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American Woodturner

The Journal of the American Association of Woodturners

Refining the Edge

Segmented Woodturning Symposium

Giles Gilson Honorary Lifetime Member

Summer 2009 Vol. 24, No.2
woodturner.org
$7.50

Educational Opportunity Grant

Some History

Joshua Salesin,
Calypso Shell,
Pink ivory wood,
2¾" × 3¾"

(Above) **Malcolm Tibbetts,** *Icosahedron Candle Holders,* 2009, Gabon ebony, holly, diameters are 4½", 4", and 3½"
Each sphere is comprised of 80 mitered triangles.

James McClure, *Golden Egg,* 2009,
Cherry, 23 kt gold gilded finial, 7" × 4"

(Left) **Lonnie Combs,** *Black Tulip,* Black walnut, 18" tall

For the past few years, I've been privileged to chair the Educational Opportunity Grant (EOG) committee. I've witnessed firsthand the program's positive results and the generosity of woodturners and collectors. The program was started during the early days of the AAW. I've been told that California woodturning artist, Bill Hunter, was one of the first to push for the establishment of the program.

Most of the money for the grants comes from proceeds of the banquet auction at AAW's annual symposium. Additional funds are generated from interest earned on a memorial fund. Over the years, thousands of woodturnings and hundreds of tools and prized pieces of wood have been donated. Eventually, the size of the auction grew so large that we initiated a silent auction for bidding on tools and wood.

Again, the live auction grew. In order to reduce the auction's duration, AAW implemented a qualification system. All artwork is now first accepted into a silent auction, with only those pieces with the highest bids moving on to the live event. The EOG live auction is an exciting event that showcases impressive, woodturned art. It's a thrill to see those beautiful creations receive generous bids from conference attendees.

Because of the generosity of donors and bidders, the EOG program annually awards thousands of dollars to individual AAW members, AAW

EOG Auction Items

Pictured are some of the many items that will be up for bid at the EOG auction in Albuquerque on Saturday night. If you are interested in bidding on something and cannot attend the symposium, place your bid online! Go to www.woodturner.org and click on the link for the EOG Auction Information.

Dewey Garrett, *Fractal Box,* 2009, Faux ivory, 1" × 4"

Benoît Averly, box, 2008, Ash, 17" tall

Douglas Fisher, *A Future Awaits Us,* 2008, Curly maple, 13" × 2¼"

Francisco Clemente, vessel, 2008, Tamarind, 12" × 13"

Barry Uden, bowl, 2008, Maple Burl, 4½" × 13"

chapters, and schools. Last year we disbursed over $86,000. The one strict guideline we adhere to is that there has to be an educational element for a proposal to receive EOG money. The program has helped AAW chapters upgrade audio/visual equipment and purchase lathes. Boy Scout troops have started woodturning programs. High school shop programs have literally been saved from elimination. Woodturning publications have been partially subsidized. Recently, we allocated money to send an instructor to state-run orphanages in the Ukraine to teach classes, so that sixteen-year-old orphans might qualify for admission into a trade school. Another success story involves a high school in southern California where a woodturning program allows students to check out a lathe for short-term use.

The EOG program fulfills the educational component of the AAW's mission. I encourage you or your local chapter to apply for a grant. Donate something to the auction. But most of all, the next time you find yourself at the annual EOG auction, dig just a little deeper into your wallet and bid on one of those special creations. ■

– Malcolm Tibbetts

Dedicated to providing education, information, and organization to those interested in woodturning

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The Journal of the American Association of Woodturners

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Back Cover – *Disentangling Inspiration,* 2008, 3" × 27" × 9" by Tania Radda

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AAW does not endorse any product featured or advertised in this journal.

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.

From the Editor

The world of woodturning is becoming more diverse and our numbers continue to increase. I recently taught a weeklong class to 18 students, 12 of them had never turned before. Now that these new woodturners have experienced the enjoyment of our craft, they're ready to buy lathes, tools, wood, and assorted equipment. One student is interested in segmented work. Three are going to pursue small-scale turning. Two intermediate turners wanted design instruction so they could improve the look of their nonfunctional items. Several were interested in everything but will most likely narrow their focus as they gain more experience.

The AAW encompasses all of these turners, and their diverse interests are reflected in our journal. For those of you who missed the Tips section, it's back with John Lucas taking charge. He welcomes your additions.

Alan Lacer's article on refining the edge of turning tools will appeal to those who are interested in perfecting their sharpening techniques. At the other end of the spectrum, the review of the "dysFUNctional" exhibit challenges readers to think of woodturning perhaps in ways not previously considered.

The article I'm most excited about is the review of the First Segmented Woodturning Conference by John Jaworowicz. He submitted version one the day after the conference, excitement evident. Several months and revisions later, the article clearly portrays the event and suggests a possible path for the future of segmented woodturning. I appreciate John's persistence and patience with the sometimes lengthy writing and editing process. It was rewarding to work with someone so positive and enthusiastic.

– Betty Scarpino

President's Letter

The AAW Board met in Albuquerque in February to survey this summer's symposium site. What a wonderful city with a convention center that will provide a great venue for another memorable conference. Both this and the previous journal provide a wealth of information about our upcoming symposium.

For those going to Albuquerque, don't miss the opportunity to travel to nearby New Mexico locations, where there are a vast number of natural, historic, and cultural settings. The new daily train service, the Rail Runner Express, will take you to the delightful city of Santa Fe and back.

Youth training continues to be an emphasis for our organization. It is great to see so many AAW chapters conducting youth training in schools and other venues. This is something that more chapters can engage in and make a difference with youth in their area. The symposium this year will again feature youth training sessions. In addition, a complete lathe and tool station will be awarded to 25 of the attending youth. Any young person between the ages of 10 and 17 who attends the symposium with a paid adult will be given a free registration.

Also at the Albuquerque symposium, there will be a raffle for a Powermatic lathe and a JET mini lathe, thanks to the WMH Tool Group. The proceeds from this raffle will go to the AAW Emergency Relief Fund (ERF). In the past, the ERF helped woodturners replace some of their shop equipment after destruction caused by natural disasters like Hurricane Katrina.

While in the Southwest, I attended the Desert Roundup put on by the Arizona Woodturners. What a wonderful conference it was, like so many other local symposiums. I found here, as I do at any gathering of woodturners, that they are among the friendliest, sharing, and engaging groups of people. Speaking of regional symposiums, those events are becoming more and more popular and prevalent. Last year, there were 14 regional symposiums—it's amazing to see how far the woodturning movement has come and continues to grow.

Looking at how far the woodturning movement and the AAW have come will be the focus of our 2011 symposium in St. Paul when we celebrate the AAW's 25th anniversary. Plans are being made to make this a very special event, one you will not want to miss.

This issue will be the second *American Woodturner* edited by Betty Scarpino. We would like to hear from our members. Feel free to express your opinion on our AAW website forum regarding what you like and what you think can be improved upon.

One of our initiatives to improve member services and benefits can be found in a new format: emails sent to local chapters. We hope local chapters will provide feedback on this new form of communication, as well as other areas of interest to AAW chapters. Feel free to contact our Chapters & Membership

Chair, Dale Larson. We hope many of you attend the chapter presidents' meeting in Albuquerque to voice your ideas.

I would like to emphasize that your Board of Directors represents each AAW member and I encourage you to contact any of us (see www.woodturner.org for contact information or *Resource Directory* for current committee chairs) regarding your thoughts and suggestions for improving our AAW organization. We welcome your input!

Bill Haskell
bill@woodturner.org

Is Your Contact Information Up-to-Date?

Please check that your email is current so that we can continue to update you on all the current happenings and news. (Recently, we sent about 10,000 emails to the membership and more than 2,000 were returned.)

To update your contact information, visit www.woodturner.org. Click on "Log-on to the Members Area," sign in with your membership number and password, select "Your Account," and click on "Edit Your Account." Or, you can send an email to the AAW at inquiries@woodturner.org with any changes and we will update your contact information for you.

AAW Annual Financial Statement for 2008

Revenues and Expenses

Income

Annual Dues	$703,894
Grants & Contributions	116,623
Publications & Products	249,221
Symposium	439,587
Exhibitions	14,511
Investment	(34,720)
Other Income	12,744
Total Income	**$1,501,860**

Expenses

Publications & Products	$432,465
Symposium	451,728
Gallery & Exhibitions	137,726
Scholarship Grants	86,640
Professional Outreach	21,252
Other Programs	17,293
Administrative	303,928
Fundraising & Member Development	69,126
Total Expenses	**$1,520,158**
Net Loss	**$(18,298)**
Restricted Portion	(49,418)
Unrestricted Net Income	**$31,120**

Balance Sheet

(as of 12/31/08)

Assets

Checking & Savings	$455,504
CDs	115,372
Accounts Receivable	44,249
Interest Receivable	787
Inventory	131,463
Prepaid Expenses	69,642
Equipment & Furniture–Net	53,132
Memorial Endowment	89,070
Osolnik Endowment	37,420
Permanent Collection	103,840
Total Assets	**$1,100,479**

Liabilities

Accounts Payable	$2,598
Accrued Expenses	10,651
Deferred Revenue	77,034
Total Liabilities	**$90,283**

Net Assets

Unrestricted	$604,878
Temporarily Restricted	259,707
Permanently Restricted	145,611
Total Net Assets	**$1,010,196**
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	**$1,100,479**

AAW Financial Statement Explanation

We have just completed our annual audit. Due to increased membership and a successful symposium in Richmond, I am pleased to report that the AAW has a net income for 2008 of $31,120 in current operations. As we continue to grow and look forward to a great symposium in Albuquerque, we should remain in a healthy financial position for 2009.

– Tom Wirsing, AAW Treasurer

A Chunk of Wood, a Chainsaw, and a Lathe

I still vividly remember the roar of the chainsaw, silencing all conversation. The look on my face must have been priceless as I stared at the demonstrator who was deftly sawing a slice off here, two or three off there, from a huge, out-of-round chunk of wood that was attached to a large lathe. Once the wood was balanced, he applied a turning tool and began making a bowl or a hollow vessel, I don't remember which. The point had clearly been made: I knew *nothing* about woodturning compared to the demonstrators I watched at my first AAW woodturning symposium in 1989. It would never have occurred to me on my own that a chainsaw could be used in such a fashion or that balancing a piece of wood could be so easily accomplished.

This was a defining moment for me and it illustrates the richness of our field, the generosity of many, and one individual's experience. Have you participated in an AAW special project or program? Do you have a good story to tell?

The editorial team for AAW's Silver Anniversary Book invites you to submit your story. "We are especially looking for essays from AAW members who might not be so well known," the book's editor, John Kelsey, explains.

"We want to be sure everyone has a way to tell their woodturning stories in this important anniversary volume. We'd like to hear from as many members as we can," Kelsey continues. "We'd like members to write about how they came to the field of woodturning and what it has meant in their lives. We've had a terrific response to our previous invitations to write, and I'm hoping members will continue to step up and share their stories."

The team also welcomes photographs taken at AAW events. Photographs must be dated and accompanied by as much information as possible about the turners and turning that appear in them.

If you've got a good story to tell, please do so in 500 words or less and send one or two photos along with your writing. Email your essay, and any other advice you've got about this project, to John Kelsey, editorkelsey@gmail.com. ■

—Betty Scarpino

Collectors of Wood Art

Lifetime Achievement Award

Photo: Steve Sinner

Arthur Mason, Robyn Horn, and Jane Mason. Robyn presented the CWA's Lifetime Achievement Award to Arthur and Jane at the CWA's banquet in Asheville in April.

Arthur and Jane Mason were presented with the Collectors of Wood Art's Lifetime Achievement Award during the organization's forum this past April. The award was given "in recognition of the Masons' many years of significant leadership and their visionary role in the field of contemporary wood art." Jane and Arthur are also Honorary Lifetime Members of the AAW.

In response to the award, Arthur said, "From our first view of the Jacobson Collection in June, 1986 until tonight, our lives have been transformed. Our friends, our time, our interests, the design of our home, our travels, our vacations—everything has become centered on our love of these wonderful objects, including or particularly including, how we spent our money.

"We have remained focused on a life dedicated to these arts, as supporters, patrons, writers, panelists, jurors, advocates, historians, and preachers, missionaries to rescue the rest of the heathen world from their abysmal ignorance of what we do. The center of our life has become those who make it, who sell it, who buy it, who exhibit it, and even those who talk about it and write about it.

"Three magic moments stand out: That day at the Renwick (Renwick Gallery of American Art, Smithsonian), when we saw our first turned wood bowl. Bud Jacobson's collection was the platform from which we built our own. The second was that wonderful weekend at Robyn and John's (Horn) in Little Rock in 1997 when the CWA was born. The third magic moment was when our gift of 120 pieces was opened at the Mint Museum of Craft + Design by Mark Leach. We could have flown home from Charlotte without an airplane.

"We are excited and honored to follow in the footsteps of those who have previously received this award: Bob Stocksdale, Rude Osolnik, Jan Peters and Ray Leier, David Ellsworth, Michael Monroe, Albert LeCoff, and Robyn Horn." ■

POP News

The mission of the Professional Outreach Program is to promote a greater understanding of professionalism within the field of contemporary woodturning.

Instant Gallery Awards

The POP is excited to present the second annual Instant Gallery awards. This year's jurors will be Kevin Wallace, Garry Knox Bennett, and Merryll Saylan. Be sure to bring your three best pieces for display in the Instant Gallery. The following awards will be given:

- Up to three purchase awards for the AAW's permanent collection
- Six excellence awards of $500 each (open to all pieces in the gallery)
- **Two collegian awards $300 each (currently enrolled college students)**
- Two youth awards $300 each (youth ages 18 and under)
- Youth participation awards to all youth displaying work in the Instant Gallery

POP Presentations in Albuquerque

- *Twirlings by a Chairmaker,* Garry Knox Bennett
- *Professionalism,* Mark Sfirri
- *30 Years of Marketing,* Jerry Kermode, Deborah Kermode
- *Ask Us Anything,* Binh Pho, Alain Mailland, Bill Luce
- *Open Forum Discussions,* David Ellsworth, Michael Hosaluk, Alain Mailland
- *What Makes a Good Demonstration,* Betty Scarpino, Bonnie Klein, Trent Bosch, Michael Mocho
- *State of the Art in Woodturning,* David Ellsworth, Terry Martin
- *From Garage to Gallery: Strategies for a Career in Creative Woodturning,* Terry Martin, Kevin Wallace
- *Whose Turn Is It Anyway?* Michael Mocho, Jack Slentz, Betty Scarpino, Joe Seltzer

Resident Artist

Jean-François Escoulen from France will be demonstrating on an ongoing basis during the symposium. Treat it as a rotation and watch for an hour or just drop in and see what Jean-François has created. Don't miss this opportunity to see an artist's work evolve over the three-day symposium.

POP Exhibits in Albuquerque

"Twirlings," Garry Knox Bennett. This will be an eye-opening treat. Garry's body of work over the past 30 years includes tables, desks, chairs, lamps, and jewelry. Eminently functional and meticulously crafted, his pieces are full of visual surprises, unexpected shapes and angles, striking colors, and contrasting materials and surface treatments.

"The Spindle." More than 50 pieces will be on display by invited artists from around the world. Come see the outstanding variety of creative objects, all made with the limitation of theme (spindle) and dimension (4" × 4" × 12"). All pieces will be auctioned off in a live auction during the symposium. Proceeds help fund future POP programs.

Merryll Saylan, 2009 POP Merit Award Winner. A special display of Merryll's work will be presented, honoring this outstanding artist's contribution to our field. ■

Photo: Tib Shaw

Ed Kelle, *Safe Inside My Cocoon,* 2008, Bleached maple outer form, cherry inner figure, paint, 11" × 3½"

POP committee members:
Trent Bosch, Barbara Crockett, David Ellsworth, J. Paul Fennell, Jerry Kermode, Bonnie Klein, Binh Pho, Betty Scarpino, and Jacques Vesery, chair.

Atlanta Airport Exhibit Works of the Hand

Martha Connell

Thanks to the foresight of Director Emeritus Marian Heard, the Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts in Gatlinburg, Tennessee established a permanent collection of artwork in order to enrich the experience of students and faculty on campus, to provide a traveling exhibition intended to expand Arrowmont's educational outreach, and to extend its mission of enriching lives through art. Since its inception in 1970, the collection has grown to include over eight hundred objects illustrating all disciplines taught at the school. The collection chronicles the changes that have occurred in the craft field over the past forty years as works in ceramic, fiber, wood, and other media have evolved from functional items into art objects.

Rude Osolnik, natural edge bowl, 1985, 6¼" × 11" × 10"

Mark Bressler, *Mystery,* 1999, 52" × 13½"

Numerous small exhibitions from the collection have traveled to college campuses and to other institutions, as Ms. Heard had planned. But in December 2008, a major show of objects from the collection was installed at the Atlanta Hartsfield-Jackson International airport as part of The City of Atlanta Department of Aviation Art Program.

"*From Tradition to Innovation: Enriching Lives Through Art,* Artwork from the Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts" is installed in 170 linear feet of exhibition cases along the hallway opposite the departure gates at Concourse T. On view are sixty-two objects plus the seventeen-piece "Fiber Project." Each of these pieces was chosen to celebrate the creativity of artists working in clay, fiber, and wood.

The earliest works in the show were created in 1970 and the most recent in 2008. These pieces demonstrate the timelessness of the handmade object, as well as the originality that contemporary artists have brought to traditional craft media. Functional items have sculptural leanings. Platters lose their functionality altogether and exist only as works of art. Teapots become a means for artistic expression while other vessels act as a canvas for painterly manipulations. Tables become sculpture and handmade paper turns into abstracted vessels. The lathe, the loom, and the potter's wheel become tools for creativity in the eyes of contemporary makers. The craft objects of the future are limited only by the vision and virtuosity of the maker. Places such as Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts provide environments that foster creativity and give instruction in methods and materials to make the imagination a reality.

Arrowmont's importance to the woodturning field through the ▸

Dale Nish, *Nagare Vessel,* 1983,
6" × 9½"

Stoney Lamar, *Red Maple Bowl,* circa 1985,
5⅜" × 15¾" × 4¾"

courses it has provided, conferences it has hosted, and exhibitions it has presented, is unequalled.

Seventeen woodturners are included in the exhibition: Mark Bressler, Christian Burchard, David Ellsworth, Clay Foster, Robyn Horn, John Jordan, Ron Kent, Ray Key, Max Krimmel, Stoney Lamar, Dale Nish, Rude Osolnik, Michael Peterson, Binh Pho, Betty Scarpino, Al Stirt, and Frank Sudol. ■

Author's Note

My first exposure to Arrowmont came when I attended the national woodturning conference, "Woodturning: Vision and Concept," at Arrowmont in 1985, shortly after my husband Pat and I became owner/director of Great American Gallery in Atlanta. Since that time, I have become very involved with Arrowmont: as a conference participant, juror, curator, and, since 2005, member of the Board of Governors.

Until 1985, my only exposure to woodturning was Ed Moulthrop whom I had learned about at the Atlanta Arts Festival where Ed got his start. It was Ed who encouraged us to include woodturning in our shows at the gallery and who introduced us to a number of the woodturners who were to become important members of our artist family at Connell Gallery.

Images by Jill Greene, courtesy of Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts.

Clay Foster,
untitled, 1996, 24"

Al Stirt,
Ceremonial Bowl, 1989,
Maple, 3" × 16¾"

Martha Connell has been a major champion of woodturning for many years. She attended the Arrowmont Woodturning Conference where the AAW was formed; her gallery, Connell Gallery/Great American Gallery promoted woodturning as an art form; and she currently serves on the Board of Governors for Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts.

Trees Live On in Wood Art

As part of a unique recycling initiative, wood felled at the construction site of the University of Michigan Museum of Art's (UMMA) $35.4 million landmark restoration and expansion project in 2006 is now being transformed into works of art. Although twenty-six trees were removed from the site to provide for the addition of the museum's new Frankel Wing, the beauty of each will live on in the form of nearly one thousand objects created by eighty woodturners from Michigan and around the country.

Bill Youngblood,
vessel, 2008,
Curly maple,
6" × 4½"

The objects—vessels, platters, pens, teapots, bowls, pepper grinders, wine stoppers, and tables—will be sold exclusively at the UMMA Museum Shop when it reopens its doors in 2009.

Woodturners chose from trees such as red maple, white oak, honey locust, redbud, burr oak, crabapple, sycamore, silver maple, and ginkgo. "Many of the turners actually cut and opened up the tree trunks using chainsaws," says museum shop manager, Susanne Witthoff. "They knew exactly where they wanted to cut the piece and what type of object they saw in it."

Lending his expertise to the project is noted woodturner Cliff Lounsbury of Tawas, Michigan, whose unique style can be seen in museum collections throughout the United States. "The idea of saving these trees was appealing to me," says Lounsbury. "I've recruited nearly thirty woodturners from across the country." To complete the regional dimension of the project, Witthoff worked with five Michigan chapters of the AAW to enlist local and regional artists.

Ann Arbor woodturner Russ Clinard coordinated the cutting of the trees and secured donated space at B & B Hardwoods, Ann Arbor, for the storage and drying of large sections of tree trunks and limbs. "I enjoyed the whole process," says Clinard. "What is important is that these trees will live on forever."

From concept to creation on woodturners' lathes, the project is slated for completion in early 2009 when the last of the turners puts finishing touches on his or her piece and ships it to the Museum Shop. In a gesture of generosity, the artists will donate all pieces, along with 100 percent of profits from the initial round of sales, to the museum. To commemorate the project, each object of art will be imprinted with a special museum logo.

"This amazing project started with some trees coming down around the museum," says Brighton, Michigan, resident Robert M. Bohlen, one of the most important collectors of wood art. "These artists wanted to show their appreciation to the University." In 2004,

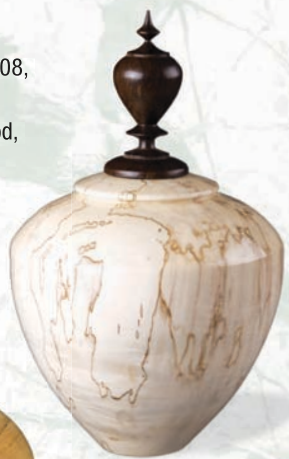
Russell Clinard and Jeff Salter,
vessel, 2008, Honey locust, 10" × 6"

Bohlen's collection of eighty-two works of art, "Nature Transformed: Wood Art from the Bohlen Collection," brought record numbers of visitors to UMMA.

"What makes this project unique is that people will now be able to buy a piece of the University of Michigan campus," says Witthoff. "The process has been meaningful and inspiring for all of us." ■

Excerpted with permission from an article in the July–August 2008 issue of Insight, *University of Michigan Museum of Art.*

Bert Olton,
hollow vessel, 2008,
Spalted maple,
African greenwood,
5½" × 5"



Bob Daily,
hollow vessel, 2008,
Spalted maple,
cocobolo, 8½" × 8"

Tips

Custom accessories for a Oneway live center

The Oneway brand live center comes with a couple of aluminum cones that thread onto the live center to provide tailstock support in many instances where a pin center cannot be used. However, I often find that neither of the cones fit the problem at hand. Instead, I turn an alternative piece from wood that meets my specific needs and thread it onto the live center (*Photo 1*). The problem is how to tap the piece so that it will screw onto the live center securely. It turns out that the threads on the Oneway live center are the same size as a ¾" by 10 tpi bolt. The expensive solution would be to buy a steel tap of that size; the cheap solution is to buy a bolt and file or grind several lengthwise grooves near the end to produce cutting teeth. You will also need to buy a mating nut for the bolt and use it to clean the threads on the live center when needed.

– Dennis J. Gooding, Grants Pass, OR

Got a Great Idea?

Share your turning ideas! If we publish your tip, we'll pay you $35. Send your tips along with relevant photos or illustrations and your name and mailing address to:

John Lucas
529 1st Ave. North
Baxter, TN 38544
jlucas@tntech.edu

Sanding pad extension

Although drill screw guides are made for driving screws, I use them for power sanding. They have a sliding/revolving sleeve and a magnetic bit holder. I can change the pads quickly, and when I use multiple pads, they are a huge time-saver.

What I like the most about the guides is the revolving sleeve that can be gripped with one hand while the other hand is working the drill. This sleeve allows for much better control for close-in detail work.

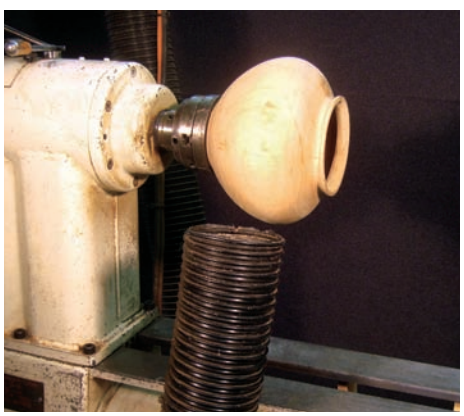
– Jim Christo, Jamestown, NY

Dust collector port for the lathe

In order to collect sanding dust effectively from power sanding, the collector port needs to be close to the sander—usually within a foot or so. The best position of the collector port varies with the size and shape of the workpiece being sanded, but when you are turning the collector port needs to be well out of the way. As such, the port should be easy to move to various positions as needed.

I have adopted a simple solution as shown in Photo 1. It employs a piece of flexible hose, a steel hose clamp,

and a small rare-earth magnet. To implement it, connect the hose to your dust collector plumbing or portable dust collector and fasten a band clamp about 10" from the free end of the hose (the best position may depend on the size and layout of your lathe). Epoxy the rare-earth magnet to the band clamp. To ensure a good bond between magnet and band, sandwich the band between the magnet and a steel washer as shown in Photo 2. The magnet can be stuck almost anywhere on the lathe to bring the port to the desired position. The hose can be brought to either the back or the front of the lathe. (I prefer the front.)



– Dennis J. Gooding, Grants Pass, OR

Reverse chucking hollow forms, closed forms, and boxes

This technique uses a simple drawbar that passes through the lathe spindle and a wooden toggle to hold the mouth of the workpiece against a fitted socket held in a chuck or faceplate. It can be used on almost any turning in which the interior diameter is larger than the opening. Photo 1 shows the assembly, which consists of a piece of all-thread steel rod that will thread through the headstock and about 12" beyond, a stop nut, a wing nut, and two fender washers to fit the rod.

The wood toggle is made from a disk of plywood; its diameter is a bit larger than the opening of the workpiece. Two opposite edges of the disk are sliced off so that the toggle can slip endwise into the workpiece but cannot pull out while flat. A hole is bored in the center of the toggle to provide a loose fit on the steel rod.

To reverse chuck a workpiece, first make a socket for the piece by turning a short tenon on the chucked piece of scrap wood that will fit snugly into the mouth of the workpiece. Alternatively, depending on the shape of the piece, you can turn a rebate that will fit snugly against the outside of the workpiece. Bore a hole in the center of the socket to allow the rod to pass through. Then insert the toggle into the workpiece, thread the free end of the drawbar through the spindle, and secure it with the wing nut and a fender washer. If the piece is long compared to the size of its mouth, it may be desirable to center the piece and hold it with the tailstock temporarily while tightening the wing nut. Also, in the case of very long workpieces, it may be necessary to use a steady rest to absorb the side thrust of the turning tools. However, I usually do not find that necessary if I use light cuts and use my off hand to steady the workpiece.

This technique can be extended to bottles and other turned objects that have very small mouth openings by replacing the wood toggle with a steel toggle adapted from a common toggle bolt such as is used for mounting items on walls. The bolt is discarded and the metal toggle and a matching washer are threaded onto the drawbar rod as shown in Photos 2 and 3. Note that the toggle folds toward the stop nut. When the toggle is in the position shown in Photo 2, it can be folded and inserted into a bottle and can be easily pulled out again. To lock the toggle in the workpiece, spin the drawbar counterclockwise so that the toggle is drawn up against the locknut as shown in Photo 3. To remove the

toggle, spin the drawbar in the opposite direction. In both cases, gently pull outward on the drawbar so that the toggle does not turn. Be certain that the toggle turns freely on the drawbar before inserting it in to the workpiece.

Toggle bolts are commonly available in three sizes in building supply stores and compatible all-thread rods are available for all of them. The following table lists them and the compatible all-thread rod sizes. It also shows the appropriate washer size to fit the toggle and the approximate maximum and minimum openings that they will serve. The ⅛" toggle is a bit fragile and is best used for light duty applications.

– Dennis J. Gooding, Grants Pass, OR

Toggle Size	Rod Size	Washer Size	Min. Opening	Max. Opening
¼"	¼" × 20 tpi	¾"	¾"	1½"
3⁄16"	10-32	#12 (9⁄16")	9⁄16"	1½"
⅛"	6-32	#8 (7⁄16")	½"	1"

Storage of chuck key

Are you always searching for the chuck key or toggle bar? Do you have to stoop or turn around to pick it up every time you need it? Wouldn't it be nice if it were always right on top of the headstock, inches from where you are going to use it? Help is at hand. Epoxy a rare-earth magnet to the top of the headstock and you are done. One magnet will hold several items at a time. See Photo 1.

– Dennis J. Gooding, Grants Pass, OR ■

The Art of Turned Bowls Update of a Classic Text

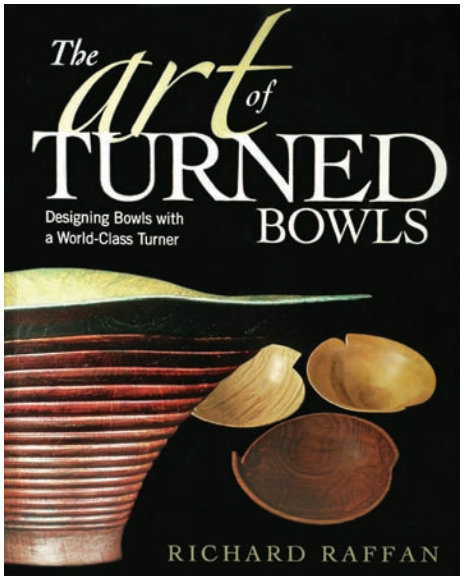
Malcolm Zander

Richard Raffan has finally come out with a long overdue update of his out-of-print classic, *Turned Bowl Design*. Much of the original text has been conserved, but it has been expanded; new material added; the layout, font, and presentation are much improved; and the photographs are all full color, numerous, large, high quality, and well-integrated into the text.

The title is somewhat misleading, as Raffan says in his very first sentence: "This book is about form and what you can do with it." The importance of form, as Raffan has pointed out in the past, is that once the pretty grain and colors have faded the form is all you are left with, so it had better be pleasing in the way it looks and feels.

Two relatively short initial chapters on choosing and preparing wood and how to best orient blanks on the lathe lead to the third chapter and the heart of the book, an extensive discussion of form. Raffan examines a whole range of different bowl forms and variations on them. He discusses in detail what works and what doesn't and the reasons why, illustrating his many profile diagrams with photographs of turned pieces. This is not a chapter to be read and absorbed in one sitting, but one that nevertheless will pay real dividends in the time invested. It will surely make you think.

Walls, rims, and bases are covered in a separate new chapter; these elements are another aspect of form in that they affect the way a bowl looks or feels, and Raffan examines and critiques many variants. The next chapter on green-turned bowls and their subsequent distortion on shrinkage leads to a chapter on surface decoration (detailing, coloring, burning, and sandblasting). The final chapter discusses decorative reshaping (carving, piercing, and sculpting).



The Art of Turned Bowls: Designing Bowls with a World-Class Turner **by Richard Raffan.**

This book is an outstanding edition; it contains a wealth of information and there is something in it for turners at all skill levels. Every wood artist should have a copy of in their toolkit, right up there with a ½" bowl gouge. ■

Website Winner

Congratulations to Craig Magera, Simpsonville, NC, first-place winner of the Spring 2009 AAW Forum woodturning contest, footstools. For more details on future contests and past results, see www.woodturner.org, then follow the links to the AAW online forum.

Craig Magera, footstool, 2009, Oak, cherry, purpleheart, 8" × 13"

To Turn the Perfect Wooden Bowl

Betty Scarpino

To Turn the Perfect Wooden Bowl: The Lifelong Quest of Bob Stocksdale, by Ron Roszkiewicz, chronicles the life of woodturner, Bob Stocksdale. "His work in bowl turning set a standard that all turners look up to today: Excellence is where you begin," says David Ellsworth.

Bob began his interest in woodturning when he was a teenager during the Depression. He built his own lathe, which was powered by a washing-machine motor hooked up to a gasoline engine. He made and sold various turned items, including reproductions inspired by pictures in books and magazines.

While serving time in a Conscious Objector's camp in 1942, Bob turned his first bowl, made from cherry. A visitor to the camp discovered Bob's turned bowls and was so impressed with their quality that she offered to sell them in her gallery.

This lovely 146-page, full-color book contains a wealth of information, not just about Bob Stocksdale's life. A favorite chapter, "Wood: More Than a Medium," presents Bob's wisdom about wood in a lively, question-and-answer format. Bob speaks directly to the reader and there is no doubt that he knew and loved the medium he worked with.

Ellsworth on Woodturning

Betty Scarpino

A lifetime of wisdom is contained in this major book by David Ellsworth. The time he spent writing is probably quantifiable; the experience of living and working with wood is not.

Ellsworth on Woodturning: How a Master Creates Bowls, Pots, and Vessels can be read and enjoyed on several levels. Upon receiving my copy, I eagerly thumbed through the entire book, looking at the images, which are numerous and varied. The images alone contain a wealth of information, making the book worth owning for just that feature. For instance, David not only talks about using a hanging bar, he includes images to illustrate how he uses one, regularly, to rejuvenate his body and improve his posture.

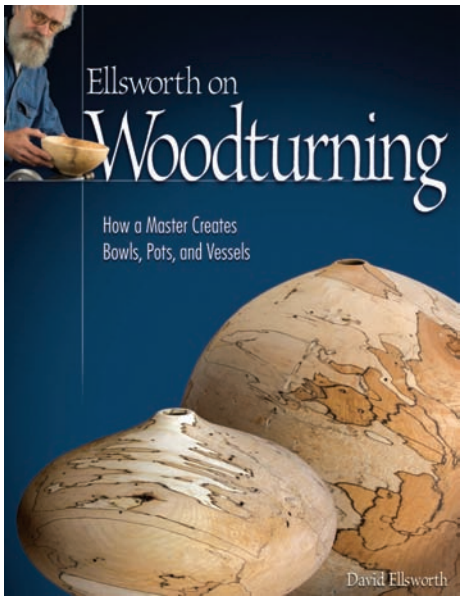
In some ways, it's easy to write a review of a book by and about David Ellsworth: one ought to buy a copy because David is one of the field's icons. On the other hand, it's a challenge because no matter what's said, there is so much that "goes without saying." David is a well-known master in the field of woodturning.

If you've ever wondered how to stand correctly at the lathe or your grinder, David clearly illustrates the postures best suited for a variety of turning activities in Chapter 8, "The Body."

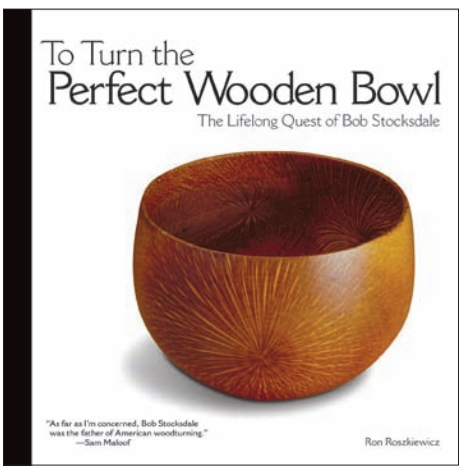
For the chapter on design, David includes images of a number of his early works. Even though the quality of the images is understandably not that of today's standards, I appreciate seeing this earlier work, because it makes his discussion of the evolution of his hollow forms more meaningful.

For those primarily looking for tools and techniques, there's plenty to enjoy and learn. David devotes individual chapters to making tools, sharpening, chucks, wood properties, sanding, and finishing. (A note about the images: David said that the second printing would correct the slightly darker-than-normal printing of many of the images.)

David clearly speaks for himself in this book, so if you want to get to know the man, his life, and his work, be sure to buy a copy. ■



***Ellsworth on Woodturning: How a Master Creates Bowls, Pots, and Vessels*, by David Ellsworth, 2008, Fox Chapel Publishing, www.FoxChapelPublishing.com.**



***To Turn the Perfect Wooden Bowl: The Lifelong Quest of Bob Stocksdale*, Fox Chapel Publishing, 2009, www.FoxChapelPublishing.com.**

Bob's life is a microcosm of the contemporary woodturning movement. In the early 1970s, he switched from making functional salad bowls to creating decorative bowls made from exotic woods. A similar trend was happening in the craft fair circuit, and indeed many woodturners were copying Bob's bowl designs.

"In addition to being known for his turning excellence and his gift for finding the best wood, Bob had a wonderful work ethic and managed to balance his work and his personal life well. As Kay [Bob's wife] explained, 'Bob is very disciplined. He's there at 9 a.m. and out by 3:30 p.m. and he never works on the weekends. That's the way it has been.'"

I met Bob in the early 1990s. He was from Indiana and while visiting family, he stopped by to say hello. It wasn't long before two very interesting chunks of wood made their way into Bob's hands. I had no doubt that he would do them proper justice. Bob could orient a bowl in a piece of wood better than anyone. He has few equals, even today. For everyone who is interested in turning a better bowl, this book is a must. ■

Poly Bagging the Journal

In response to comments about *American Woodturner* arriving at members' addresses damaged, the AAW Board tried poly bagging the Spring issue, but on a one-time basis only. While the results appear to be good, the added expense is a concern. The Board of Directors would like to continue poly bagging, but at this time, affordability prevents it. We will continue to listen to members' concerns and look for affordable and effective ways to package and protect the journal in the future.

– The AAW Board of Directors

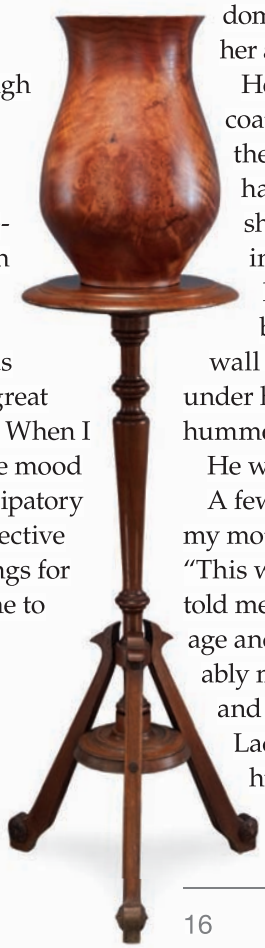
A Woodturner's Daughter

Denise DeRose

In high school, my father learned to wrestle, run, and work wood. His high school friends called him "The Rope," since he was nearly six feet tall and weighed 126 pounds soaking wet. His curly, jet-black hair and proud Italian nose were his best features. In his shop class, he made a clunky desk and an oak tool chest and discovered a passion he kept for life. After a lonely-kid stint in the Navy, he went to work as a machinist at Moffett Field.

In the 1950s, my father and his brothers farmed prunes and cherries in the Santa Clara Valley and my father kept a shop in a converted prune-drying shed. He taught me how to hammer nails into scraps of wood without splitting it. I sharpened sticks on his grinding wheel and sat in sawdust on the shop floor while he worked.

My father spoke through wood. He was more comfortable smoothing grain than his children's feelings. Although he was more likely to lay down the law than start a conversation, he and my brother David spent peaceful hours in the shop when we were teenagers. They spoke the same silence, working with serious looks on their faces, but taking great pleasure in what they did. When I ventured into the shop, the mood changed. My father, participatory with my brother, was protective of his daughter, doing things for me rather than teaching me to do for myself, watching with palpable tension should I consider a power tool too closely.

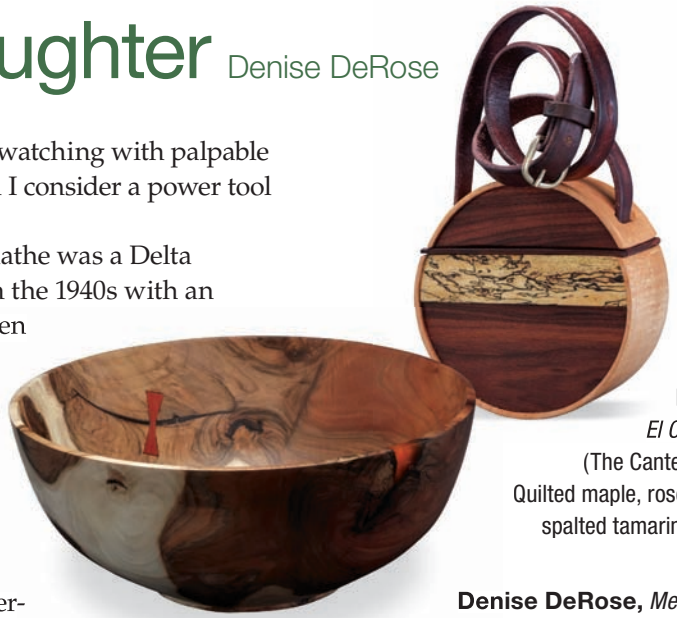


Joe DeRose, *Fern Table*, circa 1975, Claro walnut, 36" × 12"; **Denise DeRose,** classic vase, 2008, Redwood burl, 17" × 9"

My father's lathe was a Delta Rockwell from the 1940s with an 11" swing. When my mother decided that our 1960s California ranch house would look better with Victorian gingerbread trim, he turned more than 100 balls to grace our eaves. This was the way most of his woodturning projects sprang to life, a suggestion from my mother. "Draw it for me," he would say, and she would. There was the missing lid for a salt well, an oval frame, some lamps for our college dorm rooms, and a walnut base for the glass dome under which my mother kept her antique Santa.

He turned wearing a white lab coat from Moffett Field, closed at the neck with a clothespin, his hair covered in a pink-flowered shower cap. He bit his tongue in concentration, but moved like a dancer, back and forth between a drawing taped to the wall above his lathe and the wood under his skew. Totally tone deaf, he hummed the same tune over and over. He was so happy.

A few months after my father died, my mother handed me an envelope. "This was in your father's toolbox," she told me. The picture was yellow with age and blurry, but it was unmistakably me fifty years ago, pot bellied and in diapers, standing next to Lady, his beloved Brittany spaniel hunting dog. It was the only picture he kept in his shop.



Denise DeRose, *El Cantimplora* (The Canteen), 2008, Quilted maple, rosewood and spalted tamarind front, 9"

Denise DeRose, *Merger*, 2007, Claro walnut and English walnut graft with redheart butterfly, 20"

"Mom, I'm going to take the lathe," I told her. Seeing her worry, I said, "Don't argue with me, Mom. I'll be careful, but I'm going to take it." I had never touched that lathe before I broke it down and loaded it into my car.

In the years since that night, I have found in myself the same quiet pleasure of creating that my father knew. He kept a picture of me in his toolbox. Now I keep a picture of him in mine. ■

Denise DeRose lives in Oakland, California where she regularly tries to coax her teenage son and daughter into her shop hoping to get a start on the next generation of DeRose woodturners. The results of her efforts are currently inconclusive.

The photo from Joe DeRose's toolbox: Denise with Lady in the cherry orchard.

Calendar of Events

Fall Calendar Deadline: June 30

Send information to editorscarpino@gmail.com

Colorado

September 12–13, "11th Annual Rocky Mountain Woodturning Symposium," Loveland. Demonstrators include Cindy Drozda, Curt Theoblad, Trent Bosch, Allen Jensen, Craig Timmerman, Joe Fleming, Thomas Farrell, John Geim, and more to be announced. Visit www.rmwoodturningsymposium.com or call Allen Jensen at 970-663-1868.

Georgia

September 18–20, "Turning Southern Style XV," Unicoi State Park Lodge near Helen. Featured demonstrators include Bill Grumbine, Art Liestman, and Al Stirt. Also featuring Nick Cook, Joe Gettys, Wes Jones, and Dave Barriger. Information at www.gawoodturner.org or call Harvey Meyer at 770-671-1080.

Maine

Through August 7, call for entries, "Maine Wood 2010," biennial exhibition at the Center for Furniture Craftsmanship's Messler Gallery. Submission guidelines for residents of Maine only are at www.woodschool.org/gallery/index.

September 11–November 27, "Boxes and Their Makers," at the Center for Furniture Craftsmanship's Messler Gallery, Rockport. More information at www.woodschool.org/gallery.

North Carolina

October 23–25, 2009, Greensboro, NC Woodturning Symposium. Demonstrators featured: Allan Batty, Stuart Batty, Jimmy Clewes, Ray Key, and Stuart Mortimer. Local talent: Nick Cook, David Datwyler, Mark Gardner, John Jordan, and Chris Ramsey. Vendor signups happening now. For more information, www.northcarolinawoodturning.com.

Peter Hromek, *Flower*, 2008, Walnut, 15" × 6¾"

Flower is one of the many items available for bid at the EOG auction in Albuquerque.

Ohio

July 10–August 28, "Second Annual Wayne Center for the Arts Woodturning Competition," Wooster. Winners in seven categories and exhibits from featured artists, King Heiple, Mohammed Youssefi, and Bernie McGivern. Co-sponsored by Northcoast Woodturners and Buckeye Woodworkers and Wood Turners. Information at 330-264-9314 or www.wayneartscenter.org, www.bwwt.org, www.ncwt.org.

October 16–18, "Turning 2009" biennial symposium of the Ohio Valley Woodturners Guild. This 6th annual symposium features turners David Ellsworth, Jean-François Escoulen, Bonnie Klein, Alan Lacer, Jon Magill, Stuart Mortimer, Jennifer Shirley, and Jacques Vesery, plus other local guest demonstrators. For more information: www.ovwg.org or contact Pete Kekel at 859-525-4092, pkekl@fuse.net.

Pennsylvania

May 1–July 18, "In Balance, Wood & Metal," Wood Turning Center, 501 Vine St., Philadelphia. Artists include Michael Chinn, Robyn Horn, Todd Hoyer, William Moore, and Mark Nantz. Information at www.woodturningcenter.org.

Tennessee

January 29–30, 2010, "22nd Annual Symposium," at Opryland in Nashville. Featured demonstrators include Trent Bosch, Frank Penta, Tania Radda, and Mark St. Leger. Information at info@tnwoodturners.org or 615-300-0363.

Washington

July 25, "Creativity in Woodturning" symposium, Komachin Middle School, Lacey. Eric Lofstrom demonstrates woodturning basics, followed by Jimmy Clewes demonstrating design, form, and aesthetics, boxes, goblets, coloring wood. $80 registration fee. For more information visit www.woodturnersofolympia.org. ■

Giles Gilson

The AAW Recognizes an Innovative Genius

Stratus (mobile), 1978, Baltic birch, walnut, mahogany, stainless steel hardware, 72" × 27" × 52" (Yale University Art Gallery)

Photo: Rick Sicilliano

Terry Martin

Giles Gilson has always taken particular delight in doing the unexpected, a habit that began early when he was born in 1942 in the front seat of a 1933 Ford. He has been surprising people ever since with his robust and irreverent attitude. This year, the tables were turned when Giles was chosen as the 2009 AAW Honorary Lifetime Member. Giles was taken aback when he was told and said, "I wondered why I was chosen, but then I wonder about a lot of things."

I believe he was chosen because it is time to acknowledge that for the last forty years he has been right to challenge the way things are done, to break rules, and to ignore the naysayers. There are very few people in our field who should be credited with changing the way we see things, but Giles is certainly one of them.

Giles Gilson, 2008

Giles' career has been improbably rich. He has been an actor, a pilot, a designer, a musician—the list goes on and on. He has always thrown himself into any experience or field of study that has intrigued him, and they are numerous. It began early when his father convinced him that if you worked hard at it, anything was possible. "My father started teaching me to fly airplanes and drive cars when I was about nine years old, and I spent lots of time helping him fix things," Giles recalls. In this way he learned about how machines work and ever since he has built much of what he needs himself because, as he explains, "I didn't have the money to buy things."

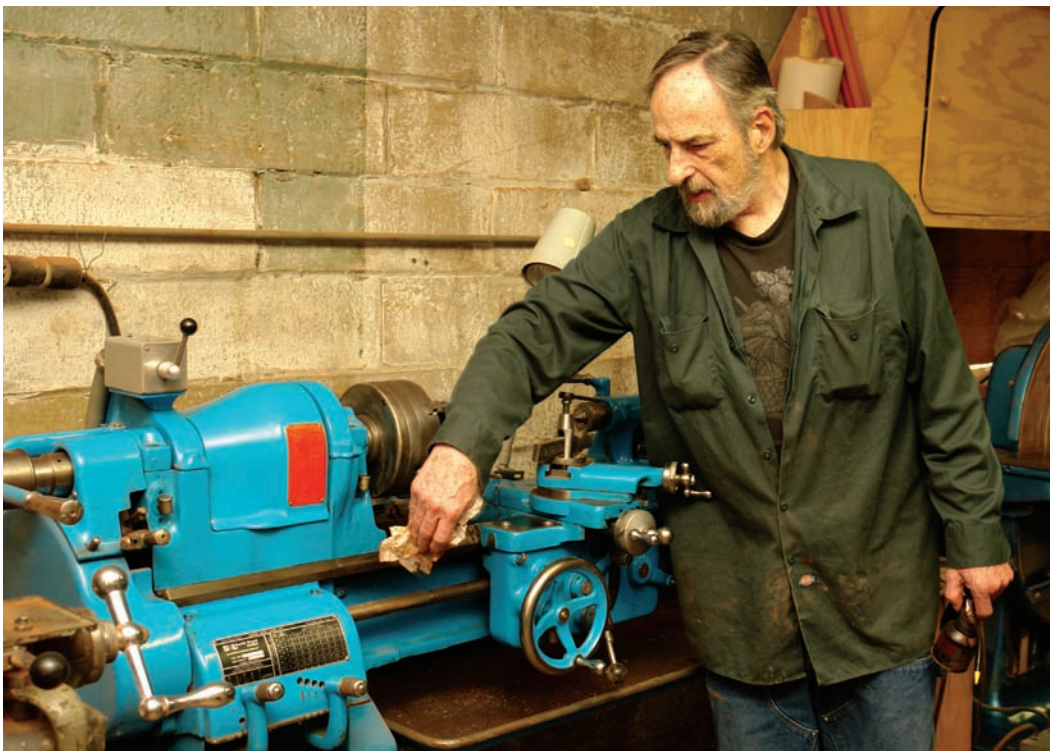
In a time when such classes were still valued, Giles took wood and metal shop courses in junior high school and high school, where he learned to spin metal and turn wood. Giles says he was lucky enough to have teachers who allowed promising students to work on their own projects. That was fortunate because Giles probably would have done just what he wanted anyway. During this period, he also continued to read everything he could find about auto design, hotrod technology, aircraft design, and aerodynamic principles.

Giles was also influenced by his mother who painted and wrote poetry and his sister who painted and studied sculpture. He says that when he was a teenager, art classes taught him about the techniques of the great masters,

about color, composition, the importance of motion, and how to add depth and feelings of distance. Music has also been an important part of Giles' life and he has played the saxophone since he was twelve. He later studied music theory and arranging, and devoted many years to composing and performing jazz.

In the 1970s, Giles moved to upstate New York and set up shop in a barn with the intention of "making stuff to sell." Never one to confuse the need for modesty with the need to state the obvious, Giles explains, "I went to the best craft fair I could find near there and I realized that I could make anything I saw there at least as well, if not better. So I did."

Giles started out by making furniture that reflected his aeronautical and automotive background, but he also created amazing mobiles—enormous soaring, dipping creations that were almost certainly influenced by his love of flying and classic airplanes. During this period, a chance encounter with Mel and Mark Lindquist drew Giles into the growing woodturning field. He enjoyed the fact that they were breaking with tradition and, in the process, upsetting many people. In a later homage to Mel Lindquist, Giles produced *The Maker.* He explains, "There are six panels around the piece showing the idea, thinking it out, then the study/research, drawing/design, and finally the making. It's about Mel, but it's also about human accomplishment. It's about all of us, what we do, and who we are."



Giles with one of the lathes he lovingly restored, a 13" South Bend.

The 1980s was a period when turners were particularly celebrating the natural beauty of wood grain, but at that time Giles started covering turned wood with the kind of automotive finishes that were normally associated with hotrods. In the eyes of many, Giles had committed an ▸

Photos: Rick Sicilliano

THE MAKER (picture piece), 1995, Aqua pearl flip, brass ring, cocobolo foot, corian base, 16½" × 6¼" (The Lipton Collection)

Fiber Vase II, 1987, Walnut, four fiberglass panels formed over a turned, basswood hollow vessel, paint, 14" × 7½" (Private collection)

unpardonable sin and, much to his delight, the indignant response was immediate. Giles was even dropped by some galleries and criticized by some collectors, but his reaction was typically contrarian. He started submitting pieces to turned wood exhibitions that were neither turned, nor made of wood. His *Fiber Vases* from the late 1980s used pearlescent colors to highlight the weave of fiberglass, and the turning community hardly knew what to think. It must give him some satisfaction now to be spoken of as the great innovator.

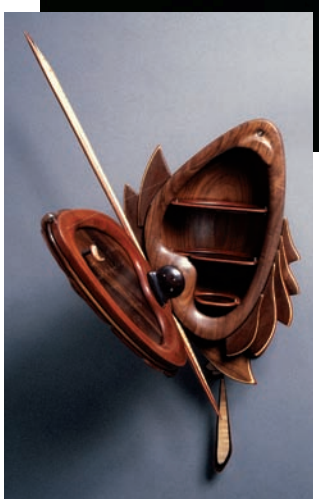
Typically, Giles is unconcerned about such criticism, "Some days I have a reverent attitude to wood and some days it's just material. When I first painted over the wood, I had good reasons. I believe in treating people gentle, but first you have to get their attention. There are a lot of pleasant clichés about using wood for art, but I don't buy any of them."

During this same period, Giles started developing his Feather series. Each of these delicately made cabinets was made up of multiple segments, meticulously shaped and assembled into complex containers. His early versions were made entirely of unpainted wood, but over the next twenty years they evolved as Giles incorporated lacquer, assorted metals, and acrylic, sometimes building these extraordinary sculptures up with hundreds of parts. They embody all of his influences and skills—feathers for flight, overlapping scales that recall musical arpeggios, shimmering

Cammy-Oh 9—Highlights from the Muse, 2002, Enriched walnut, blue interior, brass ring, figured birch foot, 65" × 16"

Photos: Rick Siciliano

Bonnet Piece (feathered wall cabinet sculpture), 1981, Curly maple, walnut, holly, ebony, stainless steel, 16" × 8" × 6" (Private collection)



Interior of *Bonnet Piece*

color, and painstaking technical virtuosity. They are, like Giles, unique.

It is often difficult to separate the serious Giles from his tongue-in-cheek side. On one hand, he claims to have "independently studied practical and emotional dynamics, and the art of existence," while on the other hand he once named a piece *The Sledge Hammer Bowlophone*, which he said is played by striking it with a sledgehammer. Giles explains, "Because I've had so many experiences in the past that can best be described as bizarre, I have long felt that it is important to include a sense of the ridiculous. Yet, when I'm doing a piece, I must be careful not to clutter a work with this. I use the absurd elements when they bring something to the final work."

Giles' ideas are often triggered by his relationships with other people. It might be said that he converts personalities into sculptural ideas, or vice versa, and these ideas can be quite specific. His Cammy-Oh series, for example, was inspired by a woman who waited tables at his favorite diner. *Cammy-Oh 9—Highlights from the Muse* is a human-sized figure that grows from Giles' trademark square base, spiraling into an elegantly poised torso with wide shoulders and a rolled collar. It's tempting to imagine that the in-your-face personality of this piece reflects his relationship with the original Cammy.

We shouldn't forget that Giles was a founding member of the AAW, so this award also reminds us of the heady days when turning was taking off and everything was possible. Back then, and now, there were very few people in the turning field who have been as inventive and as original as Giles. Even though most of us can never aspire to such creativity, we are all his beneficiaries because he gave us permission to see things differently. Thank you Giles. ■

Terry Martin is a wood artist, writer, and curator who lives and works in Brisbane, Australia. He can be contacted at eltel@optusnet.com.au.

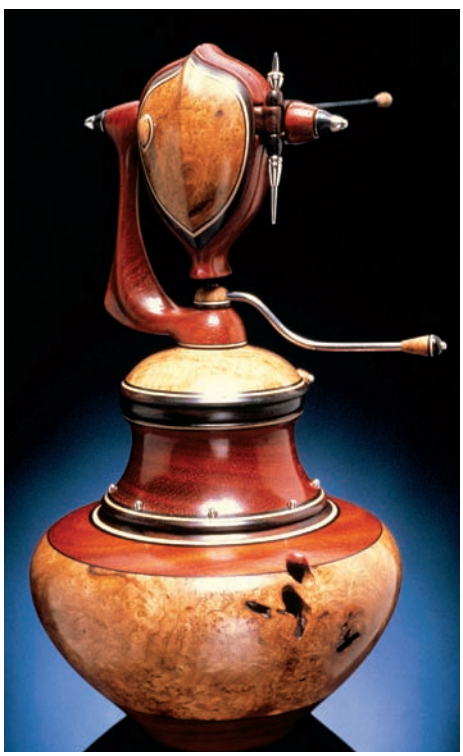


Photo: Rick Siciliano

Cabinet on a Jar Answering the Phone, 1981, Cherry burl, padauk, holly, East Indian rosewood, stainless steel, 12" × 6" (John Reich Collection)

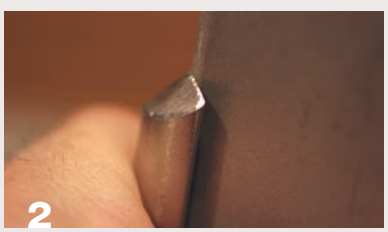
Refining the Edge
Skews and Gouges
Improve Turned Surfaces with Simple Sharpening Techniques

Alan Lacer with Jeryl Wright

I have heard many discussions and fielded a lot of interesting questions while traveling amongst woodturners. A common assertion is that some steels don't get as sharp as others or that high carbon steel (HCS) tools get much sharper than high speed steel (HSS) tools. Another common view is that honing is a waste of time: the burr will "strop off" in the wood; honing takes so much time it's inefficient; or woodturners don't need a really sharp tool. Often, such views about steel and honing are spoken as fact, not just opinion. My experiences run counter to these viewpoints, so I knew something more was needed to test these "facts" in an objective, scientific manner.

Methods of honing

To place the bevel of a skew chisel correctly on a diamond hone, hold the handle securely and use an up-and-down motion, starting at the back of the bevel. Move the hone to simultaneously touch the area just below the cutting edge and the back of the bevel.



The flute of a gouge must also be honed. The curved radius of a slipstone or a tapered diamond cone is held flat in the flute and worked with a back-and-forth motion.

Polishing flutes

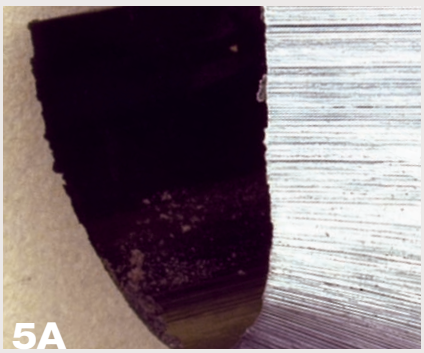
To polish or refine the flute of a gouge, use a wheel made of MDF, turned to a convex shape that fits the profile of the flute. Coat the wheel with an emery stick. Work only the last 1" or so of the flute. The wheel should spin away from you.

(4A) **Gouge flute with milling marks (100X).**

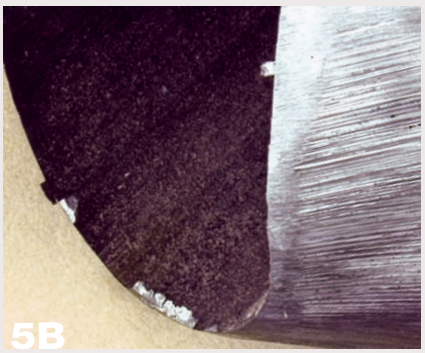
(4B) **Gouge flute after polishing (100X).**

How do you test for sharpness? There are tests used in the cutlery trade to measure the amount of force needed to cut rubber bands or to measure a knife's penetration into various objects. While this can be an easy test for a flat knife blade, testing for sharpness is a bit harder to do with gouges and thick skew chisels. With the help of Jerry Wright, I decided to conduct empirical sharpening and turning tests and let readers judge which sharpening methods produce the best turned surface. Images of highly magnified cutting edges and turned surfaces are provided as objective data. From these images one can judge the degree of sharpness of an edge and the impact that edge has on a piece of wood, cut in the way a woodturner would be using the tool. The surface finish that a tool creates on wood has significance: Does one need to start with 40-grit abrasive or is sanding even needed, a decision that will have an impact on the turned object's shape and detail, amount of dust produced, surface finish, and time spent sanding.

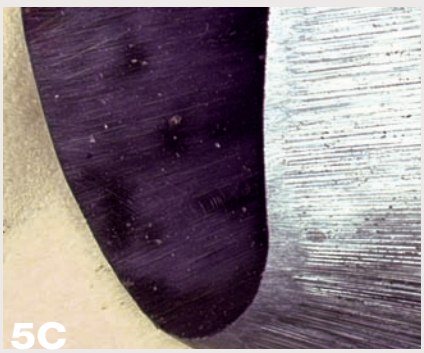
Polishing flutes: progression of honing and polishing



Gouge edge, ground only (20X).



Gouge edge, bevel honed (20X).



(5C) **Gouge edge, bevel and flute honed (20X).**

(5D) **Gouge edge, bevel honed, flute honed and polished (100X).**

Tool preparation

We tested skew chisels and bowl gouges from major tool manufacturers. First, we ground the edges using a dry wheel grinder, adhering to standard methods of sharpening. We ground them freehand, using a rigid platform for support. The grinder ran at 1,725 rpm and had a 60 grit SG, 8"-diameter wheel. Grinding was conducted until the sparks came evenly over the top of the tool's edge. For each tool's bevel, we produced a single facet, slightly hollow ground. Bevel angles were uniform from tool to tool.

Methods of honing

We honed the bevels of the skews and gouges with the flat side of a 600-grit, diamond slipstone and used the curved edges of the slipstone to hone the inside flutes of the gouges. A flat hone for the skews and the outside bevel of gouges, combined with a tapered diamond hone for the flutes of gouges, would have worked equally well. To avoid rounded over cutting edges, we maintained a two-point contact of the bevels (hone touching at the back of bevel and just below the cutting edge). When honing the inside of gouges, we held the rounded edge of the hone flat inside the flute. For tools freshly ground, the honing process took under three minutes. Less than one minute is normal for honing between grinding. (*Photos 1 and 2*)

Polishing flutes

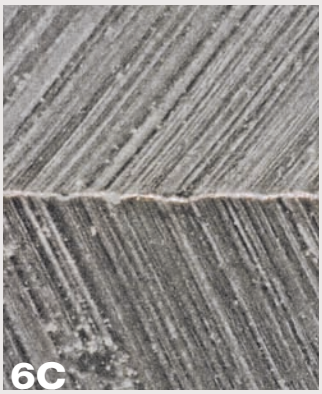
We polished the flute of one of the gouges to determine if this additional preparation had any impact on the sharpness. To polish the flute, we turned a disc of medium density fiberboard (MDF) and then created a bead to fit the profile of the flute. The MDF can be mounted on a faceplate or an arbor as shown in Photo 3. (Either work from the back of the lathe, or if you intend to run the lathe in reverse, secure the faceplate or arbor to the spindle.) *With the direction of rotation spinning away from you,* charge the bead area with a stick of emery. We polished only the last 1" of the flute to remove the milling marks. Depending on the hardness and toughness of the steel, this usually takes less than five minutes. (*Photos 4A and 4B*)

The cutting edges of gouges are shown as they are refined from an initial ground state through the pro- ▸

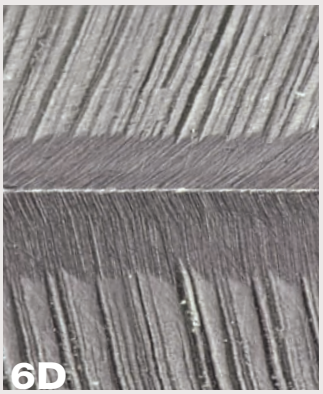
Polishing flutes: edges of skew chisels

Skew chisel edge, bevel ground only (20X).

Skew chisel edge, ground and honed (20X).



Edge view of skew chisel edge, ground (200X).



Edge view of skew chisel, ground and honed (200X).

gression of honing and polishing. Note the removal of grinding burrs. (*Photos 5A-5D*)

Cutting edges of skew chisels are shown as they are refined from the ground state to the honed state. Note the reduction of edge roughness after honing. (*Photos 6A-6D*)

Methods of cutting wood

To provide a challenge, we chose dried redwood (8% moisture content) for our tests, since it's not particularly desirable for turning. To test the gouges, we mounted the wood on a screw chuck, grain orientated as for bowl turning. When testing the skew chisels, the wood was mounted between centers, grain direction parallel to the axis of the lathe. Bowl gouge cuts were from smaller to larger diameters, with the flute pointed in the direction of cut. This is a common method of using a bowl gouge and never approached a finishing-type method of cutting.

Grinding wheels

With the advent of modern HSS and high-wear steels for turning tools, choosing the right grinding wheel is a must. First of all, gray wheels are out. They grind slowly or hardly at all, require constant dressing, go dull quickly, and generate too much heat. A premium friable aluminum oxide wheel in 60 or 80 grit for sharpening and 46 grit for heavy grinding in an I, J, or K hardness (I is the softest, K harder, and J is my preferred choice) will work well. Expect to pay between $45 and $75 each for an 8" quality wheel.

The newer seeded gel (SG) wheels work even better and have a longer life. Constructed of submicron crystalline particles that constantly reveal sharp edges, these wheels grind aggressively and have a long life. The Norton Company produces a high-end 8" version that sells for around $100 and a new line of 3X wheels for about $50. They perform quite well. The less expensive wheels do not have as high a percentage of the crystalline material as the premium wheels, yet they grind well on modern tools.

Regardless of the type of grinding wheel you use, you *must* regularly dress it to clean, sharpen, level, and true it. For SG wheels, a diamond dresser is a must, but diamond dressers also work great on any wheel. Avoid the cheaply made plated wheel dressers, opting for either a jigging system with one large diamond (Oneway www.oneway.ca and Geiger www.geigerssolutions.com make good systems) or a T-shaped system for freehand dressing (Packard, www.packardwoodworks.com, and MSC www.mscdirect.com). Dressing grinding wheels frequently and lightly keeps them in top shape.

Hardness of materials

To see why traditional hones and grinding wheels may have trouble with HSS and high-wear steels, compare the different hardness values below. All HSS and high-wear steels contain significant quantities of vanadium carbides, which exceed the hardness of many abrasives.

Relative Knoop hardness values:

- Diamond = 7000 to 8000
- Cubic boron nitride (CBN) = 4700
- Vanadium carbide = 2500
- Silicon carbide = 2400
- Aluminum oxide = 2100
- Tungsten carbide = 1900
- Hardened steel (65 HRC) = 825
- Quartz (silica) = 700 (Arkansas and Washita stones are classified as silica-quartz.)

Wood cutting basics

Much has been written about the process of chip formation and resulting wood surfaces, because of its importance to commercial wood processing. The most important variables affecting milled or planed wood surfaces (other than wood species, moisture content, and grain orientation) are cutter velocity, feed rate, depth of cut, and cutting edge sharpness. Higher cutter rpm, slower feed rate, shallower cuts, and higher degrees of sharpness all improve surface finish. Within the limits available to woodturners, tool sharpness is the strongest variable. It has been shown in commercial milling operations that very minor improvements in cutting edge sharpness cause fourfold reductions in surface roughness.

Cutting edges are formed by the intersection of two surfaces. The refinement of the cutting edge determines its sharpness. Intersections of rough surfaces create blunt or jagged edges while intersections of smooth surfaces create sharp edges. This is commonly accepted for those familiar with chisels, plane irons, and knives. It is routine to bring these linear edges to high degrees of refinement using a series of stones of increasing fineness. On the other hand, woodturning tools can have complex, curved shapes, often ground from two sides. Admittedly, these edges can be difficult to grind and hone.

Methods of examination

The variously sharpened skews and gouges and turned redwood were examined and photographed using a 54 megapixel optical imaging microscope, at magnifications up to 200X. The field of view at this magnification is approximately 3/64" wide. This high magnification, unusually high depth of field, and color photography make possible the easy observation of the cutting edges and the relative smoothness of the cut surfaces.

Gouges: effects of grinding and honing

Gouges manufactured from M2 HSS were chosen to demonstrate the impact of different edge-preparation methods on the appearance of the cutting edge as well as the appearance of the cut wood surfaces. Then gouges manufactured from 2030, 2060, CPM 10V (A11) and CPM 15V were chosen to determine whether fine-edge preparation techniques would be successful on these highly alloyed steels.

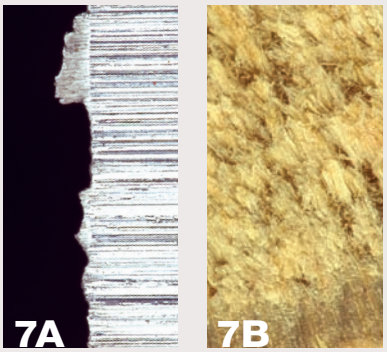
We prepared the gouges to test three ways: only the bevel ground, the bevel ground and honed, and the bevel ground and honed and the flute honed. Photos 7A, 7B, 8A, 8B, 9A and 9B show the progression of edges from coarse to refined as the burrs are removed by honing, as well as improvement in cut-wood surfaces. The edges become smoother as the intersecting surfaces become more refined. As a result, there is a huge difference in wood surfaces cut with a gouge that was only ground and one that was ground and honed. (*Photo 10*)

Results from the highly alloyed materials are shown in Photos 11A-11D. We also noted that similar results are possible with 2030, 2060, CPM 10V (A11) and CPM 15V, grades that are often thought to be difficult or impossible to sharpen.

Skews: effects of grinding and honing

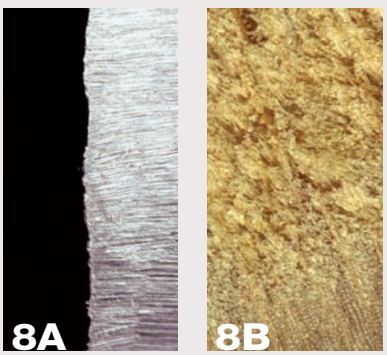
Skews manufactured from M2 HSS were chosen to demonstrate the impact of different edge-preparation methods on the appearance of the cutting edge as well as the appearance of the cut wood surfaces. We then chose skews manufactured from ▸

Gouges: effects of grinding and honing



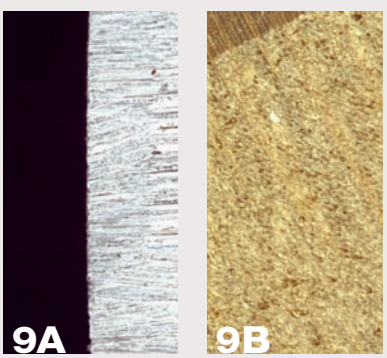
(7A) **Cutting edge of a M2 HSS gouge, ground only (200X).**

(7B) **Resulting cut wood surface (100X).**



(8A) **Cutting edge of a M2 HSS gouge, bevel ground and honed (200X).**

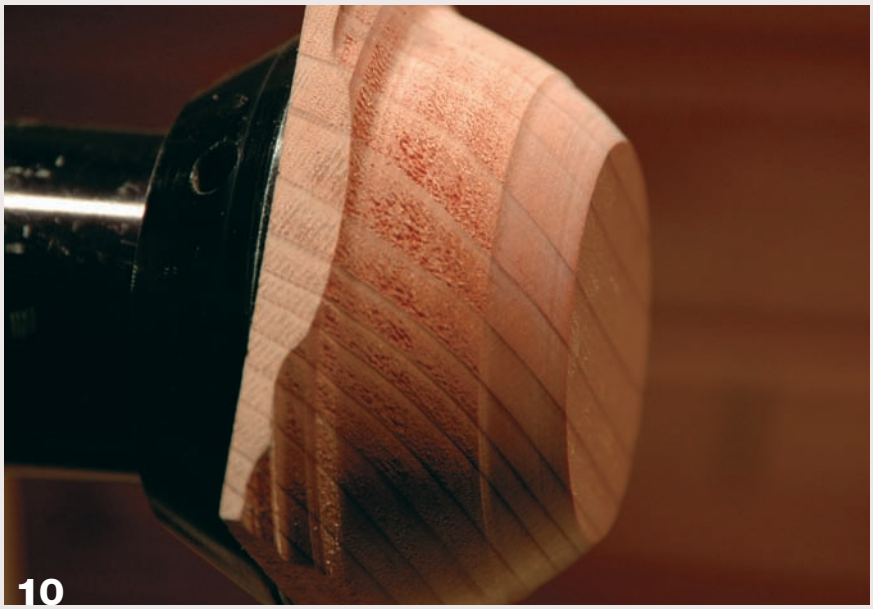
(8B) **Resulting cut wood surface (100X).**



(9A) **Cutting edge of a M2 HSS gouge, bevel and flute honed (200X).**

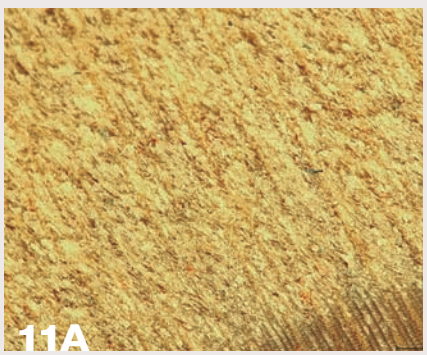
(9B) **Resulting cut wood surface (100X).**

Gouge comparison

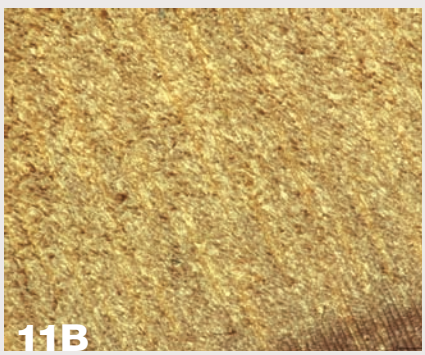


Even with an unmagnified view, huge differences are observable in surface finishes. The upper half was cut with a freshly ground M2 bowl gouge, while the lower half was cut with a 2060 bowl gouge, bevel and flute honed.

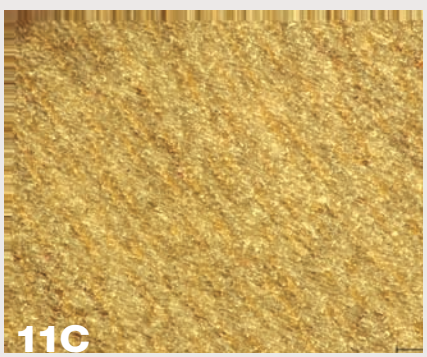
Effects of gouges



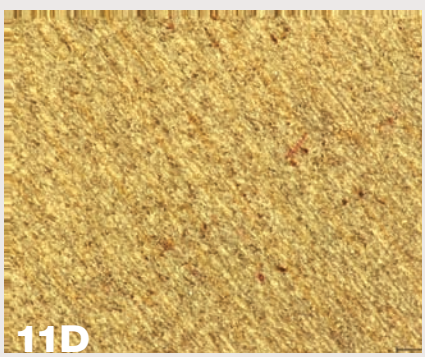
Magnification 100X, wood surfaces cut with PM 2030 gouge.



Magnification 100X, wood surfaces cut with PM 2060 gouge.



Magnification 100X, wood surfaces cut with CPM 10V gouge.



Magnification 100X, wood surfaces cut with CPM 15V gouge.

PM (powdered metal) M4, 2060, and CPM (Crucible Particle Metallurgy) 10V (A11) to determine whether fine-edge preparation techniques would be successful on these highly alloyed steels. A skew chisel made from HCS was also examined to judge the edge quality versus the base M2. Often, it is thought that HCS can produce a better edge.

Skews are deceptively difficult to sharpen. The cutting edge is the intersection of two ground surfaces. The relative coarseness of each surface has a decided impact on the edge as the surfaces interact with each other. As a result, the fineness of the grinds directly affects the edge sharpness.

Skews were prepared two ways: bevel ground and bevel ground and honed. Photos 12A, 12B, 13A and 13B show the edges of the skew and the cutting results of the wood's surface, using an M2 skew, ground and ground and honed. The cut wood surfaces show a marked difference from rough and torn, to much more level and uniform.

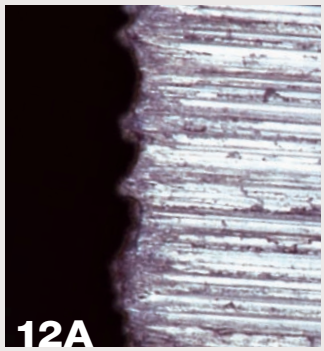
The results we received from HCS, as well as highly alloyed materials, demonstrate that similar results are also possible with low alloy HCS as well as PM M4, 2060, and CPM 10V (A11), again, grades that are often thought to be difficult or impossible to sharpen.

Observations

From a woodturner's perspective, there are a number of conclusions to be drawn from the examination of tool edges and the wood cut with those edges.

- All of the different steels got sufficiently sharp to cut the wood cleanly and that is what it's really all about, rather than some mystical

Skews: effects of grinding and honing



Cutting edge of a M2 HSS skew, ground (200X).

Resulting cut wood surface (100X).

Cutting edge of a M2 HSS skew, ground and honed (200X).

Resulting cut wood surface (100X).

concept of sharpness. The method of preparing the edge is the key to tool sharpness. Clearly, an edge that is not honed produces a torn surface when cutting poor-quality wood, regardless of the steel. Some woodturners believe that there is no need to hone, as the burr will simply "strop off" in the wood; however, experience with HSS and especially the higher wearing steels (10V, 2030, 2060, 15V) is that the burr is tough and does not readily strop off in the wood.

- Diamond honing materials can easily cut all of the steel alloys on the market. Traditional stones (Arkansas, Washita, India, crysolon, ceramic) are ineffective or require an inordinate amount of time to achieve an improved edge on HSS and also on the high-wear steels we tested. This is because the common HSS, like M2 and M4, super HSS such as PM 2030 and 2060, and the high-wear steels such as CPM 10V and 15V, contain significant quantities of hard carbides. These tungsten, molybdenum, and vanadium carbides far exceed the hardness of traditional sharpening stones. Jerry Glaser, who championed the use of highly alloyed PM materials, referred to traditional honing materials as "old methods" and diamond as "new methods" of honing—we have to learn to work with diamond. All of the different types of diamond (synthetic mono and polycrystalline, as well as natural) on the market will hone contemporary turning tools. However, the type of diamond, smoothness of plate, and how diamond is attached to a plate determine the longevity of a diamond hone.
- A cutting edge is the intersection of two planes—and both of those planes should be smooth to produce a fine edge. On skew chisels, this is not an issue once you have honed both surfaces. However, with gouges, the bevel is produced by grinding and honing, while the inside surface is a product of the manufacturing process. Honing does smooth inner flutes when done with a slipstone or cone, but for those who don't hone, or those with flutes that have very deep grooves from the milling process, there is a problem of sharpness.
- A well-manufactured flute, free of deep milling marks, is a big plus and can speed the honing process. Polishing the flutes is an option, but it would be admirable if was already done by the tool makers. Honing with diamond will, to a large extent, cut through most of the milling marks sooner or later, so polishing may not offer a huge increase in edge sharpness over regular honing.

To be fair to all of those who have argued that honing is a waste of time or that certain steels do not get as sharp as others, it seems as though those viewpoints are based on the honing material being used. Traditional honing materials work well on HCS tools but poorly, slowly, or virtually not at all on HSS and high-wear steels, so if you don't hone HSS and high-wear steel with a diamond hone, they will not be as sharp as HCS that has been honed. ■

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Transform
Your Tape Measure

John Giem

Transforming a tape measure from ordinary to elegant can be accomplished using materials you most likely have in your shop. This article shows you how to use the mechanism from an inexpensive unit and repackage it in a wooden case. These repackaged tape measures make unique gifts while providing a use for those small pieces of wood that are too beautiful to throw away.

Dismantle the tape measure

A 3' tape measure can be obtained at most hardware stores. While wearing eye protection, remove the screw under the label on the case. Remove the tape and the spring, being careful not to let them unwind. Secure them with masking tape or a clothespin. If the tape and spring are accidently released, rewind it, being sure to wind it so that the numbers are facing inward.

Original 3' tape measure.

Materials List

1. 1 tape measure 3' size
2. 1 mandrel, any stable wood, 3" × 3" × 3"
3. 1 mandrel centering pin, a hardwood dowel, ¼" diameter × 1" long
4. 1 center disc of any colorful wood, ⅜" thick × 2" diameter
5. 2 side discs of any colorful wood, ⅜" thick × 1¾" diameter
6. 1 center pin, hardwood dowel, ¼" diameter
7. medium viscosity CA glue or wood glue
8. double-sided tape for woodturners

Note the bends at the inside end of the spring; they will be used later when installing the spring in the new case.

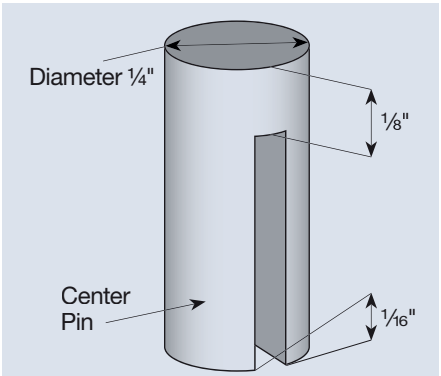
Preparing the mandrel

Construct a simple mandrel using a dry block of wood and mount it on lathe in a chuck or attached to a faceplate. The face of the mandrel is where the disks of the case will be attached with double-sided tape, then shaped. Consequently, the face must be turned flat with an area sufficient for mounding the disks, approximately 1¼" diameter.

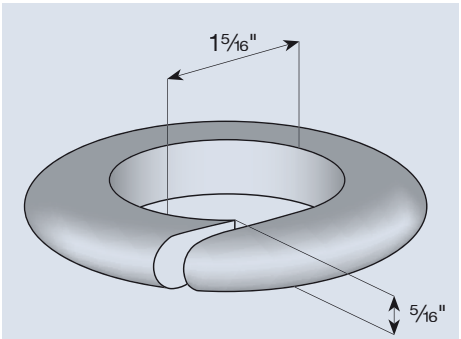
The other component of the mandrel is the center alignment pin. With the mandrel mounted on the lathe and a Jacobs chuck mounted in the tailstock, drill a ⅛"-diameter hole completely through the center of the wood. Next, remove the ⅛" bit from the Jacobs chuck and replace it with a 1⁵⁄₆₄"-diameter bit. Drill a hole into the center of the mandrel's face. This hole is centered on the previously drilled ⅛"-diameter hole. Make the depth of the 1⁵⁄₆₄" hole such that when the ¼"-diameter centering pin is inserted, ⅛" of it will remain above the face of the mandrel. The slightly undersized hole provides a friction fit for the centering pin. Insert the centering pin into the 1⁵⁄₆₄" hole.

Selecting wood

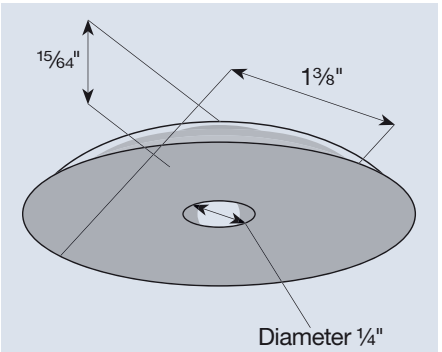
Go to your treasure box of wood and select a piece for the center ring of the case. It should be at least ⅜" thick and large enough to cut a 2"-diameter disk. Sand one side smooth and flat so that it will adhere to the mounting tape on the mandrel. You may cut it into a circular disk at least 2" in diameter or elect to do this later on the lathe. Drill a ¼"-diameter hole through the center.



1 Center pin for the case.



2 Center ring for the case.



3 Side disk for the case.

This hole will be fitted over the centering pin on the mandrel.

Select two additional pieces of wood for the sides of the case. They should be at least ⅜" thick and be of equal thickness. The two faces of each disk need to be parallel to each other to help with drilling accuracy. If they are not parallel, it could cause misalignment of the holes, which would cause problems during final assembly. For each disk, sand the side that will be toward the inside of the case.

Using a drill press, drill a ¼"-diameter hole, ⅛" deep, in the center of the inside of each side disk. To lessen the risk of cutting into this blind hole later when shaping on the lathe, use either a Forstner or brad point bit.

Turn the center ring

To form the center ring of the case, mount the center disk onto the mandrel. Begin by removing residual dust from the disk and the face of the mandrel. Affix the disk, sanded side down, onto the mandrel using double-sided tape. The center hole will be over the centering pin. Use the tailstock and a live center to apply moderate pressure on the disk. Maintain pressure for about five minutes in order to achieve the proper holding power of the two-sided tape. Turning may be done during this bonding time.

Returning to the measuring tape and spring, measure their width, which is usually ¼". For clearance inside the finished case, add 1/16" to obtain the desired thickness of the center ring. Typically, this will be 5/16".

Reduce the thickness of the center disk to the desired measurements. Don't worry about the wood in the middle. That is waste and will be removed later. Shape the outside rim of the disk and finish sanding it. Be careful where the edges of the center cavity ▸

Mandrel with pin, used for mounting components onto the lathe using double-sided tape.

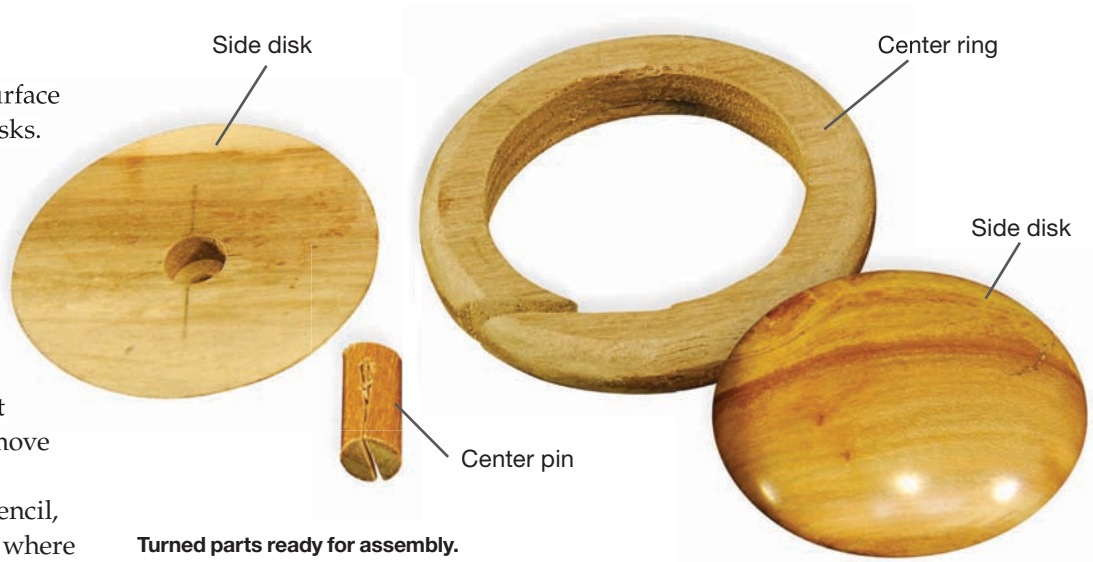
Drilled blanks, one for the center ring and two for the sides.

Clothespin holding the tape from unwinding.

will be formed. Leave a flat surface there for gluing on the side disks.

Back off the tailstock. Using dividers, mark a 1⁵⁄₁₆"-diameter circle centered on the disk. Using a parting tool, cut through the disk at the marked diameter until the outer ring is cut free. Be sure to catch the ring when you cut through. Clean the ring to remove any residual adhesive.

Using a straight edge and pencil, mark a line on the center ring where the slot will be cut for the passage of the tape. Cut the slot using a bandsaw or scroll saw that has a thin blade. Verify that the slot will allow easy entry of the base of the hook at the end of the tape and modify as needed. The hook itself, however, should not be able to enter the slot. Clean up the edges and the inside of the slot using fine sandpaper.



Turned parts ready for assembly.

Turn the sides of the case

Clean up the face of the mandrel and replace the tape if needed. Mount one of the side disks on the mandrel's face, hole placed on the centering pin. If the pin is too long, shorten it, otherwise the side disk will not sit flat on the mandrel. Use the tailstock to apply pressure as before. Be careful not to let the sharp pin of the live center damage the disk. You may need to use a piece of scrap wood between the disk and the live center for protection.

Turn the side disk to the desired final diameter, approximately 1⁷⁄₁₆". Be sure to keep the disk larger than the hole in the center ring and to allow enough area for gluing. After the mounting tape has set, move the tailstock out of the way and shape the disk to the desired thickness and profile.

Remember the centering hole on the other side of the disk. Don't cut into it or you will have a decorative spot on your disk. Finish sanding the disk.

Carefully remove the disk from the mandrel. If you have difficulty with removal, use a thin parting tool and cut into the mandrel just behind the disk. With this recess, place a tool into the cut and gently pry the disk off the tape. Clean up the disk and set aside.

Clean up the face of the mandrel, mount, turn, and finish the second side disk to match the first one.

Make the center pin

Test fit your ¼"-diameter dowel in the hole of a side disk to verify a snug fit. For now, leave the center pin attached to its main body for ease of handling. Cut a thin slot lengthwise into the end of dowel about ½" to ¾" long. Verify that the bent end of the measuring tape's spring fits easily into this slot. Cut off the end of the dowel leaving about

Partial assembly, ready for inserting the tape and spring into the case.

⅛" of the solid dowel past the slot. The exact length of the center pin is not important at this time. It can be shortened later. The solid section at the end is needed to maintain the size and shape of the slot and will be inserted into the hole in a side disk. *Make sure that when the solid end of the center pin is inserted into the hole in the side disk, the end of the slot is flush with the surface of the disk.*

Fitting the pieces together

When using cyanoacrylate (CA) glue, use eye protection and gloves. If preferred, wood glue can be used.

Test fit the side disk on the center ring. Put a small amount of glue on a nonporous surface such as a plastic lid. Using a toothpick, place a small ring of glue around the edge of one side of the center ring. Apply a side disk on the glue line. Visually center the center ring onto the side disk before the glue sets. Remove excess glue. Hold or clamp in place until the glue is set.

Place the solid end of the center pin into the mounted side disk and check to make sure it is perpendicular. With the center pin in place, test fit the remaining side disk to verify the length of the pin. Shorten the pin as needed to allow the side disk to firmly contact the center ring. Use glue to bond the solid end of the center pin into the center hole of the mounted side disk only. Again, make sure the pin is perpendicular before the glue sets.

After the glue has set, carefully place the tape and spring into the case. Slide the bent end of the spring into the slot of the center pin. The measuring tape should flow smoothly around inside the cavity and out the slot on the center ring. Hold the partial assembly in one hand with your thumb on top of the pin to prevent the spring from popping out. With the other hand, pull on the end of the tape to verify proper operation.

Tape and spring installed, ready to glue the second side to the case.

Things to look for: The spring should stay mounted on the center pin; the tab on the end of the tape should fit freely within the slot; the hook on the tab doesn't retract into the slot; the tape can be pulled out fully to the 3' mark; and the tape will completely rewind by itself. If the tape will not fully extend, carefully remove one or two turns inside the case. If the tape will not fully retract, add one or two turns.

After any adjustments are complete, test fit the remaining side disk on the pin again. Hold it in place and repeat the previous tests. Make adjustments if necessary.

When you are satisfied with the fit and function, it is time to complete the assembly. Using a toothpick, place a thin ring of glue around the edge of the center ring. Carefully place the side disk over the center pin and press it into contact. With the newly attached side down, hold or clamp the case until the glue has set. The reason for placing the freshly glued side down is so that if there is excess glue inside it will run down and away from the tape.

Apply your favorite finish to the case, being careful to keep finishes from entering into the case through the tape slot. As an alternative, the center ring and side disks can be finished while on the lathe, but take care not to compromise the glue joints. Any finish that has gotten on the area to be glued will need to be removed.

Now, sit back, admire, and enjoy the beauty of your work with friends and family. ■

I want to thank Lee Carter, who operates the Rocky Mountain School of Woodturning in LaPorte, CO, for the concepts used in this project.

John Giem is the secretary and newsletter editor for the Rocky Mountain Woodturners in northern Colorado. He lives and teaches woodworking in Fort Collins. Contact him at jgiem@comcast.net.

Completed tape measure.

Make Your Own Chucks for a Vacuum System

Clifford L. Hill and Frederick C. Hill

If you have not yet experimented with vacuum chucking, we urge you to do so. In many situations, vacuum chucks make it easy to attach a turning to the lathe. Once a vacuum chucking system is hooked up to the lathe, it is relatively simple to make your own chucks or there are a wide variety of commercial ones available. In order to make your own and save money, follow these easy directions.

First, make the base for the vacuum chuck out of wood. Glue up plywood or hardwood to at least 1" thick to form the base of the chuck. Find and mark the center of your glued-up base and scribe a circle that is at least 1" larger in diameter than the outside diameter (OD) of PVC pipe you will be using. Bandsaw the base to a rough, round shape following the scribed line. Be certain to mark the center of the base carefully because you will drill a hole here in the next step of this process.

Purchase one of the lathe spindle taps (www.leevalley.com) that allows you to thread wood with the specific thread size for your lathe's headstock. Drill a hole dead center through the face of the glued-up base, following instructions provided with the lathe spindle tap. Thread the hole with the lathe spindle tap and screw this base onto the lathe. Now, finish-turn the base round and sand the surface and edges so they are smooth. If the base wobbles slightly on the lathe, either turn away the wobble or construct a new base. The base is now ready to have the PVC pipe inserted. We usually finish the wooden base with shellac or varnish in order to seal and stabilize the wood.

Get the section of Schedule 40 PVC pipe that you are using for the chuck. The length will vary to suit your needs, but a piece that is about 2" to 3" long is generally suitable for most uses. PVC pipe couplers are best to use since they are thicker and the ends are true; however, if you carefully cut it, the PVC pipe itself is adequate.

Don't be afraid to use a longer section of pipe if you are trying to reach into the bottom of a deep hollow vessel to hold it in place with vacuum pressure. Cut the pipe to the length you desire by whichever means you find most convenient. If you are uncomfortable cutting PVC pipe, contact your local plumbing shop for assistance or just use PVC couplers. Cut the pipe with care because both ends of your pipe need to be smooth and at right angles to the pipe. As always, when using any kind of saw, remember to watch out for your fingers, wear a faceshield, and use dust protection.

Carefully measure the OD of the pipe and mark this on the face of the turned base. Using a parting tool, cut a groove slightly less than the diameter of the pipe and gradually work the groove up to the *exact* OD of the pipe until the pipe just fits the groove. When you place the pipe into this groove, it should fit snugly with no lateral movement. If you are satisfied that you have cut the groove at the exact point, deepen it to about ½".

Use quick setting, two-part adhesive (JB Weld works great) and goop up the groove with the adhesive. Push the pipe into the groove and rotate it back and forth until it seats against the wood. Bring up your tailstock, put a small, flat piece of plywood on it, and force the plywood against the pipe with the tailstock so that the pipe is held onto the faceplate while the adhesive sets. Be sure the pipe doesn't wobble on the base. Turn your lathe on at the lowest speed and allow it to turn while the adhesive sets. This will prevent the adhesive from running and help ensure that the PVC pipe runs true.

After the adhesive sets, check that your pipe is true. To do this, remove the tailstock and the piece of plywood. Turn your lathe on. If there is a small amount of wobble, use a sharp tool to turn away enough of the PVC pipe to remove the wobble. If, for some reason, there is too much wobble, discard this chuck and be more careful with making your next one.

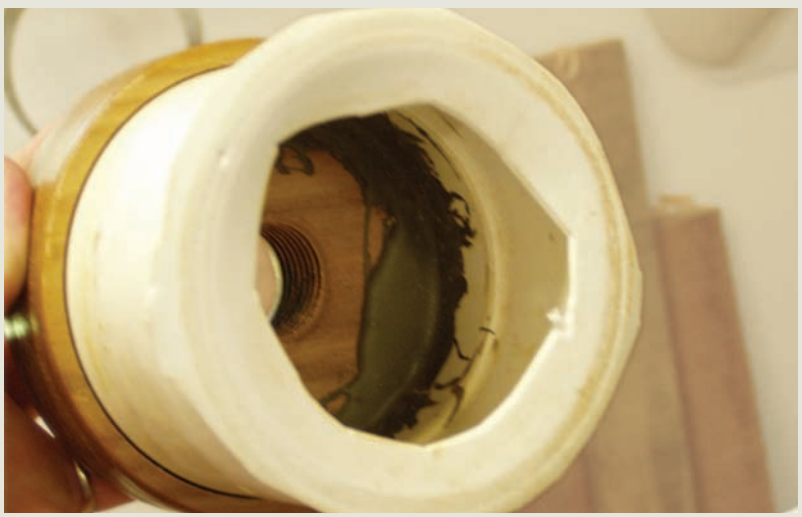
In order to use the chuck, you will need a piece of closed-cell foam sheet or similar material to make a gasket that will seal the turned object to the PVC pipe of the vacuum chuck. You can purchase closed-cell foam sheets at most art stores, as well as discount stores such as Wal-Mart. Cut rings of the sheet that are a bit larger than the OD of the pipe you are using for your chuck. The size of the inner hole of the ring isn't critical; just leave at least ½" width of foam to stick to the end of the PVC pipe for each chuck. If you've purchased the foam with the adhesive (crack and peel) on the back, stick it onto the face of the pipe. If you can't find the adhesive-backed foam, use spray adhesive to hold the non-adhesive-backed foam in place. Spray the back of the foam before you attach it to the chuck. Now, screw the chuck onto your lathe or onto a portable carving stand, turn on your vacuum, attach your turning, and there you have it, your completed lathe/carving stand vacuum chuck.

The nice thing about using PVC pipe is that you can use the wide variety of sizes available. Even short scraps are usable. If you are resourceful, you may not even have to purchase any pipe for the chuck. Check with local plumbers or builders and ask them to save the small cutoff pieces of pipe that they routinely toss away. You can make many chucks for a minimum amount (probably less than a dollar each) so you have exactly the chuck you need for any turning or carving job. ■

Fred Hill is a retired biology professor who lives in the Endless Mountains of Pennsylvania.

Cliff Hill is a retired aerospace engineer who lives in coastal North Carolina.

Bottom view of completed vacuum chuck.



Top view of completed vacuum chuck with gasket in place.

Assortment of vacuum chucks ready to use.

Pneumatic Carving Stand

Frederick C. Hill with Clifford L. Hill

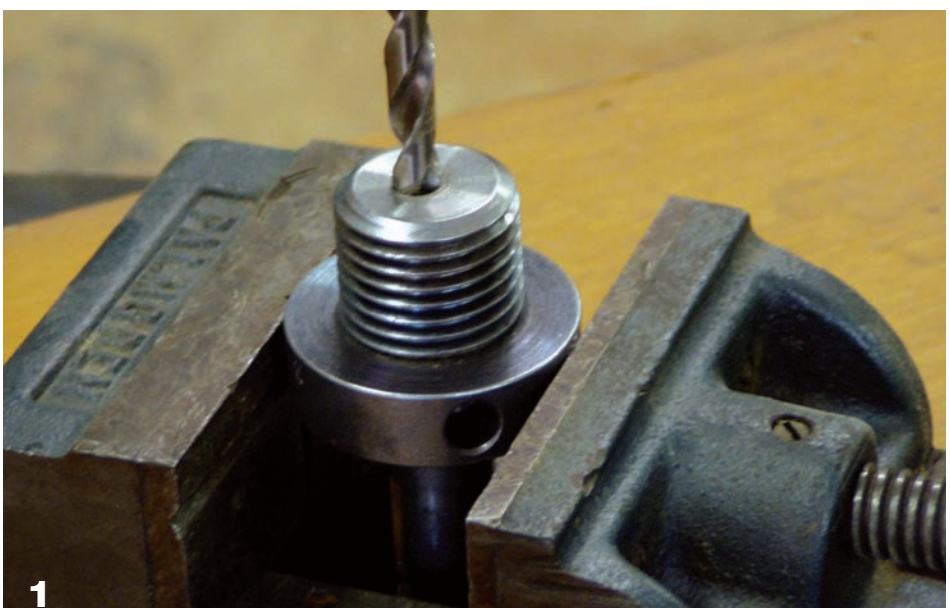
Cliff and I have been woodturning for more years than we care to admit. We go to as many of the woodturning shows as our schedules allow, but one of them, the Ohio Valley Woodturners Guild's biannual symposium (www.ovwg.org) is one that we simply don't miss. The 2007 symposium was no exception. One of the featured turners, Trent Bosch, particularly caught our attention. His *Vessel of Illusion* is a work of art and the techniques he has developed in making it are well worth learning. We have known about Trent and his lathe work for years, but this is the first time we were able to devote time to see him in action. He is one of the best natural teachers we have encountered. Trent is excellent in developing and implementing ideas for unique woodturnings. He is also a well-established toolmaker.

One of the most interesting tools he used during his demonstrations was his Portable Carving Stand (www.trentbosch.com). We had seen the stand at previous shows, but this was a time when "readiness met opportunity" and we both really saw it for the first time. We were at the point where we were doing a lot more work off the lathe and were unconsciously looking for a good holder for our turnings so we could sculpt them.

Trent's carving stand is well constructed. It holds a turned object by attaching the chuck, with the turning still attached, directly to the stand. This affords the opportunity to carve or modify a turned object in any way conceivable. Trent's stand has the advantage of having a single handle that is used to swivel the items in all directions and lock them in position instantly. Also, the stand can be purchased with the thread size for most lathes so that any chuck will fit. The stand comes with a separate bracket that can be mounted on a workbench so the stand can be mounted wherever you choose. It also fits in the 1" hole in the toolrest base (banjo).

While the stand works very well, we both needed to be able to work on items off the lathe that had been turned using a vacuum chuck. Trent's stand isn't modified for that purpose. We contacted Trent and discussed this with him but he indicated that he wasn't going to make the vacuum chuck modifications. Cliff and I came up with the idea of drilling two intersecting holes in the top of the stand and attaching a male ⅛-NPT pneumatic coupler. The stainless steel that Trent uses for these stands is soft enough to drill through it easily with a high-speed steel drill bit thus making this modification relatively easy to do.

To make this modification, drill your first hole through the top of the carving stand and parallel to the long



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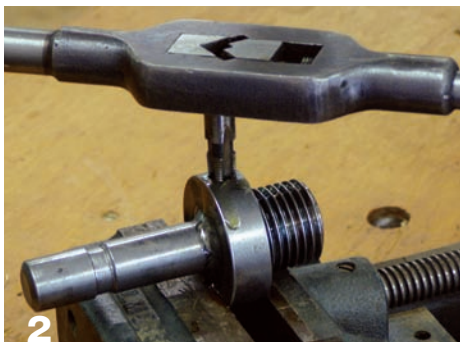
Drilling the first hole into the carving stand.



Threading the hole in the carving stand where the male pneumatic connector will attach.

axis of it (*Photo 1*). Use a drill press at low speed for accuracy. It is also important to use a good grade of thread-cutting oil for any drilling operation in metal. Drill the hole to a depth that will ensure it intersects with the next hole you are about to drill (1¼" to 1⅜" deep will work). The diameter of the first hole is not critical since it is simply a vehicle to connect to the next hole you are about to drill (we used a 21⁄64" diameter bit).

Next, rotate the part so you can drill a hole in the flange at 90° to the first hole. This will be used to install the male pneumatic connector. Using a "Q" or "R" size drill bit (0.332 and 0.339-inch diameter, respectively), drill the flange through to the initial hole. Tap the hole using a ⅛-27 NPT tap (*Photo 2*). Use a liberal amount of thread-cutting oil.

Once you have drilled these two holes, take great care to ensure that you clean all of the metal shavings from the drilling process. The threads of the male pneumatic connector should then be coated with either plumber's Teflon tape or a thread sealing compound like Rector Seal. The pneumatic connector is then screwed into the hole in the Portable Carving Stand. Once the connector is in the hole, there should be a continuous hole through the top of the carving stand into the pneumatic connector.

Now, attach a flexible vacuum line to the male pneumatic connector using a female pneumatic coupler attached to the line (*Photos 3 and 4*). In order to successfully use this combination, be sure that the vacuum line you are dedicating for this operation is long enough to reach wherever you plan on doing your carving. If you do your carving at your lathe, the line you already have to feed the lathe chuck is probably adequate. If you plan on doing carving away from the lathe, it is useful to put a "T" adaptor on your vacuum line after your pressure gauge where it comes to your lathe and run a second line from there to your carving area. In either case, it is useful to have a female pneumatic coupler on the end of each line so that you can attach or detach the line at will while maintaining an airtight seal on the unattached line.

After making this simple modification, any vacuum chuck can simply be screwed onto the Portable Carving Stand and the vacuum attached to hold the piece in place. We now have a rock-solid holding device to hold our work for carving off the lathe. ■

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(Photo 3) **Carving stand with pneumatic tubing attached.**

(Photo 4) **Completed carving stand holding a bowl for hand carving.**

The Parting Tool
A Primer

Robert Rosand

Sometimes we forget that we did not start out as professionals. I was reminded of this while teaching a class a few years ago. As I talked about the tools we would be using, a student was furiously putting masking tape on the handles of her tools and then writing on the tape. When I asked what she was doing, she said she was writing the names of the tools so she wouldn't forget them. This stuck with me and I try never to forget that there was a day that I could barely turn a block of wood into a cylinder.

With that in mind, I would like to discuss the use of a basic, important tool: the parting tool. My intent is not to write the definitive word on tools and tool use, but to pass on a few tidbits I have learned over the years in order to help novice turners enjoy their turning experience and avoid some of the mistakes I've made.

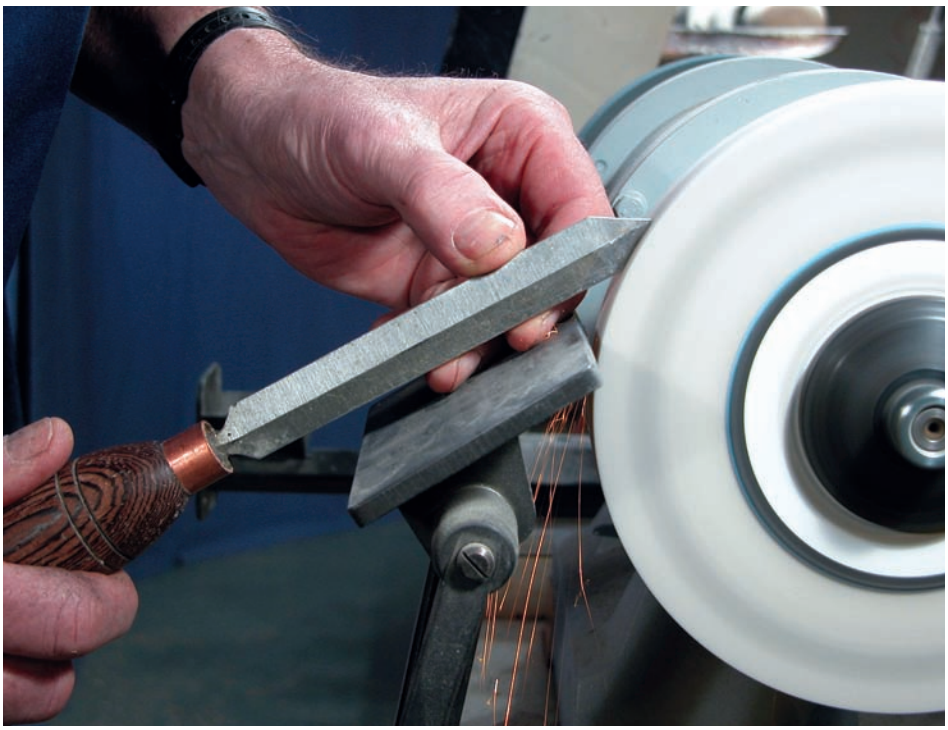
The primary function of the parting tool is to do just what the name implies, divide or separate one piece of wood from the other while the lathe is running. (Furniture makers mostly use the parting tool for parting into the wood in order to establish dimensions for various elements on a spindle.) When I first started turning, we just had parting tools. Now we have thin-walled parting tools, parting tools with flutes, diamond parting tools, mini-parting tools, and parting tools made from bandsaw blades and old knives.

Shown here is an assortment of the author's parting tools. (Left to right) Nick Cook tool with a flute (Sorby), standard diamond parting tool (Sorby), standard thin-walled tool (no flute), shopmade mini tool, Bonnie Klein mini parting tool, and shopmade parting tool.

The diamond parting tool on the right is too blunt. The bevels need to be reground (lengthened) for the tool to be used properly.

The kind of parting tools you own and use depends on the type of turning you do. I have all of them because I make a variety of objects, but I consider the diamond parting tool to be my workhorse. It costs more than a standard parting tool because the diamond profile requires more machining. What's nice about the profile is that it minimizes binding and heat buildup. A standard parting tool does not have a diamond profile so it tends to bind and generate heat, particularly in deep cuts.

A thin-walled parting tool is about 1/16" thick, but the blade is wide, which helps give the tool strength. I like to use these tools when I am turning



When sharpening a parting tool freehand, place your fingers on the toolrest and use them as a fulcrum.

lidded boxes. The thin blade minimizes waste when I separate a box lid, which helps keep the grain pattern intact between the lid and body of the container. I'm especially fond of my thin-walled, fluted parting tool which has come to be known as the Nick Cook parting tool. The little spurs on the flute cut cleanly. It's a relatively expensive tool, so I primarily use it when I want a very clean cut, even when parting through wood.

Sharpening parting tools

When any tool first comes from the factory, plan on sharpening it. Toolmakers make great tools, but for the most part they are not woodturners, so your tools need to be modified. I do my initial grinding with a 36-grit wheel which allows me to remove metal quickly to get the shape I want. I find that the factory bevels on most parting tools are too blunt, so I lengthen them. Once I have the bevel about where I want it, I switch to an 80- or 60-grit wheel to do a final touchup. I do all of my sharpening at 1,725 rpm. I like this slower speed because it allows me more time to refine the edge of the tool. You could easily use a jig for sharpening, but all that's really necessary is a good eye, a steady hand, and a substantial platform in front of the grinding wheel.

The parting tool has a cutting edge, a bevel, and a shoulder or heel. To sharpen it, place your fingers on the toolrest and use them as a fulcrum. Touch the heel of the tool to the grinding wheel, and then lift the handle of the tool until the curve of the bevel fits the curve of the grinding wheel. You want to sharpen the bevel, not the cutting edge. If you sharpen just the cutting edge, the tool *will* be sharp, but the bevel will eventually become so short that the tool will be virtually unusable (it will be blunt) and you will have to regrind it to make it useful again. Sharpening the bevel—not the edge—is an important concept that took me a long time to comprehend. If you learn it sooner than I did, it will serve you well.

While sharpening the parting tool, I also look at what I am doing from the side so that I can see the gap closing between the bevel and the wheel of the grinder as I lower the bevel onto the wheel. You do not need or want to exert a lot of pressure when sharpening. Let the grinder do the work. You might also want to try using a set of magnifying lenses so that you can see what you are doing up close and personal. The older I get, the more I find myself taking advantage of visual magnification. Good lighting is helpful, too.

Using a parting tool

Using a parting tool is fairly simple, but a surprising number of people use ▸

With the handle held too high, the wood is being scraped, not cut, with the tool.

To properly cut with a parting tool, hold the handle of the tool down and arch the cutting edge into the wood to start the cut.

it as though it were a scraper rather than a cutting tool. They are keeping the tool handle high when starting their cut, rather than dropping the handle down and feeding the cutting edge into the wood. The scraping method *will* part the cylinder of wood, but it creates sawdust rather than fine shavings. It also generates more heat, dulls the tool quicker, and takes more brute force to remove wood. You *can* part wood this way, but it is not as satisfactory as cutting.

To part or separate a cylinder of wood, let's say for the lid for a container, place the parting tool on the toolrest, drop the tool handle down (in a lowered position), and rub the heel of the bevel on the cylinder. At this point, nothing will happen. Slowly lift the tool handle up until the cutting edge engages with the wood. This is the proper cutting angle. To finish the cut, continue lifting the tool handle and at the same time advance the tool forward, in an arching motion, moving toward the center point of the cylinder of wood. There is a rhythm involved and it takes practice to master. My recommendation is to take a short piece of green wood and practice, practice, practice. Yes, even with a parting tool.

Other uses for parting tools

Once you have mastered the basics of the parting tool, you will discover that it is capable of performing other cuts. When I am turning perches for Christmas ornaments, I use the parting tool in the same manner as a skew chisel to clean up the perches. It's a time-saving measure because the edge of the parting tool is similar to that of a skew chisel.

Often I will turn the parting tool on its side and make a cut similar to using the long point of a skew chisel. This allows me to cleanly part a finial or perch from the turning stock without changing tools. When I make spindles for ornaments, I grind the cutting edge of one parting tool at an angle to look like a skew chisel. This allows me to undercut finials for a better fit. With practice, you can even turn partial beads with the parting tool. The point here is to become familiar with your tools and how they work. When you do, the possibilities abound. ■

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As the cut progresses, raise the handle of the tool and feed the cutting edge into the wood.

Sketch *for Success*

Keith Tompkins

Developing an eye for good design is perhaps the most daunting task many woodturners must contend with. In many cases, long after sharpening and cutting skills are developed, some turners still struggle with design. Contrary to popular belief, it does not have to take years of experience to develop good design skills. I am going to show you methods you can use to improve the appearance of your work, starting with your very next piece! ▸

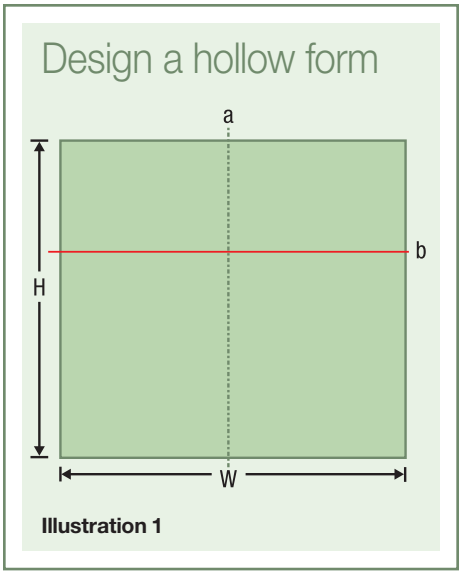


Illustration 1

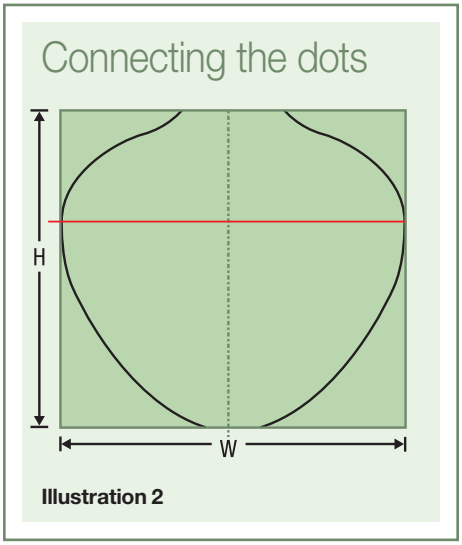


Illustration 2

Why learn to sketch?

As we first learn to turn, design considerations often take a back seat to mastering other skills. That's understandable, considering the overwhelming amount of information that needs to be absorbed. Unfortunately, this approach often leads to an unbalanced set of skills. While our mechanical abilities improve at a rapid rate, our design skills lag behind. Eventually, many turners begin to rely on shapes that have become familiar through repetition and end up turning the same shapes out of sheer habit.

I believe the key to improving the shapes you turn lies in gaining a basic understanding of design concepts and then applying them to the items you create. As I mentioned in a previous article (*AW*, vol 23 no 2), one of the best ways of doing this is learning to sketch your designs well in advance of approaching the lathe. By following a few simple guidelines, you'll discover that making sketches of your work is much easier than you may have initially thought.

This article is intended to help you recognize, draw, and then create simple, flowing forms, devoid of details. At this point, added details are not important; these may be added after the basic design concepts are mastered. In an attempt to keep things as simple as possible, I'll focus on the shapes that can be produced on the lathe: the sphere, the cone, and the cylinder. Nearly everything we turn is derived from these basic shapes; how we alter them is the key to good design.

Design a hollow form

Let's begin by designing a hollow form, which is essentially a modified cylinder. The dimensions of the piece of wood represented by Illustration 1 are essentially that of a cube, which I have selected intentionally because it generates little visual impact. In order to create a successful sketch based on this shape I will need to rely on the design concepts discussed in this article.

Illustration 1 is a simple flat rendering and represents just one side of a selected rectangular block. From this view, we can determine the width and height, but not the depth, and for our purposes, that's fine for now. Notice that I've drawn two lines through my rectangle. Dotted line "a" represents the centerline. Most turnings are symmetrical along this line and, except for multi-axis work, turners often don't take advantage of the design possibilities available to them here. This centerline is useful in making sketches: everything to the left of this line is a mirror image of what is drawn on the right. *Hint:* It's easy to fold a sketch along the centerline, and trace the image from one side to the other.

The red line "b" represents the emphasis point, usually recognized as the largest diameter of the turning. We can experiment with the emphasis point. Its placement will have a profound effect on the overall appearance of your work. Why is that so?

Static versus dynamic

Where we decide to place the emphasis point (line "b") on our turning affects the overall *balance* and *proportion* of the piece. If the emphasis is placed at the midpoint of the turning, we now have an object that is perfectly balanced along both lines "a" and "b." The result is a piece that is *static* and not visually interesting. Inverting the form has no effect. The piece has reached a point of equilibrium and appears dull and lifeless.

Something happens when we shift this emphasis point away from center. The shapes we draw above the line no longer mimic the shape drawn below the line. We have broken up the symmetry. By carefully situating the emphasis point, we can alter a form's appearance. Our goal is to create the illusion of movement, of lightness and lift. Pieces that possess these qualities have a *dynamic* appearance and generate a sense of movement.

Inverting a dynamic form such as this will still have a pleasing appearance. As a reference, a good starting point for line "b" is about one-third of the turning's height. The importance of creating sketches should now begin to become apparent. It's a simple matter to make sketches of an object

and modify its appearance by shifting the emphasis point before committing a block of wood to the lathe.

For an exercise in sketching, draw several rectangles (either vertical or horizontal), but move the emphasis point slightly in each drawing. Notice the effect this has on each sketch. Make as many sketches as you wish; paper is cheaper than wood.

We have discovered that moving the emphasis point can change the appearance of our sketches and therefore, what we make. But, can we do anything along line "a" to improve the appearance? Unlike the emphasis point, we cannot move the centerline, but we can change the diameter of the piece at different points along this line. For example, creating a small foot on our hollow form creates a bit of contrast between the size of the foot and the largest diameter of the piece. This allows us to connect the two points with a long, flowing, continuous curve.

Varying the size between the vessel's opening and the size of the foot is another way of breaking up the symmetry. This can have a subtle, but noticeable effect on the vessel's appearance.

By considering changes to the size of the foot or the opening, as well as the emphasis point, we can control how our sketch will appear. Again, a good guideline is the foot should be one-third of the overall diameter or smaller.

Important note: I have given no consideration to how the wood will be held on the lathe. For example, the size of your chuck should not determine the shape of the object you make. The goal is to create the form you have sketched.

Bert Marsh, vase, 2007, Mulberry, 8" × 9½"

Bill Luce, *Natural Edge Bleached Curly Maple Round Bottomed Bowl,* 2005, 6" × 10"

Photo: Jonathan McQuire

To help improve your sense of design, compare vessels side by side. By viewing two or three similar vessels together, from a distance of around 6', subtle differences can be observed: overall proportion of height to width; the relative height of the waist of a closed vessel; the degree to which a closed bowl curves back into the rim. These subtle differences reveal the emotional impact of each object. Becoming aware of the emotional impact that one object has compared to another is critical, because it allows us to see essential truths of form that are difficult to recognize in a single vessel. With this heightened sensitivity to elements of form, we can more quickly recognize that successful design is much more than just the absence of flat spots. The real goal in design is power, not perfection.

Connecting the dots

In Illustration 2, I have used the concepts discussed to make a sketch of a hollow form. I have paid close attention to the line of the form in order to draw a smooth, continuous curve from the top to the base. Notice how the placement of the emphasis point and the size of the foot affect the shape. After drawing the initial shape, I carefully refine the curves to make sure there are no flat spots or straight sections to detract from its appearance.

Hint: It helps to make your sketch full size. To help draw smooth curves, use your whole arm, using your shoulder as a pivot point.

The process of visualizing and drawing smooth, flowing curves on paper is very similar to creating flowing shapes on the lathe. By making sketches, we are learning to refine our sense of good form. Keep your designs clean and simple and avoid sharp changes in direction. Once you are happy with the shape you have sketched, you may want to add details, such as a bead or incised lines to your finished vessel, however, simplicity is the goal in the early stages of learning about design.

Design a bowl

I've chosen to work with cone shapes when I design a bowl. This shape helps me sketch pleasing bowl forms. The shape of the cone defines the diameter of the rim and helps gauge the size of the foot as well. The cone can be stretched and manipulated, ▸

allowing a variety of bowl forms to be sketched.

Illustration 3 shows three triangles, which are flat, two-dimensional representations of cones. Similar to Illustration 1, the dotted line represents the centerline. In Illustration 4, I have sketched three possible forms based on the triangles. Notice that, similar to the hollow form, I have strived to create a smooth, continuous line from the rim to the foot with no flat spots or straight lines. Pay close attention to how the line approaches the foot. Rather than ending abruptly, it flows into the foot creating a sense of lift.

Also notice there is no transition point that defines the point where the wall of the bowl meets the base. We are striving to create a smooth, sweeping curve from the rim to the foot that can be felt as well as seen. Turning a bowl is a rather straightforward process, but turning a bowl with consistently great form is an entirely different matter. I believe that by making sketches we train ourselves to see and visualize good form and the results will be reflected in our work.

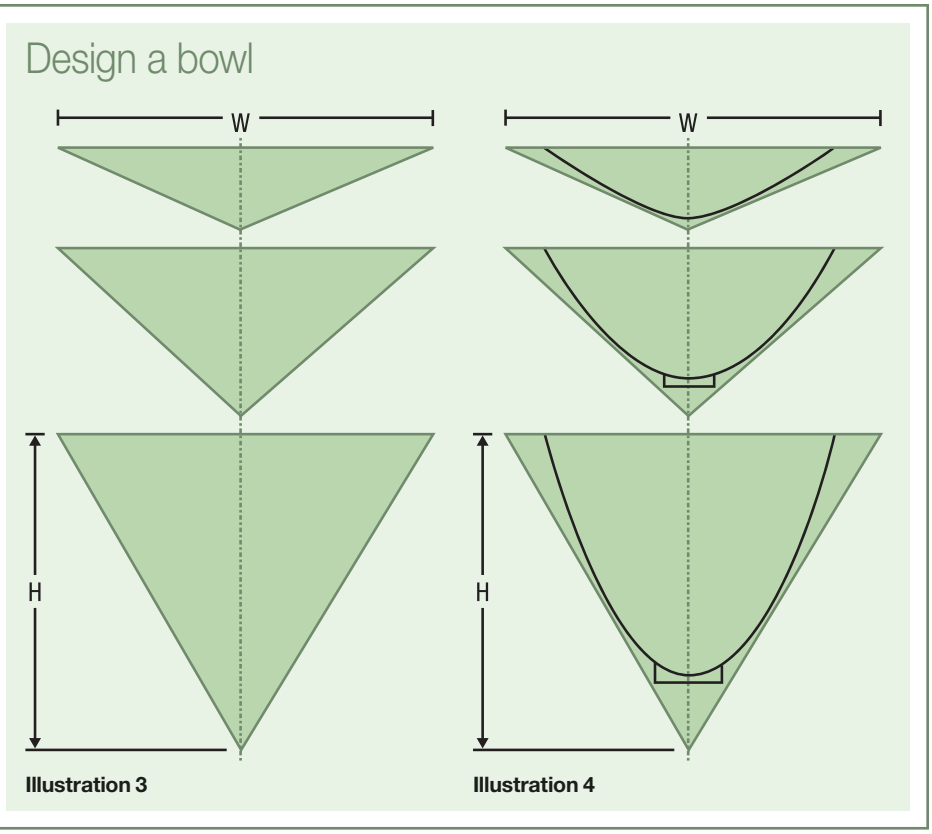


Illustration 3 **Illustration 4**

Make it yours

Once you are comfortable with sketching your designs and have trained your eye to recognize a few basic design concepts, you will begin to observe ordinary objects in a whole new way. Look closely at their shape. Examine where the emphasis point lies and how the major points are connected. Make sketches of shapes that appeal to you and add them to your sketchbook as the basis for new turnings.

You might also look at the work you have produced up to this point and give it an honest assessment based on the concepts I've outlined. By going through this exercise, perhaps you may spot areas where improvements can be made. Best of all, once you are fairly adept at recognizing and turning simple, attractive forms, adding details based on your own personal tastes or experiences will give you the ability to create turned objects that are uniquely your own. ■

Al Stirt, bowl, 2001, Butternut, 14"

I design mostly on the lathe, usually making a small prototype before trying the larger piece. This helps me get the proportions and details right. For every bowl I make, form comes first. Staring at the foot of the bowl, the curve gradually straightens out as it nears the rim giving the bowl some lift. The curve of the bowl looks like it continues through the foot, which allows the bowl to float above the surface it sits on, and the foot is large enough to support the visual weight of the flutes.

The flutes are an integral part of the bowl, not something added to the form. The width, depth, and number of flutes add to the ultimate feel of the bowl. The way the flutes hit the rim is also important, as is the wall thickness. Because the flutes are deeper at the rim than near the foot, I turn the wall a bit thicker at the rim.

– Al Stirt

Keith Tompkins is a studio artist who lives in Tivoli, NY. He is a member of Kaatskill Mountain Woodturners. He can be contacted at daddyo@webjogger.net.

First Segmented *Woodturning Symposium*

John Jaworowicz

Curt Theobald, *Bearclaw*, 2007, Curly maple, cherry, 9¾" × 16"

I was too excited to sleep. I felt like a kid on Christmas Eve, waiting to see what Santa had left the next morning. I had been to Marc Adams School of Woodworking before. I knew how to get there, hotel reservations were confirmed, the car was filled with gas, and my suitcase was already in the car. This trip was different, though. I was going to attend the first woodturning symposium dedicated exclusively to segmented turning!

Exploring Possibilities: The First Ever Segmented Woodturning Symposium was the brainchild of Malcolm Tibbetts, hatched on a long drive home some two years ago. Malcolm could think of no better place than Marc Adams School of Woodworking to host such an event. After two years of planning with Don Metcalf, head of the woodturning program at the school, the date had finally arrived. I rolled out of bed, showered, dressed, and drove the ten minutes to Exit 95. When I entered the school, there was something different: an electricity I had not felt before. I saw familiar faces from previous turning classes, as well as the usual staff. Small groups gathered, drinking coffee, holding mini instant galleries as they shared their turnings.

Segmented turning has been a subset of woodturning for over forty years. It was initially described as "polychromatic assembly" by Lincoln Seitzman to describe his basket-weave designs. Malcolm Tibbetts, currently a Board member of AAW, is known for slicing up perfectly good turnings and regluing them into elaborate woven designs. Curt Theobald from Wyoming started out with traditional Native American designs and has evolved his own style of contemporary segmented work with his Shipwreck series and *The Wizard*. He has been a frequent demonstrator at the AAW's ▸

William Smith,
Euclid Dream series, 2008,
Bloodwood, holly, 2½" × 5"

national symposium, as well as at regional and local turning meetings. He emphasizes striving for perfection in joinery rather than settling for "good enough." William Smith is well known for his open-segmented work, much of which is done on a very small scale. He, also, is branching out with his own contemporary style with his Euclid's Dream series and pieces like *Down the Rabbit Hole*. Bill has been a frequent demonstrator at national and regional meetings. He is a delight to watch.

I delivered my pieces to the instant gallery where I was immediately stunned by the number and quality of pieces present. I felt humbled placing my work in their midst. Classic designs predominated, modeled after Native American pottery. I saw very little open-segmented work and relatively little contemporary work. Malcolm brought along a *Square Knot Sculpture* and Curt brought his father/daughter pieces. Bill displayed some of his superb, tiny open-segmented vessels.

During opening remarks from Marc Adams, I found out just how special this weekend was. Ninety-two people had registered, no one had canceled, and all ninety-two were in attendance. Turners had come literally from the four corners of the United States, as well as one turner who made the trek from Lima, Peru. Some, like myself, were relative novices who had been segmenting only about six months. Others had been practicing the art for years and their work showed it. Ninety-one others were just as anxious as I was to get the symposium started, so we quickly split off into four rooms.

Curt Theobald presented his lecture on setting up and calibrating the disc sander and sanding sled to create segments of uniform size, with the ideal surface for gluing up. This technique forms the basis for creating perfect segments, ready for glue-up into rings. In his demo room, Malcolm Tibbetts discussed stave construction and assembly. He began with the basics of table saw setup and safety. In addition, he reviewed clamping techniques applicable to pairs of staves, as well as assembling and clamping an entire staved section of a turning. He also shared several examples of cutting and turning the staves before they are assembled. Bill Smith's session covered the basic geometry and design of open-segmented vessels. He stressed that careful attention needs to be placed on spacing and percentage-of-opening within the segments in order to maintain stability of the vessel. He finished by explaining and demonstrating the assembly techniques and jigs that he uses to create the tiny, intricate open-segmented bowls he is known for.

While the primary instructors were in session, a carefully selected group

Malcolm Tibbetts,
Martin's Dream, 2008, Gabon ebony,
birdseye maple, 11" × 34", with 2" diam. tube

Curt Theobald, *Eye of the Needle,* 2007, Wenge, 9½" × 3½" × 5"

of secondary instructors from the woodworking industry presented sessions in the Forum area of the building. Lloyd Johnson, creator of the Woodturning Pro suite of design software, hosted several sessions on the basics of his software. He fielded many suggestions from the audience for future, useful functions to consider adding. Dave Zimmerman from Franklin International (manufacturers of the Titebond line of glues) talked about the chemistry of glue, choices of glue, and clamping techniques. Bottles of Titebond glue were generously provided to the registrants. Carter Rothrock, former national president of the Lumberman's Association, presented two sessions on understanding wood anatomy, movement, and preparation.

Larry Smith, the Midwest representative from Festool Corporation, presented the new Kapex 120 EB compound miter saw. He meticulously explained the quality features of the Festool line and followed it up with a demonstration of the machine's cutting accuracy and precision.

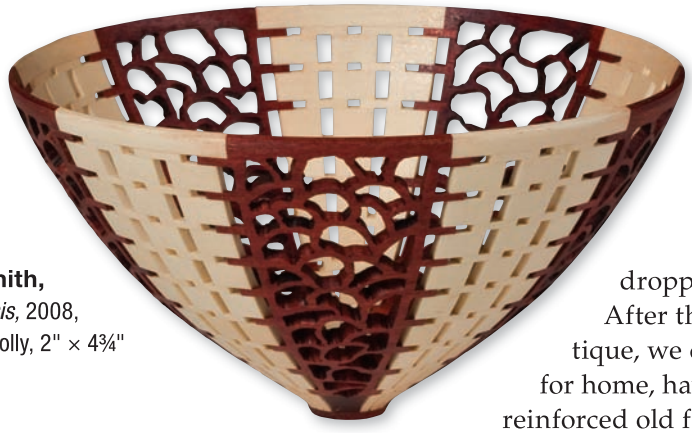
The energy and enthusiasm continued into the evening slideshow. Malcolm hosted a lively PowerPoint presentation in which he presented the segmented turnings of instructors as well as the attendees. The audience had an opportunity to share their design ideas, motivation, and assembly secrets in an open, friendly environment. The bi-directional exchange of information between the instructors and the audience permeated the weekend's meeting. Saturday's offerings continued along the same lines. All three primary instructors expanded upon their initial presentations and covered the more intricate details of design, clamping techniques, assembly sequence, and wood movement. Betty Scarpino presented an impromptu afternoon session on turning design. Tim Puro offered two sessions on the ten steps to a perfect finish.

That evening, a catered dinner of chicken and prime rib was held at Community Congregational Church. Marc presented plaques to Malcolm, Curt, and Bill, recognizing their efforts as teachers and thanking them for organizing and coordinating the weekend. A dozen door prizes were handed out, ranging from DVDs and pens, to autographed copies of the instructors' books. I hope Malcolm makes good use of the Theobald DVDs he won.

Lincoln Seitzman was the featured speaker. He is a renowned turner, known primarily for his *Basket* ▸

Don Leman, pepper grinders, 2008, Various hardwoods, sizes range from 8" to 10½" tall

Don was one of the attendees at the First Segmented Woodturning Symposium. He lives in Columbus, OH, and can be contacted at www.donleman.com.



William Smith,
Metamorphosis, 2008,
Bloodwood, holly, 2" × 4¾"

Illusions. Lincoln shared the history and evolution of his career, as well as many anecdotes from his life. To cap off the evening, Marc presented Lincoln with a distinguished service award.

On Sunday morning, we assembled for a critique of the instant gallery. Twenty pieces were selected for discussion of shape, design, use of color, and material. An effective critique not only points out the faults in a turning, but also recognizes an artist's accomplishments. This session was no different. I learned about the importance of flow of the shape, visually as well as tactilely. I saw the importance of proportion, wall thickness, and that a vessel should look good upside down as well as upright. A simple change in the size of the footprint and the shape of the transition to the base can make the difference between a piece sitting properly on the table or appearing to have just been dropped there. After the critique, we departed for home, having reinforced old friendships, made new ones, and filled our hearts and minds with new ideas and enthusiasm.

After turning for almost twenty-five years, my interest is now focused on segmented turning. Being able to construct a turning from a board and scraps of wood has an inherent attraction: less material winds up on the floor and in the garbage. Granted, the beauty of a burl or unique wood grain patterns cannot be reproduced by segmented turning, but, in my opinion, the precision, craftsmanship, and planning required to execute a segmented piece are profound indications of the turner as an artist.

Marc Adams challenged the conference attendees not to let the enthusiasm of the First Segmented Turning Symposium die. Malcolm proposed creating a separate display area for segmented work within the AAW annual symposium's Instant Gallery, something that already exists for our pen-turning colleagues. Several attendees volunteered to collect and post the pictures taken at the symposium on the symposium website: www.segmentedwoodturners.org. Tentative discussion of forming a segmented turners' special interest group or chapter within the AAW followed.

We have the opportunity to expand interest in and appreciation for segmented turning through education and exposure on a local and national level. How about a segmented turning section within our national publication, *American Woodturner*? I would like to see the art of segmented turning evolve into more contemporary forms. Without this evolution, the art of segmented turning will stagnate and become a lost art.

Malcolm Tibbetts and Curt Theobald have been on the cutting edge of creativity, both having started with traditional designs. They allowed those designs to evolve, twist, bend, be cut up and reglued into striking, modern art objects. Similarly, Bill Smith has shared his philosophy and construction secrets at the AAW symposium and a variety of local meetings. His piece, *Metamorphosis*, combines open segmentation with pierced areas. As such, it represents a bridge into more modern design. I propose that we take what we have learned from making traditional segmented designs, reach out to the future and let our art move forward.

For more information, visit www.segmentedwoodturners.org. ■

Photo: Leonard Badour

Bill Smith, Curt Theobald, and Malcolm Tibbetts (left to right) hosted the instant gallery critique at the First Segmented Turning Symposium.

John Jaworowicz is an anesthesiologist from Rockford, IL. He has been woodworking for over thirty years and turning for the last fifteen. He is a member of The Northern Illinois Woodturners chapter of the AAW. He became interested in segmented woodturning one year ago. He is married with three daughters. JWoodturner@gmail.com.

Lincoln Seitzman

Robin Rice

Apache Olla Basket Illusion, 2000,
Guatambu wood, paint, ink, 21" × 15"

I first noticed Lincoln Seitzman's work in 1997 in the Wood Turning Center's (WTC) exhibit, "Curator's Focus: Turning in Context." There, his basket illusions neatly complemented the conceptual and language-based work of artists like Connie Mississippi and Gord Peteran. Lincoln, I fancied, was a whiz kid just out of art school with a postmodern agenda: commenting on craft and its traditions while flaunting his uncanny mastery of the wood medium. I looked forward to seeing more of his work in the future. Well, I got that *last* part right: I'd see and appreciate Lincoln's consummate skills again.

Lincoln's pieced and turned objects are as refined conceptually and technically as anything made on the lathe today. They are notable for his high-level problem solving, for his respect for the craft skills of other often anonymous makers, and for his finely honed understanding of fiber art. These qualities reflect Lincoln's lengthy, serendipitous preparation for a career as a turner. He received a bachelor of aeronautical engineering from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in 1944 and joined the aircraft industry, developing planes for the Navy. Following the Second World War, he took over the family business. Thirty-five years of manufacturing clothing developed his eye for the many possibilities of woven and stitched fibers.

Retiring from business, he began to experiment with wood and taught himself to use a lathe. He was selling cutting boards, pieced from contrasting woods, at the local tennis club when he encountered an object made by a wood carver to resemble a basket. The imitation of weaving was distorted on the sides. Lincoln does not really have the temperament of a hobbyist: nothing short of perfection satisfies him. "I said to myself," Lincoln recalls, "if *I* did this, it would ▸

Petrified Cherokee Basket, 1999,
Ivorywood, bloodwood, ipe, ink, 12" × 10"

Petrified Ewer Basket, 1999,
Ivorywood, bloodwood, ipe, ink, 14" × 9"

Petrified Shopping Basket, 1990, Ipe, cherry, maple, 18" × 15" × 9"

look like a basket all the way around." It took some thought, but Lincoln ultimately was not only able to duplicate the positioning of different colors all around the basket, he finished the bottom as it would appear if woven.

Lincoln entered one of his Illusion series baskets in the WTC's 1988 "International Turned Objects Show" and felt "like Cinderella" when it was accepted. "I met Albert [LeCoff, executive director of the WTC] and all the fellow turners. They were perfectly friendly and no secrets were withheld. It's not the secrets," he chuckles, "it's the ability."

"What will you do next?" LeCoff asked him.

"I don't know. I've done a basket. Now I have to do something else."

"Not necessarily," LeCoff wisely replied.

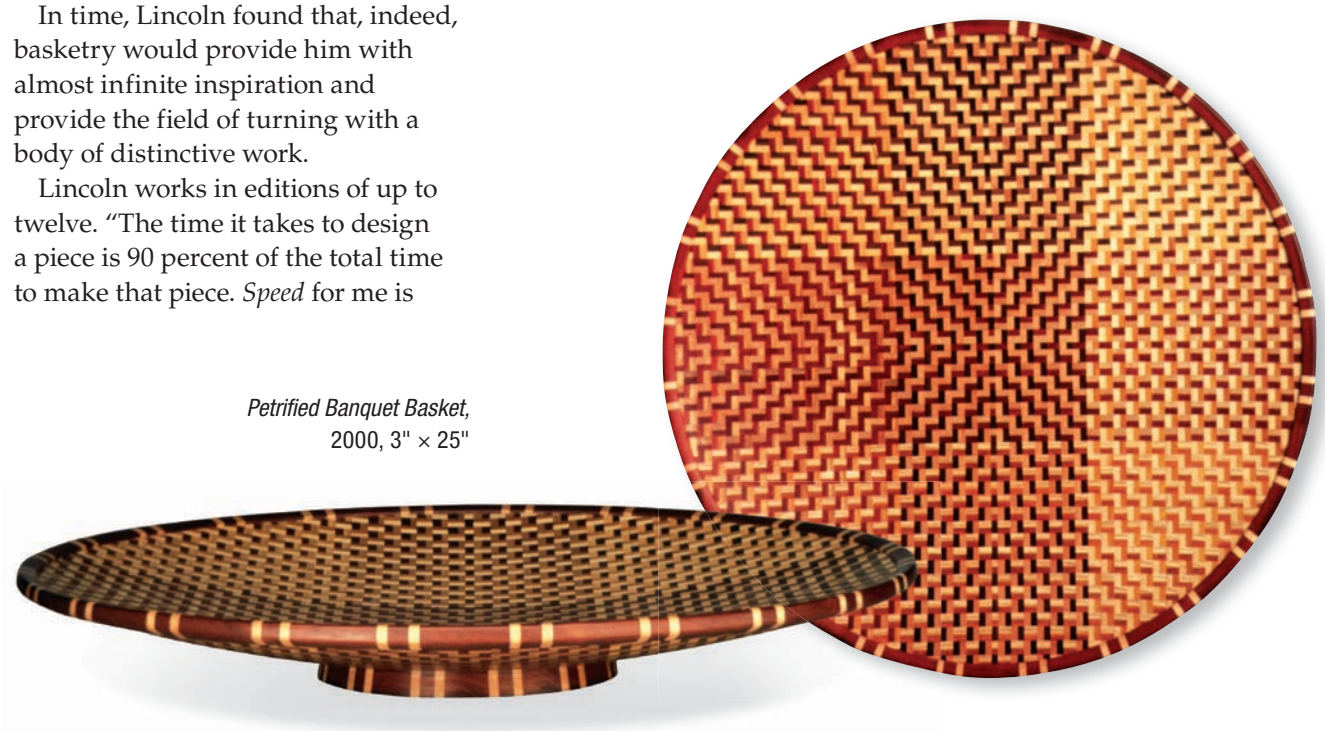
In time, Lincoln found that, indeed, basketry would provide him with almost infinite inspiration and provide the field of turning with a body of distinctive work.

Lincoln works in editions of up to twelve. "The time it takes to design a piece is 90 percent of the total time to make that piece. *Speed* for me is in terms of weeks. Each work of an edition may vary. Size and pattern are identical but the exact colors of the wood may not be." In his compact, orderly shop, he reconfigures a 1950s Shopsmith from a table saw to a 15" disc sander to a lathe.

The Petrified series is made of glossy, highly finished, dark- and light-colored woods cut in contrasting widths. Often, strokes of a tiny pen create shadows that complete the illusion of weaving. *Petrified Cherokee Basket* and *Petrified Ewer Basket* both have wide horizontal bands interwoven with narrow verticals, along with some of those inked shadows.

Lincoln challenged himself to make *Banquet Basket*, a large 25" disk, duplicating a tray he saw in an Ethiopian restaurant. *Petrified Shopping Basket*, which Lincoln identifies as "my masterpiece" is a vertical ovoid with a radiating pattern of small rectangles. The effect of an elegantly constructed utilitarian container is enhanced by the use of undisguised wood in the handles and by diagonal braces that cut dramatically through the regular weave pattern.

The *Shopping Basket*, *Treasure Basket*, and *The Water Basket* (with handles of real horse hair) are satisfying as self-contained sculptures without refer-



Petrified Banquet Basket, 2000, 3" × 25"

Apache Water Basket Illusion, 1992,
Oak, paint, ink, horsehair, 10" × 8"

ence to a possible cultural meaning; however, Lincoln's admiration for handwork and humble crafts does link him to the Pattern and Decoration movement of the 1970s and 1980s. When artists like Miriam Schapiro appropriated and imitated handworked woven, pieced, and embroidered fabrics, they drew attention to the achievements of unsung, anonymous creators. Similarly, Lincoln was inspired by baskets he saw in many settings. In a sense, each piece he makes is homage to the vessel tradition. Of course, in order to render his homage he could not fall back on basketry techniques and had to devise a new method for segmented woodturning.

The Basket Illusion series is about the coiled basket tradition. Lincoln refers to them as "stitched" baskets because stitching ties the coils of the real baskets together. In Lincoln's versions, fine pen lines suggest the lines defining the stitches. He especially reveres Native American art at the Heard Museum in Phoenix. The fidelity of his representations of Navajo, Apache, Cherokee, Hopi, and other Native American baskets reflects his understanding of the achievements of those artists. It's appropriate that his *Apache Olla Basket Illusion* is in the collection of the White House.

Lincoln Seitzman retired from active turning in 2006 at age eighty. His pioneering explorations of new techniques were recognized at the first Symposium on Segmented turning in November 2008 at the Marc Adams School of Woodworking, where he was the keynote speaker. The segmented turners (www.segmentedwoodturners.org) hope to eventually found a new AAW chapter. Seitzman has acquired a few imitators and inspired many turners to find their own unique paths, but the master of basket illusions has no peers in his chosen arena. ■

Robin Rice is Adjunct Associate Professor at the University of the Arts, Philadelphia. Her writing has appeared in numerous periodicals; she is author or coauthor of several books, including the award-winning Philadelphia Murals and the Stories They Tell, *and she is the recipient of a 2009 Pennsylvania Council on the Arts Fellowship in Arts Commentary. A version of this article first appeared in* Turning Points, *Vol 16 no 4, 2004, Wood Turning Center.*

Apache Treasure Basket Illusion, 1999,
Maple, paint, ink, 9" × 12"

Muskego Chapel

A Treasure Trove of American Folk Turning

Terry Martin

The Muskego Chapel on the grounds of the Luther Seminary.

One of the most exciting things about being a woodturning writer is discovering relatively unknown examples of this ancient craft. Often it takes serious research, even detective work, to track down such treasures, but the best finds are those you don't expect. In July of 2008, on the way to the AAW Richmond conference, Kevin Wallace and I traveled to Minneapolis for an exhibition of work by artists from our book, *New Masters of Woodturning*. In one of those moments of pure serendipity that light up our lives, we stumbled upon one of the true woodturning treasures of the United States.

The exhibition was held at Nina Bliese Gallery in downtown Minneapolis. Nina's husband, Richard Bliese, is president of one of the largest Lutheran seminaries in the United States, and he kindly offered to let us stay in guest accommodation there. When he drove us to the seminary, we were delighted to see that it was set in beautiful park-like grounds and tidy streets lined with cozy homes and educational facilities. It has a real village atmosphere and we felt right at home.

Because of our interest in wood, Richard offered to show us "the old wooden chapel" on the grounds. It sounded interesting, so the next day we drove the short distance to the chapel. At first it looked like an impressively large log cabin surrounded by trees. A plaque on the outside told us that it was built in 1844 in Wisconsin, then moved to the seminary in 1904. This was surprising because it didn't look so old. Closer inspection showed that the logs were very weathered, but it had all been well maintained and was in good condition.

We stepped in at Richard's invitation, still thinking we were going to see a space inside just like the rough exterior. What we found left us open-mouthed with surprise. In contrast to the rough log walls, there were two rows of stately turned columns that supported an upper floor. Further in, the altar was decorated with large split turnings, the altar rail was supported

Photo: Terry Martin

The memorial plaque.

by turned banisters, and the baptismal font was mounted on a large turned base. It was a treasure trove of old turning.

The size of the columns was impressive—at least seven feet tall and quite thick. My first thought was that they must have been hard to mount on a lathe, and I wondered what kind of lathe would have been used. When I looked more closely, they appeared to have been turned very badly. The tool marks were still quite evident and there was a lot of deep tearout on the detailed work. It appeared as if the turner had an idea of what was to be achieved, but the apparently clumsy work made me think that he had never done it before.

When I stepped back again and looked down the row of columns, I could see that they varied in shape and line. I asked myself, "Who was this turner? What tools was he working with? What kind of lathe did he have?" I asked Richard but he didn't know. Later inquiries confirmed that nothing much was known about the turnings. As I stood in the quiet atmosphere of this old building, I wondered, "Why did they turn such classical-style columns in a log building?" Much of what I have found out since then has given me the deepest respect for the craftsmen who worked so hard to produce this work.

Photo: Ryan Torma, Luther Seminary

Detail of a column showing tool marks and grain tearout.

Photo: Terry Martin

The chapel was built by Norwegian settlers in Muskego, Wisconsin, a town named after the Potawatomi people's name for the area, Mus-kee-Guaac, meaning sunfish. The first permanent European settlement was in 1836. It helps to know that the chapel was built only eight years after the first settlers arrived. In *The Saga of Old Muskego*, author N.N. Rönning talks of "building a church in the wilderness." We learn that the "Rev. Clausen was along in felling the trees for the logs, that Halvor Lohner, a house builder from Telemark, took a leading part . . . [and that] Peder Jacobson . . . was the one who by use of a lathe turned the pillars inside the church. Ole Spellum is said to have turned the balusters of small pillars of the altar ring." These men, with the help of the other men and women of the community, built what was to be the first Norwegian Lutheran church in America.

We need to remember how tough these settlers were. They arrived in a part of America that was still pioneer territory where daily survival was a continuing challenge. They only had simple tools to work with and were used to doing without basic facilities, which is shown by the fact that the chapel was not heated until five years after it was completed, although it was in constant use during all that time. Looking at the hard wooden benches and knowing how cold it must have been, I can't help but wonder how long Reverend Clausen's sermons were during the coldest winter months.

By 1869, the chapel was too small for the growing community so it was pulled down and parts of it were used as a barn for pigs. Fortunately, by the early twentieth century, the church community realized how important this piece of their history was and rebuilt it on its present site, preserving not only a piece of church history, but also a remarkable example of turning history.

We know that the columns were turned from black walnut. What we don't know is how Peder Jacobson did it or how much he knew about turning. When you look closely, it appears the details may have been turned "uphill," or against the grain, which could account for the tearing of the grain. However, Peder may not have had proper turning tools. All of this ▸

Photo: Terry Martin

The altar rail.

is speculation, but my guess is that he was not a trained turner. He may have been a wheelwright or perhaps a blacksmith who repaired wagons when required. He probably had to forge his own tools and may not have known how to use them properly.

Then there is the question of the lathe. Norway has a long history of turning, and turned work was probably familiar to most of the settlers, but the lathe used to turn these columns must have been very large. It may have been a rough wooden bed with wedged head- and tailstocks. But how was it was driven? Large logs like this are very heavy and even mounting them on the lathe would have required some help. It must have taken a lot of power to start them turning and to maintain any kind of speed. The most likely power source was human hand power, probably through a great wheel. It would have been good winter work to keep warm. Once we picture the enormous logs turning erratically and not very fast on a rough lathe, the tool marks and inconsistent shapes are understandable. Also, there would have been no way to sand these columns so, with this in mind, the finish is quite impressive.

The detail on the decorative elements looks as if the turner had seen such work, but was not sure exactly how it should be. Some of the beads are well formed, but the stepped portions at the top of the columns look rough. The altar rail banisters by Ole Spellum are a little more consistent, and if we look at what is obviously a later replacement spindle, it is clear that although it is not fine work, Ole knew what he was doing. I have to ask myself if I could produce such work under those conditions, and I am sure I could not.

When I sat quietly in this old building and thought about those turners, I was quite moved. Their work was part of a community effort to make a new home for themselves, both physical and spiritual. The addition of the columns to the rough building was clearly an attempt to elevate their place of worship above the commonplace. If I was impressed when I walked through the door, I can imagine how it must have seemed to the farmers of the region when they first saw it and thereafter when they gathered there every Sunday. These humble turnings are a testament to the ingenuity, hard work, community spirit, and faith of those hardy settlers. I like to think of Ole and Peder sitting beside their work on Sundays with their families. Photos of the settlers in the region from that time show that they were a pretty dour lot, but I am sure they permitted themselves a moment of pride. What would they have thought if they had known we could still admire their work more than 160 years later? How many of us will leave a turning legacy that can still be admired in 2168? ■

Terry Martin is a wood artist, writer, and curator who lives and works in Brisbane, Australia. He can be contacted at: eltel@optusnet.com.au.

The interior of the chapel with rows of columns turned in the classical style. The altar and high pulpit are decorated with split turnings.

Photo: Courtesy of ELCA Luther Seminary Archives, St. Paul, MN

Merryll Saylan

Kevin Wallace

Photo: Hap Sakwa

Tribute to Hans Coper, 2001, Various woods, polychromed, 49" × 47" × 9"

Merryll Saylan's works have been exhibited in numerous museums and galleries and her writings on art and woodturning techniques published in books and magazines. She's been a sought-after instructor for decades and has served on the boards of the Wood Turning Center and the AAW. Beginning her career with a bachelor's in design from UCLA and a master's in art from California State University, Northridge, led to an approach that was not the norm in woodturning at the time. As a woman interested in art and design, entering a field dominated by men who created work driven largely by tools and technique certainly brought with it challenges.

"Art school exposed me to so much," Saylan says. "When I taught furniture design or woodturning, I found that people had great skills at making but didn't know how to look at what they made. They didn't have ideas or knowledge to draw ideas from. People think you are born an artist, but I think it takes practice, like getting in shape to hike at altitude."

Photo: Ed Saylan

Breakfast Tray, 1996/7, Maple, 5" × 17" × 23½"

"In graduate school in the '70s, women outnumbered men and I never felt any discrimination," she recalls. "There were a couple of us [women] in woodturning early on—we did the same shows and museum exhibitions—but we were not encouraged in the same way, we were not on the teaching rosters and our work was not recommended to collectors. But, I learned that you could still get in museums, galleries, and exhibitions by getting out there and meeting the curators."

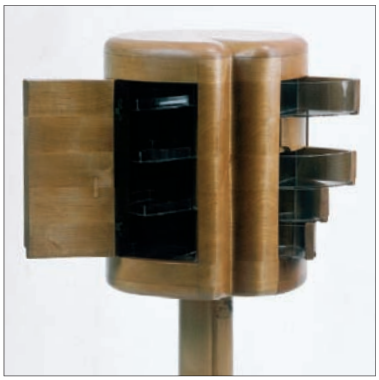
Ultimately, it was the quality of the work that mattered, as Saylan learned when she was approached at a craft show by a fellow woodturner who told her, "You should go see this guy's work—so delicate, beautiful forms, amazing." "I came to find it was *my* work," said Merryll. "The guy had seen my husband booth-sitting for me and assumed he was the artist."

Series

Though there is crossover between series, Saylan's work can be divided into two approaches. One concerns concept or narrative in the use of juxtaposition of everyday objects. In works such as *Breakfast Tray*, form, contrast, and familiarity cause the ▸

Collector's Cabinet, 1976,
Alder, acrylic, 45" × 24" × 24"

Collector's Cabinet open (detail)



Photos: Ed Saylan

viewer to find levels of meaning on both shared and personal levels.

The other body of work is more concerned with pattern, texture, and color. While traditionally turned bowls or platters are designed to display the natural beauty of wood, Saylan's platter forms serve as a canvas for the exploration of surface. Yet it is the nature of wood, with its inherent differences in color, grain, texture, and density that opened the door for her experimentation with pigments and texture. Cross-media exploration has been an important part of the process. "A friend who created wearable art shared fiber-reactive dyes," Saylan recalls of one breakthrough.

Many works by Saylan fall between these two approaches, including her Recycled Packing Crate series and *Tribute to Hans Coper*, works that utilize juxtaposition, as well as color and texture.

Merryll's path

To fully understand Saylan's work, it is best to look at the path that led her to her highly original approach. She was encouraged by her family in her creative pursuits. She played the viola in junior high school and won several orchestra competitions. Switching to piano in high school, she concentrated on Bach, intending to become a concert pianist.

This early interest in music still informs her work, although everything changed with her first art history class. She also became increasingly interested in craftsmanship and credits her grandfather as a great influence. A tailor of fine women's clothes, he taught her about detail, fabrics, materials, and the importance of fine workmanship.

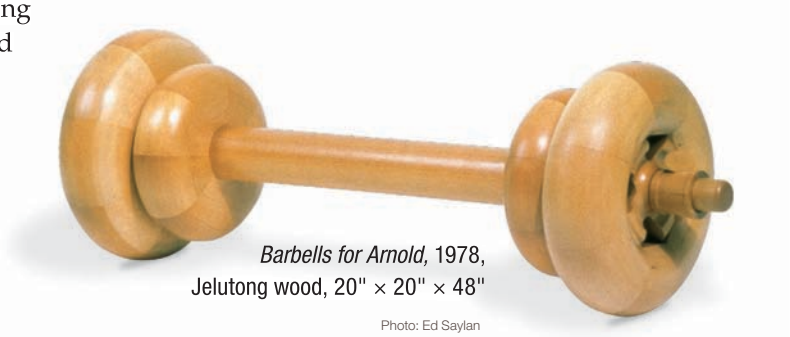
Saylan attended college after high school, but left after two years, married, and had three children. In 1969, Saylan went back to school at the University of California, Los Angeles, majoring in design. Her studies included art history, architecture, environmental and industrial design, crafts, and fine art. A landmark exhibition of Italian design produced by the Museum of Modern Art was touring at the time and some of the designers did presentations at UCLA. These experiences had an impact on the work she would explore for the rest of her life.

Following graduation, Saylan took classes in Chinese cooking and woodworking. The result was a set of rice bowls. Meant to be utilitarian, they checked when filled with rice. The experience was positive, as it made her more interested in wood's qualities. When she attended the California State University, Northridge, for her postgraduate studies, students were encouraged to learn to use all of the equipment available in order to increase their vocabulary as artists. Saylan chose to focus on the lathe, creating furniture, bowls, and sculpture.

One of her student works was curated into the final presentation of the seminal California Design Shows, a series of exhibitions that included objects designed for industry, as well as individual works by craft artists. Saylan's work was purchased by Joanne Rapp, an early dealer in contemporary woodturning with her Hand & Spirit Gallery in Scottsdale, Arizona.

"I was thrilled and surprised to have been selected and almost embarrassed when fellow students and artists were not," Saylan recalls. "I was also utterly excited to have my work displayed alongside a vessel by ceramist Laura Andreson, whose work I admired."

Soon after, Saylan created *Collector's Cabinet*, the first in a new series, born of an assignment to reinterpret some element that students saw or that piqued their interest while traveling to school.



Barbells for Arnold, 1978,
Jelutong wood, 20" × 20" × 48"

Photo: Ed Saylan

Photo: Hap Sakwa

Sailing to Safety, 2002/3, Various woods, polychromed, 6" × 7" × 36"

"The traffic signal boxes fascinated me since I was a child—their strange shape, sounds, and connections to the pavement," she says. This led to a series of lamps based on connector forms, which in turn inspired a piece titled *Barbells for Arnold*, inspired by seeing wheels laying around her studio and the movie *Pumping Iron*, featuring Arnold Schwarzenegger. Somehow, this in turn led to *Jelly Doughnut*, inspired by a lifetime of dieting.

The initial exercise—reinterpreting an element experienced in everyday life—ultimately proved a major influence on her life's work. "Household things, architecture, well-designed dishes, lighting—all interest me," she says. "Sometimes I think that, because life can be so complicated, there is much to be gained in the quiet, subtle detail in a form."

Other assignments at UCLA assisted her in expanding her aesthetic vocabulary. One concerned personal space and how to build an object to represent it, while in another the students designed a house to match how they woke and moved throughout the day.

"I later considered that many of these exercises were similar to what artists explored in conceptual and performance art," she says. "Today, I frequently give myself exercises."

Examples of how these exercises manifest as artworks includes *Tribute to Hans Coper* ("A central form and then how can I vary it—change the base, change the color.") and *Tower of Bowls*, which features 15 bowls, each fitting into a 4" × 4" space, each with a different design. ("At first I knew what I wanted, then I wondered what else can I do, and finally I just played.")

Photo: Hap Sakwa

Forbidden Fruit, 2001, Ash, maple, polychromed, 27" × 5"

San Francisco Bay area

Having completed her master's degree, Saylan settled in the San Francisco Bay area with her husband Ed. She shared a studio with furniture makers John and Carolyn Grew Sheridan and needed income to pay her share of the rent.

"My large sculptures, though accepted at an ACC exhibition, at the Wood Turning Center, and in Snyderman Gallery in Philadelphia, weren't exactly flying out the door," Saylan recalls. "My studio mates suggested that since I knew how to turn, I might make some things that might sell. I had created the rice bowl set and began to explore bowl forms."

Saylan became increasingly aware of the studio woodturning movement, attending woodturning conferences and meeting Dale Nish, Alan Stirt, Albert LeCoff, and Stephen Hogbin. She began to focus on smaller pieces, including rice bowls and sushi trays as limited production items. Having traveled to Japan while in her twenties, she was interested in the tea ceremony and Japanese ceramics. This interest led her to study ceramic publications, as a means of improving her forms.

"I started working with multiples because frankly, I thought it was a way to help people see differences," she says. "They are like families, you can see their connections but they are also separate. I did a bunch of experiments with the same form, changing texture and color and how that would change the whole nature of the piece."

The resulting works were exhibited at a new breed of craft shows appearing across the country, exposing the public to work by contemporary craft artists. "Doing the craft shows exposed me to a lot of different work and ideas," Saylan recalls. "Mel and Mark Lindquist, David Ellsworth, and Michelle Holzapfel did these shows."

She also began teaching furniture design at the University of California. "In my furniture class, I forced students to sit through a lot of history," ▸

Photo: Diane Padys

Service for Two, early 1980s, Satinwood, walnut, acrylic, dye, 14" × 9" × 9" (cabinet)

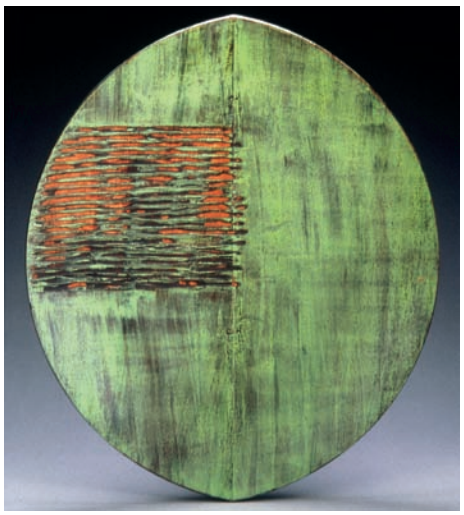


Photo: Hap Sakwa

Vessel, 2002, Mahogany, milk paint, 21" × 18" × 2"

she says. "We did both team design and individual items. I made them draw and even team draw. Things happen in collaboration that you might not think of on your own."

It was during this period that she met John Kelsey, Albert LeCoff, and Stephen Hogbin. She also searched out women furniture makers, including Gail Fredell and Wendy Maruyama.

Residency in England

In 1990, Saylan was selected for a residency at the Lakes District in England, where she also taught at the Rufford County Crafts Centre and Thwaites School. The experience made clear to her the effect of environment. While she had been working in an industrial area in Berkeley, she now found herself driving past the country homes of John Ruskin and Beatrix Potter.

"The textures, colors, and architecture were so different," she recalled. "Beautiful dry-stone walls with ferns growing in the crevices. The crafts residency was in Grizdale Sculpture Park, a place with nine miles of sculpture trails. I needed a map to be able to locate them. I took many a lunchtime walk looking for them."

Saylan wanted to extend her stay in England and soak it all in. Initially intimidated by the English turners, she focused on mastering the use of the gouge. This mastery of technical skills led to greater ease with her materials and permitted a looser style and a sense that works could be left rough. Soon after, the colors and surfaces in her work changed.

Moving home, Saylan and her husband relocated, moving into a home adjacent to a salt marsh, where she could watch the patterns left by the tides and water birds. "Environment has always affected my work and living next to a salt marsh with its movement and patterns is reflected on my surfaces," she says. Interpretation of these images from nature was driven by both her experience of wood as a material and her interest in modern painting.

Fits and starts

Looking back, Saylan sees her career has been plagued with fits and starts, largely caused by illness on the part of herself and her husband Ed, who lived with heart disease for two decades. For Saylan, a bout with arthritis of the spine caused her to set aside her work for years, though she took the time to improve upon her drawing skills. Eventually, she had surgery and was able to return to work.

"My doctor simply calls it medicine," she says. "I call it a miracle and I've been working ever since. Throughout my career, there have been times I'd lose two years but looking back, they just run together and seem insignificant."

Her own health issues led her to create narrative works that concerned home and health, including *Breakfast Tray* and *Tea Cup*. Exploring issues of strength, she created *An Apple a Day*, and a set of oversized dumbbells.

Today, Merryll lives and maintains a studio in Berkeley. Her current works concern functional objects, combined with autobiographical themes, as well as platter forms that reflect the influence of color field painters, including an aunt, who encouraged Saylan's bold use of color. The platters, which also concern material and surface, are suggestive of manhole covers, recalling the student experience of basing works on objects she passes every day.

The importance of her work has become easier to view in retrospect. "Along with Stephen Hogbin, Merryll was an early practitioner of the contemporary artist's approach to woodturning, wherein she would explore an idea rather than a wood species or vessel silhouette or useful function," notes John Kelsey. "She used the lathe almost incidentally, as a mechanism for solidifying her ideas. She made lots of things that didn't look like other people's turnings, which caused some to think and experiment for themselves."

Saylan has seen the field of woodturning grow and change over the decades.

"There is a big move toward other issues—people talk more about inspiration and what they

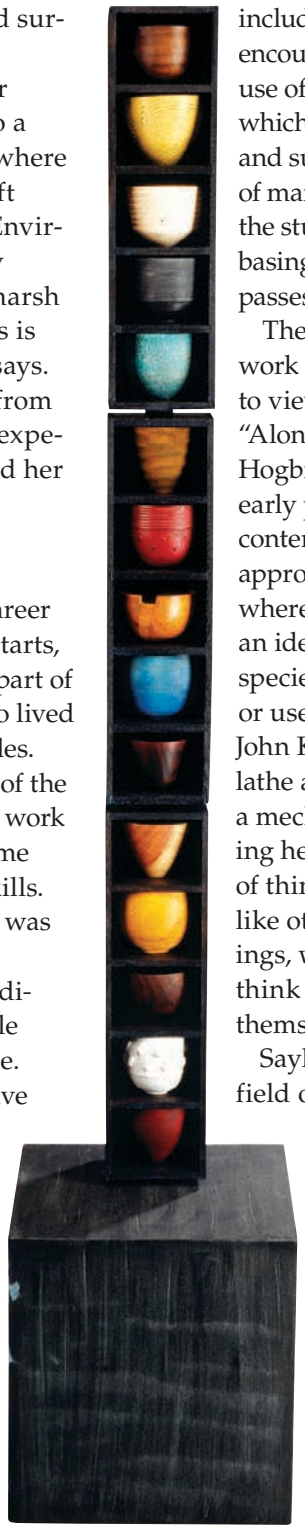


Photo: Hap Sakwa

Tower of Bowls, 2001, Various woods, polychromed, 77" × 17" × 15"

Photo: Hap Sakwa

An Apple a Day, 2001, Maple, 5" × 4" × 25"

were trying to say or do," Saylan says. "There is much more acceptance of other kinds of work."

As for the way her work fits in the field of woodturning, Saylan points to the period of time when she began working, when designer-craftsmen associations were in vogue. "I thought of all these things as cross media," she offers. "Work progresses when you're making. First you can't get started, then you do, and then the ideas come and you want to try this, and then that."

Albert LeCoff, founder and executive director of the Wood Turning Center, recalls the early impression Saylan made on the field of woodturning, "Merryll's entries in the 1981 Turned Object Show were *Barbells for Arnold* and *Jelly Doughnut*. For me, these pieces were a welcome addition to the wooden vessels and bowls that predominated the exhibition. Merryll's fellow participants questioned her use of plain wood and red acrylic. Jurors David Ellsworth and Rude Osolnik awarded *Jelly Doughnut* a Merit Award. This piece created a lot of discussion during the exhibit. It seemed like a fish out of water. I experienced great delight in Merryll's successful use of humor and avant-garde materials."

Historically, artists are viewed within the context of their genre. Art critic Calvin Tomkins once noted, "At a certain point during the 1970s, it suddenly occurred to me that half the interesting new artists in America were women. This was such a startling realization—nothing like it had ever happened in the history of art." Saylan's entry into the art world was well-timed, even if she was ahead of her time in pursuing woodturning. If she had been promoted within the context of contemporary art, she would have fit well into the Feminist Art Movement led by Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro, who believed that "the personal is the political" and inspired women artists to create work from their experiences as women. Saylan's use of tea bowls, plates, and cups are more subtle, though. They are objects that come from and are returned to the kitchen, the historic domain of women.

Ultimately, Merryll Saylan's accomplishment has been in bridging the fields of contemporary art, woodturning, and design. Remaining true to herself and unconcerned with fitting firmly in any genre, she continues to revisit early ideas, while evolving them.

"When I was in school, we used to wonder how Sam Maloof or Bob Stocksdale could work on the same thing for years and years," she says. "Today, I look at my work and see the continuum. Time flies when you're having fun." ■

Photo: Tony Boase

Tea Cup, 1997, Box elder, paint, 6" × 6" × 6"

Kevin Wallace is Director of the Beatrice Wood Center for the Arts in Ojai, California (www.beatricewood.com). He has authored and co-authored a number of books on woodturning, including New Masters of Woodturning: Expanding the Boundaries of Wood Art *(with Terry Martin).*

Robin Wood, Derbyshire, England, *Cor Blimey,* Image from Wood's video

Photo: John Carlano

Challenge VII: dysFUNctional

Robin Rice

No doubt there are as many ways of being useful as there are jobs to be done; however, we might consider the notion of object function very simply as embracing two overlapping categories. Objects are useful in a physical or practical sense—as tools—ranging from furniture to containers to automobiles. Objects are also symbolic or communicative. They embody ideas and feelings, including that mysterious sensation of beauty, something everyone recognizes and no one can satisfactorily define. Communication is the purpose of "dysFUNctional," organized by the Wood Turning Center (WTC) in Philadelphia. In this sense, the exhibition isn't dysfunctional at all. It does communicate. But perhaps that contradiction is in itself dysfunctional.

When the exhibitions committee of the WTC conceptualized the seventh in its series of "Challenge" shows, we knew that functionality and meaning, especially in the vessel tradition, have been at the center of many postmodernist discussions and explorations of woodturning. Some people, especially in Western cultures, believe that work that is materials-based and practical barters away meaningfulness in order to do a job well. The WTC has consistently exhibited and supported work by artists like Connie Mississippi who comment on functionality and the vessel tradition. The WTC's 1997 "Curators' Focus: Turning in Context" included language-related work by Mississippi and an enigmatic piece by Gord Peteran, an apparently turned nonfunctional form stitched permanently into a covering of red leather. Peteran's work, featured on the catalog cover, aroused controversy and some in the turning field found its overt purposelessness almost offensive.

In spite of such forays into concept-driven art incorporating wood and lathe work, the WTC had never initiated an exhibition that did not include a high percentage of traditionally functional objects. "Challenge VII: dysFUNctional" is itself a response to a challenge, one issued to the WTC by The Philadelphia Exhibitions Initiative (PEI). This program of The Pew Center for Arts and Heritage, funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts, generously supports exhibitions and exhibition-related ▸

Norm Sartorus, *Old & In the Way,* 2006, Desert wood from Texas, 5" × 13½" × 6½"

Photo: John Carlano

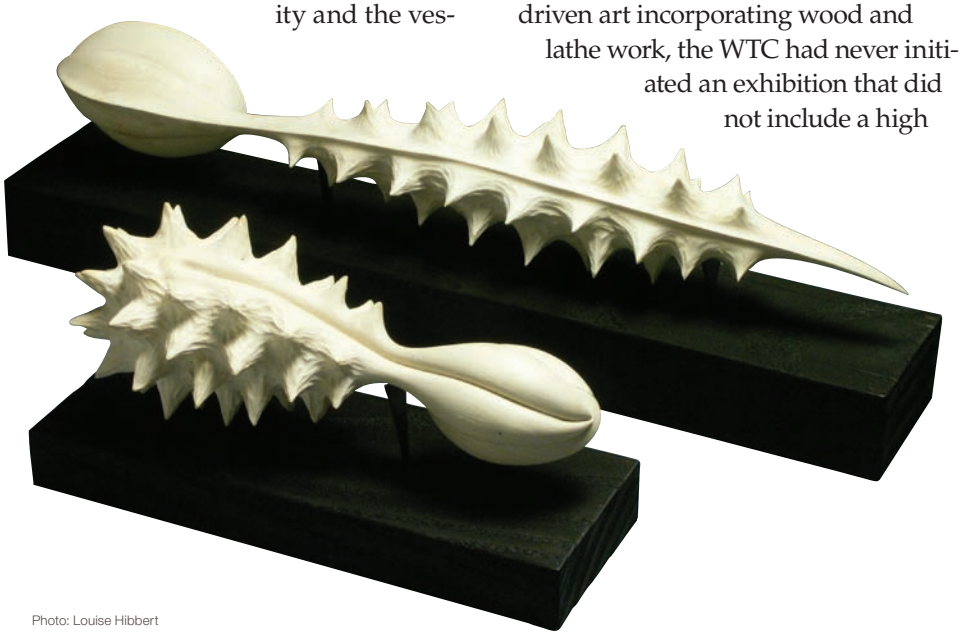
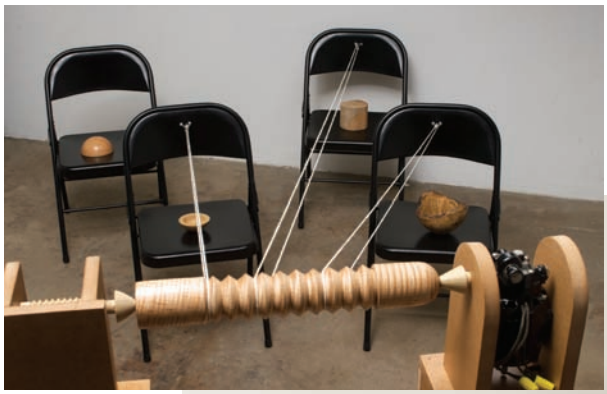


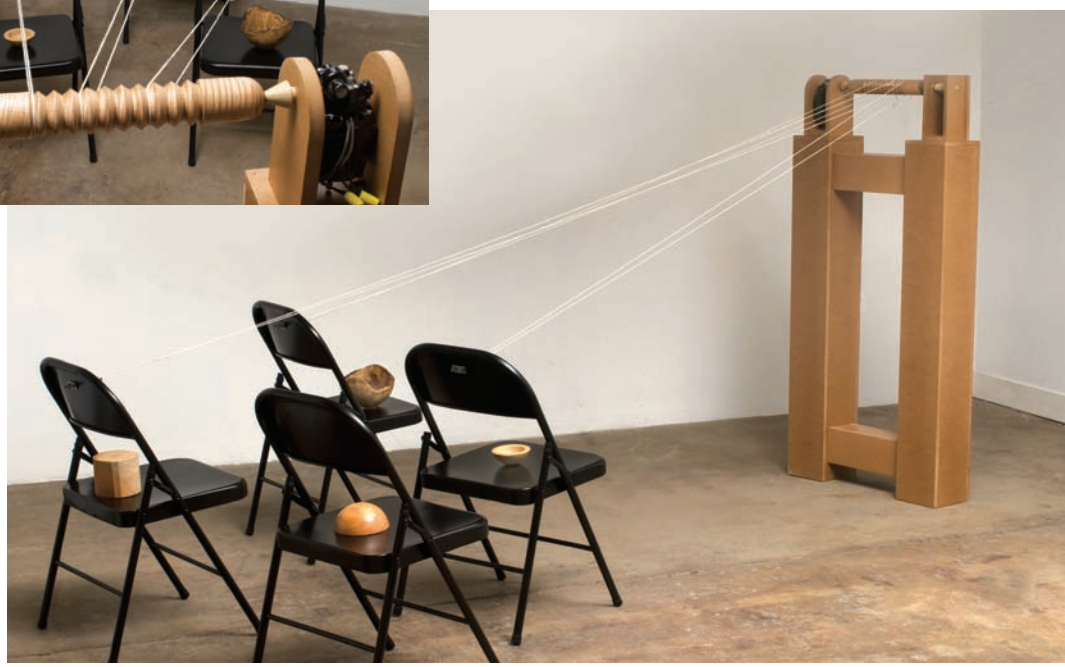
Photo: Louise Hibbert

Doug Finkel, *Spoons,* 2007, 2½" × 6"

"Don't touch me!" Doug Finkel's spoons seem to say with their prickly handles. A pair of these utensils becomes more amusing when one considers the verb to spoon. Even though they have corresponding grooves and ridges, this couple won't be spooning anytime soon.

programs in Philadelphia. Its grants usually are awarded to daring, cutting-edge shows, often in unexpected venues. The WTC has regularly applied for and never, to this day, received a grant. PEI, however, wanted to encourage the WTC and offered to sponsor an intensive two-day study session. This 2006 workshop was led by crafts curators and scholars Glenn Adamson, now head of graduate studies at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, and Michael Monroe, executive director of Curatorial Affairs of the Bellevue Arts Museum in Washington State. Representatives of the WTC included executive director Albert LeCoff, David Stephens, and myself.





Michael Stadler, *Rhetoric*, 2006, Installation

Rhetoric is Michael's response to some of the trends of contemporary Western society. The kinetic composition mimics the dialogue of weekend woodturning workshops, complete with an altar-like lathe mechanism and audible chatter of the chairs. According to Michael, "The chatter and dialogue shows how each student creates her or his own copies of the teachers' samples."

Glenn Adamson, in particular, has worked closely with the WTC and was one of the curators of "Wood Turning in North America Since 1930." He and Monroe told us emphatically that the WTC can choose to remain an organization appealing to a narrow group of people who are fans of lathe turning or it can expand its relevance to speak to the larger art community and public. If the WTC wants to move forward, gain credibility, spark interest, and attract a more diverse audience, it must explore the territory beyond functionality and beyond what is typically described as "wood art." To do this, Adamson and Monroe believe that the WTC must work with curators outside the wood field to push the envelope and implement concept-based exhibits.

The WTC's exhibition committee decided to explore these suggestions through the next juried "Challenge" exhibit. We aimed to develop a concept that did not depart fundamentally from the spirit of the WTC, rather one that expanded its potential. A key decision was to avoid an off-putting, coldly intellectual premise by seeking work made in the spirit of play, hence "FUN." Creativity is the highest form of play and art and art-making reflect this, even when the subject matter is serious.

To see infinite possibilities in simple everyday things is one form of play. The exploration or co-option of tools as expressive forms is probably the dominant theme of work that was chosen for "dysFUNctional." *Old & In the Way*, made by Norm Sartorius, is a spoon that skews toward communication. Unlike most artists in the show, Sartorius specializes in intentionally dysfunctional or pseudo-functional objects. The spoon is the formal basis for Sartorius' nonfunctional sculpture. The piece in this show was made during a time of illness; it is intentionally autobiographical.

Sartorius carved and polished a found piece of weathered wood in such a way that the resulting "spoon," when viewed from one side, appears to be almost completely the product of age: gray, porous, knotted, its grain deeply scored by time. When turned over, burnished surfaces, though still showing patches of bark and fissures, convey a sense of age that has been cherished, a refinement and enhancement.

What is more human, more evident of culture than a spoon, an extension of the hand designed to take in sustenance? However, the "old" spoon is useless. It can't help to nourish the

body, but it is "in the way" only if we restrict our vision. Sartorius invites us to appreciate this elegiac spoon, tactilely and visually, and to contemplate its journey as a product of nature. It can nourish our understanding.

In contrast to Sartorius' fluid, undetermined organic shape, Doug Finkel's white boxwood *Spoons* are sensuously voluptuous *and* dangerously prickly, presenting a classic case of approach/avoidance. The forms hint at certain types of mollusk: fiercely armored on the outside, soft and vulnerable inside.

A quartet of highly qualified curators from outside the wood field juried the show: architect Cecil Baker, public art consultant Marsha Moss, director of Arcadia University Art Gallery Richard Torchia, and director and curator of the Lehigh University Art Galleries Ricardo Viera. I observed their deliberations. None was familiar with woodturning and, although they were sensitive to technical skill, they were not sophisticated enough to always distinguish levels of difficulty. Medium-specific jurors—wood experts—would have recognized links or associations with masters of the wood field. They would know when they were seeing real innovation or something closer to homage or imitation. The "dysFUNctional" jury, on the other hand, focused intensely and thoughtfully on expressive and conceptual qualities. They rejected clichés and imitative strategies of expression. In particular, they admired work that embodied an idea with consistency throughout. They liked pieces in which materials were one with concepts. I doubt that a jury of wood experts would have made significantly different choices from the thirty artists selected by this panel.

Just about everyone who sees it has been thoughtfully engaged and charmed by British turner Robin Wood's video installation *Cor Blimey*. Wood is well known in the turning field (but not known to the "dysFUNctional" jurors) for making a single historic bowl form on a handmade pole lathe. The bowls are beautiful and identical. Though people love them, they could be seen as the driest, most stuck-in-the-mud, function-based objects ever. Their construction could also be seen as a meditative, spiritual discipline. In his installation, Wood surprisingly focused on the negative aspect of bowls: the mountains of wasted wood cores generated when a solid chunk is transformed into a hollow container. The punning title is apt: "Cor Blimey" is slang, descendent of the old English exclamation of surprise, "God blind me!" In a video that segues into three-dimensions, we are confronted by things we ordinarily don't see, futile purposeless objects, yet, like the bowls that bore them, these elements have a modular, organic appeal of their own.

I suspect teachers will especially appreciate Michael Stadler's installation *Rhetoric*. While Robin Wood incorporated video of a lathe in his installation, Stadler uses a lathe mechanism as the basis of his three-dimensional diagram of a lecture on woodturning. Each audience chair is occupied by a turned piece representing a listener. Ideas emanating from the lathe (or the lecturer) are portrayed as loops of ordinary knotted string traveling from lathe to chair and back to the lathe. They all originate in the same place but their destinations are individual. The ▸

William Leete, *Soul Seat*, 2007, 32" × 18" × 18"

Soul Seat represents the nature of life and the awakening of the soul as the body breaks down. The chair is a useful metaphor, as the chair (body) becomes dysfunctional, the soul is freed from the mundane duties of relative life and awakens to itself. While the large chair form expresses activity and change, the small golden soul is suspended in stillness at the center of the seat plane. In addition to disallowing the use of the chair, Leete is trying to say the true function of the chair (body) is to house and serve the soul.

Photo: John Carlano

Robin Wood, Derbyshire, England, *Cor Blimey*, Image from Wood's video (image on page 58)

Wood says, "These cores are the waste product of traditional turning on a foot-powered lathe. Such cores have been found in rubbish pits for more than two thousand years. Archaeologists reconstruct turners' activity from the waste cores, so here is a record for the last couple of years. Archaeologists name the different shapes; I just throw them on the floor and wonder if they will ever be studied in the same way. The short film shows how bowls are turned on the pole lathe; in the end, the cores fall into a pile on the workshop floor."

Photos: John Carlano

Jordan Gehman, *Rollin' on 20,* 2007, 30" × 36" × 28"

Juror Marsha Moss described this piece as "the meeting of opposites in which each one is restrained by the other."

metal folding chairs chatter with the movement of the string. We see that threads of communication are fragile, improvised, and easily distorted or even destroyed by whimsical fate.

In both Wood's and Stadler's installations, dysfunctionality is intrinsic to a represented process. Other works focus on dysfunctional objects. Several present chairs as a symbol of the human being. In William Leete's *Soul Seat*, a tiny perfect chair suspended within the frame of a full-size broken chair hints at an internal and indestructible perfection or aspiration to perfection. Jennifer Marsh's *Blue Chair* staggers sideways, fatally wounded. The pale form pierced with dozens of blue spines evokes both pity and fear. Jordan Gehman's *Rollin' on 20* is perhaps the most surreal and mysterious work in the show, a conundrum of perfection in construction and utter, disorienting uselessness.

All these pieces and many more are illustrated in a catalog designed by Dan Saal to express and enhance the "dysFUNctional" idea. Saal set himself the task of communicating efficiently *and* dysfunctionally. He used surprising materials, like a cover made of industrial carpeting and translucent pages that allow the viewer to see a working drawing superimposed on a photograph of the finished work. Inconsistent page shapes and text orientation draw attention to specific details. The catalog completes a provocative and memorable show that will travel to a number of venues in the next couple of years. It illustrates a thread that runs through the entire exhibition: dysfunction is often perfectly functional but in unexpected ways. ■

Tour Schedule for "Challenge VII: dysFUNctional"

Houston Center for Contemporary Craft, Houston, TX
July 17–Sept. 13, 2009

Lehigh University Art Galleries, Zoellner Art Center, Bethlehem, PA
Dec. 2, 2009–March 14, 2010

Fine Arts Center Gallery, Montgomery County Community College, Blue Bell, PA
June–July 2010

Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art, Loretto, PA
Aug. 13–Nov. 7, 2010

Bucks County Community College, Newton, PA
Dec. 1, 2010–March 15, 2011

Erie Art Museum, Erie, PA
Oct. 8–Dec. 30, 2011

Inquiries as to the availability of booking this exhibit at www.woodturningcenter.org.

Robin Rice is Adjunct Associate Professor at the University of the Arts, Philadelphia. Her writing has appeared in numerous periodicals; she is author or coauthor of several books, including the award-winning Philadelphia Murals and the Stories They Tell*, and she is the recipient of a 2009 Pennsylvania Council on the Arts Fellowship in Arts Commentary.*

Photos provided by the research library at the Wood Turning Center, Philadelphia, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the growth, encouragement, and enhancement of individuals creating art with a primary focus on turned and carved wood objects. For a catalog and videos, visit www.woodturningcenter.org.

"The Art of Opening: Bottles & Their Toppers"

Members Gallery

"The Art of Opening: Bottles & Their Toppers," opened at the Wood Turning Center in Philadelphia May 1. The exhibit runs through July 18, 2009. For more information about the exhibit, visit www.woodturningcenter.org.

Mike Yager, *Ogallalagica,* 2008,
Sand dollar, menhaden bones, fountain grass seed, pine wood, copper, string, epoxy putty, cork, brass, coal, enamel paint,
8" × 4" × 2½"

Dewey Garrett,
OT Bottle Set, 2008,
African blackwood, apricot,
5¼" × 4" × 1¾"

Tony Marsh, *Arcane Kiss,* 2008,
Aluminum, plexi, metal, rubber,
4⅜" × 2⅜" × 2⅜"

Tucker Garrison, *Morel,* 2008,
Hard maple, acrylic paint, stainless steel,
5" × 2"

Tucker Garrison, *Seed Pod,* 2008,
Cherry, stainless steel, acrylic paint,
5" × 1½"

Tucker Garrison, *Hemlock,* 2008,
Cherry, stainless steel, acrylic paint,
1½"× 5½"

Members Gallery

Gorst Duplessis, *What No Vanilla,* 2008, African blackwood, pink ivory, cocobolo, rose engine turned, 10½" × 3½"

"I have a PhD in ice cream, especially vanilla, and a subspecialty in cones."

Jim Mahoney, *Giveaway Bowls,* 2008, Maple and walnut, largest bowl is 5" diameter

"When my wife and I visit friends and bring food, we use these bowls, not only to hold the food, but to leave behind as gifts."

Jon Reiver, *The Goblet,* 2008, Ash, 13" × 3". The stem is about 1/16" thick.

"The biggest challenge was keeping the integrity of the stem while working with something that thin. I used jigs to support the piece while I was offset turning the stem. I keep this goblet under a custom-made glass dome."

Anthony Napoli, two-footed bowl, 2008, Redwood, 7" × 3⅝" × 3⅜"

"When one of my green-turned bowls warped, rocking about ¼" to ½" from side to side, I needed to figure out how to fix the problem. The easiest solution would have been to sand the base flat, but I thought a footed bowl would look much nicer, with two feet being the optimal number for design purposes. I marked where I wanted the feet to be, then removed the wood around that area using a drum sander attached to my drill press, slowing the speed to 500 rpm for better control. I refined the surface using a sanding pad with fluted discs attached. I was pleased to have achieved my goal of having a seamless curve from the bowl into the two curved feet.

I liked the appearance of the two-footed base and wanted to create another bowl with this feature. I went one step further and made a double-off center bowl. The base of this redwood bowl is a feature that makes viewers want to pick it up to see all sides."

Anthony Napoli, two-footed bowl, 2008, Maple, 2¼" × 9¼" × 9¾"

Jan Panek, *A Fish Couple,* 2007, Maple, 13" × 7" × 17"

Jan Panek, *Fish 1,* 2004, Walnut, 12" × 5" × 12"

Jan Panek, *Fish 3,* 2006, Maple, 11" × 5" × 7"

"In Balance: Wood and Metal"

Members Gallery

"In Balance: Wood and Metal" at the Woodturning Center in Philadelphia. May 1–July 18, 2009.

Michael Chinn, *Admission Barriers,* 2002,
Genuine mahogany, purpleheart, aluminum, paint,
4¼" × 14" × 8"

Michael Chinn, *Sooner Than Expected,* 2007,
Genuine mahogany, purpleheart, aluminum, paint, bleach,
9" × 11½" × 4"

Disentangling Inspiration

Using a turning gouge as inspiration, I created this fun piece. Since woodturners are always reinventing their tools and gadgets and claiming that they have the ultimate tool, I asked myself, What if the ultimate tool is not the tool itself, but the hand that holds the tool? If I were to create a turning gouge, this would be it. The handle represents me and the gouge represents how I refine the materials I use to achieve my goals when creating a piece.

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Tania Radda, *Disentangling Inspiration,* 2008, Basswood, compressed cherry, acrylic, 3" × 27" × 9"

Photo: Ken Manicki

Disentangling Inspiration will be one of the many items you can bid on during the EOG auction in Albuquerque.