Holiday Projects • Funeral Urns Turner's Bandsaw • Utah Symposium

The Journal of the American Association of Woodturners
Fall 2004 Vol. 19, No. 3 www.woodturner.org

American Woodturner®

10 pages of turned pieces from:

Orlando AAW Symposium
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Chapter Collaborative
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Chapter Sages Page 44

What individual makes a chapter tick? Join us for a visit with 12 long-time members who are the heartbeat of their local chapter.

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American Woodturner

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Fall 2004

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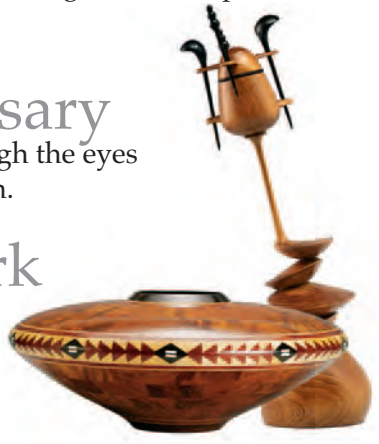

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36 On this issue's Cover From Sea to Odyssey

The AAW's juried exhibit, "From Sea to Odyssey," included:

"Kelp Forest," left, by "Dewey Garrett, Livermore, CA, turned and dyed palm wood, 8" x 5".

Center: "Currents #1," by Peter Rand, Niagara-On-The-Lake, ON, dyed and reassembled maple, 8" x 3".

Background: "Venus," by Ron Fleming, Tulsa, OK, bleached hackberry, 13 1/2" x 7".

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Nick Cook shares his 30-plus years of techniques developed while making classic baby rattles.

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AAW members share recent work of turning funeral urns.

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Next to the lathe, the bandsaw is the woodturner's best friend in the shop. Join Alan Lacer for a review of safe practices for preparing lathe stock.

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What's going on at your lathe?

Anything interesting in your chapter of AAW?

Have you visited any turners, shops, or museums of interest?

Do you have a tip or technique you'd like to share?

Please send article ideas to:
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For tips on article submission and photography requirements, visit: www.woodturner.org/articles.html

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A NOTE ABOUT 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.

SUBSCRIBERS

If your issue arrives damaged through the mail, please contact the AAW office.

President's Letter

There's been lots happening in the AAW since the last column.

Our Orlando symposium is now past and was a great success. Almost 900 attended this year's symposium, and although this wasn't the record setter in attendance, it certainly was in other aspects. The annual auction to benefit the Educational Opportunity Grants raised a record-breaking $48,000. Board member and auctioneer John Hill kept the bidding brisk. Although some top-notch work sold at bargain prices, collectors and patrons came ready to buy what they wanted. In a few instances, bidding for collaborative tops by Bonnie Klein, Binh Pho, and Curt Theobald produced thousands of dollars in bids. That may well be a record for tops for a night!

In other news:

- The ethics committee recently submitted a draft code of ethics for board review.
- Board member Steve Ainsworth tenured his resignation due to medical issues. The board appointed former president Dave Barriger to serve out Steve's remaining term through 2006. Steve worked diligently while on the board and the fruits of his labor can be seen in the update of the bylaws. Please check out www.woodturner.org. for updated and comparison bylaw revisions.

Dave Barriger

- A newly formed professional development committee is working to identify issues and submit recommendations, to enhance services through the AAW that effect professional turners.
- Delta Machinery donated two lathes, valued at more than $2,200 apiece, to the AAW. These lathes will be awarded to an individual and chapter. See our website for contest rules.
- The chapters and membership committee will now send e-mail regionally or nationally with subjects such as regional symposiums or shared demonstrator opportunities. Your chapter representative will receive the guidelines for this opportunity.

As I've said before, this is where you come to find out what's happening in your organization, so at *right*, here's a bit more!

Phil Brennion
philb@northlink.com

AAW News

New offices
More than 25 members of the Minnesota Woodturners chapter helped move the AAW administrative offices into the historic Landmark Center in downtown St. Paul, MN. (Phone, fax, and e-mail remain unchanged.) Our new space includes a 2,400-square-foot gallery. "From Sea to Odyssey" will be our first exhibit.

Ballot, renewal form mailed with issue
You probably noticed your ballot and membership renewal form polybagged with this issue. This method saves postage costs over a separate delivery. Please fill out and return your renewal and ballot promptly.

Orlando volunteers
Many thanks to more than 200 volunteers who made the Orlando symposium a success. See the AAW website for a volunteer list.

Willard Baxter passes
Willard Baxter, a former AAW board member from Gainesville, GA, died in June. Willard was instrumental in starting many AAW chapters and creating the Southern States Symposium.

Board Candidates 2005–

Phil Brennion

Serving on the AAW board over the past two and a half years has been extremely rewarding as well as challenging. Having served as chair of the Publications and Internet committees, I've been a part of a team where results happen. Our journal is coming of age and our Internet site is flourishing. While serving as your president this past year, I've also had the opportunity to deal with some pretty tough issues. I hope you feel I've met the task, as AAW continues to grow and move forward.

I'm seeking your confidence in re-election to the AAW board for a number of reasons.

When January 2nd comes around, the potential for the AAW to have only two board members who have served more than a year is a reality. I believe the AAW is at a critical time in its growth, when continuity in its leadership is of great importance.

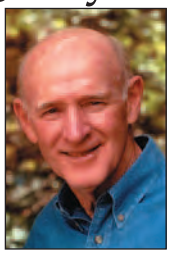
There are a number of very significant issues and programs presently being addressed by the board that I would like to see to fruition. A new organizational structure of the AAW is one. Meeting current demands of our organization have grown beyond the abilities of the board. Effectively implementing existing programs, while achieving new goals in a timely manner can be overwhelming for board members who do their jobs. This just based on time requirements alone!

We can more effectively grow our organization with a professional director and organized volunteers.

As a professional turner, my needed productivity in the shop certainly has been a bit compromised the last few years while serving on the board. But serving again at this juncture in time—to help fulfill the AAW mission statement and make our organization stronger—is an important choice I believe in. I hope you think so, too!

Phil Brennion
Chino Valley, AZ

Jerry Brownrigg



As a teacher, I am interested in all phases of the turning world. Since students interests differ so greatly, I feel I need to have a broad knowledge and skill level to teach. Many of these turning techniques and processes have been learned while attending the national shows of the AAW.

Since I have taught woodturning for over 40 years I have witnessed tremendous, welcomed growth and change in the turnings of years ago to the new freeform and abstract objects of present day-turners.

I took two turning classes in college during undergraduate work and my interest in the field has continued to grow through the years. I have been fortunate and had the opportunity to demonstrate at nine of our national meetings and have given many demonstrations to middle-school and high-school students in Kansas and Oklahoma.

I attended the original organizational meeting of the AAW in Gatlinburg, TN, in 1985, am a founding member of the AAW, and have attended every national meeting of the organization since its inception.

If elected to the board, I hope my past administrative duties at the university and my interest and experience in the woodturning community will help further and benefit the purpose of the AAW.

Jerry Brownrigg
Alva, OK

2005–2007

With this issue, you will receive a ballot, along with your membership renewal, to vote for three AAW board members to serve from 2005 through 2007. Ballots should be postmarked by Oct. 21, 2004. Each of the six candidates wrote a statement which follows.

Bill Haskell

I have been active in woodturning for 15 years, and I've had the privilege and benefit of being involved in chapter leadership: newsletter editor, leader of challenging projects, and president of a large and active chapter. I cherish belonging to three chapters because it provides a varied perspective into chapter level activities and programs.

I enjoy mentoring turners in my workshop, demonstrating woodturning, and exhibiting at art shows and galleries. Recently, the Home & Garden Channel (HGTV) filmed me on the lathe and executing the biomorphic piercing work I do.

In 2003, I was the AAW Board liaison for the Pasadena symposium. I coordinated and installed the AAW "Put A Lid On It" exhibit, along with the Glendale Woodturners "Trees To Treasures" show, and I created the symposium logo. These undertakings gave me an opportunity to work closely with the AAW managing director and the chairperson of the Exhibits Committee.

These valuable experiences, plus my management tenure in the aerospace industry, have provided grounding in project and organization leadership. I believe all these activities have developed qualities and have demonstrated an energy level that is essential for an effective member of the AAW Board.

I want to continue, and improve upon, the outstanding education and publication activities that underlie the AAW's success. However, I believe the AAW needs to expand its reach into the general public. More can be done in the areas of a permanent AAW collection, touring exhibits, museum shows, media coverage, and public forums.

Another objective of mine is to strive for greater participation by members-at-large on AAW committees. There are many very capable people in this organization that can bring invaluable talent, energy, and ideas to the AAW.

I'm willing to contribute to the continued growth and success of our exceptional organization.

Bill Haskell
Placentia, CA

Franck Johannesen

Consider me to serve on the Board of Directors of the American Association of Woodturners. It is time for me to help rather than just enjoying the benefits provided by the organization.

In the past I have been an engineer (anybody remember Apollo moon mission?) for Philco (long gone) and RCA (also gone). I became an optician and ground lenses and fit contact lenses in northeastern Pennsylvania. At the same time we also had a Christmas tree farm. Our move to Florida allowed full-time wood turning.

A gathering of six woodturners was enough to get our chapter going in Sarasota, with meetings in member's homes and gradually included meetings in the Art Center and outdoors at the Sailing Squadron. We were able to get the finest demonstrators such as Bobby Clemons, Dave Barriger, Larry Hasiak, Michael Mode, and Chris Stott to name a few. We got entry into the local art shows, where we even started winning prizes over the established painters and sculptors, which led to the attention of some gallery owners.

As a full-time turner, my attention is often taken by new converts to our craft, all hungering for the knowledge of trees and wood and how to convert these precious pieces of firewood into objects of art. The passion of taking a piece of a tree and making a useful attractive object in one day is the force that unifies our membership and makes it grow. I believe I can help the AAW to achieve even greater things than it has in the past.

Franck Johannesen
Sarasota, FL

Continued

Board Candidates 2005-2007

Sandy Moreno

Some may say I became a turner by osmosis. I sat mesmerized on a stool in my garage, sitting for over 300 hours watching chips fly and listening to my husband explain the difference between cutting and scraping to woodturning students. They too seemed mesmerized by the same flying chips. I am still awe struck by a log or block becoming something so beautiful that you must think that its sole purpose on this earth must have been so that a privileged woodturner could transform it into a work of art. I was hooked, and been turning for over eight years.

I attended my first AAW Chapter meeting in 1996. Since, I have served as secretary for the Independence Woodturners, KC Woodturners, and vice president for the Northland Woodturners. I have attended three AAW National Symposiums, and helped organize several local chapter symposiums. My love for wood led me to the International Wood Collectors Society and the position of Central States trustee. My professional background is sales and marketing for over 25 years.

My husband and I own a woodworker's specialty store, Turn About Wood. As a strong supporter of education, I promote woodturning by organizing educational programs and demonstrations, and have had the opportunity of working with some of the world's greatest instructors.

The store has given me great opportunities to share woodturning and the AAW with the public. I believe our chapters are a valuable asset in solidifying the turning community and what I have found, through the fellowship with turners—beginners and professionals alike—has been invaluable.

If elected, I will lend my skills and talents to help preserve this valuable resource. I will remain committed to the task of assuring the continued growth and excellence of the American Association of Woodturners.

Sandy Moreno
Oakview, MO

Malcolm Tibbetts

The AAW introduced me to a fascinating world and my journey of woodturning discovery has greatly benefited from my involvement with this wonderful organization. Serving on the board of directors would be both an honor and an effective way to "give something back." As a full-time studio artist and as a demonstrator, I have been able to share my woodturning passion with others. If given the opportunity to serve on the board, I will try to increase awareness of woodturning within our school systems, advance woodturning as an art form, and strive to respond to the interests of the membership.

As operations vice president at Heavenly Ski Area (one of America's largest), I was responsible for the performance of over 1200 employees and I managed an annual operating budget in excess of $12 million. As a result, I understand concepts such as customer (member) service, fiscal responsibility, and the need to "plan ahead." I have experience serving on several United States Ski and Snowboard Association boards and I have organized many televised international World Cup ski competitions. This may seem unrelated to directing a woodturning organization, but the required management skills are very similar.

In recent years, the popularity of woodturning has surged; however, I believe there remain many doors to still open into our schools and into the mainstream art world. I am prepared to work vigorously at achieving our association's goals. I believe I am a good listener and capable of implementing innovative ideas and I would like to help assist in the AAW's continued success. I ask for your trust, your confidence, and for your vote. Thank you for taking the time to consider my candidacy.

Malcolm Tibbetts
South Lake Tahoe, CA

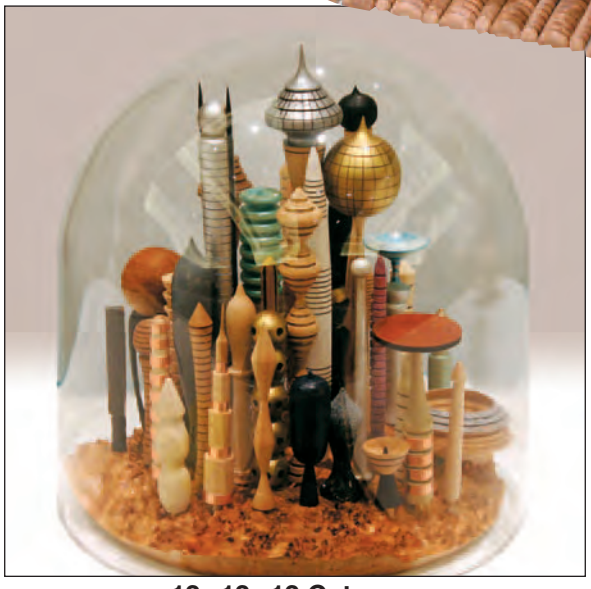
Chapter Collaborative Challenge

Due to a rules change, this year's Chapter Collaborative Challenge included two categories—the Large Category, commonly known as the "UPS size" and the 12"x12"x12" category.

See page 66 for next year's collaborative rules. In the Winter issue, we'll profile the Space Coast chapter's journey to build its entry.

Large Category Artistic Award
"Big Island Palm"
Big Island Woodturners
Hilo, HI
25 participating members

Large Category Fantasy Award
"Charmed"
Woodturners of St. Louis
St Louis, MO
12 participating members



12 x 12 x 12 Category Fantasy Award
"Kandor–Capital City of Krypton"
Palm Beach County Woodturners Club
Royal Palm Beach, FL
9 participating members

Large Category, Technical and Best of Show
"1872 Steam-Driven Fire Engine"
Space Coast Woodturners
Melbourne, FL
30 participating members

Rewards of starting a Woodturning Chapter

Why would anyone want to start an AAW chapter?

By Ron Browning

Besides being lots of fun and rewarding, there are several reasons. You may be new to turning and just can't find a chapter near your home. Or maybe there isn't a local chapter within driving distance of your new home. Or perhaps your chapter is a victim of its own success—you've outgrown your meeting space and need to split off into two groups.

Whatever the reason, I encourage you to forge ahead. Here's a brief outline of how the Hands-on Woodturners started.

Driving force

Almost a year after visiting the Florida West Coat Woodturners (FWCWT) booth at a tool show, I came across the club's tri-fold brochure. An upcoming meeting date jumped right off the page. As a woodworker who recently rediscovered turning, I didn't care that it was a two-hour drive to St. Petersburg. So off I went.

What I found was a nice bunch of folks. There were pieces on display that didn't have any tool marks! The bottom of the bowls were turned and finished! I had reached woodturning nirvana! Also attending for the first time was a fellow that had moved down recently from way up north. He had looked up the chapter in the resource guide (no idea what he was talking about). Then the guy from up north—Norm Rose—asked if anyone wanted to see how to use the skew.

> More than 20 turners showed up to watch Elvie Jackson at our first demonstration.

Although I wasn't a member of a secret society, I must have fallen into one because I was certain that no one knew how to use the skew. But Norm made it as simple as ABC (Anchor, Bevel, Cut!). That night—after the two-hour drive home—I was in my shop using the skew for the first time successfully.

Jumping into chapter activities

At that meeting in St. Petersburg, I picked up an AAW membership application, and promptly joined. I immediately got involved with the St. Pete chapter, including a demo at the second meeting that I attended. Before long, I talked up the FWCWT to anyone that looked like they might have an interest to woodturning.

When I told people from the Tampa Bay area that I drove two hours for a meeting, they told me it was just too far to drive. So I started collecting names. I also promised potential members that if anything closer came up, that I would give them a call. In the meantime, I got information from the AAW office on starting a chapter.

Several months later, Ken Jackman contacted me. Ken said that he was moving into the Tampa Bay area and wanted to know where the local chapter meetings were held. I told him about the St. Pete chapter—just 2 1/2 hours from his new address. There was a long silence on the phone, followed by, "Are you sure that there isn't anything closer?" I assured him that there wasn't and that he could ride with me to the next meeting.

Starting from scratch

I finally met Ken, and he immediately started talking about forming a local chapter. I let him know that I already had the AAW paperwork—and a list of names. We set a date for the first meeting and Ken started calling the names we had collected. Judy Jackman submitted news items to local papers, inviting anyone interested in learning more about woodturning to join us.

First meeting

Our first meeting drew nine members—an encouraging start. When Judy suggested a chapter name—Hands-On Woodturners—at our second meeting, 10 turners and three spouses applauded.

Thanks to Ken and Judy, we soon applied for local chapter status, elected officers (Ken was our first president), and began organizing our own special events.

We opened a lot of eyes when more than 20 turners showed up to watch Elvie Jackson at our first demonstration. Shortly after that Larry Hasiak, an AAW board member at the time, presented a program on the benefits of AAW membership. Then Dave Barriger, a former AAW president, contacted us and offered to give us an all-day demo and tree identification walk at Rainbow Springs State Park.

Since that first meeting in 1999 with just nine members, we've now grown to more than 100 members.

No looking back

Since that first meeting in 1999 with just nine members, we've now grown to more than 100 members. Yes, it did stretch us to make phone calls, write by-laws, and find an initial core of dedicated volunteers.

But the effort was worth it. Hands-On Woodturners now owns a lathe, a covered trailer, video recording system, and huge library of books and videos. And, of course, we have a growing support group of generous, sharing woodturners within a short driving distance.

11 More tips for starting a chapter

- You'll need two or more leaders to drive the formation of a chapter. Attempting to do this solo will lead to early burnout and limit the number of worthy ideas.
- Contact the AAW office (www.woodturner.org; 651-484-9094) for a packet of information on starting a chapter. You'll receive a sample set of by-laws, insurance information, and organization and promotion ideas. On request, the AAW office will send a packet for applying for a 501(c)3 charitable organization status for the Internal Revenue Service.
- Before you announce your first gathering, have a site arranged for your initial three or four meetings. Many existing chapters meet in schools, community centers, and woodworking stores.
- Refer to your AAW Resource Directory for current AAW members within a two-hour drive of your meeting site. Don't be surprised if potential members already belong to one chapter.
- At least two weeks before your meeting, send public service announcements to surrounding newspapers. Check your library for a complete list of papers.
- In addition to mailing information about the chapter start-up, consider flyers or posters at home centers, lumberyards, tool stores, trade schools, and adult education centers.
- Put up woodturning displays in libraries, community centers, and other community locations in the community where there is a lot of traffic.
- Be sure to let other local wood-related clubs (wood-working, carving and so forth) know of your plans to organize a turning chapter.
- Beginning with your first meeting, be prepared to maintain accurate financial records. After you elect a treasurer, he or she will appreciate your early efforts.
- When you outline your initial demonstrations, ask attendees for topics that would attract a wide range of skill levels.
- Ask for volunteers at the meetings. Camaraderie will flourish when more members have an active role.

If this article has created any interest for you to start your own local chapter, please contact:
John Hill , 828-645-6633
(johnrhill@charter.net).

Ron Browning (rbrowni5@tampabay.rr.com) of Lecanto, FL, is president of the Hands-on Woodturners.

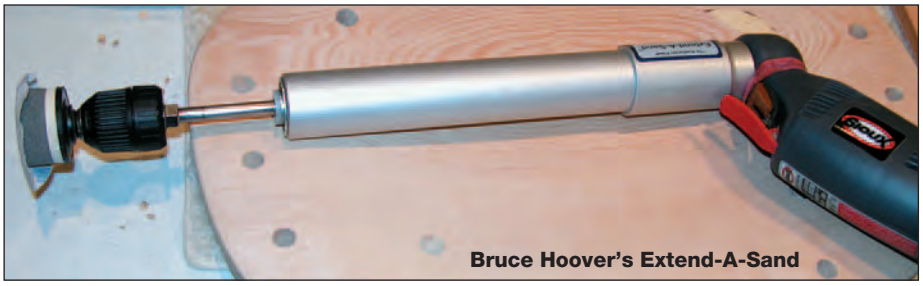
What's New

By Alan Lacer

Uncovering new items at the trade show

One of the big draws each year for the AAW symposium is the trade show. This isn't just any woodworking show that skips into town, but the largest trade show anywhere aimed solely at woodturners. And this year's version was the largest ever, with 43 different vendors. It was a place to spend a lot of time and—possibly a lot of money.

Although there appeared to be more wood vendors than past years, tools, lathes, sanding supplies and gadgets still dominate the trade show. This year there were some interesting new items that caused me to take a second look.



Bruce Hoover's Extend-A-Sand

Best Wood Tool's articulating mount

H.G. Geiger's dressing jig

New devices

First, I came across three different systems for holding turned work for carving, texturing, or finishing off the lathe. The benefit: The work is still mounted in a chuck or on a faceplate. Best Wood Tools (www.store.yahoo.com/bestwoodtools) demonstrated an articulating mount for positioning the piece in any number of presentations. It comes standard for a bench-mount system or an optional post that fits into your lathe's tool rest base.

Don Geiger introduced a jig holder that adapts to the Oneway Wolverine receiver base. His product, called the "Vertical Solution," (www.dongeiger.com) attaches to a Wolverine base and accurately centers the grinding jig system to the center of your grinder. It adjusts both vertically and horizontally to achieve this goal. The jig also has a built-on gauge to accurately set the length that a gouge protrudes from the holding jig itself.

Don also showed a grinding wheel dresser from H.G. Geiger Co. (unrelated). The Michigan-based firm developed a simple but effective method for precisely dressing a wheel. It makes use of your existing grinder tool rest as the jigging system to control and lock the jig in place. Geiger modified what appeared to be a standard Wolverine angling tool rest platform by cutting a slot for the wheel. The result: smooth and quick truing of a grinding wheel. The cutter is a large industrial diamond with adjustments to precisely control the depth that it cuts into the grinding wheel.

Oneway (www.oneway.on.ca), showed a couple of new items. They introduced a dust hood system that mounts on the lathe, slides along the machine where needed, and simply hooks into your existing dust collection system. They also showcased a new boring bar system with a laser-measuring device different than most. The Oneway version allows a more precise way of identifying the location of the cutter, regardless of whether you are turning the sides or bottom of the workpiece.

Bruce Hoover's Extend-A-Sand (www.thesandingglove.com) also caught my attention. This gadget is for power sanding inside an open bowl. I must admit that I use a piece of turned wood with a drill bit extension passing through it to do essentially the same thing, but Bruce's version looks to be a more solid and versatile system than my homemade tool.

3M arrives on woodturning scene

One of the busiest booths was 3M, a new vendor this year. Rather than manufacturing items solely for the turning field, 3M is adept at finding new or different applications for existing 3M products. They showed abrasives that were mostly for

Continued on page 67

Magic in Downtown Atlanta

By David Galloway

Leon Gates, a volunteer, assists an aspiring turner with a candlestick.

In the middle of downtown Atlanta, an oasis of creativity and community is flourishing. As wood whirls—as if magically suspended in midair—the kids in the neighborhood use magic wands of gouges and scrapers, transforming wood into objects of art. But the real magic is the inner transformation as they discover the joy of making something by the work of their hands, the alchemy of self-expression and the experience of empowerment.

The specific locale is Emmaus House, a long-time ministry of the Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta in an urban neighborhood just south of the Atlanta Braves' Turner Field. Known during the turbulent 1960s for its penchant for social justice and civil rights, Emmaus House now provides a spiritual center for this neighborhood, with a chapel and a building that serves as a gathering place for the folks of this community. In the last few years, the focus of Emmaus House has widened to include a rapidly expanding arts program for the neighborhood kids.

The genesis of this program came from the imagination of Frank Allan, the bishop of the Diocese of Atlanta, as he reached retirement. Bishop Allan decided to use his newly acquired turning skills to give a hands-on turning experience for neighborhood kids.

Malcolm Velasco, a regular participant on Saturday mornings, puts finishing cuts on the interior of a chalice.

On a busy Saturday morning, Bishop Frank Allan mentors two young participants at Emmaus House.

The bishop reports that he really learned about turning wood at a week-long seminar at John C. Campbell Folk School taught by the late Willard Baxter, himself a retired Southern Baptist minister. With notions of apostolic succession aside, Willard gifted the bishop with the skills to begin turning bowls—and the passion to pursue this new endeavor.

Bishop Allan wondered why Campbell-style instruction would not work in an urban setting. Now, it happens every Saturday morning as Emmaus House becomes a center for the arts as kids gather to engage in painting, pottery, woodworking—and of course, woodturning.

Having heard of this exciting project in the center of the city, the Georgia Association of Woodturners (GAW) volunteered to mentor these kids as they learned the woodturning skills. The chapter also donated a lathe honoring Willard Baxter.

When I visited the turning studio recently, eight lathes were filled to capacity with kids turning a variety of projects. At one, former chapter president Harvey Henson was huddled with Malcolm Velasco, a talented young turner.

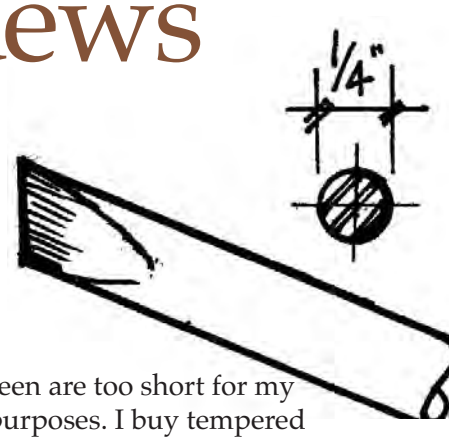
It seemed appropriate that Malcolm's project was a chalice—something Frank Allan and Willard Baxter would be proud of.

The Rev. David Galloway (drdavidgalloway@msn.com), is an Episcopal priest and a member of the Georgia Association of Woodturners. His former neighbor, Ed Moulthrop, introduced him to woodturning.

Why Round Skews Are Best!

Well, actually they're not the best, but they are the best for the kind of work that I do. I'm known mostly for my small-scale turning. After reading Nick Cook and Alan Lacer's article about their favorite skews (2004 Summer issue), I knew I had to horn in on the act. I do believe that your favorite skew will be the one you get good at and that will be dictated by the kind of work you do.

If you do a lot of small-scale turning, I don't think that you can go wrong with a small round skew. These inexpensive skews are easy to make and user-friendly. You can purchase small round skews commercially, but the steel in the ones that I have



seen are too short for my purposes. I buy tempered 1/4" round 8" long high-speed steel from Enco Manufacturing (800-860-3400; part #383-7015). I make a 10" handle and sink the HSS about two inches into the handle. That gives me about 6" of usable tool.

One of the things I like the best about my small round skew is that the shaft of the tool does not damage or nick the tool rest. I stick to 1/4"-diameter skews because I've found that the larger round skews (3/8" or 1/2") tend to be a little cumbersome. When I need a larger skew, I switch to my traditional 1/2" skew.

My switch to a round skew took a little time. First, it was about 12 years into my turning career before I became just "fair" with a skew. I started out with a 1/4"-square skew. That tool worked fine, but I did need to soften the edges since they regularly marred the tool rest. I then remembered reading about oval skews, but could never find one small enough for my needs. The next logical step was a round tool.

Actually, sharpening the round skew is fairly easy, although a coarse grinder (36 grit) is helpful when first shaping the tool (see *American Woodturner*, 9.2:7, 9.4:11). If you are starting from scratch, first turn the tool into a

The Typical AAW Member

It's not a perfect match, but Tulsa woodturner Lyle Dragoo is representative of the typical AAW member, as reflected in an on-line survey conducted last year. The categories and percentages at *far right* represent the largest group for each response. (Of interest: 45-54 was the second largest age group with 30 percent.)

Lyle, 67, started turning in 2001, the same year he joined the AAW. He is now chapter president of the Northeastern Oklahoma Woodturners Association. He

Photo: Bob Hawks

averages five to 10 hours a week in the shop. Lyle estimates he spent $2,000 on turning-related expenses, including instruction, tools, books, videos, wood, and supplies in the past year.

A typical AAW member by the numbers

Years an AAW member:
1-3 years (42%)

Age: 55-64 years (33%)

Woodturning skills:
Intermediate (52%)

Weekly hours spent woodturning:
5-10 hours (35%)

Dollars spent annually on woodturning:
$2,000+ (27%)

screwdriver shape. Grind one side, turn the tool, and repeat until your skew looks like a screwdriver. Then grind the skew portion of the tool. The blunted portion of the tool is then ground away. Once the tool is roughly shaped, I switch to a 60- or 80-grit wheel and complete my sharpening. I rarely hone the skew because I don't find it necessary. I also free-hand sharpen all of my skews. Although I do make extensive use of jigs for sharpening most tools, I've never found a jig that gives me the bevel I desire on my skews.

Whether you use a round, rectangular, or oval skew, getting comfortable with one just makes your turning life a lot easier. It is well worth the time it takes to master it.

Bob Rosand
Bloomsburg, PA

Call for demonstrators

If you're interested in demonstrating at the AAW's 19th Annual National Symposium, the application deadline is Oct. 31.

The symposium, to be held July 22-24 in Overland Park, KS, is the AAW's biggest annual event and attracts 800 to 1,100 turners.

For more information and a demonstrator application, contact Mary Lacer in the AAW offices (651-484-9094 or woodturner@qwest.net).

The Quizzical Woodturner

By Ernie Newman

Think you know something about woodturning? Test your woodturning IQ, then check answers below.

1. Which of the following are softwoods?
   A-Balsa
   B-Poplar
   C-Camphor

2. What woodturning event led to the formation of the AAW?

3. Metal was first turned on a lathe in the sixteenth century. True or false?

4. What "chuck" is built into virtually all wood lathes?

5. What do the foreign language words draaier, tornatore, drechsler, tournier and tokarz have in common?

Ernie Newman (ernienewman@hotmail.com; ernienewman.cjb.net) lives in the Blue Mountains west of Sydney, Australia. He previously taught a 700-hour course for apprentice woodturners.

ANSWERS:

There is more than one way to turn and there isn't just one right answer to the questions in this quiz. Your comments and corrections are welcome.

1. Balsa, poplar, and camphor are all hardwoods. Hardwoods have vessels or pores that can often be seen with the naked eye in end grain cut cleanly with a razor-sharp blade. (A low-powered magnifying glass may be necessary to view the vessels, which resemble tiny pinpricks.) Hardwoods evolved after softwoods and have a more complex structure.

2. The AAW germinated from discussions at an October 1985 woodturning conference at the Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts in Gatlinburg, TN. The AAW was chartered the following year.

3. False. The earliest evidence of metal turning is a 360 B.C. letter written to a Greek turner asking for bronze dowels. The dowels were required to join the drums used to form columns and the writer specified that the dowels be made precisely so that the drums could be rotated without deviation.

4. The Morse tapered opening in the headstock spindle may be used as a chuck to hold miniature goblets, chess pieces, spinning tops and the like. Place the timber between centers and turn a taper roughly corresponding to a Morse taper on one end. The tapered blank is knocked firmly into the tapered opening with a hammer. Avoid using great force, as it isn't necessary and could damage the headstock bearings.

5. Draaier (Dutch), tornatore (Italian), drechsler (German), tournier (French) and tokarz (Polish) all mean turner. All these words became surnames in the way that the English surname Turner was given to woodturners in the medieval era.

The Oliver Machine Company

Muscle machines from 1903 to 1999

By Alan Lacer

Are you looking for a lathe with a little more oomph than your midi lathe? Maybe the 62-foot Oliver 18-A pictured above would fill the bill. Or perhaps you could drop a towering Oliver faceplate lathe—capable of 100"-diameter work—into your basement shop before turning your next bowl.

If you remember life before personal computers and VCRs, perhaps you even turned at an Oliver lathe in your high school shop. The familiar Oliver logo was once the dominant player in millwork shops, trade schools, and industrial technology shops across the U.S.

So reliable were its products that it was said that the biggest problem the Oliver sales force faced was selling a second Oliver machine: Oliver tools just kept running. In fact, George Paes, an Oliver district salesman and AAW member, remembers a light-hearted offer: A bonus awaited him if he could find a paint that would dissolve an Oliver machine after 20 years of service.

Consider these industry-leading features from Oliver:

- Gargantuan lathes weighing up to a rock-steady 5 tons (Model 22AC)
- A telescoping bed lathe (Model 26AC) that slid from 8 1/2 feet between centers when closed, and opened up to 16 feet
- An 8"-portable lathe, a forerunner to today's popular small lathes
- Premium Timken tapered roller bearings
- In 1904, introduction of an electronic four-speed lathe
- Mechanical variable speed changes with pulley diameters (introduced before 1920)
- Infinitely variable AC system that allowed any speed between 600 and 3600 rpm, available in the 1920s.

Midwest roots

Oliver Company had a storied history in Grand Rapids, MI. Its roots go back to 1890 when Joe Oliver started making miter trimmers under the American Machinery Co. name. In 1903, the name was changed to "Oliver" to avoid confusion with the American Wood Working Machinery Co. of Rochester, NY.

In its hey day, Oliver produced diverse products including electric glue pots, planer/jointer knives and safety heads (to replace the square heads that were the norm), shapers, tablesaws, jointers, tenoners, mortisers, sanders, jig saws, grinders, handscrew clamps, and vises. The Oliver catalog listed metal lathes, metal spinning lathes, and of course, wood lathes of all types.

By 1994, the company estimated it had produced over 150,000 machines, with at least half that number still in use on a weekly basis. At one time Oliver had branch offices in New York City, Chicago, St. Louis, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, Salt Lake City, Denver, and Phoenix. Overseas offices included Manchester, England, and Paris, France.

This company and its products were not just aimed at standard or low-tech operations. It once designed and built a computer-controlled wood lathe to turn large patterns for missile nose cones. Oliver even designed and delivered a specialty bandsaw to

All in a day's work: Forty-four Oliver employees stand behind a 62-foot long lathe, built in 1919 for the federal government. This model 18-A lathe had a 33-inch swing.

cut the unique tiles for the Space Shuttle program.

Lathes of every size imaginable were a story unto themselves. I have found no company anywhere in the world that made such a diverse range of lathes, from their small "Junior Lathe" to enormous faceplate lathes and the beast shown *above*.

Pattern and millwork shops and especially public and trade schools were commonly outfitted with Oliver lathes—known for their ruggedness, heft, and reliability. Innovations included direct power drive lathes (the headstock spindle is the armature for the motor), electronic variable speed systems, and motor or spindle brakes to reduce the time to stop the machine. Oliver also pioneered quick-action tailstocks, chucks to hold square material, and an improved system for locking tool rest bases.

And today? The company we revered ended in 1999 when an individual purchased the Oliver name. You may see woodworking machinery (tablesaws, shapers, jointer, sanders, but no lathes yet) made in the Orient under the Oliver logo. However, these Asian machines aren't original Oliver designs at this time.

A former employee, Richard Fink, purchased all Oliver drawings, patterns, documents, machine inventory, and many parts to service the Oliver equipment still in service. Under the Eagle brand name, Richard now manufactures two original Oliver machines—the 24" planer and the famous Straitoplaner that mills coveted.

Thinking that variable speed was a recent lathe innovation? If you leaf through history, you'll find a 1920s Oliver ad for the model 51-K that included this feature. AAW member John Magnussen of Buffalo, MN, still uses the Model 51 lathe at left.

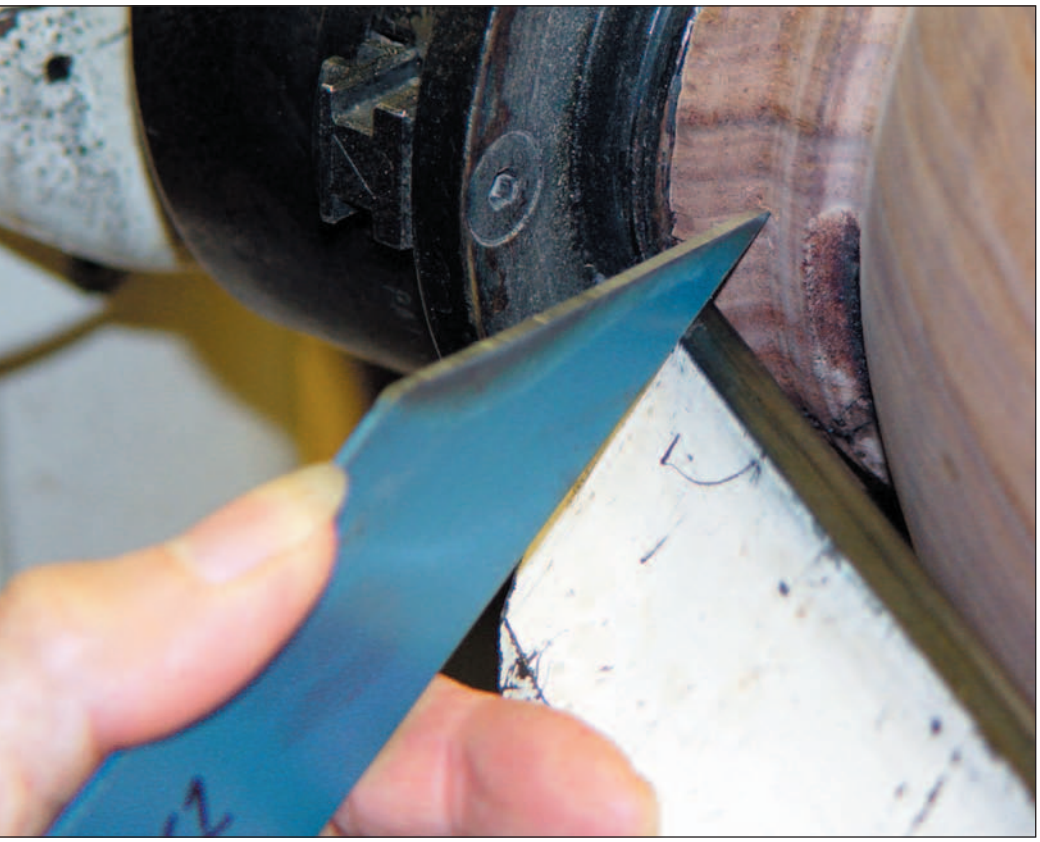
Alan Lacer (www.alanlacer.com) is an *American Woodturner* contributing editor. He lives near River Falls, WI.

References: *Vintage Woodworking Machinery by* ***Dana Batory****.*
Special thanks to ***Richard Fink*** *of Eagle Machinery and Repair (Oliver Machinery employee from 1976 until 1999 and the source for Oliver parts and service), and to* ***George Paes*** *of Nipomo, CA, a former Oliver employee district salesman, for their assistance in researching this article.*

The Hager Parting Tool

By Stacey Hager

Put power hacksaw blades to use at your lathe



It was a dark and dreary midnight seven years past. (All good stories begin like this.) I was well into turning a lidded box with grain that promised to be a bear to match at the joint.

What I needed was a thin-kerf parting tool like the one I had watched Chris Stott use several months before. I began scrounging around my shop for something from which I might make a reasonable facsimile.

I found an old power hacksaw blade. With my metal chopsaw, I cut off one end at about 30 degrees.

I started to grind the edge and then remembered a sentence from the sharpening instructions packaged with my Oneway Wolverine jig. To paraphrase, laying the blade flat on the grinding platform (Photo H) produces a slight hollow grind (Photo C), which is ideal for clean parting. I found this advice difficult to follow with my regular diamond-profile parting tool, but why not try it here with this new thin parting tool?

It worked! In fact, it cut so cleanly, and so smoothly, and with so little effort that I regretted not having another person awake at 1 a.m. to watch as those delicate ribbons floated onto my forearm.

I have given "Hager Parting Tools" to friends and visiting demonstrators who have stayed at our home. Many say they use them regularly. Here's how to make one for yourself.

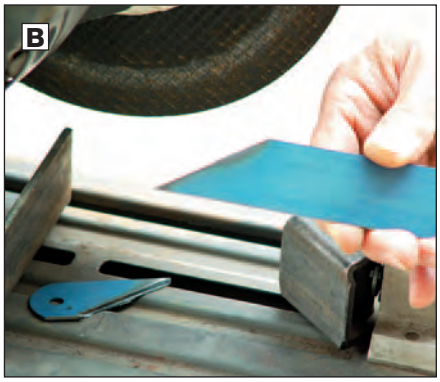
Choose a blade

Starrett, Ingersoll-Rand, Lenox, Disston-Porter, Borg-Warner, and Armstrong-Blum manufacture power hacksaw blades. Grainger (www.grainger.com) is one well-known catalog source. I've had good luck with high-speed steel blades, but you'll also find welded bi-metal and high-carbon steel blades. Dimensions range from 12" to 30" (length), 1" to 2 5/8" (width), .050" to 100" (thickness). For general use, I prefer 18" x 1 1/4" x .062". Prices range from $5 to $70 for new blades.

I get free used blades from the welding department at my local community college. For ultra-thin kerfs (.027"), I prefer perforating blades from the printing industry. Zimmer Industries and Simonds, Inc. manufacture these high-carbon steel blades. Your local printers may discard used blades. Note: You'll need to add a handle on the printer blades, as the metal edge may cut into your palm.

Grind off the teeth
Because you can heat high-speed steel until dull-red without losing hardness, you can grind without concern for temper, as shown in *Photo A*. If you heat high-carbon steel much above the boiling point of water (212° F), you risk losing the ability to hold an edge. If carbon steel turns blue, you must carefully grind back to uncolored metal in order to find properly tempered steel.

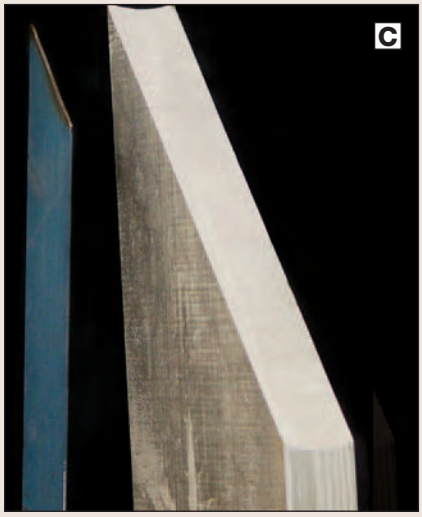
Establish 30-degree angle
At a metal-cutting chopsaw, wedge or clamp the blade at the proper angle as shown in *Photo B*. (You may not be able to hold the blade firmly enough with just your hand.)



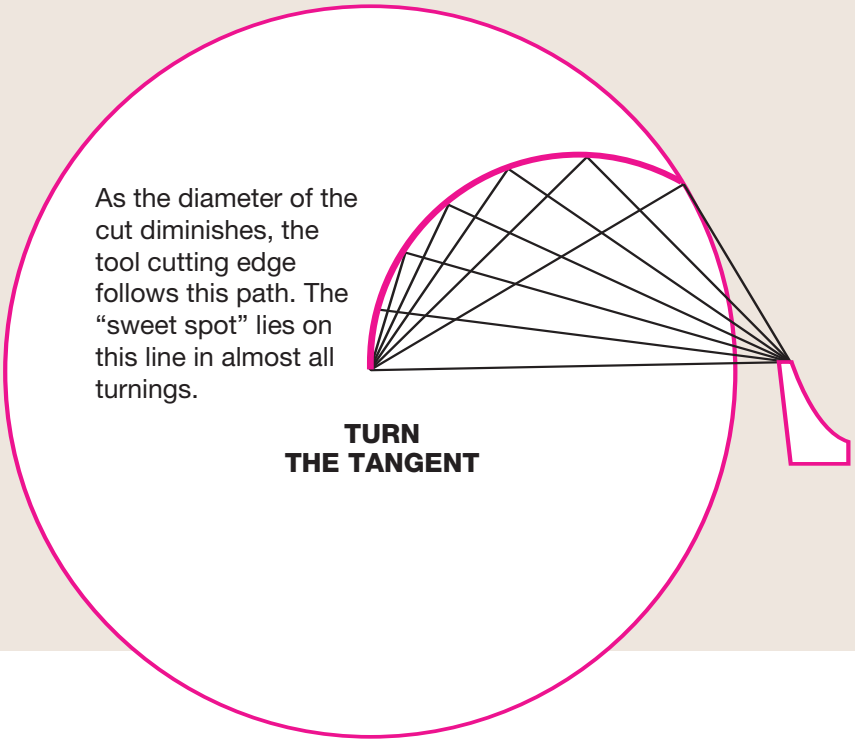
Continued

5 Advantages of a thin parting tool

- Thin kerf: The usual kerf is 1/16" (.062"). I made one ultra-thin parting tool that cuts a .020" kerf. This is ideal for lidded containers.
- Clean cutting: The points of the curved tip cut fibers before the center rakes out the chips, as shown in *Photo C*.
- Stability: The cutting tip is low on the tool. This eliminates the tendency to twist, which increases as you raise the center of force (cutting edge) above the level of the tool rest. Start parting with the parting tool horizontal or tilted slightly downward. This scraping start prevents "fuzzing-up" the beginning of the cut. Once started, drop the handle (which raises the tip) and "turn the tangent," as shown *below*.
- Doubles as scraper: For cleaning up the surface in tight spaces, this tool also scrapes. Just tilt the blade a few degrees

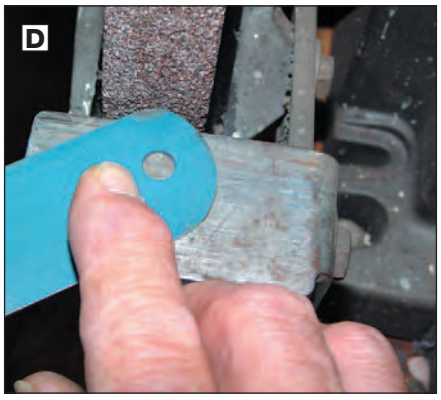


off vertical and into the work. The sharp edge of the hollow-ground angle will shear-scrape beautifully.
- Safety: The long handle gives enough leverage to prevent large forces from transmitting to the hand. If any parting tool begins to bind in the kerf, you should back out and widen the cut. You may choose to add a wooden handle to this tool.



Round the handle

To prevent the corners from digging into your palm, gently cure the handle end of the parting tool as shown in *Photo D*.

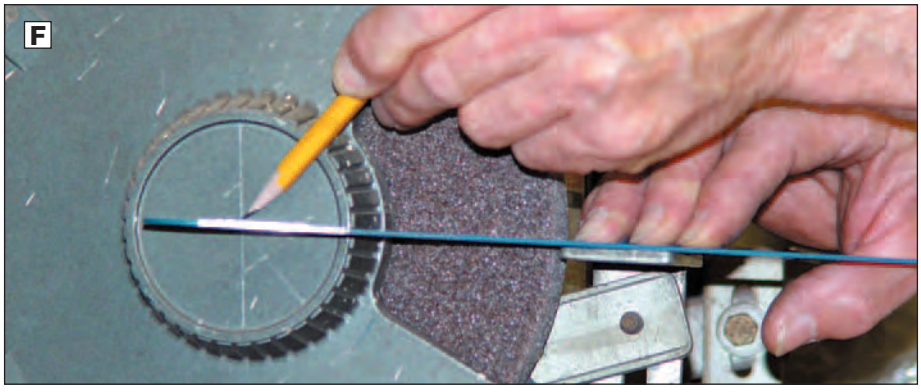


Break the sharp edges

A hardened hollow-ground edge will destroy your tool rest rapidly. To avoid this, round the top and bottom edges of the blade slightly with a hone or sandpaper as shown in *Photo E*. Make the blade feel comfortable in your hand without completely destroying the flatness of the bottom edge.

Hollow-grind the major and micro bevels

Adjust the tool rest on your grinder so that the center of the rotation of the wheel passes through the center of your saw blade when it is extended over the tool rest past the grinder shaft as shown in *Photo F*. You can confirm this adjustment by hollow-grinding a section of the blade, then flipping it over and lightly touching the same edge to the wheel. Because the wheel should grind exactly the same curve when the blade is reversed, you should see no facets.



Adjust the tool rest by tapping with a small hammer as shown in *Photo G*. Hollow-grind the major bevel as shown in *Photo H*. Then flip over the blade and form the micro bevel by lightly hollow-grinding the bottom edge of the tip at approximately 30 degrees. The micro bevel should be less than 1/16"—just enough to raise the cutting tip above the blunted bottom edge of the tool.

Retired teacher Stacey Hager (Staceyhager@hotmail.com) of Austin, TX, is a member of the Central Texas Woodturners Association.

Create a Classic Fountain Pen

By Emory McLaughlin

Writing with a finely made fountain pen harkens to the days of old. Drawing ink into the pen becomes a ritual. With a fine writing instrument, a little more thought goes into writing; I've found my handwriting tends to be a little neater.

If you really get into writing with a fountain pen, you'll discover they are customizable with different size nibs and amounts of flexibility to fit your writing style.

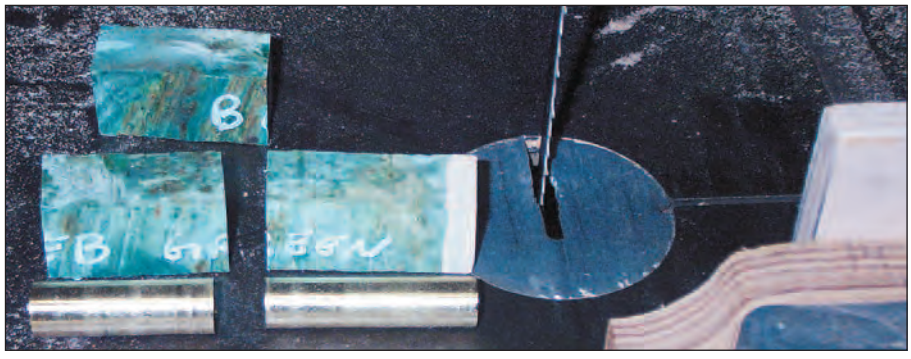
Turning a classic fountain pen is a fun project that can bring a lot of joy to you or to others. You'll find turning and assembly is no harder than making any other fine writing instrument.

There are a couple newer fountain models that get a lot of attention. The Gent Jr. and the El Grande are both nice pens that have been upgraded over previous pens. The El Grande, as the name indicates, is a larger pen and requires a fatter pen blank.

The El Grande kit for this project sells for about $14 (gold plating) to $19 (platinum plating) from mail-order suppliers.

Select a highly figured piece of 3/4" x 3/4" by 5 1/2" wood for this project. I prefer stabilized woods for most of my pen projects because they turn nicely and take a finish well. The wood for the pen shown here is stabilized green-dyed box elder.

1. Cut the parts to length using the brass tubes as a guide. Make sure to cut the blanks about 1/16" longer then the brass tubes; this allows extra stock for squaring up the blanks. I cut my blanks on a bandsaw, marking a line across the center cut to ensure grain alignment throughout the project and during final assembly.



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2. Drill the blanks.

Because the drill bits have a tendency to wander slightly while drilling the holes, I prefer a self-centering drill vise to hold my blanks. To combat wandering, I drill my holes at the centerband location. This makes the center of the pen line up. If the ends are slightly off, it is acceptable because they are not right next to each other. Drilling from the centerband position also helps with grain alignment.

6. Now, to the lathe

I prefer to use a skew chisel for the entire turning. A roughing gouge or a spindle gouge would work just as well. Turn the pieces down till they are just proud of the bushings. Stop the lathe and use your fingers to slide across the barrels. By touch, make sure the pen has a smooth transition.

3. Glue in the tubes

There are two reasons glue joints fail: Improper glue coverage and smooth or contaminated gluing surfaces. I prefer Medium Gap Filling CA glue for my pens. I make sure and apply plenty of CA glue. Rotate the brass tube and slide it up and down before pressing it in all the way. Some penturners use polyurethane glue that expands as it dries; this diminishes the coverage concerns.

4. Square the blanks.

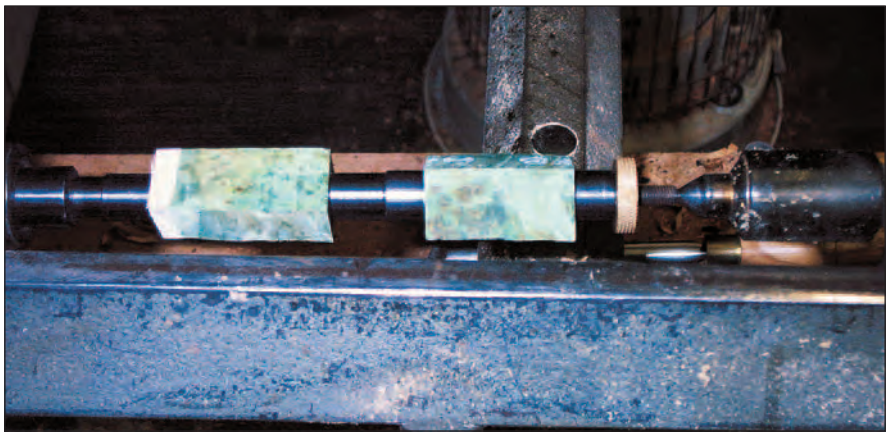
I square my blanks with a disk sander. I use a holder that has a rod mounted at 90 degrees to the disc. This is a quick method of squaring the blanks to the brass tubes that are inserted in the wood. This is a critical step, since this will determine how the pen fits together after assembly.

5. Mount the blanks on a mandrel

The mandrel is a metal rod held on the lathe using either a Morse taper or a Jacobs's chuck. Each pen kit uses metal bushings that slide onto the mandrel on each end of the pen blanks. The size of these bushings is matched to the components on the pen.

I measure these bushings with my dial calipers to ensure I place them in the right order. Slide on the first bushing, the first blank, and then the second bushing. Slide the third bushing on and check the alignment of the second pen blank.

Make sure the grain runs through from one blank to the other. Finally, slide on the last bushing. I bring up the tailstock and tighten the live center slightly before tightening the brass nut on the mandrel. If you over-tighten the tailstock or the nut on the mandrel, your pen will not be round when you finish.



8. Final assembly

The instructions packaged with your kit should describe the order of parts assembly. I use a pen press (available from most mail-order sources) to assemble my pen, but a clamp or a vice used with care also works.

7. Sand and finish

Sanding removes some of the wood, which is why you should leave the stock proud of the bushing. I stack my sandpaper sheets and cut them into 1" x 3" strips. Each stack contains 120, 220, 400, 600, 800, 1000, and 1,200 grits. I find these strips are just enough paper for a pen sanding; I throw away the paper after use.

I sand with the lathe running. Between each new piece of paper, I wipe the blanks with my hand to remove particles that could scratch the surface.

Before the 600-grit paper, I slow the lathe down to about 100 rpm and apply two coats of CA medium gap-filling finish. After the second coat dries, I return to 220-grit paper and work my way through 800 grit. With the 1,000 and 1,200 grits, I stop the lathe and sand with the grain.

After sanding, I wipe the blanks clean, then buff the pieces. This is easiest done with the barrels still on the mandrel. I hold the mandrel at a 45-degree angle; this helps remove any sanding scratches that might appear after applying finish. I use a three-wheel buffing system: red rouge, white diamond, and carnauba wax. It only takes slight pressure with each of the wheels. Make sure you have a firm grip on the piece you are buffing; the wheel will try to pull the piece away from you.

When removing the barrels from the mandrel, keep them in the proper order for final assembly.

Breaking in a new pen

To break in a new pen, doodle 10 or 12 curly-Qs on a piece of 600-grit sandpaper with no ink in the pen. Then do the same thing on a paper grocery bag. This wears in the nib (the tip of the pen).

Most fountain pens use either an ink cartridge or a pump. The pumps draw ink into the center and then it is drawn out through the nib. The conversion pumps generally hold a little more ink than the cartridges.

If you put ink in your pen and don't use it for an extended period, it will dry up. This requires cleaning to get the pen working again.

If you sell pens, either dip a pen in ink for a customer or ink up a demonstration pen of each model. (If you put ink in a fountain pen, it is not considered new anymore.) When you let customers try out your demonstration pens, make sure you supply some good quality paper (not paper from your printer).

Emory McLaughlin (emory@asthewoodturns.com) is a member of the Penturners Guild and demonstrated at the Orlando symposium. He lives in Jacksonville, FL.

Utah celebrates Silver Anniversary

25 years of woodturning in Provo

Mike Mahoney, left, fields marketing questions for the panel of studio turners including David Nittmann, Cindy Drozda, Keith Gotschall, and Nick Cook.

As he elbowed through the crowded swap meet, Joe Wagner looked like any other symposium attendee. But aside from Dale Nish, Joe is the only woodturner with perfect attendance at the Utah Woodturning Symposium—all 25 of the gatherings on the Brigham Young University campus in Provo, UT.

Joe Wagner has attended every Utah Symposium.

Joe, who lives in nearby Salt Lake City, vividly remembered the first symposium in 1980. "I had been turning for eight or nine years," Joe recalled, "when I found a flyer at a lumberyard about a woodturning conference in Provo. So I called Dale and asked a few questions.

"Dale was pretty candid. 'I can put your name on the list,' he said, 'but I'm not sure we'll have enough people to break even. It might not go.' "

Shaky start

Little did anyone know that from a shaky start—the fall weekend drew about 40 participants—the Utah Symposium would grow into the world's longest-running woodturning seminar. What began as just two demonstration rooms mushroomed to 13 rooms for the 2004 symposium.

Because of special silver-anniversary events, symposium director Kip Christensen opened the doors to 700 attendees and bumped up the schedule to include 34 demonstrators and 149 demonstrations. Next year, Kip expects the attendance cap will drop back to 450.

Awesome gathering of experts

Lest you assume that he's the slowest learner in the West, Joe gained demonstrator status in 2000 with two different rotations.

At the autograph-signing reception in the Brigham Young Museum of Art, Joe joined 70 current and previous demonstrators to sign copies of *Beneath The Bark*, a 140-page book commemorating the 25th anniversary. (See pages 26-27 for photos of some of the turned pieces from 140 demonstrators.)

Joe was clearly in awe to be included in such company. "This event and woodturning changed my life—there's no doubt about that. Over the years, I've seen the best turners in the world. If I can get two or three good ideas or things to do on the lathe, I figure it's worth the money to attend."

Joe's favorites

Favorite demonstrators? Of course. "In the beginning, Dale demonstrated every year," Joe said. "He answered any and all questions—and I had plenty. And of course Dale brought Richard Raffan early on to demonstrate. I've watched him every year.

"I think Tommy Sorensen demonstrated the second year. He's such a great production turner. Tommy still takes a lot of kidding because he was so shy that first time that he brought along his brother-in-law, Rob

South African turners Mike Kaplan of Sedgefield and Grant Marshall of Knysna were first-time Utah demonstrators.

After his last Utah demonstration, English turner Allan Batty, left, gives California turners Russ Swenson, center, and Noble Waidelich some of hands-on pointers with a skew.

Going, going, gone!" While Steve Dunn, right, makes change, attendees paw through the remaining turning stock in Steve's pickup truck.

Stayner, to talk for him. But Rob couldn't answer all of our questions, so Tommy finally had to talk! Dale eventually got Tommy comfortable giving demos. I've watched him demo several times since.

"I could watch Dick Sing every year. I really connected with him and we talk every year. And learned so much from Stephen Gray's kaleidoscope demos. I made quite a few of those over the years."

Joe could have gone on with a longer list, but the annual swap meeting was calling him. "I love the swap meet," Joe admitted. "I'm a ba-a-a-d tool addict. I probably own 400 to 500 tools. I've bought lots of used tools here. Who knows what I might need tomorrow?"

First demos

In the international audience, Joe got his first look at Grant Marshall and Mike Kaplan, two emerging woodturners from South Africa. See the back cover for examples of Mike and Grant's recent work.

Woodturning is just beginning to gain acceptance in South Africa as an art form. The first turning exhibit was held just four years ago in Capetown. Galleries in Capetown and Knysna sell turned pieces primarily to tourists.

The cost of importing tools and equipment is partly responsible for holding down the expansion of turning. "The irony is that we have these stunning timbers, but the majority of turners cannot afford the equipment," Mike said. "For example, I know there are just four VB36 lathes in the entire country. A Oneway Stronghold chuck costs about $400, so a lot of turning is done on homemade faceplates.

"We try to share as much knowledge as we can and have a club lathe, which we loan to new members to encourage them to start turning."

Mike and Grant's club in Knysna (about 300 miles east of Capetown) has 10 active members. They also belong to the Association of Woodturners of South Africa, which has about 150 members.

"We need Europeans and Americans to stimulate us," Grant added. "But we have our own voices for our own work."

Last demo

The 2004 symposium also marked Joe and the entire North American turning community's last chance to watch a crowd favorite, English turner Allan Batty. Allan again charmed the crowd with his wit and turning knowledge gleaned from a turning career that began in 1954 as a trade union apprentice. However, recent heart problems have made travel difficult.

Allan promised the crowd that he passed all his knowledge and only his best jokes to his son, Stuart. But like Cher—who has had countless farewell tours—don't count on 2004 being Allan's last trip to Provo.

Because just like Joe Wagner, woodturners keep coming back to Utah.

Beneath the Bark

The Utah Woodturning Symposium celebrates its 25th anniversary

Beneath the Bark: Twenty-Five Years of Woodturning, represents the work of 140 turners who have presented at the Utah Woodturning Symposium in Provo during the past quarter century. A handful of pieces from the exhibit are shown on these pages. An exhibition book is available through the Brigham Young University Museum of Art Store (877-266-5053) and turning specialty outlets.

Ray Allen

Untitled, ebony, maple, mesquite, purpleheart, bone, 7¼" x 18". Ray, who died in 2001, was a forerunner in segmented turning. Ray's work quickly came to the forefront of segment turning.

Jean-Francois Escoulen

Evolution, osage orange, ebony, 15" x 4". Jean-Francois is known world-wide for his whimsical multi-axis turned sculptures.

Bob Neill

Flying Saucer, English sycamore, 2" x 12". Bob, a Welsh turner, specializes in pyrography techniques, coloring, and metal-leafing.

Mike Shuler

Birdseye Maple Bowl #1103, birdseye maple, and red glue, 5½"x 12". Mike, a turner from Santa Cruz, CA, used the red glue to define the bricklay segments in this funnel-shaped piece.

Stuart Mortimer

Twisted Hollow Form, pink ivory and ebony, 10" x 3½". English turner Stuart Mortimer incorporates signature spiral work into many of his pieces. He recently began turning some of his finials from solid-sterling silver.

Johannes Reiber

Canteen, birch and walnut, 10" x 7" x 4". Johannes, a German native living in Norway, is recognized as one of the most enthusiastic demonstrators on both sides of the Atlantic. His specializes in multi-axis pieces like the canteen shown *below*.

Tommy Sorensen

The Elegant Stairway, alder, 45" x 7" x 22". Tommy, a production turner from Salt Lake City, has participated in 18 Utah symposiums. At age 15, Tommy started making his living from production turning; he's turned full-time for 35-plus years.

Revisit the Icicle Ornament

By Bob Rosand

For more than 15 years, turned Christmas ornaments have been a mainstay of my turning. When the sales of other work are slow, I always manage to sell an ornament or two. I have also had the opportunity to demonstrate my ornaments for numerous AAW chapters and at various regional and national events.

It always surprises me a bit that people want to see my ornaments turned time after time. Although I still use the basic procedure I described in the Fall 1991 *American Woodturner*, I now have some variations I would like to share with members.

For those who are not familiar with the icicle ornaments, read on to learn how I make them, as well as discover some variations that my wife, Susan, and I have come up with over the years.

Materials and tools

To make this ornament, I suggest a 2 1/2" x 1 3/4" piece of figured burl that will become the globe. To turn the icicle and the finial, you will need a piece of straight-grained wood about 1 1/4" square by 7 1/2" long. I prefer to turn the globe from a light-colored wood like oak, ash, or cherry because the lighter woods don't get "lost" when the ornament hangs on a tree bough.

You also will need a good chuck with #2 jaws for turning the globe. The Talon chuck by Oneway is ideal for this because of its small size, but other chucks will do just fine. A set of spigot jaws is almost indispensable for turning the icicle, but you can manage without them—the process is just a bit slower.

The icicle requires a small roughing-out gouge. A 3/4" roughing-out gouge works fine, but if you turn a lot of these ornaments, a 1/2" roughing-out gouge is a big help. (Packard Woodworks is one catalog source for this tool.) You also will need some good bent-angle tools for hollowing the globe and a small skew. Other than that, standard turning tools should suffice: 3/8" spindle gouge, 1/2" spindle gouge (optional), mini square-nosed scraper, small (1/4") round-nosed scraper, small skew, parting tool.

Turn the globe

Glue the burl to a waste block, which is held in the #2 jaws of your chuck. Next, turn the globe to a finished diameter of about 2 1/4". Shape the globe with a 3/8" spindle gouge as shown in Photo A. I prefer a "flat" globe on the top and bottom rather than a round globe. This allows for an easier fit of the icicle and finial, since both have to be undercut to fit on the globe.

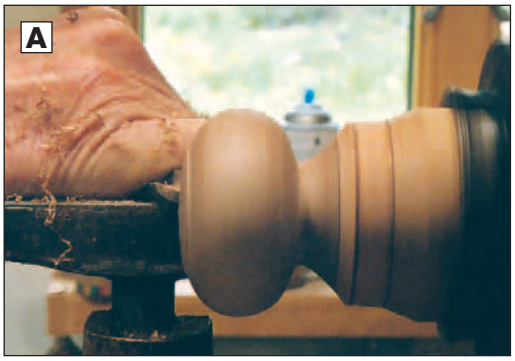
Be sure to make the glue block from a hard wood like oak or maple—not plywood or pine. The reason for this is important: The plys in the plywood may separate. Additionally, pine is too soft and may pull out of the jaws, especially if you have a catch.

As you shape the globe to the final dimensions, make sure that you leave enough material at the top of the globe to allow for hollowing, but remove enough material so that you can see what the final shape will be.

Once you have the globe turned, drill a 3/8" hole through the entire ornament into the waste block as shown in Photo B. Then use a small square-nosed scraper to open the hole in the bottom of the ornament to about 3/4" wide; this allows room to hollow. Now use the bent angle tools to hollow the interior of the ornament. I prefer a combination of the bent-angle tools and a small round-nosed scraper to hollow the interior as shown in Photo C. Hollow the wall thickness to about 1/8". You don't have to worry about extreme thinness here—the idea is to remove some of the interior mass so that the finished ornament does not weigh down the pine bough. As you become more proficient, you can turn thinner walls.

As you turn, clean out the shavings; if they build up too much, they can grab the tool and destroy the globe. (The shavings build up more with green wood than dry wood.) Compressed air is one solution, but if you don't have a compressor, a small piece of plastic hose or straw will suffice to blow out the shavings.

After turning the interior, use the spindle gouge to continue refining the shape of the globe. Don't forget that you have a 3/8" hole drilled through the entire globe. When you are satisfied with the shape of your ornament, sand the globe, apply sanding sealer, and part it from the lathe as shown in Photo D.



Continued

Turn the icicle

Place the icicle stock in the spigot jaws of your chuck. The length of the spigot jaws are about 1 1/2", so they hold the icicle well as shown in Photo E.

If you don't have a set of spigot jaws, consider drilling a 1" hole in a waste block, then turn a 1" tenon on the icicle stock and glue the two pieces. Although this takes longer to prepare, it's cheaper than buying spigot jaws.

Next, use the roughing-out gouge to start turning the icicle. You won't have the support of the tailstock to rely on, so take light cuts. I turn the smallest segment first (the tip of the icicle). I reduce the diameter with the roughing-out gouge, then refine the shape with a small skew and small spindle gouge as shown in Photo F.

This first segment defines the rest of the icicle segments. Each successive one must be a bit larger and longer than the previous one. As you finish a segment, sand, apply sanding sealer and then turn the next one. I usually turn four segments followed by a cove and some other decorative cuts at the top of the icicle.

When you are satisfied with the icicle, turn a tenon with your parting tool that will fit into the large hole in the bottom of the globe as shown in Photo G.

Once I have the tenon sized to fit the hole in the bottom of the globe (about 3/4"), I use a small parting tool ground at an angle or a skew to undercut the icicle so that its shoulder fits nicely into the globe and there are no gaps.

Finally, glue the icicle into the body of the ornament.

The finial

Turn the finial from the remainder of the icicle stock. I first turn a 3/8" tenon on that stock and then undercut it with the skew or small parting tool. Be sure to check the fit. I then refine the shape, part it from the lathe, reverse the finial and hold it in the spigot jaws. This allows me to make any final changes on the finial and also drill a 1/8"-diameter hole as shown in Photo H to accept a small ebony knob (a nice decorative touch).

I then drill another small hole

Variations on a theme

Now that you have the basic ornament down pat, you may be looking for ways to vary the design. Over the years, I have found this to be a necessity, particularly selling ornaments at craft shows. I have lost more than one sale by not having this years "new and improved" model. For me, the basic globe and icicle stay the same, but here are some variations that you may consider.

1. Paint the globe. Susan grabs a handful of the globes that I turn and paints winter country scenes on some of them and holly leaves on others. Recently, she has been experimenting with painting fall leaves on some globes.

2. Marbleize the globe. We experimented with marbleizing a few years ago, which sold well. Since paint covers the globe, marbleizing allows you to use less expensive wood.

3. Turn the globe from banksia seedpods. I'm not particularly fond of turning banksia, since it is so dirty, but the ornaments turned from it sell well. I usually turn the walls of the globes a bit thicker, since the banksia "eyes" tend to pop out if you turn it too thin.

4. Bleach the globe. I prefer two-part wood bleach—not household bleach. At first I was not impressed with the idea of bleaching the globes—I thought that character would be lost. Bleached ornaments are now one of my favorite variations.

5. Dye the globes. Some of my ornament globes are dyed with red aniline dye and the icicle and finials are turned of red-and-white striped color wood.

6. Woodburn the globe. I have recently added pyrography skills. I now burn stars on the globes, which produces a totally different effect. This technique sells well.

7. Laminate the globe. Consider gluing up some of those precious scraps that you just can't bear to throw away and turning them into ornament globes.

with a pin vise in the ebony knob to accept a screw eye for hanging the ornament as shown in Photo I. Screw eyes (#18A is an ideal size) run about 10 cents apiece. If you want to save some money, consider using cut-off fishing hooks or glue in nylon filament.

For final steps, glue the finial in place, and spray the ornament with satin lacquer.

If you are just starting out with Christmas tree ornaments, you might consider experimenting with icicles that are somewhat shorter than the length suggested in this article. As you gain confidence and skill, you will be able to lengthen the icicles.

Bob Rosand (rrosand@pdprolog.net) is a frequent *American Woodturner* contributor. He lives in Bloomsburg, PA.

Pushing the Envelope

Orlando Instant Gallery displays members' ever-changing talents

By Andi Wolfe
Photos: John Lucas

Setting the stage

The AAW's 2004 National Symposium drew nearly 900 members. If each conference registrant had brought their allotment of three turnings, none of us attending would have had time to take in any rotations.

Fortunately, there was a reasonable number of turnings to view, but it still was necessary to walk through the gallery numerous times to absorb all the offerings on display. The style of turnings ranged from functional bowls and furniture to sculpture that would be at home in a fine art gallery.

And as Nick Cook observed, "They're really pushing the envelope."

The Instant Gallery setting was in a large ballroom with plenty of space to walk among tables. The turnings were arranged in such a way that attendees could easily detect the individual styles from one maker to another. It was also easy to pop in to see a few tables in the gallery between rotations, and the gallery was isolated from the trade show by a wall that ran the length of the ballroom.

Volunteers were generous with their time in providing staffing and assistance. All of this added up to a relatively stress-free zone where one didn't have to worry about bumping into a table when trying to navigate around people.

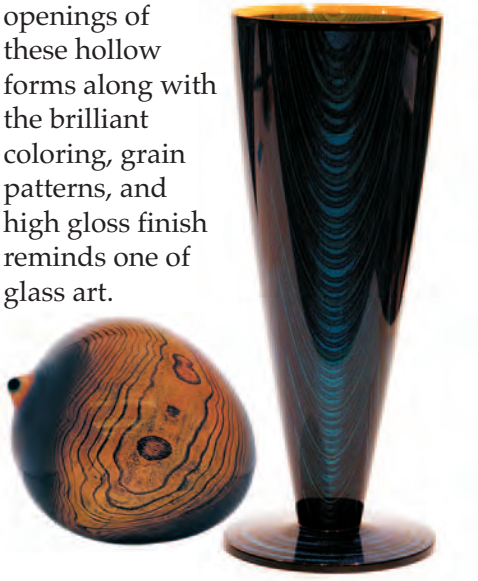
The Instant Gallery room drew continuous crowds at the symposium.

On Sunday morning, Mark Sfirri and Bud Latven critiqued the Instant Gallery. As usual, the atmosphere was similar to what one experiences at a major golf tournament with a spectator gallery following the speakers from table to table, and jockeying themselves for a better view.

Mark and Bud made a point to congratulate turners on work well done when they didn't recognize the name of the maker of a piece they were critiquing. It was obvious that they had spent a lot of time thinking about what pieces they wanted to discuss, and they had mapped out their route in advance.

The show

Mark and Bud featured the work of nearly 30 turners in the critique session, and the turnings were across the spectrum of styles of contemporary woodturning. The first turnings discussed were by **Don Derry**. The pure forms and interesting accents around the openings of these hollow forms along with the brilliant coloring, grain patterns, and high gloss finish reminds one of glass art.



Don Derry, left; Steve Gleasner, right.

This same comparison was made to the work of **Steve Gleasner**, who makes vibrantly colored, segmented vases from plywood. Other turnings discussed, which feature coloring as part of the surface enhancement treatment, included work from Binh Pho, Irene Gafert, Jacques Vesery, Steve Sinner, and Andi Wolfe. **Steve Sinner** also uses a high gloss finish, but his method for coloring was discussed from the technical aspect of precise application. Mark thought these vessels were

segmented turnings until he learned about the ink and airbrush techniques used to produce the patterns covering these vessels.

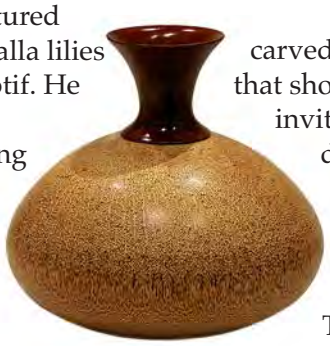
Binh Pho's work was presented as a good example of excellent form, incredible details, and in terms of how the personality of the artist comes through with each vessel.

Binh Pho

The changing direction of **Jacques Vesery**'s work from the well-known feathered vessels to more open, sculptural sea forms was presented, and **Irene Gafert**'s work was discussed in the context of the abstract Escher-like pattern of fishes around the rim of her platter and bowl. Mark also talked about why he thought this treatment worked better on the platter as compared to the bowl.

Left: Steve Sinner
Right: Harvey Fein
Foreground: William Smith

Mark and Bud chose different turnings by **Andi Wolfe** to discuss. Mark was most interested in a painted and textured bowl that featured calla lilies as the decorative motif. He was attracted to the painting and texturing techniques of the design, and suggested the work presented a "warm glow" that drew his eye. Bud featured a new carved work of autumn leaves that showed movement and an invitation to explore, but also discussed this work, and a third, in terms of the nice forms accomplished before incorporation of surface enhancements. The purity of form and use of materials were examined in the context of the work of Cindy Drozda, David Ellsworth, Pam Reilly, Gaye Siegel, and Everett Eiselen. **Cindy Drozda** displayed a series of lidded vessels and these were featured as excellent examples of a wonderful combination of pure forms, beautiful wood, fine detailing of the finials and hidden surprises



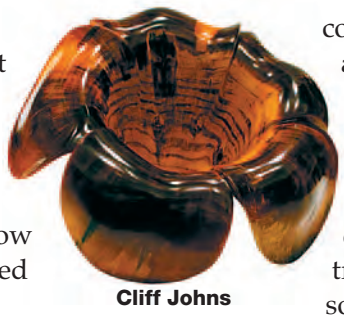
Gaye Siegel

Continued

David Ellsworth

(e.g., gold leafing inside the vessel). **David Ellsworth**'s work was presented as the ideal combination of pure form and natural attributes of wood, and a comparison was made between one of Ellsworth's vessels with one from Don Derry. These were very similar in size and form, but the contrast between the natural wood surface in Ellsworth's signature work to that of the glass-like coloring and finish of Derry's vessel was striking.

Pam Reilly's small holly box with a bloodwood finial was also highlighted as a good combination of form, finish, and detailing. **Gaye Siegel**'s sabal palm vessels were discussed in terms of the beautiful shapes of the hollow vessels. These turnings had a contrasting wood for the neck and opening, and there was an exchange between Mark and Bud about whether these were complementary to the forms or could be further refined. **Everett Eiselen** included a laminated sphere in his Instant Gallery entry, which Mark Sfirri picked up as he was moving from one table to another. Mark explained that he had not intended to do a critique of this sphere, but that every time he went through the gallery he had picked it up to look at it and stroke it. He found the laminated spiral pattern to be interesting and liked how the sphere was presented on its stand.



Cliff Johns

The natural features of wood were highlighted in the turnings from **Sylvia Scudder** and **Jamie Donaldson**. Silvia Scudder entered bowls made from magnolia, which were discussed in terms of how effective the grain was exhibited in the bowls, and Donaldson had a hollow form made from a holly stump, which had experienced a lot of movement upon drying. The movement and motion of the wood gave this turning, "Dinosaur Egg," its effect.

Sylvia Scudder

Segmented turnings from William Smith and Curt Theobald were presented in the critique. **William Smith**'s lattice-work turnings were highlighted for their delicate construction, fine detail, and use of material. Smith's lotus bowl was used as an excellent example of planning and execution of a design featuring complementary woods and small, but prominent, details such as the delicately curved tips.

Curt Theobald's entries included traditional southwestern designs and a new, dramatically different, design that featured the use of madrone scorched to the point that the segments were unraveling from the vessel. The vessel (shown on page 37) was reminiscent of a "fractured moment in time," giving the appearance of an archeological relic.

The critique also featured carved turnings by Cliff Johns, Neil Scobie, and Ron Pursell. **Cliff Johns**' Norfolk Island Pine vessel carved into a *Plumeria* flower was discussed because the translucent color of the petals were lush and had the appearance of melting butterscotch. **Neil Scobie**'s carved rim bowls also had a very sensuous appearance with the flowing curves of the rims into the bowl, and a **Ron Pursell** bowl was contrasted to his taller forms by Mark, who envisioned an abstract animal from the bulbous sections ending in tentacle-like curves.

Technical features of turnings by Harvey Fein and Jim Keller were discussed in terms of composition of the designs with the elements of the wood. **Harvey Fein**'s three platters were compared and Mark explained how some of the contrasting sapwood elements conflicted with

the well-executed spiral motifs, but found that the teak platter had everything working together to form a nice composition. **Jim Keller**'s off-center disks had a sculptural quality to them that was very appealing to Bud, who thought the smallest of the turnings on display was the most successful of the series.

Sfirri and Latven commented on the lack of sculptural turnings in the Instant Gallery, but featured the work of **Marilyn Campbell** (shown on page 38) and **Keith Tompkins** in their critique. One of the main points made about the work from each of these artists is that the design works at the small scale presented, but could also easily work on a much larger scale. The combination of wood and epoxy with the texturing and coloring of Campbell's sculptures were considered to be highly effective. Tompkins had two double spiral vase-like forms on display, one of which was made from holly and ebony and the other from mahogany. Both sculptures were considered successful, but suggestions were made for refinement of the bases supporting the spiral sections.

In addition to the colored, carved, segmented and sculptural turnings discussed, a couple of "fun" objects were also featured in the critique session, including **Art Pataky**'s lamp styled after a diving helmet and **Caroline Harkness**' earring stands.

All in all, the Instant Gallery was a treat for the eyes, and the critique covered a wide swath of contemporary woodturning.

From top to bottom:
Jacques Vesery
Cindy Drozda
Neil Scobie
Frank Amigo
Ron Pursell

Andi Wolfe (andiwolfe@yahoo.com) is a botany professor at Ohio State University and a frequent demonstrator of pyrography techniques in woodturning.

From Sea to Odyssey

Photos: Bob Hawks

Juried exhibit captures nautical theme

"**From Sea to Odyssey**" was the theme of the AAW's sixth exhibit, which coincided with the AAW National Symposium in Orlando. Jack Vesery and Mark Sfirri juried the show representing work from 45 members, including 11 international turners (six from Canada alone).

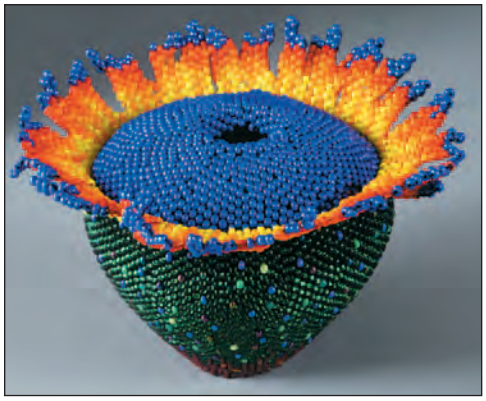
The exhibit will be on display Sept. 9 to Dec. 17 at the AAW's new gallery at the Landmark Center in downtown St. Paul, MN.

To order a $10 DVD of this year's exhibit, visit the AAW website at www.woodturner.org.

Next year's exhibit theme will be "reTURN to the Land of Oz." See page 65 for rules and entry information.

"**Lumba Lumba**" by **Douglas Weidman** of Green Lane, PA. Box elder, acrylic paint, and textured; 10"x7"x8".

"**Keel's End**," by **Jack Shelton** of Fort Pierce, FL. Honduras mahogany, turned and carved; 3 1/2"x11".



"**Ring of Fire**," by **Linda Fifield** of McKee, KY. Maple covered with glass beads , 2¾" x 3¾".

"**New Beginnings**," by **Dixie Biggs** of Gainesville, FL. Cocobolo and cherry, 5" x 6½" x 7½".

"**From Beneath the Bermuda Triangle**," by **Curt Theobald** of Pine Bluffs, WY. Madrone burl, 5" x 4".

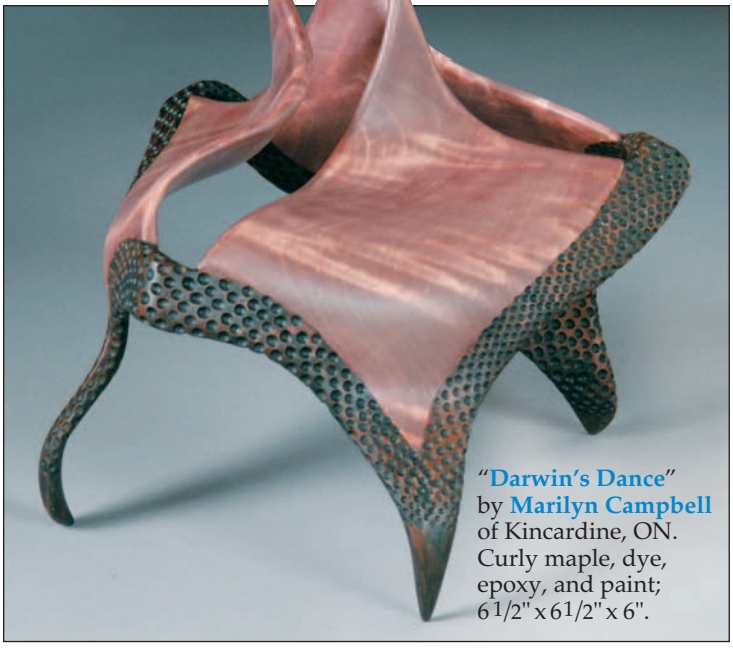
"**Nautilus**" by **David Nittmann** of Boulder, CO. Maple, turned, burned and dyed; 22" x 2".

Continued

From Sea to Odyssey

"**Circumnavigation**," by **Butch Smuts** of Johannesburg, South Africa. African blackwood and red ivory wood with kiatt burl and red ivory wood inlay; 5" x 9 1/4".

"**Tornado**" by **Marcel Van Berkel** of Terschellilng, The Netherlands. Elm, turned and carved; 17" x 7" x 9".



"**Darwin's Dance**" by **Marilyn Campbell** of Kincardine, ON. Curly maple, dye, epoxy, and paint; 6 1/2" x 6 1/2" x 6".

"**Wave Form III**" by **Michael Hampel** of Chelan, WA. English walnut, turned and carved; 5 1/2" x 15" x 6 1/2".

Light up the Holidays

By Judy Chesnut
Photos: Judy Chesnut and Vickie McClain

This past Christmas, I gave more than 60 Christmas bulbs as gifts—and not one required an electrical outlet.

You can turn these light bulbs in a variety of sizes for different uses. I have made them for Christmas tree ornaments, decorations for holiday wraps, and turned smaller versions for necklaces and earrings.

For this project, my favorite wood is Dymondwood (one source is Hut Products, 800-547-5461). Although the laminations are slightly more difficult to turn, it does make an attractive bulb like the examples shown *above*.

Once you get started, it is easy to turn these in multiple quantities because it doesn't take much more time to make six than it does to make one.

I've collected Christmas ornaments since 1970. This design was partially inspired by an ornament Chip Siskey brought to one of our Kansas City-area AAW chapter holiday parties.

Select stock and tools

I recommend the first time you make these, choose a wood that is easy to turn. Padauk (for the bulb) and yellowheart (for the threads) work well. You'll also need a 1/4" birch dowel.

I suggest you use whatever tools you are most comfortable with and happen to own. I turn my Christmas bulbs with micro (also called mini or detail) tools. If you turn these bulbs with larger tools, use a light touch.

Cut the blanks

The padauk blank is 1" square and 1 3/4" long. The yellowheart is 3/4" square by 5/8" long. For this part, I slice pen blanks up in 5/8" lengths. Cut the 1/4" birch dowel 2 1/4" long.

I mount my stock in a Beall collet chuck with a 1/4" collet. If you do not have a collet chuck, a set of spigot jaws will work. Just cut the yellowheart blank long enough to mount in the chuck and eliminate the 1/4" dowel.

For me, the dowel serves a dual purpose. The dowel makes it quick and easy to mount and turn multiple bulbs. In addition, I leave enough dowel on the bulb to serve as the filament contact portion when I part off the bulb from the headstock.

Continued

Drill the blanks and glue the parts

Mark the centers on the yellowheart and padauk. I drill with a size F bit so that the hole is slightly larger than 1/4". This produces a snug fit, but not so tight that it splits the blanks. If you don't have a size F drill bit, you can lightly sand the dowel so it doesn't fit in the hole too tightly.

Using a vise or clamp to hold the stock, drill a hole 5/8" deep in the end of the padauk. Drill completely through the yellowheart as shown in Photo A.

Assemble the three pieces with cyanoacrylate (CA) glue.

Mount the bulb stock

Mount the blank on the lathe as shown in Photo B. I like to leave just enough dowel exposed to safely part it off with a small skew when finished. This reduces the chance of vibration or of the dowel breaking.


A

Snug the tailstock, then begin turning

It is important to bring up the tailstock and check it often to be sure it remains snug. If you try to turn this without the tailstock, the dowel will twist and break.

Using a light touch, turn the bulb to a cylinder. Check your tailstock again and be sure it is snug, but not too tight. Begin shaping the bulb with a 3/8" spindle gouge, taking light cuts.

Turn the bulb shape

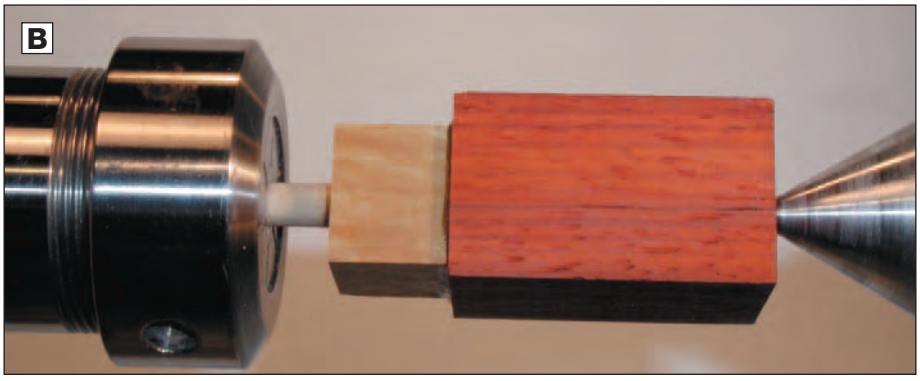
For reference while turning, it is helpful to have a real Christmas bulb in front of you. At this point, I suggest holding a dark-colored bulb up to the stock and lightly touch the bulb to the padauk while the lathe is turning. This leaves a line around the wood, which marks the widest part of the bulb as shown in Photo C. I cut downhill from that line, which simplifies shaping.

Beads sub for threads

Instead of threads, I turn three beads on the yellowheart. This gives the appearance of threads and they are much easier to turn.

Refine the shape

After cutting the beads, refine the shape of the bulb. leaving just enough at the tailstock end to


B


C

keep the bulb stable. I do most of my sanding at this point, beginning at 220 grit and working through 600 grit.

With a small skew or gouge, gently part off the bulb at the tailstock end as shown in Photo D. Finish-sand as necessary.

Apply finish

Apply the finish while the bulb is still mounted in the chuck. I've had good luck applying a sanding sealer and then friction polish. With the lathe running at a slow speed (500 rpm), buff with a soft paper towel. Don't use too much muscle on this step as the dowel can easily twist off.

With a marker, add detail

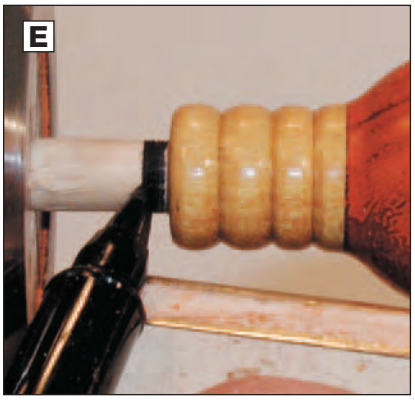
Stop the lathe and add a black line around the dowel next to the beads as shown in Photo E. Rotate the lathe by hand and support the marker on the tool rest. I prefer a flat-tip calligraphy pen, because it makes a neater line than a round tip. These pens are available at office-supply or art stores.

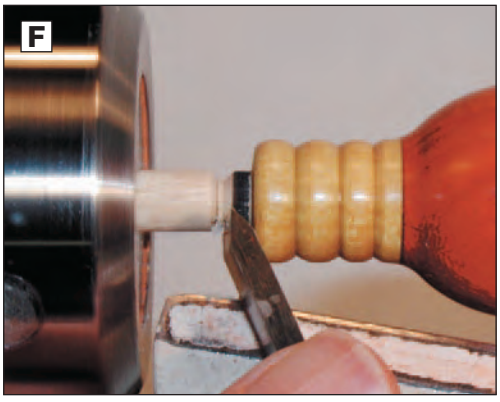
Parting off from lathe

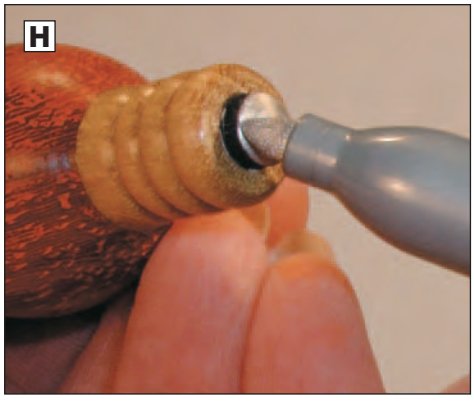
With a small skew, part off the dowel at the edge of the black line, leaving about 1/8" of dowel on the bulb as shown in Photo F.

Final touches

Using a #60 drill bit, drill a small hole in the center of the dowel about 1/2" deep as shown in Photo G. I have not found a screweye small enough for this ornament, so I use the eye from a #202 brass fishing hook.



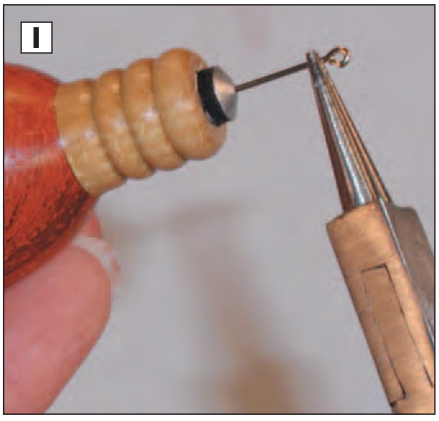




Before gluing the shank into the bulb, paint the end of the dowel with a silver Sharpie pen (available at office-supply stores) as shown in Photo H.

Finally, adhere the shank of the fishing hook into the bulb with CA glue as shown in Photo I.

AAW member Judy Chesnut (twoskibums@earthlink.net) is vice president of the Kansas City Woodturners Club.



The $500 Avocado Project

By Warren Brown & Jim Rinde Photos: David Frank

In February, Mission Produce offered the Channel Island Woodturners $500 and a large supply of avocado wood in return for 25 simple bowls turned from green avocado wood.

We accepted the challenge because this was a good opportunity for our chapter. First, there's little turning information available about avocado's stability, drying properties, and finishing procedures. In addition, the offer included a good supply of wood for demonstrations and practice turnings. And of course we'd earn seed money for bringing in experienced demonstrators.

Mission, a distributor of avocados, planned to give the bowls to loyal growers in the Ventura County area near Los Angeles.

Top: a slab of Fuerte about 20" across has plenty of character for turners. Bottom: Russ Babbit Jr., a member of the Channel Island Woodturners, roughs out a bowl as Martha Etchart watches.

At its March meeting, the Channel Island Woodturners presented 25 avocado bowls to Mission Produce. Mission presented the bowls to area growers.

The assignment: 25 bowls

After a full pickup load of mature Fuerte avocado wood arrived for our February meeting, members scrambled for sizable logs with crotches, bumps and straight grains. We were instructed to turn any shape or size of bowl for the next month's meeting.

Ten turners made the 25 bowls, with contributions ranging from one to four bowls. There was not enough time for natural drying, but we were instructed to try different methods for the best results possible. All participating members were asked to record their experiences, procedures, problems, and conclusions for this great avocado experiment.

Our work was with mature, freshly cut Fuerte avocado wood, which has the best color of avocado varieties (see additional information at *right*). Our logs ranged from pale yellow-beige to beautiful pink-red.

Would avocado keep its unusual pink-red color on drying? We certainly hoped so! The bark was attractive for natural edge work, but would it stay in place after drying? We had a month to find out.

The photo at *left* shows the 25 avocado bowls that were brought to the March meeting. Bowls ranged in size from about 4" to 12" in diameter and had wall thickness from 1/8" to about 1".

Chapter observations

"This was my first opportunity to work on "fresh" wood," Al Geller reported. "All of my past experience has been with seasoned wood, which doesn't distort. I had no difficulty with end grain tearout, even with a slightly dull gouge. Shear scraping with a freshly ground gouge gave the best results. If I was gentle, I could maintain the natural bark edge without using CA glue. Aggressive cuts pulled the bark off of the bowl edge.

"Avocado wood has a very uniform texture and does not crack upon drying. Thin bowls do, however, distort dramatically on drying."

"The avocado wood worked very well when wet," Sam Turner added. "I turned two nice 8" to 9" bowls, one natural edge and the other the normal orientation. The natural-edge bowl retained its red hues better than the other did because I saved more of the heartwood in that orientation. It warped a bit, but was pleasing.

"I turned the other bowl very thin. As it dried out over two days, I watched it warp very badly. But I find the unpredictable shapes interesting. I call it a tostada bowl."

David Frank has turned avocado for a couple of years. "When it's turned in the green state," David said, "it cuts like butter and can be turned down to 1/8" or less. Since it loses moisture quickly, it is best turned all at one time, as it will warp. In addition to warping out of round, the wall thickness will shrink in a variable pattern in the softer grain layers and areas of side branches. This gives a ripple pattern to the wall that adds to the organic freeform shape.

"The Fuerte species of avocado tree often has wonderful red coloration in the heartwood. This is best seen in larger logs, particularly with crotches. The red coloration seems to fade if the wood is allowed to dry completely. I preserved the subtle red coloration of the wood by applying the finish to the partially dry wood."

Mentoring in March

At the March meeting, Tim Albers of Mission Produce picked up the bowls and also brought another load of fresh-cut avocado wood. Several visitors attended this meeting, and one of them, Ira Goldberg, took up the challenge of turning a bowl. Two experienced turners worked with Ira to lead him through turning a natural-edged bowl. Ira completed about 90 percent of the turning and all of the finish cuts. Ira also joined the club that day.

Grower's delight

Tim was delighted with the bowls, especially the different shapes and forms we turned. Although some people see the shrinkage and warping of a green-turned bowl as something less than perfect, others—especially avocado growers—see these bowls as unique and overflowing with character.

The avocado tree

There are many varieties of avocados. Fuerte, Bacon, and Zutano varieties have fruit with smooth, green skin and are harvested from November to March. These are large, upright trees. The Haas variety, the most common in grocery stores, has pebbly, green skin that turns black as it ripens. This spreading tree is harvested from April to November.

Fruit production starts about the fourth year. After a few years, every other tree must be removed to allow space for the remaining trees to grow.

To a woodturner, a fast-growing tree is going to be a relatively soft wooded tree (with a few exceptions such as eucalyptus). We found this to be true of avocado wood. We judged it to have a finer, harder grain than ponderosa pine but not quite as hard as poplar. Its turning properties are similar to soft walnut or cherry. The green avocado wood has a density of 0.7 g/cc; when dried, the density is 0.45 g/cc. It has a light to medium color, which polishes to a high gloss.

Avocado logs up to 8" to 10" in diameter may dry without checking—even without greenwood sealer on the ends. Larger logs need to be halved and sealed to avoid cracking.

Warren Brown (warrengbrownverizon.net) and Jim Rinde (jerinde@adelphia.net) are members of the Channel Island Woodturners.

Chapter Sages

Across North America, turners revere a well-seasoned member who is the linchpin of all chapter activities. Join us in a celebration of AAW chapter sages. We love these guys!

What is a sage?

In *From Age-ing to Sage-ing: A Profound New Vision of Growing Older,* author Zalman Schachter-Shalomi defines a sage or elder as a person who:

- Constitutes wise, prudent leadership
- Offers experiences and wisdom for the welfare of society
- Expresses their hope in the future by the contributions they make for the generations that come after them
- Gives generously with encouragement
- Mentors younger people who are drawn to their wisdom and models a life that finds validation, self-worth, and meaning from within.

Gordon McMullen Bozeman, MT

Nominated by Ken Emerson, Northern Rockies Woodworking Guild

Gordon McMullen is the Northern Rockies Woodworking Guild's most versatile turner—the guy most of us turn to when we have a problem with our lathes or a turning project. Gordon began turning seriously about 25 years ago, as he approached retirement from his long career as a plumber.

He began with kitchen-sized bowls, and did a lot of greenwood turning. As time went on, he grew more interested in really large bowls, and his small Delta lathe couldn't handle the big pieces he wanted to turn. So he designed and built himself a bowl-turning lathe that would handle really big stuff. It was such a good design that a lot of other people in the area liked it too, and he built several more for people in this part of the country.

Gordon is especially inventive about designing tools for turning. Last month, he gave a demo to the group about making small tools from drill rod. He's an accomplished metal worker and a welder, so there's not much he can't do himself in toolmaking.

Gordon is a real believer in demonstrations as well as hands-on learning. Two years ago as our group reactivated, he gave informal classes on Saturday mornings to anyone who was interested. Whenever he teaches some skill or technique, he never says to us "This is the 'correct' way to do such and such." What he does say is "There are lots of ways to do this. I do it this way; but try out different ways, until you find one that works for you." He's a great asset to the club, and we are lucky to have him here!

Marvin Ewing Louisville, KY

Nominated by Buddy Riley, Louisville Area Woodturners

Marvin Ewing is one of the founding members of the Louisville Area Woodturners. He has served as president, vice-president, mentor, librarian, and all-around friend to any and all turners who wish to further skills. No one in the club has done as many demonstrations as he, or offered his shop and home to an outside demonstrator, allowing the club to have large meetings there.

Marvin will undertake any and all challenges in any new endeavor to try to master any technique and relay his success or failure to all club members, allowing us the benefit to use his skills to our advantage. You need a big lathe? Go to Marvin's. Need to learn firsthand how to use a hollowing rig? Come on by Marvin's shop Saturday morning. He enjoys the time to talk woodturning and to relay his expertise to anybody who wants to learn.

Marvin took me under his wing and taught me all that I was willing to learn. He offers advice and criticism in such a manner as to never hurt your feelings, but you want to do your best as not to disappoint him.

Marvin has now retired from his job at Ford Motor Co., and he says he doesn't know how he had time to work. In addition to fishing with his wife, Marvin instructs at the local Woodcraft store and also tries to get all the things done around the house that he promised to make for his wife—but put off to turn with us. However, he still says," Drop by and we will spin a piece of wood and make some shavings."

Marvin is someone who all clubs need.

Earl Bowers Athens, AL

Nominated by Andy Woodard, Duck River Woodturners

Using a T-model engine and a flat-fabric belt, Earl Bowers built his first woodturning lathe in 1931. At the same time, this inventive 21-year-old also built a bandsaw using wooden-spoke T-model rims. He has been woodturning ever since.

Currently, Earl—known as Uncle Earl by everyone—is interested in segmented turned work and handmade inlay. Over the years, he has built more than 50 poster beds. His greatest satisfaction was making circular crown molding on a dare. He proudly displays several ingenious machines that he made to settle his nerves while teaching 27 years at a community college.

Uncle Earl brags a bit about the fact that in all of his years teaching, no one lost a finger. Friends estimate that his good teaching skills probably saved at least a bushel basket of fingers over the years.

Uncle Earl believes in drawing plans for his projects and taking his time making them. His nephews bring him to our monthly woodturning meetings, which mean a great deal to him. He is quick-witted and willingly and respectfully shares his knowledge. He relishes new ideas and uses our library regularly.

Uncle Earl turns at two lathes. One is over 100 years old and is capable of turning a seven-foot-long bedpost; the tool rest alone is heavier than most small-scale lathes. He built his other lathe, which has a custom-threaded spindle and wooden pulley system.

Uncle Earl is currently recovering from some health challenges. He recently said, "They might keep me from driving, but they can't keep me out of my shop. I have to get back to work to get well again."

He anticipates his 94th birthday in July. Godspeed, Uncle Earl!

Continued

O.B. Lacoste Lafayette, LA

Nominated by Eddie Castelin, Bayou Woodturners

O.B. Lacoste had only been turning about seven years when I met him, and he is by far one of the most proficient and prolific turners I've ever met. I remember him starting the demo of bottle stoppers with the statement "the only thing you can do wrong is not turn."

I knew I had encountered a true character when the demonstration started with a real Cajun story. But O.B. really stands out from the crowd because he's the first one to step up and show something new, take the time to explain it to even the most novice turners, and then show us how to make it better. It isn't enough for him to try a new technique; O.B. has to figure out how to do it well, make it simple, and then teach it to others. We can always count on him to lead the gallery portion of our meetings with a lengthy dissertation on the finer points of turning and some new technique he perfected.

O.B. also is an innovator. When testing a new version of an old

Jim Hilburger Colden, NY

Nominated by Ray Bissonette, Western New York Woodturners I

Twelve years ago, Jim Hilburger arrived at one of our meetings, curious, but unable to turn. Now, at age seventy-five, he is the spark plug of our club. In fact, an award named for him is given annually to a member who stands out in contributing to the mission of the club.

What struck us immediately was his combination of energy, talent, and generosity. He knew, for example, how many of us hoped in vain for some of the alluring but pricey turning tools gracing the pages of the catalogs. Soon, Jim began arriving at meetings with cartons of homemade versions—equally effective, but available at cost to any of us. Fairly credible rumors suggest that members a little short of cash but full of motivation might pay little or nothing. It wasn't long before you understood.

Jim shares what he had with others so they can do the same. What device or wisdom couldn't be brought to the meetings is dispensed in his shop outside of Buffalo to the almost daily procession of pilgrims who came to the oracle with problems. They leave with solutions and often a couple samples of his handiwork.

Russ Fairfield Post Falls, ID

Nominated by Charlie Benson, Spokane Lathe Artists

Russ Fairfield has been turning wood for 50-plus years and has never stopped teaching, helping, or mentoring. It makes no difference whether he is teaching high school students, novice club members or contemporaries; his preparation is always complete.

Once each month, Russ opens his shop for our club and will stand and teach for six hours straight. He doesn't stop until the last person is satisfied or can't absorb any more. I have attended every session and will continue to attend—even when he starts over with the basics. His classes cover tools, sharpening, bowl-making, hollow forms, penturning, Christmas ornaments, and segmented turning. These classes also include glues, finishes, bandsaws, and woods.

There seems to be no end to Russ's knowledge, whether it is chemistry, metallurgy or any other subject related to turning. It is not just beginners who are inspired by Russ, as accomplished turners also enjoy his classes. His sly sense of humor adds to the enjoyment of learning.

Each quarter, Russ demonstrates for the local high school shop class and works with the students afterward. He also presents at symposiums and

lathe, he contacted electronic experts for help in revising the controller to work the way real woodturners work.

O.B.'s shop is always open for novice turners, and he even welcomes in a few seasoned turners for tune-ups.

And, of course, there's the one about Boudreaux, down at the funeral parlor, who….

The tools and products of his hobby crowd every inch of the barn in which Jim works his magic. But amid the clutter is the key to the man and his tireless drive to learn, to teach, to share.

A large sign reads: "When I stand before God at the end of my life, I hope that I would have not a single bit of talent left, and could say, 'I used everything you gave me.' "

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clubs across the country.

Russ Fairfield is highly thought of in our club and has a large Internet following. Russ contributes to woodcentral.com (Russ's Corner), penturners@yahoo.com, and his personal site, woodturnerruss.com. Many Internet sites include reference to Russ's articles or his methods.

Yes, Russ Fairfield is our chapter's gold mine. Every club should be as lucky as the Spokane Lathe Artists.

Ron Browning

Lecanto, FL

Nominated by Randy Leach, Hands-On Woodturners Club

Ron Browning is the "do-it-all, get-it-done guy" for the Hands-On Woodturners. In addition to serving as our president, Ron also is our newsletter editor and webmaster.

Ron never misses an event in our busy club. He keeps all of the club's equipment at his shop, and sets up at our functions. He then does most of the demonstration that goes on at our civic events.

Ron also holds sawdust sessions at his shop from 6 to 10 p.m. every Sunday night. Twelve to 18 members regularly attend these sessions. I have heard comments by the attendees that range from "This is just like going to Mr. Wizard's shop" to "I have attended classes on woodturning, but I learn more on Sunday nights from Ron." We bring any projects we are having a problem with, and Ron gets us going in the right direction. We also make and sharpen tools, build jigs, and turn on the lathe while receiving pointers from Ron. If nothing else is going on, he will demonstrate for us, always showing new tools or techniques he has picked up.

Ron, who has been turning for about 40 years, teaches woodturning at the local technical institute and demonstrates at other clubs. He does all of this while employed full-time as a radiation protection specialist at a nuclear power plant.

Ron comes wrapped in a big smile and positive attitude.

Dr. Bob Bahr

Fort Wayne, IN

Robert Smith, Chiselers and Turners of Northeastern Indiana

Maestro and sage Dr. Bob Bahr not only is founder and CEO of our club, but he keeps our funds securely under his bed. He opens his house and full basement shop each Wednesday evening for members and friends to gather, learn new techniques, gossip, and discuss problems. We often wonder at the vast numbers of turning tools our sage has purchased, used slightly, then stored where only he can locate each one.

Our membership includes beginning, youthful turners, old, arthritic, and senile geezers, and a few pretty ladies. Doc sets the example of inviting anyone to his shop to learn turning techniques.

Doc Bahr is our most frequent demonstrator, most accomplished raconteur, and laughs the loudest when the joke is on him. Some members, without ever turning on a lathe, pay dues and attend all meetings just for the entertainment. For our "Show and Tell," he continues to match (often replicate) recent *American Woodturner* articles. The only complaint we have heard from Doc is that he can imitate what the great turners do, but he doesn't initiate anything new!

Doc Bahr organizes our club's Woodfest annual symposium. This year, Doc expanded the event to 12 demonstrations including marquetry, pyrography, guitar making, and turning a hat.

Continued

David Friedman Boynton Beach, FL

Nominated by Carl M. Schneider, Palm Beach County Woodturners

Dave has been involved in woodworking for 65 years. On his first visit to a woodworking tool and supply store in Cleveland in the late 1970s, he observed a woodturning demonstration by Stanley C. Stary. He was hooked on turning. It was Stan's attitude as a teacher that was most notable, and Dave has done much to pass Stan's enthusiasm on to others.

Dave and a few fellow woodturners drove to Akron for AAW chapter meetings and eventually started their own chapter in Cleveland. Some of them accepted Dave's invitation to attend a weekly gathering in his shop. Dave attended seminars to expand his own knowledge and demonstrated his craft at chapter meetings and in his weekly workshops.

Bob Hawks Tulsa, OK

Nominated by Ron Fleming, Northeastern Oklahoma Woodturners Association

Whether flipping burgers for our annual picnic or organizing another woodturning show, Bob Hawks is deeply ingrained in activities for the Northeastern Oklahoma Woodturners Association. But Bob's involvement goes far beyond helping organize a club in 1989 and holding several offices.

Bob's fine craftsmanship is part of the story. Before Bob was asked in 1993 to donate a vessel for The White House Collection of American Crafts, turned pieces didn't get much attention in the Oklahoma art communities.

Bob parlayed his White House recognition into local acceptance for woodturners. Fortunately, Bob is respected and networks well among Tulsa decision makers. (Because Bob has been a commercial photographer in Tulsa since 1948, he has worked with most corporations and galleries.)

In 1998, Bob helped organize the first juried exhibit of turned work at the respected Philbrook Museum of Art. Then to help us get prepared for the jurying process, Bob photographed all the members' entries.

This exhibit was great exposure and really elevated our respect in the community. He's also

Bill Kelly Rancho Palos Verdes, CA

Nominated by Curtis Thompson, El Camino Woodturners Guild

After looking over your definition of a sage, I'm convinced that we have one of the critters in our guild. Bill Kelly immediately came to mind—no reflection necessary.

Bill is our current president. He's been turning for many years and is "long in tooth," as the saying goes. His willingness to contribute his time teaching woodturning and working with

the youth in our community is unquestionably one of his strongest attributes.

Bill is no slouch with the tools either. He fancied the work of Stuart Mortimer a few years back and now is the master of twisted turnings in the Southern California area, demonstrating and teaching this skill to many of the area guilds.

Bill has led teams of turners on

Even before moving to Florida seven years ago, Dave contacted the Palm Beach County Woodturners. Since then, Dave has been actively involved in every aspect of the chapter. He opens his home and shop to our board meetings, committee meetings and professional event workshops. He personally hosts visiting professional demonstrators, provides financial contributions toward major chapter purchases, demonstrates aspects of his own techniques at our regular meetings, serves as a teacher at workshops, and encourages new members to participate in chapter activities. He built our library storage cabinet, built shelves and signs for our shows, and contributed substantially to the building of the chapter's antique treadle lathe.

organized our turner booths at local festivals including the Tulsa State Fair, Tulsa Octoberfest, and the Blue Dome Festival.

Bob semi-retired from commercial photography in 1987—long before the advent of digital photography. Yet he's embraced digital cameras and has taught many members how to take jury-quality images of their own turned work.

In addition to demonstrating photography at AAW symposiums and shooting photos for many AAW exhibit projects, Bob has demonstrated photography and turning techniques for chapters in our part of the country. He 's also mentored turning in his own shop and participated in several days of hands-on turning sessions for Broken Bow high school students in conjunction with Oklahoma's Forest Heritage Center.

We're all lucky that Bob took up turning when he retired.

three of our collaborative challenges for the AAW symposiums in the Glendale Woodturners Guild. Yes, I said Glendale—Bill belongs to several of the turning guilds in the Southern California area.

For the past three years, Bill has been the liaison for three local AAW chapters, getting them involved in the "Youth Top Sail Program" featured in the Spring 2004 issue of *American Woodturner*. He's either at sea with the kids or turning something for the boats, keeping the tall ships in good repair.

Bill is a highly respected turner and teacher of our youth and elders alike in the Southern California area. Turning is surviving and thriving because of members like Bill Kelly.

Dave Hardy

Sellersville, PA
Nominated by Dave Souza, Keystone Woodturners

As a retired master machinist, master craftsman, and woodturning enthusiast, Dave Hardy has been promoting woodturning and lathe creations for more than 25 years. A consummate teacher, David is quick to try a new approach, generously sharing his results and encouraging others.

As a teacher and mentor, David has directly affected hundreds of lathe artists throughout the Mid-Atlantic states with his teaching, demonstrating, and open "Hardy Nights." Once a month, for more than 20 years, David has opened his shop doors to all interested in woodturning. His motto is "Come, learn, and pass it on."

These Hardy Nights have given birth to dozens of demonstrators, woodturning teachers, and individuals who today pursue the craft as a profession. The early attendees of these open turning nights have gone on to become today's woodturning leaders and sages in clubs including Bucks, Keystone, and Lehigh Valley chapters.

Yet, even the most accomplished woodturners still turn to David with a difficult project, or a challenging question at the lathe. David is truly a "sage's sage." The Hardy approach of teaching, mentoring, and promoting woodturning is at the very core of the AAW.

Thank you, David.

Heirlooms in the Making

Turned Baby Rattles

By Nick Cook

Heirloom:
an object passed down
from one generation
to another.

Heirlooms: That is exactly what many of my early baby rattles have become. Countless children I turned rattles for in the 1970s have grown up and are now having babies of their own. The original rattles are now being handed down to the new babies.

The first rattles I turned were made from a solid piece of maple. They were barbell shaped with captured rings that rattled between bulbous ends. The loose rings fascinated parents; however, adults expressed concern that the child could choke on a broken ring. Back to the drawing board.

That was when I started exploring other styles and methods of production rattles. I tried another version by drilling into the end grain of one end of an 8/4 square of hard maple. I placed dried beans in the hole, then glued a turned plug in the hole before turning the rattle.

My next attempt involved a table router with a 1" core box bit protruding through the router table. Blocking and guides allowed me to push my blanks down onto the router bit and create the appropriate void in each piece. After nearly losing a finger, I decided this technique was too dangerous.

That was when I designed the version I still turn today at my lathe. In fact, I still use the same fixture I made more than 25 years ago. I have assembled a spotless new jig for this article.

Recommended tools: drive center, live center, $1\frac{1}{4}$" roughing gouge, $\frac{1}{16}$" parting tool, and $\frac{1}{2}$" detail gouge. Before turning, you'll also need a plunge router and 1" core box bit.

Build a router jig

The fixture base and guides are from 3/4" plywood or MDF, as shown in the drawing on page 53. The top stop is chamfered so you can easily remove the blank from the fixture.

The next layer creates a track for the router base. You must adjust the width to match the width of your own router base plate. After attaching the sides, measure and mount stops at each end of the fixture. Be sure to allow enough material at the end of the blank to separate the finished rattle from the lathe.

Prepare the blanks

For my setup, I mount a 1" core box bit in a 2 1/2 hp plunge router as shown in Photo A. I rely on 1/2"-shank bits; I have tried 1/4"-shank bits and they will not hold up to the heavy cuts.

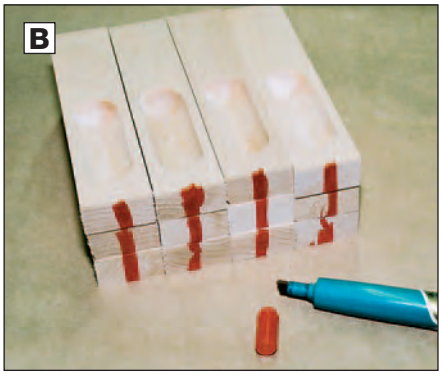
The cavity in the blank you rout should be 1/2" deep, approximately 1 1/4" wide, and 3" long. Make several 1/16" passes rather than trying to accomplish all with one heavy cut.

Once all the blanks are routed, use a red marker to identify the end with the cavity as shown in Photo B. This will keep you from accidentally "spilling the beans" (cutting into the cavity) later.

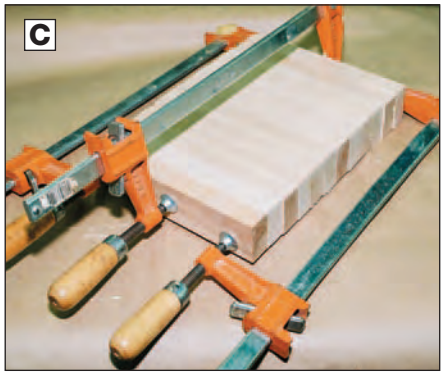
The router bit will fuzz grain at the beginning and end of each cut. To remove this fuzz and provide a better surface for gluing, make a light (1/32") pass across the jointer. For safely joining with these small pieces, be sure to use a hold-down block and a handle that rides above the jointer fence.

I suggest making six rattles at a time. Match up pairs of blanks for consistent grain and color. Drop nine dried black-eyed peas into six halves, then apply a thin film of woodworker's glue to the other six halves. A plastic glue spreader will help you avoid applying too much glue. (Too much glue will force squeeze-out into the cavity and bond the peas to the wood.) Clamp with three clamps as shown in Photo C.

To rout the rattle cavity, use a 2 1/2 hp plunge router fitted with a 1" core-box bit.



To prevent an oops at the lathe, mark the rattle end of the blanks in red. This clearly identifies your rattle end and handle end during glue-up and turning.



Glue up six sets of rattle halves at one time. Three clamps will ensure even clamping pressure.

Now, turn the blanks

Before mounting blanks on the lathe, rap the rattle blank on the

Continued

tailstock to make sure all the peas are free to rattle. Locate and mark the center on each end of the blanks and punch the center with a spring-loaded automatic center punch. This creates a dimple to help you locate the centers.

I use a 1/2" Stebcenter drive center in the headstock and a live center in the tailstock. (I've found the Stebcenter's multiple teeth are well suited for driving small blanks.) Once between centers, position the tool rest to within 1/4" of the corners of the blank and just below the center.

I set the lathe speed at 3,000 rpm. But if you are more comfortable at a lower speed, use it. With a 1 1/4" roughing-out gouge, turn the blank into a cylinder. To remove material quickly, I grind my gouge to about a 45-degree bevel.

Once round, mark each end of the cavity. An unglued rattle blank makes a handy guideline as shown in Photo D.

After marking, make a cut at each end of the cavity with a 1/16" parting tool. Next, eliminate most of the waste at the tailstock end and reduce the diameter on the handle end of the rattle. The roughing gouge makes this quick and easy work. I use the 1/2" detail or spindle gouge with a 25-degree fingernail grind to round over each end of the cavity.

Now, round over the handle end of the rattle. The template *opposite* will help you size a pleasing rattle, which complies with federal guidelines. For more details, see the boxed material at *right*. To comply with federal guidelines, the diameter should be 1 11/16" or larger (I make mine 1 3/4"). After shaping the rattle (use the template *opposite* as a guide), pare down each end to approximately 1/2" before sanding. Then sand with 150-, 180- and 220-grit sandpapers.

Apply finish and personalize

Although I relied on mineral oil for many years, I recently switched to walnut oil because it dries to a harder surface that I prefer. With paper towels (never use rags), burnish the oil into the maple. When dry, apply a light coat of bee's wax and buff.

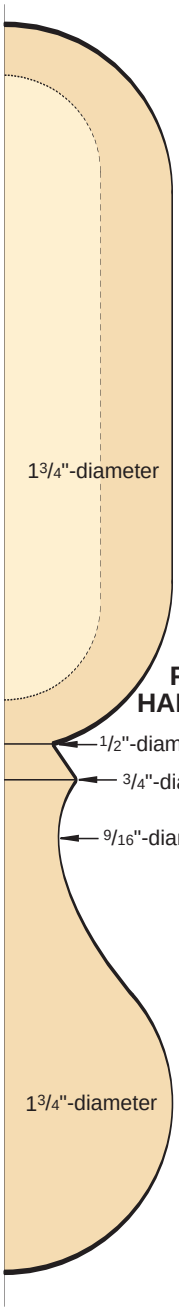
After the wax has dried, part off with a 1/2" spindle gouge with a long fingernail grind as shown in Photo E. For a consistent sheen, reapply bee's wax to both ends of the rattle.

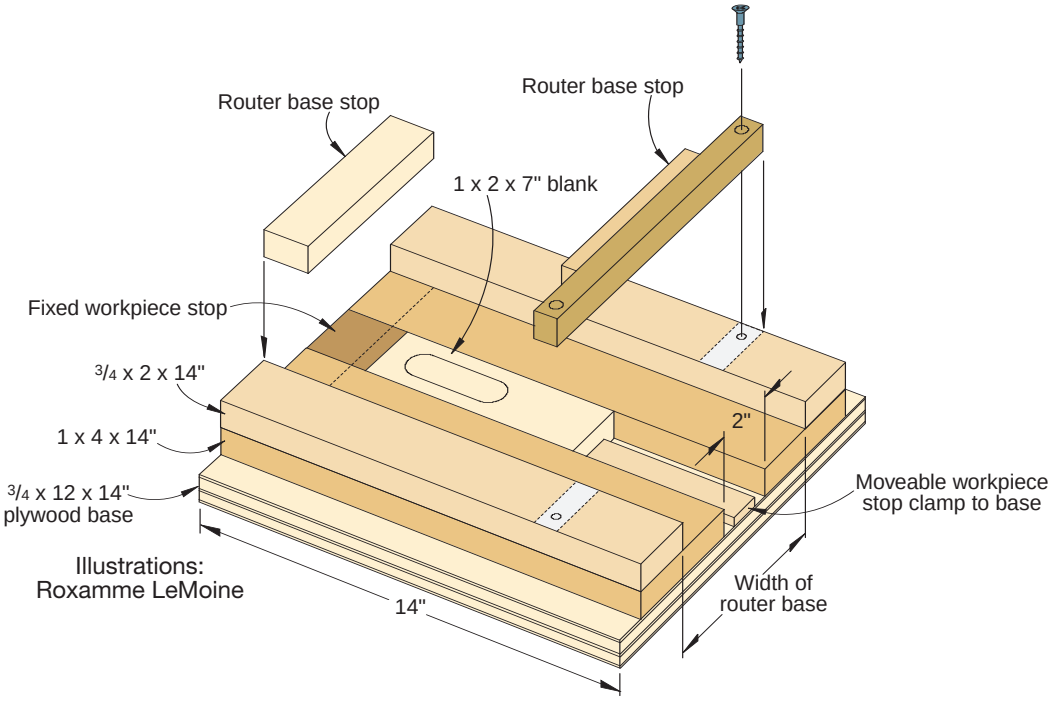
When dry, personalize the rattle by adding the baby's name and birth date either by hand or with a laser engraver.

Nick Cook (nickcook@earthlink.net) is an American Woodturner contributing editor. He lives in Marietta, GA.

With an extra blank, mark out the rattle ends on the blanks (pencil lines) and tool rest (red lines).

With a 1/2" spindle gouge, part off the rattle end. A long fingernail grind guarantees success.





Baby Choke Tester

Also known as a Small Object Tester, a choke tester should be a part of every home to verify if toys and other objects are safe for infants. I have discovered that choke testers are challenging to locate. After visiting several baby and toy stores, I finally found one at www.homesafetysolutions.com and ordered several for $2.85.

I also located helpful information at the U. S. Consumer Product Safety Commission at www.cpsc.gov. There I found a two-page document titled *Small Parts Regulation, Toys and Products Intended for Use by Children Under 3 Years Old.* It contains the specifications for a small-parts test fixture. Details about additional rattle requirement (16 CFR Part 1510), also are available at the same website. This states that a rattle diameter must be 1 11/16" or larger as shown at *right*.

—Nick Cook

Too small! This rattle fails the U.S. Consumer Product guidelines for a 1 11/16" diameter or larger parts. The hole shown was drilled with a 1 3/4" Forstner bit.

Ashes to Ashes

As more families embrace cremation, woodturners are called upon for creative options. This gallery of urns includes the work of ten AAW members.

Joshua Salesin

Joshua Salesin of Santa Cruz, CA, turned this 7" pet urn with matching 4" keepsake container from box elder, teak, ebony, mahogany, walnut, maple, and betel palm nut. Pet owners keep collars, tags, and favorite toys in the keepsake containers.

Amos Thompson

Amos Thompson of Rancho Palos Verdes, CA, turned the 11" maple urn *below* for the ashes of a friend's mother. For finish, he applied 25 coats of lacquer. The volume is approximately 160 cubic inches.

Herb Green

Herb Green of San Jose, CA, found inspiration from Mike Mahoney's demonstration at the 2002 Provo Symposium. Herb added an African blackwood threaded lid and base to the maple burl *below*. The capacity is about 210 cubic centimeters.

Danny Luttrell

For this 10 1/2" urn, Danny Luttrell of Richmond, VA, first patterned the bubinga finial from a mantle clock. He then turned the vessel from canarywood. The urn—the first Danny has turned—won first place among all turnings at the Virginia State Fair.

Bill Bowers

From his studio in Anchorage, Bill Bowers turns urns varying in size from 25 cubic centimeters for keepsakes (purse size) up to 3.6 liters for large adults. From left: madrone burl with blackwood lid, figured myrtle with blackwood lid, maple burl with boxwood lid, walnut burl with tagua nut lid, and redwood burl with blackwood lid. Many of his smaller urns are purchased for pets.

Continued

Mike Mahoney

Mike Mahoney of Orem, UT, has been marketing his turned funeral urns for 12 years. The 8" redwood burl *below* has a hand-chased threaded lid of African blackwood. Mike wrote about turning funeral urns in the Spring 2001 issue of *American Woodturner*.

Tom Dunne

Tom Dunne of New Orleans turned this 14" x 9" urn from spalted pecan with a threaded zircote lid. Tom started turning wholesale urns for funeral homes, but now turns six or more custom urns a year.

Robert Andrew

When Robert Andrew's 18-year-old cousin died earlier this year, he turned this 8" x 12" cocobolo urn for her family. Robert, who lives in Afton, TN, is a member of the Carolina Mountain Woodturners.

Bill Grumbine

A friend commissioned Bill Grumbine of Kutztown, PA, to turn the urn *above* from a 12" x 12" x 19" walnut slab. The entry to this urn is from the bottom. This was Bill's first cremation urn.

In Oklahoma, Matthew Hill grows a business with urns

To market his cremation urns, Matthew Hill has visited with Oklahoma City funeral directors. Left: Matthew carved, stained, and glazed this 12" maple urn before adding white oak legs. Center: 9" pear wood; stained white oak legs. Right: 6 1/2" pet urn from a spalted chinaberry tree growing in Oklahoma fence row. All handles are from ebony.

Tips

Got a Great Idea?

Share your turning ideas! If your tip is published, you'll earn $35. Send your tips with relevant photos or illustrations along with your name, city, and state to:

John Lucas
PO Box 1292,
Cookeville, TN 38503
jlucas@tntech.edu

Bubble wrap protects openings

To avoid damaging the edge of the opening of a hollow form, I wrap the edge of the opening with bubble wrap (the kind with the small bubbles) before sanding the interior. Blue (painter's) masking tape secures the wrap.

Now, any accidental bump against the edge while the drill is running causes no harm.

Sally Ault, San Diego, CA

Avoid a spinning spur drive

For extra safety, I drill a hole the diameter of my spur drive about 1/4" deep. That locks the spur drive in position. To keep the spur drive from spinning in green wood, I put a few drops of CA glue in the hole, which hardens the wood.

Since following this practice, I haven't had a spur drive spin out of stock. If I need to shift the bowl to realign the grain, I move the tailstock.

Ric Erke
Davidson, NC

Plastic wrap protects face shields

I was pleased to note Bruce Hoover's tip on protecting your face shield with the 3M overlays (Spring 2004). I have used plastic kitchen wrap for the last few years for the same reason.

This works for me: Cut a length of clear wrap to the approximate length, secure it to the side and top of the shield with masking tape, and trim to size. When the plastic wrap gets gummed up, it's cheap and easy to replace.

This stretches the lifetime of a face-shield visor.

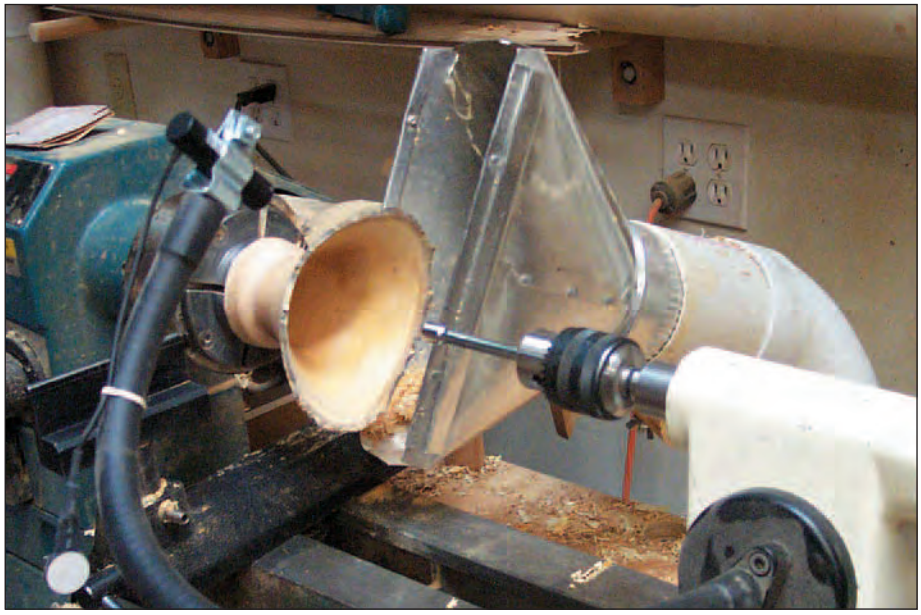
Peter Smith
Princeton, NJ

Low-cost laser depth finder

When I need to find the bottom of my turned vessels, I attach a laser light to a flexible arm and fastened this to my tailstock. Then I chuck a socket extension into a drill chuck and put that in the tailstock. I align the laser with the tip of the extension and slide the tailstock until the extension bottoms out on the bowl.

The laser puts a dot on the outside of the bowl exactly at the bottom of the bowl.

David Smith
Longview, WA



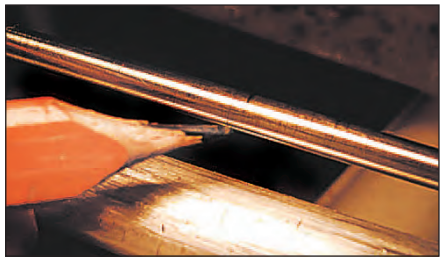
How to straighten a pen mandrel

In penturning, it is critical that the mandrel be as straight as possible. If the mandrel is out of round by as little as a few thousandths of an inch, it will likely show up in the final result when the pen stock doesn't match up properly to the fittings.

You can generally tell if the mandrel is not running true by feeling it when installed on the lathe—with the lathe running and without any bushings installed. You should feel some vibration if it's not running true.

One culprit is bringing up the tailstock too tight; you simply need enough pressure to rotate the live center and support the mandrel.

The quickest and easiest way to



straighten the mandrel is to start the lathe with the mandrel in place, but no bushings. Lightly bring up the tailstock. With a pencil held on the tool rest, lightly touch it to the middle of the mandrel. Then turn off the lathe.

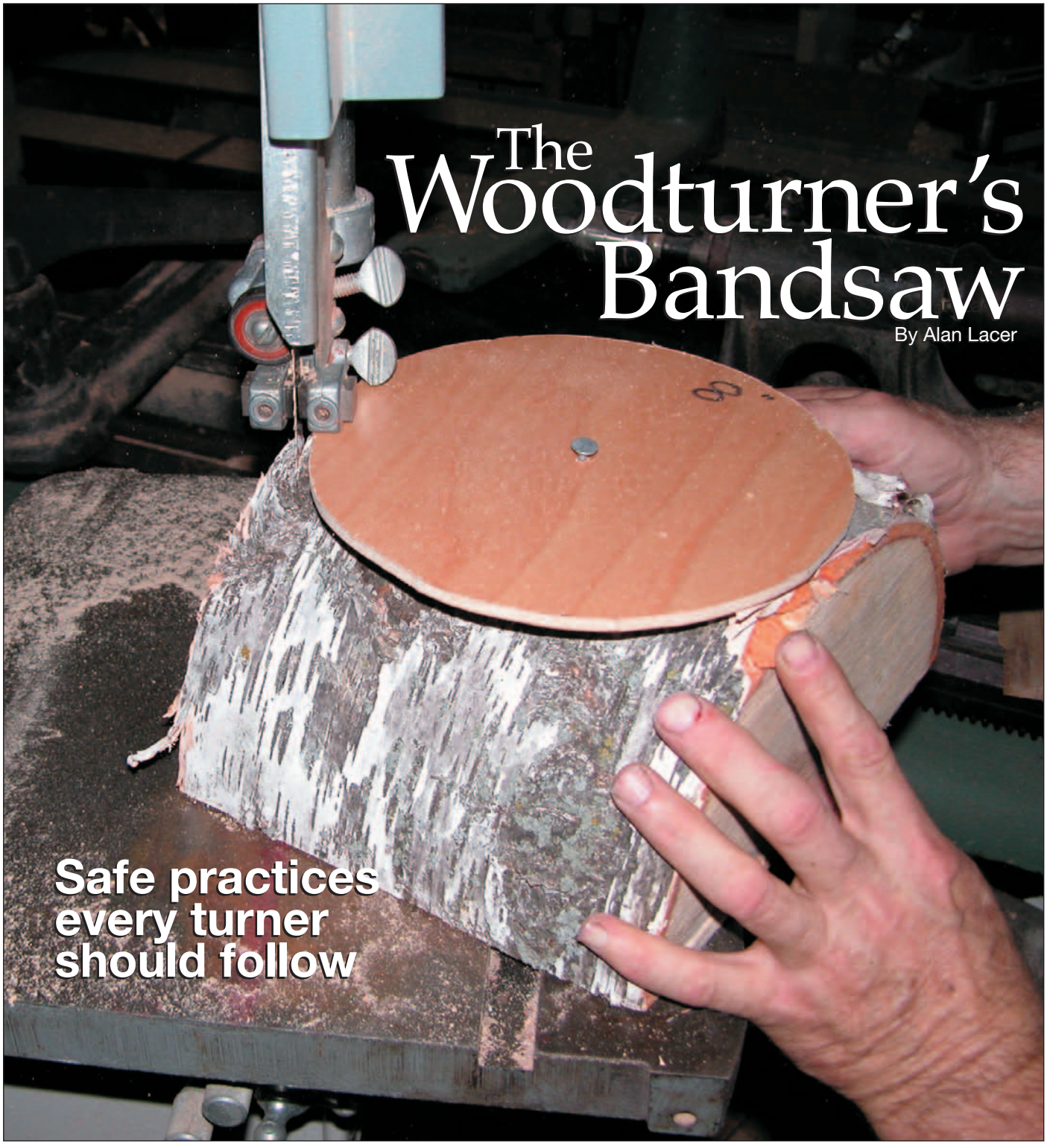
If you can see a pencil line on only part of the mandrel, then the mandrel is not running true. The less pencil line on the mandrel, the more out of true it is. The goal is to get an even line drawn all the way around the mandrel.

To correct this problem, turn the side of the mandrel without the pencil line toward the tool rest, put your thumbs under the tool rest, and pull the mandrel toward the tool rest. Repeat this pulling step several places on the mandrel.

Now perform the pencil test again. When you get an even, solid line all the way around the mandrel, your mandrel should be running true.

You can true the mandrel with a dial caliper, but it usually takes longer than this process.

Greg Wilson
Concord, NC



The Woodturner's Bandsaw

By Alan Lacer

Safe practices every turner should follow

Give me a lathe, a grinder, and a bandsaw and I'm a happy woodturner. But despite the importance of lathes and grinders, we sometimes overlook the bandsaw's role in turning. Here are some bandsaw tips for a wide range of turning applications—from preparing stock for small tops to larger green wood bowls.

Sensible bandsaws for woodturners

I've had poor luck with bandsaws with smaller than 14" wheels, and no luck at all with the three-wheel models and resaw bandsaws with wide blades. My recommendation is a 14" or larger saw—preferably with a minimum of 8" under the blade guide.

One excellent choice for a woodturner turning modest-sized pieces is to purchase a 14" saw with the optional riser block kit (allowing approximately 12" under the guides). There also are a number of 16", 18", and 20" saws capable of doing great work for the turner, but costs escalate.

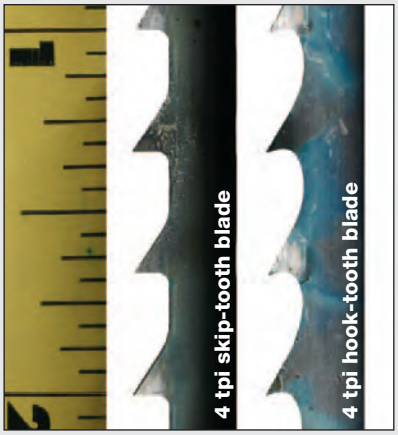
I steer most turners away from the large classic bandsaws of 30" and 36" because the forces are so great and the saw is too unforgiving when something goes wrong. For 14" saws, I prefer at least a one horsepower motor for the gusto required to cut through wet wood. And I like a tilting table for tasks including sawing off corners of large turning squares and cutting tapered bowl blanks.

Bandsaw blades for turners

- For green-wood cutting, I prefer a skip or hook-tooth blade with as few teeth to the inch as I can find—usually 3 or 4 teeth per inch (tpi). Both tooth styles have advantages and disadvantages. The hook tooth does not clog as quickly, but the aggressive cut pulls stock into the blade. The skip tooth is gentler to operate, but clogs more frequently. Try both types to determine which suits you best; you'll like either one better than a regular blade.
- I don't recommend narrow blades of 1/4" or less, nor blades greater than 1/2". For preparing bowl blanks, turners don't need a narrow blade to cut exactly on the circumference. However, we want a blade that is not prone to jamming when cutting a radius. In balance, a 3/8" or 1/2" blade satisfies turning work.
- Blade thickness also is a concern for resistance to twisting and metal fatigue. Generally I avoid any blades less than 0.025" thick. For my 20" bandsaw, I prefer something closer to 0.030".

I purchase blades from a local saw shop that welds them to length from good quality basic stock. If you go through a lot of blades and have a frugal bent, consider learning how to silver-solder blades from rolls of coil stock.

But what about the low-tension, bi-metal, or carbide-tipped blades? Because I often cut wood with bark attached—which dulls blades—I can't justify the more expensive blades in these categories for rough-cutting stock.



Options and accessories

- Good light to shine directly onto the cutting area.
- Brush for the lower wheel to minimize build-up on the tires.
- A brake, which is a wonderful safety feature usually found on 20" or larger saws.

Bandsaw safety

I probably know more turners injured at their bandsaw than at their lathe. The message: Learn the saw's habits, develop sound practices, and acquire a healthy respect for this machine.

Who is probably most at risk for a bandsaw accident? Two

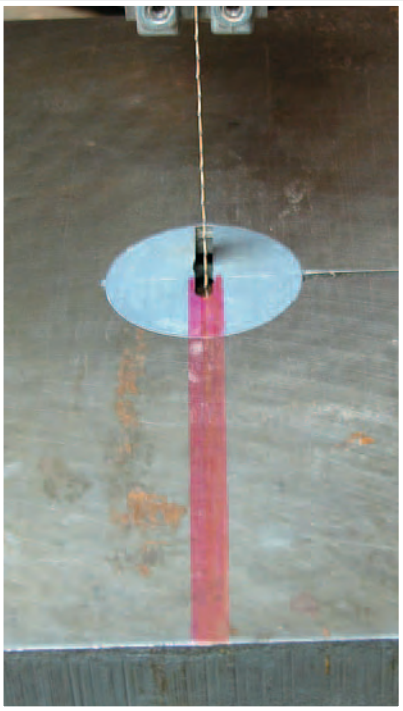
Continued

Safety tips in the Red Zone

While teaching bandsaw techniques, I recommend drawing or painting a 1"-wide strip on the bandsaw table that extends from the blade to the edge of the front table. Hands and arms must stay out of this zone. Unless using a pushstick, never push with the hands or fingers in this zone.

To reduce exposure to injury, I work from the side when cutting bowl blanks, turning the piece into the blade rather than pushing.

One more suggestion: Develop a routine to pull the stock through the bandsaw rather than pushing. Doing so reduces the chance of injury.



prominent groups generate the most accidents: the novice who does not understand the bandsaw's behaviors and the seasoned veteran who thinks he or she has mastered all and therefore can't get hurt.

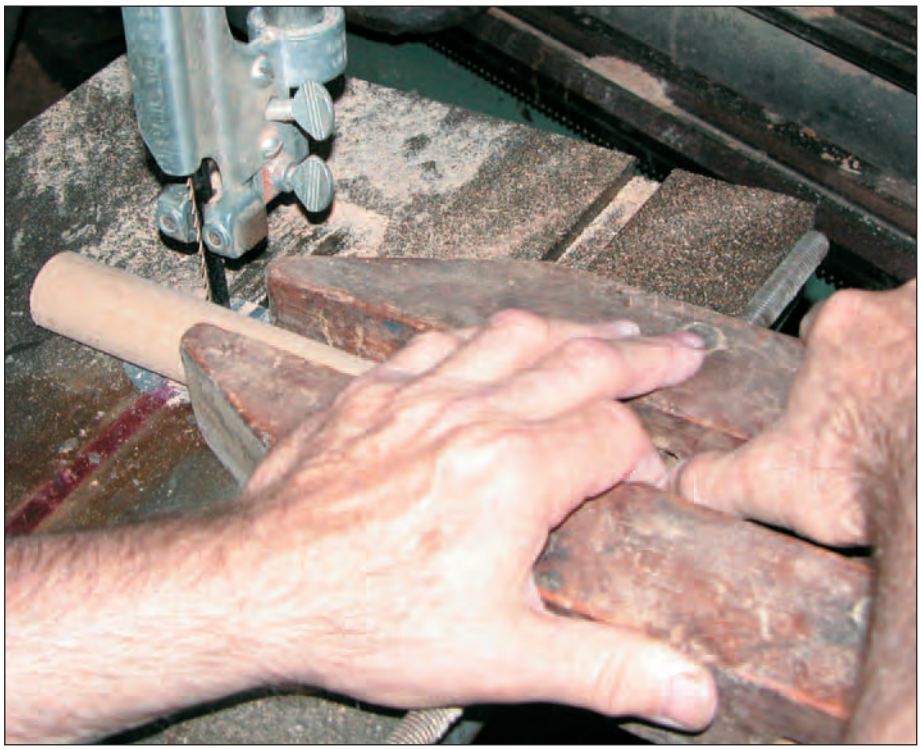
I operate from two essential rules. First, hands and arms must stay out of the Red Zone—the area in line with the blade. See the box at *left* for more details.

Second, work with supported stock—not stock that wobbles, rolls or flips while cutting. Just as in turning wood where an unsupported edge causes a dig-in, serious bandsaw accidents happen with lightning speed when the work is not supported below the cut.

I know a lot of turners like to crosscut short, round objects on the bandsaw. But there are serious risks here unless you take precautions. If larger than 3" in diameter, I prefer to crosscut stock with a chainsaw.

It is possible on some sizes to rig up V-blocks to cradle the round stock. If the round stock is small (under 2") and shorter than the table is wide, I suggest securing the piece in a parallel (handscrew) clamp that stays flat on the table as shown *below*.

For making multiple blanks 2" or smaller, crosscut stock with your bandsaw miter gauge. Clamp smaller pieces of wood against the miter-gauge fence and cut away—a good technique to



To crosscut short round stock, securing material in an adjustable parallel (handscrew) clamp is a solid solution.

remember for making multiples.

The problem with crosscutting round stock is that on entry, the piece tries to roll like a wheel—pulling the work quickly into the blade and sometimes twisting the blade. Either of these situations can result in a broken blade or worse—an accident caused by shooting the wood from the saw or pulling your body parts into the blade.

One additional note: It makes my hair stand on end when I see or hear about a turner going to the bandsaw to cut the waste off the bottom of a turned bowl. This sounds like an emergency room visit in the making. A better plan: Remove the nib off the lathe with a Japanese pull saw.

With 6"-diameter or larger stock, you can bandsaw logs upright to halve the material. Note safe hand position.

Bandsaw bowl stock

Because bowl turning is still the most popular interest, let's review the process of bandsawing a small log to produce a face-grain bowl.

I recommend crosscutting the log to length (slightly longer than the diameter) with a chainsaw or even a hand bow saw. Next, halve the log using wedges and a sledge hammer, a chainsaw, or bandsaw.

At the bandsaw, there are several options for halving a log. One is to cut into the side of the log (end grain on table) as shown *above*. I suggest this technique on logs 6" or larger in diameter and no longer than the height under the upper blade guide.

Another strategy is to cut head on to the end-grain as shown at *right*—truly a ripping cut. This cut on supported wood avoids the

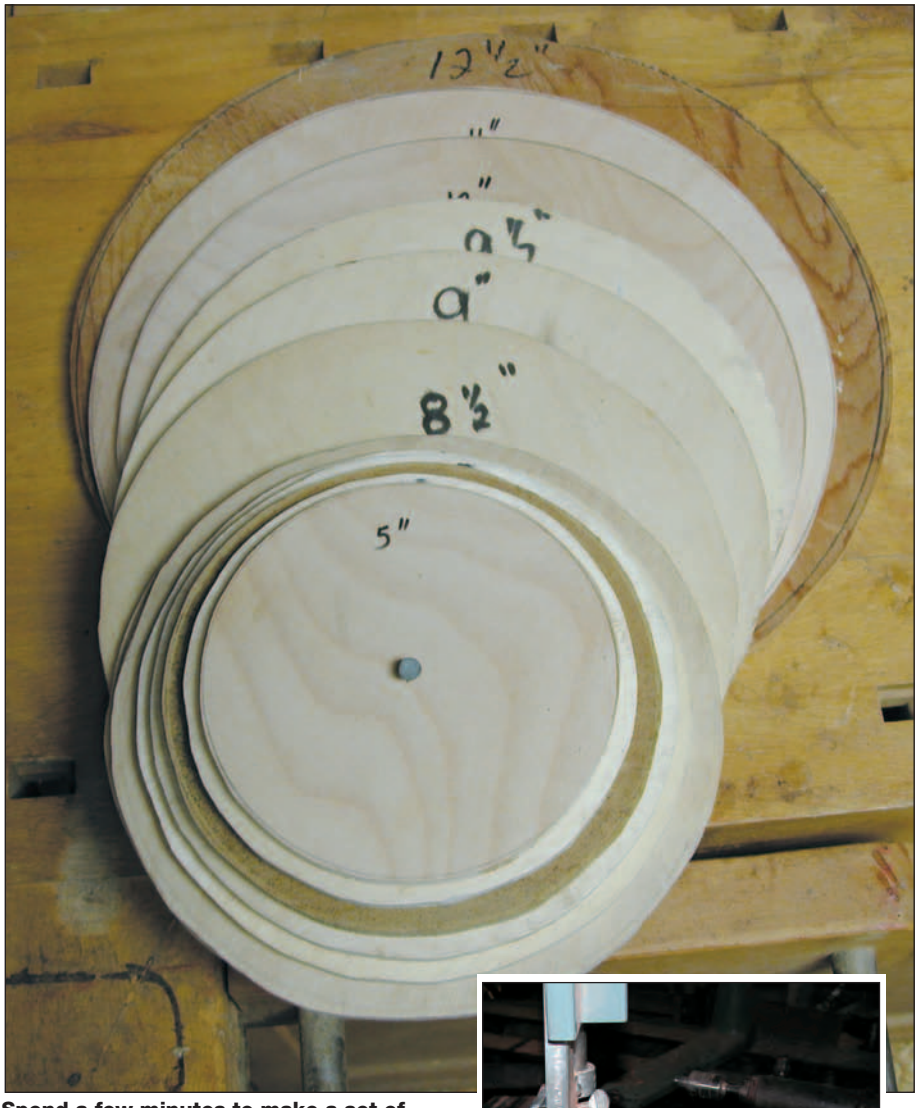
A recommended ripping procedure: The downward pressure of the bandsaw blade reduces the tendency of the log to roll side to side.

Continued

danger of the piece rolling like a wheel as noted in crosscutting. If using this method, I recommend looking for a face of the log that has support on the bandsaw table along the entirety of the cut. Also, the face of the log that first contacts the blade should be as flat as possible to maximize support under the blade.

Next, cut the half log into a disc. The safest way I have found is a cutting template attached to the curved section of the half log.

I recommend making a set of patterns for the smallest bowl you think you will ever turn to the largest capacity of your lathe. Patterns from 1/4" plywood or hardboard are ideal. Make a set in half-inch increments, drill a hole through the center to accept a nail, and identify the size of each template as shown at *top right*.



Spend a few minutes to make a set of cutting patterns, shown above, for your lathe's swing capacity. The 8" pattern is shown at right on a birch log.

Bandsaw with a template

Select the appropriate template, nail it to the half log (flat face down on the bandsaw table) and cut around the outside of the template as shown *below right*. Don't try to cut the circumference in one pass—it's too easy to jam the blade or even twist it. I nibble away with 6 or 8 cuts that appear to be straight.

If you're new to bowl turning or you're turning at a lightweight lathe, take your time to make the blank round; doing so reduces effort at the lathe. For mounting stock to the the faceplate, use the same template to mark the center on the flattened face.

I can think of no other saw that is so versatile as the bandsaw. It easily rips, crosscuts, cuts circles and arcs, works logs or other thick stock, and cuts angles—all quietly and effortlessly compared to other power saws.

But just like other power tools, the bandsaw demands full attention and control. Focus on the task at hand—not your lathe work—while bandsawing.

Alan Lacer (www.alanlacer.com) is an *American Woodturner* contributing editor. He lives near River Falls, WI.

What's New *Continued from page 12*

industrial applications, such as the 5" ceramic abrasive sanding discs. The 3M booth also included wet/dry polishing papers in extremely fine grits to eliminate even the finest sanding marks. 3M also showed radial bristle discs and brushes with abrasive material throughout the bristles and not just on the surface—useful for working carved or detailed areas on a turning. (Call 800-938-4797 for a copy of *3M Solutions for Creative Arts.)*

3M's Warrior, a small power sharpening/honing device, intrigued me. It uses a variety of 3M small wheels that come in several different materials, from diamond to soft-polishing discs. The tool is held underneath the wheel but remains visible from above. The Warrior is packaged with a flexible shaft to convert it to a handheld sanding or carving tool (similar to a Foredom).

3M's Warrior power sharpening/honing machine

Still more finds

There was still plenty more to see this year—here are just a few more:

- John Jordan had a new line of tools developed primarily for hollow turning. Attendees also showed interest in his new armbrace-style handle (www.stubbylathe.com).
- Several new videos this year, including offerings by David Ellsworth, Curt Theobald, John Jordan, Mike Mahoney and Stuart Batty (a joint venture filmed at last year's conference in Pasadena).

Alan Lacer (www.alanlacer.com) is an *American Woodturner* contributing editor. He lives near River Falls, WI.

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From the lathes of South Africa

The turned vessels of Mike Kaplan and Grant Marshall

Mike Kaplan and Grant Marshall were two of the new faces demonstrating this year at the 25th anniversary of the Utah Symposium. An exhibit of South African turned pieces at the 2003 AAW National Symposium in Pasadena, arranged by Andi Wofle, also included their work.

Far left, Marshall. Oak, 22" x 7".

Center top, Kaplan. Carved, scorched, and textured white alder, 13½" x 5½".

Center middle, Kaplan. Scorched and textured white pear and copper wire, 6¼" x 8¾".

Center bottom, Marshall. Lacquered jacaranda and red ivory wood, 9" x 7".

Above, Marshall. Scorched and carved Norfolk Island pine, 12" x 6".

Photographs: Don Dafoe