as craftspeople, pointed out how important it is that children encounter tools and materials early and at home.

Mark Sfirri, a turner and teacher, spoke of the shift in his consciousness from individual concerns to those of the community when he became a father. He talked about his efforts to introduce basic visual vocabulary—such as hue, value, contrast, balance, and rhythm—to elementary students, so that they can talk about the works of art they encounter on field trips.

Betty Scarpino, a turner and mother with a degree in industrial arts, talked about the artist-in-residency position she established at a local art center using an AAW Educational Opportunity Grant. She called for more creativity in the way we promote art.

The mood of this session vacillated between optimism and concern, but throughout, the kids at the table were busy transforming their materials and, along with themselves, one hopes, eventually the rest of us, too.

Collectors Neil and Susan Kaye (in turned-wood hats) check out what overhead lighting might do for a pierced hollow form, along with maker Terry Martin, right.

Pacific paradigms: Japan versus Australia

Terry Martin, the ITE resident turner from Australia who also functioned as the group's scribe and photojournalist, offered an eye-opening view of woodturning in Japan, contrasted with that in Australia. Martin is no stranger to Japan, and his personal encounters with Japanese turners span the range from production bowl turners to a near National Living Treasure. As might be expected, these turners tend to subordinate personal expression to tradition, society, and the work itself. Nevertheless, Martin's camera and stories have captured some wonderful characters.

The Aboriginal work that bridged the slide show's transition to contemporary Australian woodturning depicted very different craftspeople in a very different context, this one the vast and imposing context of nature itself. For instead of *form following function,* in Aboriginal woodwork *function may be said to follow form.* Martin's slides of boomerangs and shields made from appropriately shaped branches and trunks prove this observation correct.

In contrast, European settlers came with preconceptions of the unique Australian environment that effectively alienated them from it and led to much of its destruction.

Terry Martin

Nakajima-san, left, and son, two turners in Terry Martin's fascinating slide presentation of woodturning in Japan.

Their descendants have rethought their relation to this land, and contemporary woodturners have much to appreciate in the unique character of the materials available to them. At the same time, they have been absorbing and responding to the new and powerful directions that contemporary woodturning has taken, particularly in the U.S. Martin's slide show of current work in his country depicts a variety and vitality that suggest it may be time for Australians to give something back to the U.S. for the influence it has had.

Martin's slide show and themes—of how the Australian bush has shaped the work of the Aborigines, how European settlers reshaped the Australian bush, and how contemporary woodturners are rediscovering its special character in work that promises to impact our field worldwide—are writ large in his new book, *Wood Dreaming* (published by HarperCollins and available from the WTC: $60/$54 to members, 215/844-2188). Short of a review, it should be said that it isn't everyday you are introduced to a whole continent's worth of undiscovered woodturning. This is an important and wonderful book that will excite any woodturner who visits it.

Conservation and ecology

One of the focuses of the ITE is the use of lesser known species (LKS) of wood, which are responsibly grown and harvested in the tropical rain forest but are difficult to market because their working properties are relatively unknown. The ITE participates in the Shop-Testing Program sponsored by the Good Wood Alliance (formerly WARP) to help increase the use of LKS. This and other ecological issues were the subjects of several presentations at the all-TURNatives conference.

Michael Brolly, ITE resident from Hamburg, PA, talked about his own perspective on the issue of "turning responsibly." Thinking globally and acting locally, Brolly engages regularly in "dumpster diving" to reclaim wood worth turning. Others wondered what effect such small gestures could have on a worldwide dilemma. Collector Neil Keys observed that there are more trees in the U.S. today than there were in Colonial times. The issue of political and ecological correctness in woodturning triggered various reactions of questionable validity or practicality.

Fortunately, the Executive Director of GWA, Yurij Bihun, was among the roster of speakers, and his pre-

sentation the next day helped clear the air. No need to feel guilty, he maintained; as Terry Martin had said earlier, a woodturner in his whole lifetime likely uses less wood than a major newspaper does in one day. But that is not to say that a woodturner cannot have a significant effect on the course of wood use. An object might be worth a thousand words, so to speak, if it sensitizes people to the issues surrounding wood's use. Bihun pointed to the "Conservation by Design" show (see *American Woodturner,* December 1993), at the Renwick Gallery in Washington, DC, through January 12, as an outstanding example of how woodworkers could make statements in their work powerful enough to change public perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors. Instead of boycotted tropical hardwoods, woodturnings and other careful, respectful, consciousness-raising uses of wood might be just what our culture and the ecology could use.

The dynamics of ecology and politics continue to evolve beyond simple answers. Recent research, Bihun said, indicates that decreased demand for familiar exotics like rosewood is putting pressure on temperate hardwoods like maple. This bigger picture is one of the reasons the Good Wood Alliance changed its name from Woodworkers Alliance for Rainforest Protection. Wood use ought to increase the value of forest over open land. Forests and wood use are not at odds, but rather call in concert for sustainable management.

For perspective on how we use wood, Bihun pointed to a variety of models, from the Bronze Age ravagings that denuded Greece for smelting energy, to the GWA's Greenwood Furniture Project in El Carbon, Honduras, where the sustainable harvest of a lesser-known species is linked with the expanding skills of local young people to make green wood furniture. Colonial versus modern New England, from near-total deforestation at the hands of the tanning and charcoal industries' to the natural regeneration of woodlands, largely from benign neglect, points once again to the deceptiveness of simple answers. For, although the renewed woodland in Pennsylvania represents the largest hardwood-producing area in the U.S., prized for its black cherry, tulip poplar, and hard maple, much of the rest of the northeast is dominated by red maple and other "weed trees."

The largest portion of the northeast woodland is in the hands of small landowners, most of whom do not actively manage their woodlots. Those who do, tend to practice selective cutting, which too often means selecting the best and leaving the rest, to the detriment of the entire gene pool. Twisted, gnarly, opportunistic growth may very well call for clear cutting. On the other hand, woodturners are not usually interested in the same trees as loggers. "Silviculture is an art as well as a science," Bihun reminded us.

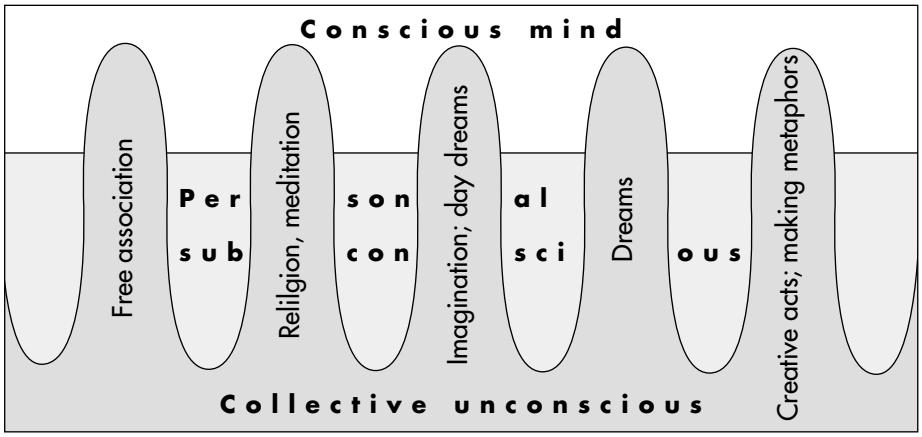
If you were looking for simple answers, this session on responsible wood use would not have satisfied you. True to its context, it offered, instead, alternative considerations.

Turning to Joseph Campbell

What does art history have to offer the turner looking for creative direction in the shop? Barbara Hodik, Professor of Art History at the Rochester Institute of Technology, offered insights based on Joseph Campbell's studies of myth for getting in touch with the kind of stuff deep inside you that you can be sure will powerfully impact others, too.

She offered as proof of the effectiveness of such an approach the success of the *Star Wars* trilogy. George Lucas, looking to develop a mythology of the future, embraced Campbell as his mentor. Campbell helped shape the blockbuster story of a young man in search of his identity, his father, his place in society, and his role in the conflict between good and evil, freedom and control, and the past and future of his culture. Campbell identified these universal themes in cultures all over the world and throughout history and codified them. Understanding them, Hodik suggested, can help make your work as powerful as *Star Wars.*

Art and craft, just like movies and television, involve visual metaphor; they are, according to Hodik, "society sitting around the campfire communicating what matters." What matters, it turns out, occupies three levels: the conscious, the personal



From Jung, through Campbell, to Hodik: Where human truths come from.

Local families make a point of attending WTC shows staged at Ursinas College.

subconscious, and (with a nod to Carl Jung) the collective subconscious. The relation among these levels of consciousness is illustrated on the facing page. The vertical shapes reaching up from the collective unconscious, through the personal subconscious, and into the conscious mind are like bubbles percolating. Dreams, free associations, meditations, and creative acts are the vehicles of this communication. Woodturning is one of the ways to give shape to powerful universal themes. In fact, Hondik (and Campbell) maintain that there's no way to avoid the collective unconscious from percolating up, like a lava lamp, into your work. The more you know about these subliminal forces, the more in touch you are with your work, and the clearer, more compelling it is to others.

Hodik drove home the point that we all tap into the unconscious individually, and no matter what conscious efforts you may make, in as much as your work is in touch with the unconscious, "you can't avoid people reading their own stories into your work." Titling a piece is one way to lead viewers in a particular direction, with more or less specificity: "The title, 'Unit 1 and Unit 2,' for instance, leaves viewers freer than, say, 'Elephant at the well.'"

Artists are mediums. They try to bring a degree of order to chaos, balancing conscious, deliberate actions with unconscious, universal forces. "If you are true to your deepest nature," Hodik concluded, "you can't avoid repeating fundamental human truths."

The well turned word

The question of communication in art was taken up by Tom Csaszar, a writer and artist who has published more than sixty art reviews and feature articles in various art and craft magazines. Csaszar referred to a number of essays exploring the nature of criticism; one in particular by Sidney Geist in the first issue of *Art Forum* identified the purpose of criticism as five-fold: descriptive, historical, analytical, hortatory, and judgemental. The question of judgement was debated, some feeling that a review was more useful if it stopped short of personal opinion, others that withholding judgement was an abrogation.

The question of meaning and how it is conveyed was also addressed. Works possessing an open meaning lend themselves to explicit discussion. Those with implied meanings tend to be richer, requiring more indirect explication—thus the use of analogy, anecdote, and otherwise artful writing.

Various members of the audience wanted Csaszar to explain how more publications might be encouraged to publish more critical writing on woodturning. Makers and collectors alike want this to happen because greater exposure and serious attention, it is assumed, will bring greater credibility and cultural value. Csaszar allowed that this might be so, but that greater exposure did not necessarily mean that good things would be said about woodturning. "Publicity never hurts," he said, "but it doesn't guarantee anything, either." A debate ensued on whether it was preferable to have a bad review rather than no review at all, and vice versa. The choice seemed to be a matter of individual character.

The answer to the question of increasing exposure settled on community. With community comes the exchange of information, ideas, and opinions. Such discourse builds a common vocabulary and a history of shared experience and expression. As community expands, it overlaps into other communities, and the conversation broadens. Exposure thus comes about naturally, if slowly. Given how quickly the woodturning community has grown, the anxiousness for more seems an unreasonable impatience.

Csaszar gave us a five-minute off-the-cuff review of the ITE exhibition. He noted the playful character the work (indeed, children seemed fascinated by it). He observed an irony that would never occur to a woodturner: the careful importance invested in the material, while the process required so much removal of it. And he recognized the show's constitution of four strong voices. For more on (and from) these voices, see the following article.

Rick Mastelli is editor of American Woodturner. *Photos by the author.*

FOUR MORE IN ORBIT

International Turning Exchange '96

TERRY MARTIN

THE INTERNATIONAL TURNING EXchange was initiated by the Wood Turning Center to encourage interaction, collaboration, and creativity at the highest level and between turners from different turning cultures. Albert LeCoff, Director of the WTC, has long promoted the idea of woodturning as an art form deserving of the kind of credibility afforded to ceramics, glass, and other more established creative media. The ITE is probably one of the most significant ways he has devised to further this dream.

So how does it feel to be part of this dream? There were five of us selected for 1996, one each from France and Australia and three from the U.S. One of the Americans, the only woman selected, unfortunately had to withdraw for personal reasons, so it became an all-male group.

Put them together in the George School campus woodshop just outside Philadelphia for six weeks, arrange for them to live in a farmhouse on campus, take them out every now and then for events such as the AAW "Turning Ten" symposium and visits to other turners, schedule an exhibition at the end of the event—and let the mixture cook. It is a risky proposition with great potential for disaster, but with good will and the right support it works.

The four residents were, in a sense, divided into two pairs by their working styles. One pair, Hugh McKay and Michael Brolly, both produce work which is highly labor-intensive, idiosyncratic, and can take months to complete (although Hugh has a background in production turning, he has long foregone that style of work). These two are also normally the more reclusive, Michael happily admitting that he is comfortable working without much social contact and Hugh living and working in a quiet part of Oregon. Coincidentally, these were the two American participants.

The other pair were Jean-François Escoulen from France and myself, who are more accustomed to having to produce a number of pieces every day. Jean-François, who is a key organizer and popular member of the turning community in France, has a background as a traditional production turner. He found the pace, if not the expectations, of working during the ITE almost leisurely. I, who also work as a writer and travel extensively, am one of those turners who has to produce a lot of work each day to survive. I, too, felt there was ample time to produce a body of work.

One clear indicator of the different approaches to work was in the number of pieces each of us made for the final exhibition. Although we all worked seven days a week and often late into the night, the results in numbers were disparate. The exhibition showcased eleven pieces by Jean-François, twelve by me, seven by Michael, and two by Hugh. In addition, Jean-François and I produced four collaborative pieces.

In the workshop there were also big differences in personal interaction and the sharing of ideas. Michael admitted early on that "basically I am very shy, so the thought of spending a large block of uninterrupted time with a group of virtual strangers scares me." When Michael needed to concentrate on a piece he tended to stay up all night so he could be alone with his work. Nevertheless, during the residency he was very sharing of his ideas and methods. Perhaps more significantly, he was encouraging and showed excitement at the other participants' work.

One of the reasons Hugh had been accepted into the ITE was his willingness to demonstrate his technical skills to the other residents. He had decided in advance what he was going to do and marked out his territory in the workshop from day one. Although he was willing to share his techniques with the others, he never pretended he was there to collaborate.

I had two tasks during the residency. I was not only a turner but also the resident writer/photographer. I claimed this made life easier: When I was tired of turning I could get out the camera or tape recorder and do something else. It let me off the hook in many ways. I'm a garrulous person, and there were times when my interest in talking must have irritated the quieter members of the group.

Jean-François had the largest barrier to overcome. His English was, by his own admission, poor and at the beginning of the residency he suffered from isolation. His English teacher in France was British and, much to his consternation, the American accent among us defeated him. Luckily he was able to understand my accent and I translated the American into English! But, despite this language barrier, Jean-François' natural ability to communicate came through, and he proved to be a genial companion.

Right at the start Michael began a series of baseballs (photos, facing page) inspired by the eccentric bats of Mark Sfirri. He saw them as a warm-up exercise for further collaboration with the ITE group, but they ended up being the major body of work he produced. Six in all, they represent Michael at his wittiest. Michael has a remarkable repertoire of techniques

Michael Brolly's baseball series (above): "High Fly Ball," "Fly Ball," "Bat Ball," and "Grass Burner." At right is Brolly's "Dancing Tryclops."

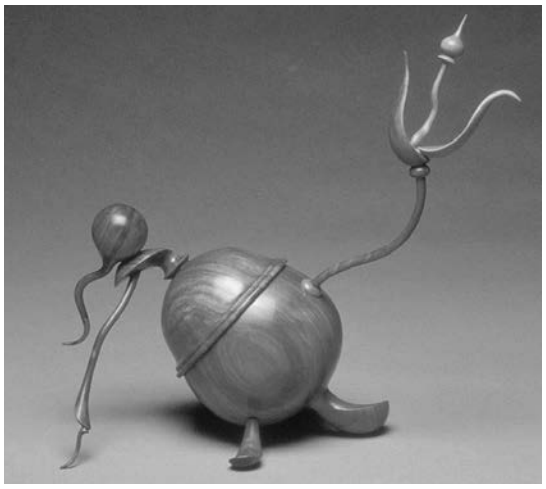
and he brought them all into play with this series. The zipper on "Fly Ball" was cut on the table saw using a jig devised for the task. The wings of the fly on the zipper were cut out of brass. The lanky legs on "High Fly Ball" are wonderful examples of turned and jointed pieces that took hours and hours of intense concentration. They are even more remarkable when closely examined, because even under the most intense scrutiny the work is faultless. "Grass Burner" is such a funny piece that it is easy to overlook the technical mastery required to make it. The smooth lines of "Bat Ball" resulted from days of carving and hand-sanding.

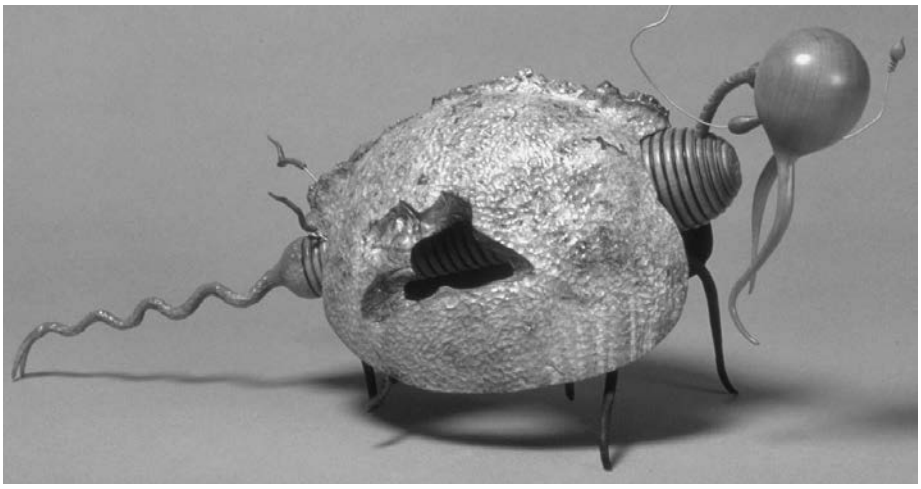
I watched the balls evolve a little bit every day. Michael's work is so painstaking, I couldn't believe it. The amount of hand-finishing that goes into it is a revelation for a person like me who is always in a hurry. I'd look at these wonderfully weird pieces and say to Michael, "You're a sick puppy." He'd answer, "Thank you very much!"

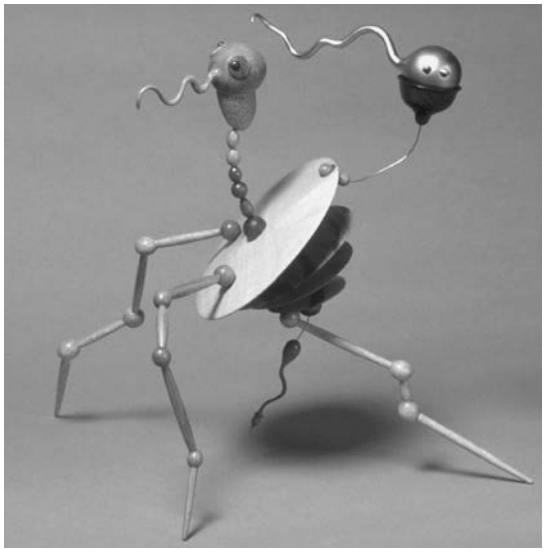
Part way through the residency the colored veneers that Michael had ordered arrived and he was able to start work on his largest piece, "Dancing Tryclops" (photo, above right) He spent days laminating the legs and body using jigs, clamps, and shaping techniques that only Michael could have thought up. It is a trademark Brolly piece with its stealthy legs, cocked head, and powerfully dynamic presence. Close inspection reveals that it was made in several pieces and that the hundreds of individual layers of different-colored veneer line up with total accuracy. Only the other ITE residents knew that this was achieved by try-fitting all of the pieces over and over, removing microscopic amounts of wood each time, until the whole was able to be glued up. It was a special act of courage to even attempt such a difficult piece. That it worked perfectly is testament to Michael's artistry.

For the first half of the residency Jean-François seemed in a minor panic. When a George School teacher who spoke French interpreted for him, it emerged that Jean-François understood our task was to produce a wholly collaborative exhibition. He was anxious about not having produced any work with the other residents. Once it was explained that, although it might be desirable, it wasn't compulsory to collaborate, he relaxed and began enjoying himself more. Jean-François underwent the most extraordinary transformation during the residency.

Although he had been producing his eccentric lidded containers for a few years, he still felt constrained by traditional techniques. When Michael and I showed Jean-François our various carving techniques based on extensive use of hand-held rotary cutters, belt sanders, and other post-turning tools, Jean-François was galvanized into a period of prolific creativity. It is possible to trace the rapid development of his ideas through the pieces in the show. "Folies Bergère" represents the kind of work he was doing when he arrived—eccentric spindles projecting from an offset base (see *American Woodturner,* September 1996, page 40, for example). Then in







Jean-François Escoulen surprised everyone, including himself, with his fanciful turned constructions, including "Nouvelle Direction," upper left, "La Metamorphose," above, and "Darling, you are getting more and more beautiful," lower left.

"Premiere Collaboration" he incorporated textures and carved flourishes using the techniques Michael and I had shared with him. After that, he discarded the game plan and produced "Nouvelle Direction," a wonderfully grotesque lidded container with a fallen-down-drunk posture unlike anything he had produced before (photo, top left). Then, almost as if he had frightened himself, he eased off a little for some days and worked on a few collaborative pieces with me.

About a week later Jean-François pulled off the biggest surprise of the residency—probably as much for himself as for the others. "La Metamorphose" (photo, above right) is based on the Kafka story where a man wakes up and finds he has been transformed into a cockroach. The piece has all of the nightmare qualities of the story, but with a layer of humor that lightens it. Although it doesn't look like it, the piece was almost wholly turned. It was such a departure from his previously linear, spindle-based work that it was hard to see it as the work of the same person, and it is tempting to read it as a metaphor for the transformation this residency was effecting.

After being reassured, particularly by Michael, that the piece was wonderful, Jean-François went on to produce "Darling, you are getting more and more beautiful" (photo, left), a large, whimsical, stick-like creature with a benign, muppet-like expression. In a cradle suspended on piano wire it carries its best sperm with the intention of fertilizing its wife at home. Everyone, including Jean-François, realized they were indeed witnessing a metamorphosis. "I've always wanted to be an artist," he said. "When I go home to France, I don't want to do production work any more. This is what I want to do."

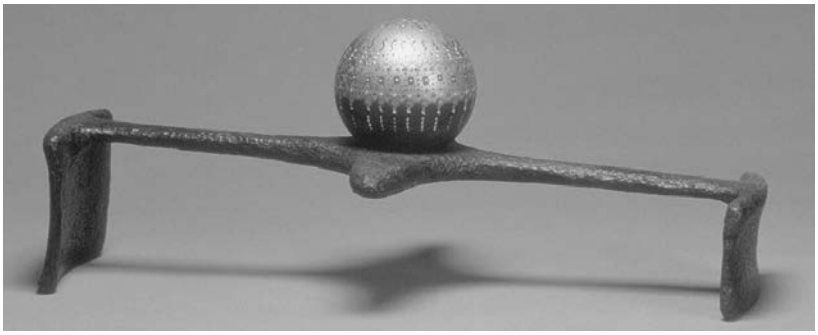
He capped it all by producing "The chicken family goes on vacation," a multi-legged, multi-headed, eccentrically built, garish bird of such humor that everyone who sees it smiles or laughs with delight.

Hugh arrived at the ITE with a 125-pound block of wood cut and ready for mounting on a lathe. He knew what he was going to do with it and instead of adapting the wood to the available equipment, he spent the first week adapting the equipment to his wood. He cut pieces off the large lathe generously lent by Bill Hilgendorff (with Bill's permission), added bits here, took bits off there, rejected the school's compressor and hired in a bigger one, added his complex tool system to the lathe and ended up with the best copy of his own workshop he could manage in the circumstances. He then set about six weeks of the most intensive work imaginable, head down and eyes focused on the wood, and absolutely incommunicado!

The rest of us watched the whole process with a mixture of awe and fascination as Hugh made "Quad pot w/ reveal" (photo, facing page). Massively off-center, the work took days just to mount and remount, turned, as it was, on four centers. As the piece took form, its deceptive simplicity belied the complex idea behind it. Hugh explained that he wanted to make a piece that explored the paradoxes of geometric shapes and the similarities between spheres, tubes, and cubes. The result is a large box-like form with four orifices in the top. Each hole leads to a hollow, but three of these are contained within the angles of the rectangular exterior. The fourth is shaped on the outside to match its inner curve, both reflecting and distorting the images of the other three

Hugh McKay's "Quad pot w/ reveal," left, features four hollows, each turned on a different axis.

Terry Martin's "Vessel in a Bowl," right, looks like it couldn't have been turned but was (though obviously not 360°), while "The ascent to Madame Montgolfier," below, looks like it was turned but, except for the sphere, wasn't.



sections. It is a risky piece, both technically and intellectually, as most of its qualities are internal.

His other piece for the show, "Blue Rose," is named for the rosewood he carved it from and the blue glass inserts he cast for the piece. It is as far from "Quad pot" as can be imagined. Curvaceous and pierced to reveal the interior, it flows and whirls, allowing light to pass softly through the glass and color the viewer's perceptions.

I found it difficult to imagine collaborating, but under gentle pressure from Jean-François I worked with him on several pieces. The most successful of these was "The music of the sphermatazoa." Although the majority of the turning was Jean-François', the conceptualizing, designing, and assembly were intensely collaborative, and we agreed later that it was the piece we enjoyed working on most.

Of my solo work, I enjoyed playing with "The ascent to Madame Montgolfier" (photo, above right). A lot of my work looks like it couldn't have been turned, but it was. ("Vessel in a Bowl," pictured at top right, is a case in point.) So I decided to make something that looked like it could have been turned but wasn't. The base for the sphere in this piece was wholly cut out on the bandsaw and then carved. Only the sphere was turned. I just wanted to make a piece for fun.

I also enjoyed making "Personazita." The title is the politically corrected version of "manzanita," the wood from which it is made. I was told that this wood was hard, so I was ready for a battle. I was pleasantly surprised at how easy the wood is to cut compared to Australian hardwoods. One of the great delights of the residency for me was the opportunity to try so many northern hemisphere timbers.

All of these experiences will leave a mark on us, depending on our willingness to be influenced. The launching of Jean-François on his artistic career would, in itself, justify the whole experience. The other three of us will each reinterpret and recycle the experiences in our own way.

One of the reasons for the success of the '96 International Turning Exchange was that many lessons were learned from the previous year's inaugural event. Obviously 1997 will be better again, when further improvements are made. Perhaps, considering the nature of the residency, there should be attempts to invite only those who are more open to an interactive and collaborative process. The female/male balance needs to be redressed in future events, although it can only be as good as the number and variety of applicants allow. Logistics will inevitably improve as a network of contacts and resources is built up.

As it was for us four turners, all the ITE residencies will be intense and challenging experiences. But in time there will be a truly international community of turners who understand each other, and perhaps themselves, better than they could have any other way. The exchange of ideas and techniques will trickle through to other turners in the home countries, and unforeseen benefits will accrue. The ITE is a program of long-term vision and one that will change the turning world.

Terry Martin turns wood and writes in Brisbane, Australia.

Big, Brawny & Sophisticated

A new generation of lathes

KEN KEOUGHAN

There is a whole new generation of lathes out there. They are big, brawny, and sophisticated. They are powerful enough for humongous platters and hollow forms, precise enough for small intricate work. These lathes—the Nichols, Oneway, and VB36—have a great deal in common:

- They have been developed by family-run companies;
- The driving force within the company is a woodturner;
- They are establishing or have established a new price point in the $5,000 range;
- They are demonstrating why they can command this price level.

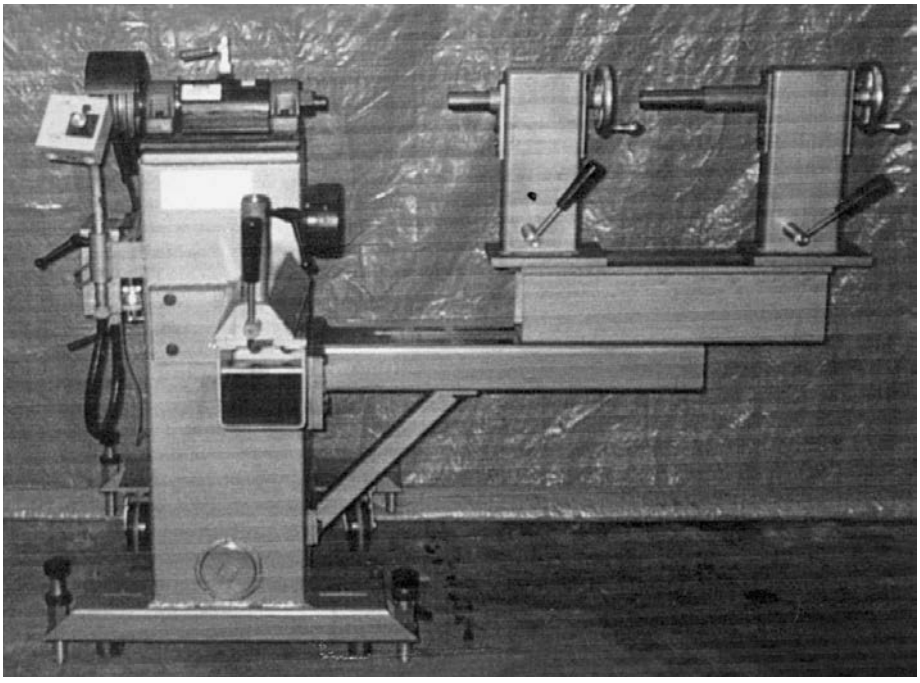
I first saw them as a group at the AAW "Turning Ten" symposium this past June. They stood out like Sumo wrestlers at a Small Persons' convention. The Nichols lathe, in contrast to the traditional long bed over spindly legs, is a massive piece of machinery. John Nichols will attach a crane to it, if you like, so you can lift that green 600-pound out-of-round bowl chunk you've always wanted to turn. The VB36 Master Bowl Turner has a 36-inch-diameter maximum swing with the standard tool rest; otherwise, the floor's the limit. I saw it turning a large bowl blank at a stately and steady 50–60 rpm. The Oneway, developed by Tim Clay, uses a 10 3/4-inch cylinder as the basic assembly component to which its bedways and ribs are welded. The cylinder provides extraordinary torsional rigidity. One morning at the symposium I saw a crowd gathered at the Oneway booth. Frank Sudol was arcing wet turnings 2-inches wide into a trash can more than six feet away.

First we will look at the individual lathes and the men who are responsible for making them available to us. We will try to determine what their goals were, what they wanted in a lathe. Second, we'll see what respected, in many cases professional, turners who know these lathes say about them. Third we will briefly summarize what these developments mean to us as woodturners.

Nichols

John Nichols eats, drinks, sleeps, and dreams lathes. So, I think, does his wife, Ruth. He apprenticed as a mortician, spent twenty-three years in the US Navy, has performed electrical maintenance in power plants, and been production manager of an animal feed processing plant turning alfalfa into feed for export to the Orient. Six foot six inches tall and disarmingly garrulous, he may be the John Wayne of lathe builders. "Want a nice lathe, pilgrim?"

About ten years ago Denver Ulery, an in-law of John's, asked John what he could do about the cast iron tool rests that his students at Overlake School kept breaking off at the stem. John got a shoe box full of pieces, looked them over and made a batch of steel tool rest replacements. That got him interested in lathes. Really interested. "Denver, kept batting my ears about the idea that long-bed lathes couldn't cut it for turning bowls. 'You can't get at the bowls on a long bed…We need a lathe for bowls.'" One thing led to another, and John decided that "if you're going to work 200-pound out-of-round, out-of-balance pieces, you need a heavy duty lathe made entirely of metal." This realization came to him about four years ago. He sat down, paced the floor, scribbled, and sweated, and two weeks later he came up with his first prototype. "It was mostly cutting torch and hammer, you understand, a little crude. But at that point I was operat-



The Nichols lathe, in one of its innumerable configurations.

ing on three credit cards, a dream, and the sure-fire inspiration of poverty's door-step."

Today, the Nichols lathe is one of the most respected and probably one of the most controversial on the market—respected because of its excellence; controversial because of its originality. Let's look at it:

- Beds that cross at 90 degrees.
- Front- or back-of-the-lathe turning capabilities.
- Beds that can be extended or telescoped.
- Massive tool rests, anywhere you want them.
- Custom-designed to individual specs, including:
  - –Type of turning
  - –Height of turner
  - –Power
  - –Controls
  - –Pulley configuration
  - –Safety features
  - –Hoist (600-pound capacity)
  - –Leveling jacks; 900-pound-capacity floor casters
  - –Four bed options

The list goes on and on. To buy a Nichols lathe, you fill out a three-page questionnaire. He sends you a videotape showing how to assemble it once you get it, various customizations that have been done, how the options work, and what they are for.

This is a massive piece of machinery. Everything about it is big and strong. It's about as tough as the boring bars he was demonstrating with at the "Turning Ten" symposium in Greensboro.

Flaws? People have questioned his bearings. Response: "We use two sets of double-row spherical roller bearings. They can certainly take the weight we use and they work extremely well over very long periods of time in terrible environments at speeds double ours and running 18 to 24 hours a day. I've had one spindle assembly returned for a replacement, just as a matter of course. In another instance we think the problem was the machine needed to be run up to reasonably high rpm levels from time to time."

What about the tailstock? Can it be aligned? Answer: to a fair-thee-well. But if you slide the telescoping bed in or out it must be realigned to be dead accurate. That's the price you pay to be able to change the length of the bed.

Are they evolving or changing? Yes. Daily. That's why they are customized. He's done one lathe for a young fellow afflicted with cerebral palsy. Now he's looking for a turner or would-be turner bound to a wheel chair.

These machines are as precise as they are strong. You can do extremely delicate work on a Nichols lathe or hoist up a 600-pound burl and have at it. Does Bonnie Kline need one of these? Possibly not.

VB36 Master Bowl Turner

The VB36 Master Bowl Turner Lathe was designed by Nigel Voisey and birthed by Roger Buse. That explains the V and the B. The 36, of course, is the nominal swing over the bed with the standard tool rest.

This lathe, painted a serene green, is a solid, sleek, quiet, professional lathe. Voisey designed it for professional and impassioned advanced turners.

This is not to say that intermediate, even novice turners can't enjoy it and benefit from it. "I wanted a bowl lathe that would be free of vibration, quiet, and steady, almost regardless of the size of the workpiece. I also wanted to be able to get at the workpiece from any angle easily. Since we were building a lathe of prodigious capacity, safety became a very serious concern. We could not permit dangerous acceleration or deceleration or firing up the machine with a great squealing of belts when the spindle was locked." Nigel, who has

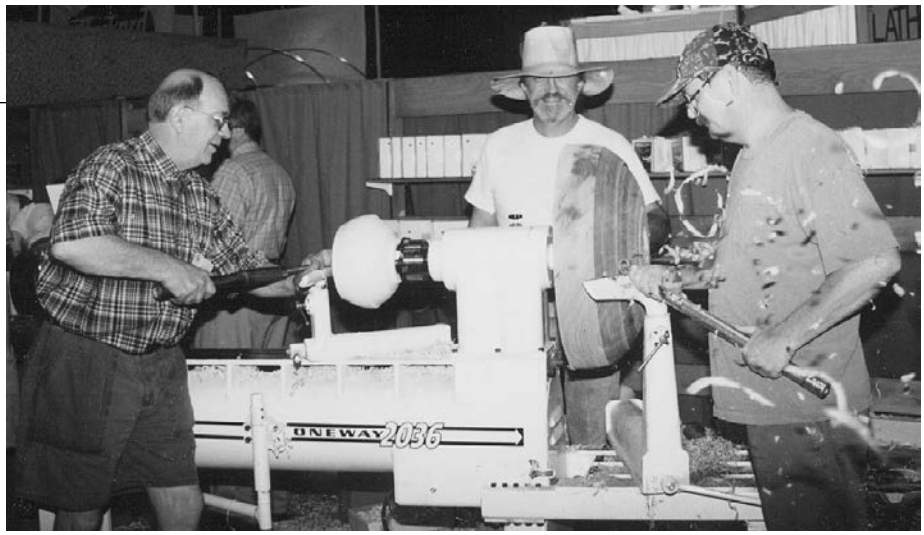
The VB36 Master Bowl Turner.

written books on machining wood, knew what he was after. He has been a professional woodturner.

Serious development began in 1993. Voisey reviewed his ideas with Roger Buse, whose company, Hegner U.K. Ltd., was accustomed to assembling, marketing and distributing machinery. It also had a reputation for excellence and integrity.

It took nearly two years to develop a prototype to put into preproduction testing. What does this lathe incorporate that is new and unique?

- Bearings—lubricated through machine-top oil cups, the spindle literally floats in oil. They've been called old-fashioned; engineers regard them as superb for this use.
- Body casting—permits perfect bearing alignment; it is machined to an accuracy better than 3 microns.
- Massive spindle shaft—$2^1/_2$-inch ground from EN-8 steel, hard-chromed on the bearing surfaces—ten-year guarantee on the bearing assembly.
- Faceplate system—triple bayonet mounting provides excellent security when accelerating, decelerating, or reversing.
- Mass—the machine weighs 800 pounds to fulfill its vibration- and noise-elimination goals; mass was a must.
- Motor—2-HP three-phase 220-volts,



The new Oneway does double duty for manufacturer Tim Clay, left, and John Jordan, right, while hat-man Johannes Michelsen looks on.

operating through an inverter that converts single-phase wall current to three-phase for the motor.
- Soft start/stop—handwheel on side of headstock controls belt tension and can provide a "running clutch" effect.
- Variable speed—0–2600 rpm, based on step pulley configuration ranges: 50–500, 150–1350, 250–2600.
- Remote control—start, stop, forward, reverse are controlled by a hand-size magnetic-backed box on a 6-foot cord that you can hold or stick any place you want on the machine; controls made by ABB.
- Full-torque all-speed—proper engineering to achieve specified power ratings expressed in horsepower or kilowatts results in full "working" power even at low-end rpm.
- Offset tailstock (option)—permits standing directly in front of the workpiece with the tailstock employed; #3 Morse taper; heavy quill with rack-and-pinion gears operating nearly 6 inches of travel.
- Floor-standing tool rest (option)—permits depth in excess of 24 inches; permits diameters in excess of 7 feet. Are we turning bowls or wading pools here?

Nigel reports that sixty of these lathes have been sold since March of 1996. Professional turners in the U.K. who own them love them.

Oneway 2036

Tim Clay owns a company whose bread and butter is dependent on CNC (computer numerically controlled) precision machines that manufacture components for off-road heavy-duty machinery, e.g. General Motors locomotives. They "spend all day every day with machines that were designed and engineered to do specific jobs and do them about as well as they can be done." After six years of turning on lathes manufactured by others, Tim decided that he wanted to build a woodturning lathe that would embody a philosophy of excellence and employ the technology available today—a lathe that would do the job of turning wood about as well as it can be done.

Work began in October 1995. The first prototype was on line and working in February of 1996. Among the practical innovations it incorporates into one harmonious machine are:
- Tubular bed design—10 3/4-inch diameter, stress-relieved, 5/16-inch wall thickness.
- Extra heavy duty cast iron tailstock—1 1/2-inch-diameter quill; #3 Morse taper; super-rigid clamp design; 5/16-inch through-hole; 5-inch handwheel.
- Three-bearing headstock—massive 2-inch spindle chromalloy case-hardened to 60 Rockwell C; 5/8-inch hole through; drive pulley between front and rear bearings; #2 Morse taper; set screw locks into groove in shaft preventing tightening/loosening of workpiece when starting/stopping.
- Motor—1 1/2-hp standard, 3-hp optional 220-volt single-phase AC motor, 0–3000 rpm; "effective" torque at 30 rpm; three-step ten-groove 1-inch-wide poly-vee belts; speed ranges are 0–800, 0–1800, or 0–3000 rpm.
- Electronic variable speed controller on swing arm—built-in ramp acceleration/deceleration/braking.
- Tool rest—banjo clamp mechanism that eliminates clamp shaft deflection and ensures a tight grip over entire length of banjo (patent pending).
- Outboard extension—two sizes: one to permit 20-inch swing, another to permit 45-inch swing; used with motor reversed; either is worked as you would a short bed lathe; the 20-inch can be employed in-line to extend length of standard bed.

This lathe took the "Turning Ten" symposium by storm. Oneway sold everything they had on the floor and a total of twenty lathes were ordered at this event.

User responses

Rodger Jacobs on the Nichols—"The Nichols lathe is versatile. Any swing, any length, any motor size. Good safety features like belt covers and guards. L-shaped front and back beds allow a tool rest to encompass 180 degrees of workpiece. If you want a vacuum chuck that will suck a golf ball through a garden hose, it's available. The bed on my Nichols telescopes out to 7 feet, so I have a short bed or a long bed. John listens to and works with his customers. His lathes are in a constant process of woodturner-inspired evolution. The best feature is that John really cares about his machines. These lathes are his creation and he wants to find good homes for them."

Dave Barriger on the Nichols—"I've

been very pleased with it. It's steady enough without sand or tire leads to do most of the work that I like to do. The variable speed gives me excellent control with out-of-round, out-of-balance pieces. I also like the bed off to the side that lets me put the tool rest beside or behind the workpiece. On some of my pieces I have been using the steady rest that I bought with the lathe, and it works real well.

"Despite its mass the lathe is easy to move around. I have mine on casters with jacks to raise it up above the casters and set it steady and level."

Ray Allen on the Nichols—"I wouldn't take three times what I paid for it."

He says adjusting the tailstock can be a "little tricky" because of the sliding beds, "But it's only a matter of a couple of minutes to adjust it. And I'm working on some pretty big pieces". Most are up to 30" in diameter and 26" deep.

He made a very interesting point. "I turned a piece that was 36" by 32" tall. You know what I found out? I found out you couldn't get that sucker thru a standard door."

"Overall", Ray says, "I'm very well satisfied with my Nichols lathe. You'll never find a fairer person to deal with than John Nichols."

Terry Harvey on the VB36—"This is a brilliant lathe. The best on the market. The controls are superb. It's excellent for handling heavy large pieces. I've just finished a 38-inch-diameter bowl. It took four of us to heft the workpiece up onto the lathe. But with the ramp-up start and stop and using the extra belt for maximum working torque at low speeds it was manageable. Using the electronic speed control it's relatively easy to bring an out-of-round, out-of-balance piece into reasonably stable equilibrium. Roger made me an adapter to convert the VB36 spindle threads to the size that fits all my chucking and faceplates systems.

"This lathe is the best thing since sliced bread. I know. As a professional turner I have and work on five lathes."

Stuart Mortimer on the VB36—"In the U.K. the VB36 is the only one of its stature available. It is difficult to exaggerate the quality and woodturning potential of this lathe. More of a problem getting wood of a size in the U.K. to turn on it. The variable speed, good torque at low speed and electronic brake make this lathe a joy to use with heavy pieces. While demonstrating at Dale Nish's symposium I did a couple of bowls that we lifted up to mount with a forklift. The Union Graduate cannot touch this lathe."

Don White on the VB36—Don White, a highly respected professional turner in the U.K. says, "I tried out the VB36 down at Melvyn Firmager's when he had one on trial. After I got used to it, it was superb. I was so impressed I sold a Union Graduate and my old Wadkin to be able to buy one. As far as I'm concerned the only thing wrong with the VB36 is I wish it had come along 20 years sooner."

Al Stirt on the Oneway 2036—Touring the floor of the vendor area at the "Turning Ten" Symposium with a couple of other turners, Stirt said of the Oneway 2036, "This is the smoothest lathe I've ever turned on."

John Jordan on the Oneway 2036—John Jordan, was seen at the symposium asking Nick Cook if he could help John find someone to move some "heavy equipment" out of the convention center that day or night. "Where to?" Nick asked. "Anywhere. I can pick it up in a day or two to get it home." It was one of the Oneway 2036s that had been used to demonstrate at Greensboro.

In a follow-up call John said, "The Oneway is probably the best lathe that's ever been invented. A thoughtful lathe dependent on input from woodturners to design it. Anything you need to do with that lathe you can do with one hand, like change the tool rest. This is a wonderful machine."

David Lancaster on the Oneway 2036—"When I first saw this lathe I didn't think it could be much with a tubing bed—was I mistaken, as it proved unbelievably rigid! When the tailstock, which is heavy cast iron with a $1\frac{1}{2}$-inch barrel, is moved along the bed it makes a swishing noise, the sound of a precision fit. The fit of the barrel and body is of a quality until now found only on metal lathes. The cam lock grips very rigidly and without deflection.

"This is the smoothest running lathe that I've ever used. Frankly, this lathe has improved my turning. Oneway has taken a giant step forward, introducing a new standard of excellence for all lathe manufacturers to try to equal."

We as woodturners are fortunate to be alive and turning today. These lathes have been designed by and for woodturners. They are being manufactured by companies whose woodworking focus is turning wood. They are not Taiwanese Wannabees. They have not been developed as an extension of an existing line of tools. Nor have they been battled to a mediocre standstill by corporate cost accountants. "Marketing" costs are neither doubling the price nor devouring the profits. In fact they are more than a cut above most, if not all, of their competition. All three, Nichols, VB36, Oneway, are the result of a genuine pursuit of excellence. Yes there is a whole new generation of lathes out there...big brawny, sophisticated.

Ken Keoughan is a retired advertising consultant who lives in Friendship, ME, and Mt. Dora, FL.

PHOTOS FROM THE MAILBAG

This clock tower won the Friendship Cup at the Kansas City Ornamental Turning Meeting in May 1996. The Friendship Cup was presented to American ornamental turners in 1991 on behalf of the Society of Ornamental Turners to award on a yearly basis to the best example of the craft exhibited at the annual meeting. The piece, No. 2 in a series, utilizes the design influences of Texas county courthouses. Size is 4" x $11\frac{3}{4}$". Materials are cocobolo, African blackwood, boxwood, snakewood, and olivewood with carnelian gemstones and quartz clock movements. Upper and lower domes lift off exposing box compartments and a lift-out tray in the lower compartment.

—James Harris, Red Rock, TX

Wayne Welke/Photography

I turned twenty two of these tap handles for Redbones, a popular tavern here. Bartenders and customers alike seem to prefer them over the ones the breweries provide.

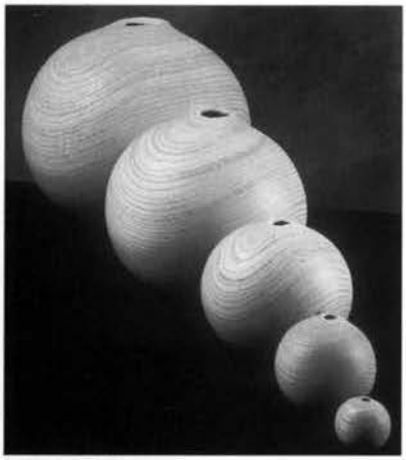
—Matt Pelrine, Somerville, MA

"Satin Sun," right, is made of colored maple burl and ebony, 11" high.

—Bob Chapman, Kent, England

My mesquite turnings, below, won Best in Show at this year's Rockport (TX) Art Festival. I am a self- (and magazine-) taught turner on a homemade unit with the capacity to turn 96" dia.

—Richard Nicols, Falcon Heights, TX



Photos: Joseph Pacifico

"Ash Pots," left, range from 1" to 12" dia. "Wired," center, is of red maple (and wire), 7" high. And "Exploded View," right, is of ash, wire, and acrylic paints with a textured finish, 9" dia. *—Robert J. Lufrano, Staten Island, NY*

Beyond Basic Turning by Jack Cox. *The Linden Publishing Company, Fresno CA 93726, 1993. Paperback, 256 pages, $28.95.*

Potential readers of this book should first thumb through it or at least closely examine the cover photographs. It is not what its title would suggest. A better descriptive would be "An Excursion into Advanced Segment, Multi-center, and Stave Turning." This work presents many interesting concepts for those wishing to expand their horizons into more complex areas of segmented piece woodturning.

In his introduction Cox sets himself three overall objectives. First, as a long-time engineer and turner, he would present "a cross-fertilization of the two disciplines" on issues of design for pieces and on jigs and fixtures for completing them. Second, he seeks to relieve the non-engineer of "becoming bogged-down by the mathematics" required by his advanced segmented turning designs. His third objective is "conservation of timber" in design, assembly, and completion.

For his first objective, Cox largely succeeds. The presence of an engineer is clear throughout the work. The principal shortfall here is a tendency to arbitrarily discard design approaches which have been used successfully by others for decades. This narrows the scope of the work to those particular concepts on which he has based his 35-plus years' development of segmented systems. Within this limitation however, the presentation is strong, well-detailed, and very much worthwhile.

Achievement of the second target is limited. Cox employs the common engineering mechanism of nomograms to replace the trigonometric calculations involved in the compound angles required of advanced segmented designs. But for understanding of the underlying concepts as practical design tools, much of the text winds up pushing the reader into trying to cope with the math detail. Those of us not so inclined would do well to substitute a copy of the handbook "Woodworker's Guide to Compound Miters" (Bridge City Tool Works, 800/253-3332, $5).

The third objective of timber conservation is well-met. But, as Cox himself points out, this comes at stiff cost in terms of time required for design and cutting of individual pieces and the development and construction of required jigs and fixtures. Readers interested in designs and processes economically suitable for marketplace products will largely have to look elsewhere.

The book breaks into three principal sections. Chapters 1–4 are con-

cerned with the planning, design, and layout of segmented and stave constructions. This is where the hurdles of engineering mathematics are most severe. Text in a rather leaden style does not help those of us who never could get comfortable with the calculus and trigonometry of spatial relationships. It is all in there but, for many, several re-readings will be needed to assimilate the concepts involved. For the math whiz, it's probably a piece of cake!

The second section (chapters 5–10) are much easier. They cover sawing, sanding, assembly, lathe mounting, and some general turning issues. This is jigs-and-fixtures country and, for the most part, very well explained and detailed.

The final section is taken up with eleven projects based on Cox's design and implementation systems. While none are "pioneering," few turners with limited experience in the realm of segmented work will have encountered them. Each is done in more than adequate detail for a good chance at success the first time out. Higher mathematics does intrude from time to time but, generally, problems are not insurmountable.

Data tables, line drawings, and photos are well done and, for the most part, clearly explain the concept discussed. There are some nagging problems and exclusions. Lathe rotation directions bounce from clockwise to anti-clockwise and back again without comment, explanation, or caution. A complicated top-to-base assembly process employing screws to apply clamping pressure at each level replaces the commonly used reverse approach, using glue-only assembly at each stage. Discussion of adhesives focuses almost entirely on the use of hot-melt systems.

Only part of the potential audience will have the stamina to wade through the early chapters of this book. But, for those already exposed to the simpler aspects of segmented, stave, and similar work, there are many pockets of real challenge in this book. For most, mastery of the projects presented will secure new understanding of advanced design and process alternatives. —*Willis M. Hunt*

An Introduction to Bowl Turning with Dale Patton and Terry Telson. *Artisan Workshop, 9240 Amarone Way, Sacramento, CA 95829, 1994. VHS, 40 minutes, $25.*

This tape offers an interesting look at beginning bowl turning from the vantage point of two delightful turners. This video has as its described audience novice turners interested in bowl turning. Dale Patton performs the turning and did most of the commen-

tary while Terry Telson does the camera work and selected introductory presentations. There is only one project covered, and that is a small vessel. The wood used is dry mahogany. All of the various steps are covered, namely, sharpening, finishing, bandsawing the blank, mounting the blank, truing up the piece, turning the outside, using glue blocks, reverse-chucking, hollowing and parting off. Dale and Terry are relaxed, and they make the viewer relaxed as well. At one point Dale says, "If you're working up a sweat you're probably doing something wrong." They enjoy their work and this is readily sensed.

I gleaned new ideas from this video, techniques that I had never seen demonstrated before. Dale and Terry approach this video not only with good spirit but with genuinely good ideas. However, I do not think they address their stated audience. They try to do too much in a short time. Some aspects of beginning bowl turning were glanced over. Explanations—the *why* of things—were good in spots but left me wondering in others. Having taught high school students these techniques, I kept hearing in my mind all of my students' questions. Students of any age not only want to see a demonstration but need to be told what they are seeing and why they are seeing it. This allows them to understand their own mistakes back at their own lathe.

This video is not geared to beginning bowl turners. In a class setting I would call this a remediation or enrichment tool. To one who knows a little but needs some extra instruction this video is a very valuable resource. Another audience that this tape would appeal to is groups of turners, such as AAW chapters. This is a good demonstration of turning a dry piece of wood into a useful vessel. It would appeal to new members who are interested in turning. It would also be good as a demonstration tape for various innovative techniques in dry wood hollow turning.

Having viewed this tape a number of times, I admire Dale and Terry for what their doing, and I recommend this tape to readers interested in a good tool for enrichment, remediation, or demonstration. This video is not of the caliber of the well-known Richard Raffan, Del Stubbs, John Jordan, Dennis White, and Bonnie Klein tapes. These are all extraordinary teaching tapes. But with this second tape, Dale Patton and Terry Telson are making their way into this group.

—*Warren Wyrostek*

Will Hunt is a semi-retired product-development consultant in Lexington, MA. He wrote on segmented projects in this year's March and June issues. Warren Wyrostek teaches woodworking at the University of South Florida.

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION

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11. I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.
Signature: Rick Mastelli, Editor

GREENWOOD SEALER

WOODTURNERS IN NORTHERN CALIFORnia's Sacramento Valley are happily blessed with a seemingly endless supply of beautiful wood—usually free. Oak, ash, walnut, almond, eucalyptus, fruit woods, birch, fruitless mulberry, and acacia are readily available. We seek out burl wood, crotches, and grafts. In our quests we make friends with park personnel, local tree trimmers, orchardists, and neighbors. How do we handle this abundance of green wood? We share—calling on other turners to join in the harvest.

The tree trunks are cut into logs at the harvest site. Later they are cut into turning-size blocks and then turned into green wood bowls and platters. All this wood, with its high moisture content, needs to be carefully and slowly dried. Unprotected, green wood will check or crack as it dries. Green wood sealer moderates rapid, uneven moisture loss, alleviating physical stresses as wood dries.

Green wood sealer is a wax emulsion that is brushed on the wood and dries to a plastic coating. Once dry it will not wash off, chip, or peel. Drying time of the sealer depends on temperature and humidity—from an hour on a dry summer day to several days in cold, wet months. The material is milky white from the container and dries almost transparent. It is essentially non-toxic and while still wet can be cleaned up with water. Green wood sealer must be kept from freezing. An antifreeze formulation is available.

To coat logs and turnings I use a 2-inch-wide paint brush kept in a coffee can half filled with sealer and closed with a plastic lid; the brush handle is cut to fit in the can. This saves sealer, since it is not necessary to clean the brush after each use. Sealer will keep this way almost indefinitely.

Use sealer at four stages:

1. When cutting the tree to lengths that suit your requirements, seal the ends. This does not always prevent checking. If you have cut a lot of wood, end-coating will buy you time until you can get to the next step.

2. Since checking starts so easily at the pith of the log, you will want to rip the log in half through the pith, with a chain saw or bandsaw. A single chain-saw cut can do it, but two cuts, one on each side, may be necessary. If you want to store the half logs (and you have already coated the ends, where most of the moisture loss occurs), coat an inch or two of the flat surface at each end. Also seal "feathering" in sawn crotches and burls—on any highly figured wood.

3. The next step is cutting rounds on the bandsaw. If the round is not going to be turned promptly, coat the freshly cut surfaces.

4. After turning a bowl from the green round, use sealer again. (Since green wood turnings warp during drying, leave the turning substantially thicker than the final design so you can re-turn the blank round after it is dry.) After turning green, wipe off shavings and dust and promptly coat the inside and outside of the turning and set it aside to dry. Large and closed-form bowls can best be coated by pouring the sealer into them. Rotate the bowl to coat all surfaces and pour the excess back into the container.

Store the coated turnings to allow for drying with good air circulation. Don't stack bowls within bowls. Turnings can be held in net onion bags and hung on the shop wall to dry. Don't increase the temperature in the storage area in an effort to speed drying. Most of the moisture loss and therefore checking takes place early in the drying time. Inspect your drying bowls for the first few weeks. If you find checks or cracks, it is sometimes possible to re-turn the piece and remove the checked area.

Drying time needed before the turning can be completed depends on the original moisture content of the wood, thickness of the turning, wood species, and temperature and humidity in your shop. Drying may take six months or more. Smaller-diameter and thinner-walled pieces dry more quickly.

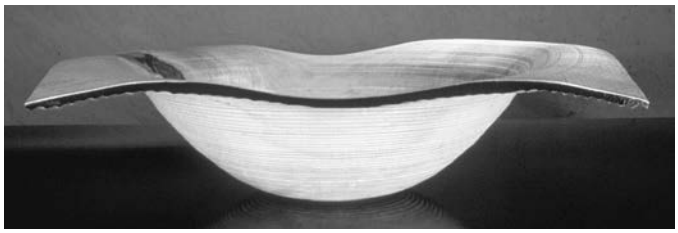
To identify your logs and turnings, number them—black marker on light wood, China marker on dark wood—before applying the coating. I keep a record of species, date acquired, location, etc.

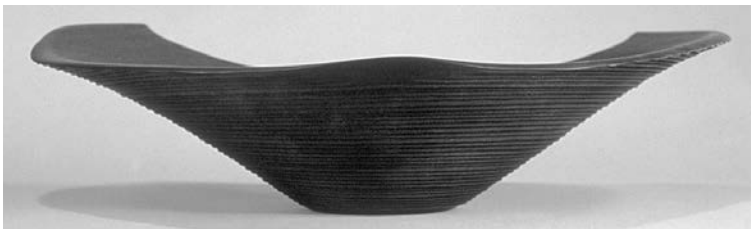
Sources for green wood sealer:

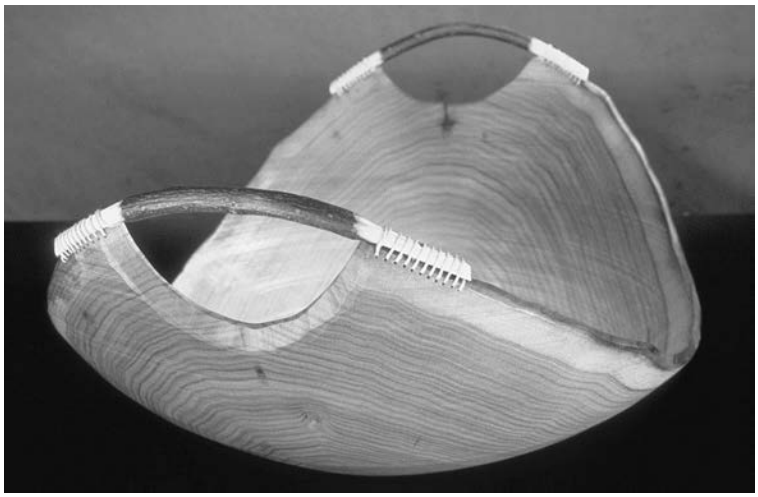
- In quarts, gallons, and five-gallon pails (trade name, Green Wood Sealer) from Craft Supplies, Provo, UT. Phone: 1-800-551-8876.
- In 5-gallon pails and 55-gallon drums (trade name, Sealtight) from ISK-BIOTECK, Memphis, TN. Phone: 1-800-238-2523.
- In 5-gallon pails and 55-gallon drums (trade name, Anchorseal) from U.C. Coatings Corp., Buffalo, NY. Phone: 1-716-833-9366.
- In 55-gallon drums (trade name, Mobilcer M) from Mobil Oil Company. Check the Yellow Pages for a local distributor.

Our club, Nor-Cal Woodturners, purchases sealer for its members in 55-gallon drums and transfers the sealer into eleven 5-gallon pails. Some turners buy five gallons; others divide the five gallons. Our cost including shipping is approximately $30 per 5-gallon pail.

Charles Brownold turns in Davis, CA.







Bowls *and the other stuff*

My work over the last couple of years may be divided into two groups: the bowls and the other stuff. The "Twig-Handled Bowls" (one of the series, above) have a hint of primitiveness, as if made by early hunter-gatherer societies. In contrast, "Stealth Bowl" (top right) asks the question,"If the Department of Defense commissioned me to make a salad bowl that could operate behind enemy lines, unseen by radar, what would it look like?" "Circle in a Square Bowl" (top left) retains the original dimensions of the log from which it was cut.

The other stuff is sort of my editorial page. "Wood Bullets" (bottom): Real ones take fifteen children from us every day. Wear one on your lapel, hang one around your neck, let people know where you stand on this issue. "A Child's Toy" (below left): Children need to get comfortable moving around large amounts of radioactive waste. And "My Last Cigarette" (below right): Quitting after thirty years was a major accomplishment that I celebrated with this piece.

—Mark Salwasser, Arlington, MA