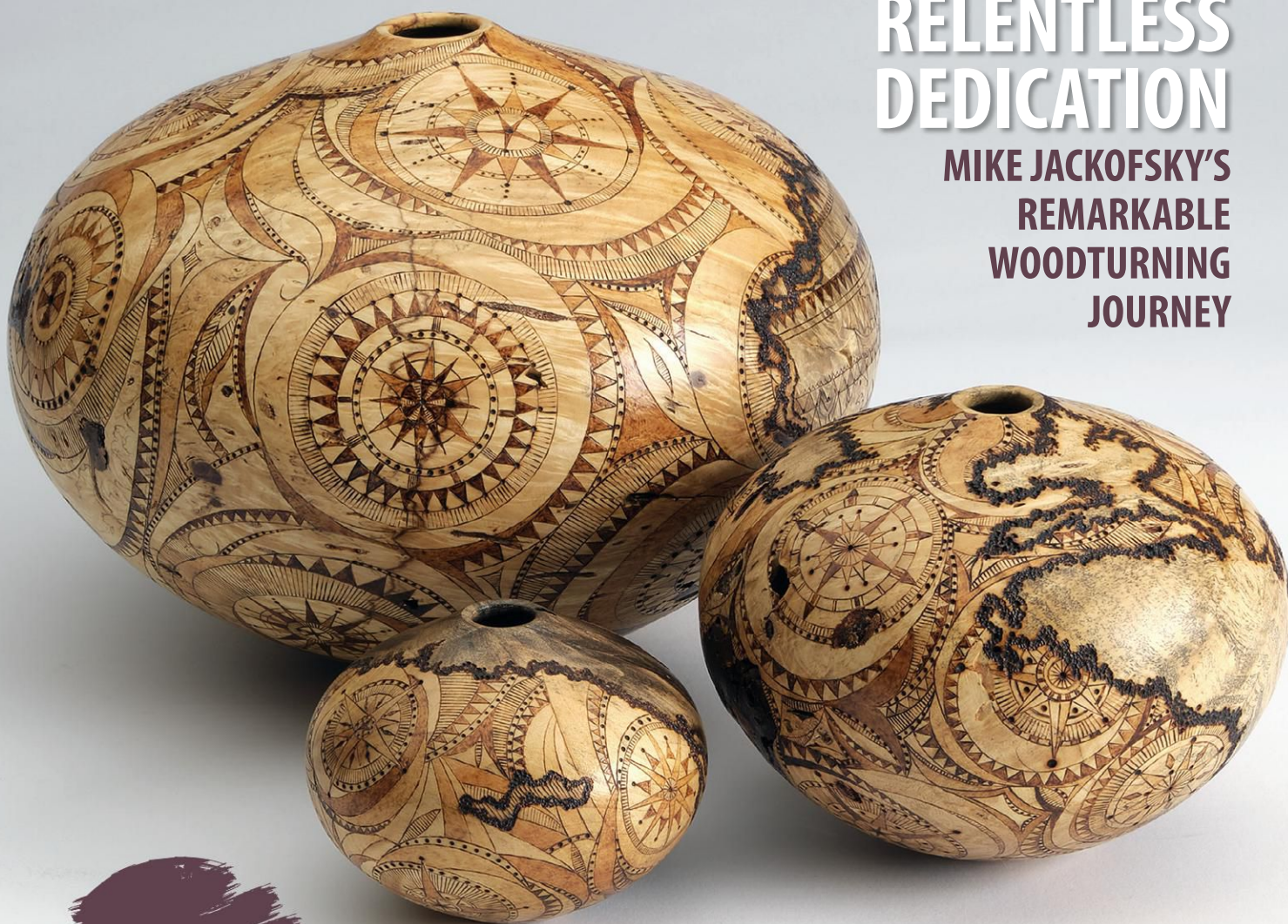


TURN AN ELEGANT ROUND-BOTTOM BOX • ROUTER INLAYS WITH A CLEVER INDEXING WHEEL

AMERICAN WOODTURNER

Journal of the American Association of Woodturners

August 2024 vol 39, no 4 • woodturner.org



RELENTLESS DEDICATION

MIKE JACKOFSKY'S
REMARKABLE
WOODTURNING
JOURNEY

VOTE NOW
FOR AAW BOARD
CANDIDATES
(PAGE 6)

VARIATIONS ON A SINGLE BRANCH

.....

**RING TURNING: A MODERN TAKE
ON THE GERMAN TRADITION**

Instant Gallery Awards

Professional Outreach Program

Portland Symposium 2024

Photos by Andi Wolfe, except where noted.

Each year at the AAW International Symposium, the Professional Outreach Program (POP) celebrates accomplishment in woodturning by awarding select works on display in the instant gallery, where all attendees can show their work. Following are the works chosen for this special recognition from this year's AAW Symposium in Portland, Oregon.

For more on the POP, visit tiny.cc/AAWPOP.

EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Photo courtesy of the artist



Rolly Munro, New Zealand

Fractals and Feathers, 2021-2024, Pohutukawa wood, acrylic ink, spirit dyes, oil finish, artist's lacquer, 9½" × 8¾" (24cm × 22cm)

Eiko Tanaka, Kaga City, Ishikawa Prefecture, Japan

Shi-Un-Ei (Goblet), 2024, Japanese horse chestnut, *urushi* lacquer, 8" × 4" (20cm × 10cm)

Collection of Dan Zobel

Photo courtesy of the artist



Noble Peters, Oklahoma

Pear Natural Edge, 2024, Bradford pear, varnish oil, 4" × 7" (10cm × 18cm)

Collection of Dan Zobel





**Diana Friend,
Washington State**

Umbel Floret II, 2024,
Madrone burl, plum,
horse chestnut,
snakewood, mahogany,
Waterlox sealer/finish,
6¼" × 10½" × 6"
(16cm × 27cm × 15cm)

Dave Landers, Colorado

Rocket Box, Too!, 2024, Bigleaf maple, India ink, lacquer, 11" × 4" (28cm × 10cm)

YOUTH AWARDS



**Karlyn Theobald,
Wyoming**

A Touch of Green, 2024,
English walnut, paper,
polyurethane, 3" × 7"
(8cm × 18cm)



Silas Nielsen, Utah

Untitled Bowl, 2024, Honey locust,
3" × 3" (8cm × 8cm)

COLLEGIAN AWARDS



**Niko Rivas, Oregon State University, College
of Forestry, Arbor Science and Design**

Captured Bowl, 2024, Curly maple, 2" × 5" (5cm × 13cm)



**Molly Pearson, Oregon State University, College
of Forestry, Wood Science and Engineering**

Burl Bowl, 2024, Maple burl, 2" × 3" (5cm × 8cm)

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

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website: woodturner.org
gallery website: galleryofwoodart.org

Executive Director Jennifer Newberg
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EDITORIAL

American Woodturner	Joshua Friend editor@woodturner.org
Editorial Advisors	Betty Scarpino Terry Martin Jean LeGwin
Journal Production	Plaid Moose Creative Linnea Overbeck Art Director Production Management
Woodturning Fundamentals	Don McIvor editormcivor@woodturner.org

EDITORIAL SUBMISSIONS

Send article ideas to: editor@woodturner.org

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ADVERTISERS

For rates and specifications, contact:

Ewald Consulting
Erica Nelson
763-497-1778 • erica.nelson@ewald.com
Betsy Pierre
763-295-5420 • betsy.pierre@ewald.com

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DIVERSITY STATEMENT

The AAW strives to cultivate an organization built on mentorship, encouragement, tolerance, and mutual respect, thereby engendering a welcoming environment for all. To read AAW's full Diversity Statement, visit tiny.cc/AAWDiversity*

A NOTE ABOUT SAFETY

An accident at the lathe can happen with blinding suddenness; respiratory and other problems can build over years.

Take appropriate precautions when you turn. Safety guidelines are published online at tiny.cc/turnsafe*. Following them will help you continue to enjoy woodturning.

*Web address is case sensitive.

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Photo: Darrel Nish/Craft Supplies USA

Back cover: Jerry Bennett



Editor's Note



In the February issue this year, I used this space to invite submissions of short stories about mentorship. I have received some but would love to get more so I can compile an even better commemoration of those who have taught and inspired us. I believe it is important to acknowledge our mentors, not to stroke egos but to remind us of the intangible value of one human

encouraging another. So once again, I invite you to email me (editor@woodturner.org) a short story of who gave you that essential boost in woodturning. How did that person make a difference in your life? Please keep it to about 300 words, and photos are welcome. Happy reading and happy turning!



—Joshua Friend

From the Executive Director



Dear Members,

First, I want to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude to all of our volunteers, donors, chapter leaders, and you, the AAW members.

Your dedication and support make the American Association of Woodturners (AAW) community strong and vibrant.

Portland Symposium

I can't stop thinking about the Portland Symposium! It was truly an unforgettable event, filled with learning, inspiration, and camaraderie. While every volunteer who helped make the Symposium a success deserves a thousand thank-yous, a special shout-out goes to **Rick Baker**, our amazing AV volunteer. Rick went above and beyond when Eiko Tanaka's demonstrations drew such a large crowd that the room reached standing-room-only capacity. Thanks to Rick's creativity, expertise, and diligent problem-solving, he set up an impromptu overflow space, ensuring everyone had the chance to see the demo. Thank you, Rick!

Walking through the Symposium, it was wonderful to see folks gathering, eagerly flipping through their handout books, deciding which demo to see next, sharing meals, and buying tools and wood at the tradeshow. The buzz of excitement and curiosity was palpable, especially in the gallery's special exhibitions area, which showcased the incredible works of **Mark Sfirri** and

Artist Showcase recipients **Heather Marusiak** and **Kevin Jesequel**.

Attendee feedback

I was particularly moved by the feedback we received from attendees, which truly captures the essence of what we strive to achieve through AAW, especially our reach to so many different woodturners with diverse interests and experiences. For instance, one attendee shared their thoughts on the Artist Showcase panel, noting, "It was fascinating, inspiring, and grounding to hear about the artists' thought processes and inspirations. It was incredible to hear personal, heartfelt discussion from these artists whose work has inspired so many of us."

Andy Cole's demonstrations were also a hit. One woodturner commented, "I appreciated the demo, and even without being a coring woodturner, some of the ways to make a tenon have been helpful for my future projects, as well as tool placement, angles, and how to 'lengthen' the handle using the forearm. I also appreciated Andy's enthusiasm for his craft." The unique perspective offered by **Eiko Tanaka's** demonstrations was equally appreciated, with feedback like, "A wonderful look into turning within a different culture!" and "Just so very fascinating and well presented. The tools and reasons for angles were very interesting."

We also received wonderful feedback on **Janice Levi's** demos, with one attendee mentioning, "Janice really communicated well! I felt like I was in a

friend's shop talking about the project. It really helped me feel like I belonged in the room (my first symposium). Thank you!" Another attendee shared their thoughts on **Kirk DeHeer's** demos, noting, "This was a great introduction for me. I may pursue threaded boxes because I think that I can develop the skills now."

Similarly, another participant was inspired by **Dan Tilden's** demonstration, saying, "Before seeing this demo, I never would have attempted this type of project. Dan has given me the knowledge where now I may attempt it!"

Strategic planning

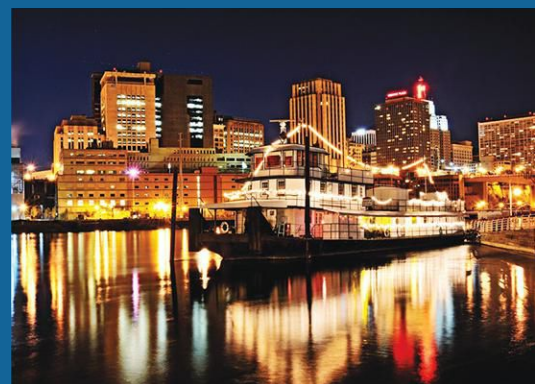
Thank you again to all who participated in the strategic planning focus groups at the Portland Symposium and afterward through the online survey. Your input is crucial as we chart a path for the AAW over the next several years. Later this month, the AAW Board will gather at the SWAT symposium in Waco, Texas, to take the next steps in our strategic planning process. We'll review our mission and vision and set the strategic direction for the future.

Once again, thank you to each and every one of you. Your passion and commitment are what make our woodturning community so special.

Warmest regards,



Jennifer Newberg
AAW Executive Director



2025 AAW International Woodturning Symposium

Join Us in Saint Paul, Minnesota
June 12-15, 2025

AAW | AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
OF WOODTURNERS

AAWSYMPOSIUM.ORG

2025 Board Candidates

The Nominating Committee is pleased to present the following four candidates, who are running for the AAW Board of Directors, with terms beginning January 2025. A nine-member Board volunteers its time and energy to represent the membership in moving the AAW forward. Board members may serve two consecutive three-year terms.

You may vote for up to three candidates. **Voting is by electronic ballot only**, available on the AAW website at tiny.cc/BoardVote (case sensitive). Your vote must be cast between August 1, 2024, and midnight CDT August 31, 2024.

In keeping with AAW bylaws, the two candidates receiving the most votes will be elected to serve three years. The third Board member will be appointed by a two-thirds majority vote of the Board of Directors. The ability to appoint one Board member helps to ensure a healthy diversity of talent, so that all areas of expertise remain fulfilled.

We encourage you to participate in the voting process and hope you will help make this election turnout significant.

—Linda Britt, Chair, Nominating Committee

VOTE NOW!

tiny.cc/BoardVote
August 1 – 31!

HOW TO VOTE

Vote online during the month of August by visiting tiny.cc/BoardVote or scanning the QR code with your mobile device.



Chuck Lobaito, Michigan



During the two years as a current Board member and treasurer of the AAW, I have learned that the role of volunteers is vital for the sustainability and growth of the organization. My experiences as a Board member have underscored this importance, motivating me to run for the Board again and to continue contributing even beyond my tenure on the Board.

I spent fifteen years at two CPA firms and the last eighteen years as a controller. For the

past fourteen years, I have been the controller of two membership-based organizations similar in size and structure to the AAW. I am responsible for all financial and many operational parts of our organization, including taxes, accounting, our annual audit, insurance, budgeting, financial analysis, building maintenance, and large statewide event logistics. I am also responsible for working with our volunteer treasurers and officers on financial matters at our 90-plus local affiliates.

I believe my business and financial experience has benefited the AAW and will continue to do so with the help of the finance committee.

I started turning in 2005 after I went to a woodworking show with my wife and her father. A week later we had a lathe. My family joined the Detroit Area Woodturners in 2012. I believe local clubs are a fantastic resource for new turners. I have been the treasurer of our club since 2014 and have held other positions. We attended the 2013 Tampa and 2016 Atlanta AAW Symposia. At both, I volunteered to assist for at least one class per day in the youth room. In 2016, my entire family assisted in taking down and packing up the lathes in the youth room. Joining our local club and the AAW has given me the opportunity to learn beyond my wildest expectations.

David Fellows, South Carolina



My journey in woodturning started in 2012, and I joined the AAW in 2013. I have attended several AAW Annual Symposia where I have worked with the youth turning sessions, and I have attended over a dozen regional symposia.

I retired from the South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice in 2010 but continue to work for the agency part time. I have instructed more than 300 incarcerated juveniles in the joys of woodturning. The classes provide them with a skill and an

opportunity to create and make an object to give to their families. For most of the juveniles, it was the first time they were giving instead of taking. The accomplishment of a new skill and opportunity were life lessons and rewarding for all of us.

Presently, I am an instructor with Mann Tool and Supply in Columbia, South Carolina. I have demonstrated at the South Carolina State Fair and at other clubs in South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. I am also a regional demonstrator for a wood tool manufacturer demonstrating in the Carolinas.

My experience with regional clubs and doing tool demonstrations has revealed a void in recruiting new turners and youth to

the experience of woodturning. Most of the clubs I have visited are weighted with senior citizens who have had some exposure to high school shop classes with some experience in woodturning. Most clubs offer programs and demonstrations for advanced skills, and younger and newer turners are left behind, frustrated, and intimidated.

My vision is to foster and focus on young adults and newer turners. They are our future. I believe there is a need to develop and promote programs and demonstrations for youth and newer turners. They need our assistance, encouragement, and training opportunities to develop basic woodturning skills.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kimberly Winkle, Tennessee



I have been involved with the AAW in several capacities since 2003, most recently as a Board member since 2021 and chair of the POP and WIT committees. I remain impressed by the unwavering dedica-

tion of the AAW to woodturning education and to creating and sustaining its community. I am similarly dedicated and driven by a firm commitment to craft and craft education, which is why I am interested and well prepared to continue my service as a Board member.

My twenty-plus years in higher education, specifically in the arts,

have developed my range of skills and experiences that would positively serve the AAW. Additionally, my twelve years of prior service on the board of a statewide arts nonprofit have provided added and relevant skills, such as committee work, fundraising, program development and assessment, strategic planning, budget planning, public relations, and community building.

Having strong and meaningful community connections is an important component of my leadership and professional activity and is an area of interest to me regarding the AAW. I'm interested in developing relationships with organizations and groups to help grow the organization, progress the conversation of woodturning, and broaden

the population that the AAW serves. My workshop teaching at several major craft workshop institutions and participation in a variety of craft-oriented organizations and symposia have allowed me to become engaged in a large and meaningful group of artists and organizations with whom partnerships might be forged in support of the AAW and towards a goal of broadening the reach of the organization and its mission.

I am inspired by the possibility to continue my service on a Board that helps lead the AAW to success. My experience, passion, and motivation provide me with the qualifications to successfully support and grow an organization where creativity, learning, and community are the priority.

Larry Curry, Oregon



My name is Larry Curry, and I am currently president of Willamette Valley Woodturners in Salem, Oregon. I have been a woodturner for about twenty-five years. I have been a volunteer videographer at all of the

Oregon Woodturners Symposiums (OWS) and will be serving on the board for the OWS in 2025.

Our club has a very good mentoring program, and we encourage young people to participate. Our current membership includes people from 8 to 90. We have at least six members under the age of 18.

I spent over fifty years in the corporate working world. The last thirty-five-and-a-half years I owned and operated my own executive business management consulting business. I also served six years on the board of directors of Oliver Wight Americas, Inc., and on the board of the American Production and Inventory Control Society for two years. During my time on the Oliver Wight board, I headed several committees, including the member and executive compensation committees. I also managed negotiations of alliances with partner companies, including Microsoft. I worked with companies as small as twenty-nine employees and larger clients like Caterpillar, Boeing, and Army Material Command.

I have been a member of the AAW for many years and would be honored to serve on its Board of Directors. I believe my corporate experience would allow me to add value to the Board, and my management skills could be used to support all AAW endeavors. Being retired and a widower, I have lots of time and would happily use it to support the efforts to promote woodturning. I truly believe that there are no downsides to woodturning, except possibly acquiring one or two too many tools. It provides older folks an opportunity to relax and be creative and helps young people focus on something positive.

Join Us for the 2024 Virtual WIT eXchange

Are you in a slump and looking for connection? Are you ready? Hundreds of women across the globe have participated in past Women in Turning (WIT) eXchange collaborations, which encourage you to commit to your creative process, create connections with other women makers, and promote teamwork. The WIT eXchange includes social time, enrichment programs, and an opportunity to ask for and receive problem-solving advice in an engaging, supportive environment while you create. Oh, and it's fun too!

This year's Virtual WIT eXchange will start the first week of September and run through October 15. By the end of six weeks, you and two collaborators will have created a project inspired by two randomly assigned inspiration words. The process of creating these projects will be documented in a recorded five-minute presentation developed by your team that will be included in the Presentation of Projects event on November 2, 2024. To view all of the past Presentation of Projects event videos, visit tiny.cc/EventsArchive (URL is case-sensitive).

Registration for the 2024 Virtual WIT eXchange will open August 15, 2024. Now is your time—join us! For more information and to register, visit tiny.cc/WITExchange2024.

—Marie Anderson and Linda Ferber



AAW Hosts Girls Build at Portland Symposium

Photos by Andi Wolfe.



AAW volunteers Cindy Navarro, Debra Higley-Feldman, and Preston Christensen (left to right) share the joy of woodturning with enthusiastic girls from Portland's Girls Build program.

When you drop a pebble into a pond, you never know how far the ripples will go and what impact they will have. In October 2023, my husband shared a story with me from *Fine Homebuilding* magazine about Girls Build™, an organization in Portland, Oregon, that has been working since 2016 to inspire curiosity and confidence in girls through exposure to working with tools. As I read the article and visited the Girls Build website (girlsbuild.org), it occurred to me that these girls should also be exposed to woodturning and that the 2024 AAW Symposium in Portland would be a great opportunity.

I learned from Girls Build Program Manager Ev Wu that they had two lathes and three tools and were already exposing their staff to woodturning through local classes. At the Women in Turning (WIT) meeting in October, our committee agreed—our skills, clubs, grants for equipment, and programming matched up perfectly with their needs and we should marry our resources with their programming. Linda Ferber and Linda Britt, members of the WIT and Youth Committees, shared our plan

with the Youth Committee, and they jumped at the chance to work with Girls Build. Girls Build was thrilled with our offer. The missions of Girls Build, WIT, and Youth Turning were a good fit. Ev Hu even joined the Cascade Woodturners Association (an AAW chapter in Portland, Oregon) and applied for an AAW membership through a WIT grant.

At the Symposium

AAW's Youth Committee and WIT worked to bring our plan together, with Linda Ferber taking the lead as contact with Girls Build. Linda procured two sessions in the Youth turning area exclusively for girls from Girls Build. A call went out to WIT members to volunteer, and all of the spots were filled.

On Saturday, May 25, twenty-five girls and Girls Build staff arrived at the AAW Symposium. The group enjoyed both turning and touring time. Half of the girls toured the instant gallery and vendor areas with Heather Marusiak, Elizabeth Weber, and Janine Wang as their guides. During the tour, the girls were wowed by Nick Cook turning at the Powermatic booth, and they were

amazed by the variety of turnings in the instant gallery. The other half of the group donned faceshields as Preston Christensen explained and demonstrated making a whisk handle, with group two making an ornament. The blanks were donated by Cousineau Wood Products, and the ornament kits were donated by Craft Supplies USA. Each girl had a mentor to coach her through the projects, and everyone went home with a finished turning and a smile.

The girls and their leaders had an eventful life-changing experience—the dropping of that pebble had wide-reaching implications. Heartfelt thanks to everyone who sponsored or volunteered to make this event happen for our future woodturners. We hope that our AAW partnership with Girls Build will grow, and the experience showed that reaching youth through an established organization is a good outreach model for future AAW Symposia. ■

—Robin McIntyre, Cape Cod Woodturners WIT Liaison, AAW WIT Liaison Coordinator

2024 AAW Chapter Awards

This year, the AAW introduced two new awards to honor the efforts of local woodturning chapters. As chapters continue to innovate and make more substantial impacts, AAW wants to shine a spotlight on their efforts.

Chapter Communications Excellence Award

The new Chapter Communications Excellence Award honors chapters that demonstrate effective, creative, and innovative communications through email newsletters, websites, social media, marketing campaigns, and video content. Nearly a dozen chapters provided impressive submissions. This year's winner has excelled in disseminating information, educating, and entertaining their members and non-members, and promoting the art and craft of woodturning through compelling and creative communications.



Winner: The Woodworkers of Central New York

Chapter Community Impact Award

The new Chapter Community Impact Award recognizes chapters that have demonstrated a strong commitment to community service, outreach, and positive societal impact. Nineteen chapters shared inspirational stories about the programs they implemented to go above and beyond for their communities. This year's winner developed a program called Turning for the Next Generation. Working with local schools, this chapter's efforts in teaching students the art of woodturning have not only enriched the lives of students but also impacted the educational pathways of the schools. This chapter has shown dedication to fostering creativity and skill development among students through their woodturning workshops and classes. By providing hands-on learning experiences and a focus on detail, they have ignited a passion for craftsmanship in young minds and inspired a new generation of artisans.



Winner: The Dakota Woodturners

CTWA Continues YouthWorks Partnership

About twenty years ago, the non-profit American YouthWorks (AYW) approached the Central Texas Woodturners Association (CTWA) asking us to assist in teaching youth how to turn pens that they could sell. CTWA founding member S. Gary Roberts, working with AYW's Johnny Perales, volunteered to organize a program that would teach six participants not only how to turn pens but to become teachers of their peers in how to turn wood.

An area in the basement of AYW's facility became a dedicated workshop space. The AAW supplied a \$1000 grant that was used to buy equipment and supplies. Local chapter members donated turning tools as well as encouragement. Johnny Perales chose six students to become teachers, who, after

six months of weekly instruction, were certified to help teach other students.

This was the beginning of a symbiotic relationship that is still thriving today. When AYW moved to new, better accommodations, they offered us their facilities, without charge, as a place to hold our regular meetings. The new area was furnished with tables and chairs, had good lighting, and was heated and air-conditioned. As our chapter grew, AYW also provided storage space for our equipment.

In exchange, CTWA members bring several lathes at graduation time each spring and teach graduating students to turn their own pens. This year, more than sixty pens were turned in one day. Each fall the AYW holds a special gala dinner and charity auction with many beautiful turned pieces donated



An appreciative American YouthWorks graduate shows off the pen she made at the CTWA's annual pen turning event.

by our chapter members in appreciation of AYW's generosity. Through the years, this relationship has matured, and we are proud of the way it benefits both of our fine organizations.

Austin, Texas-based American YouthWorks (americanyouthworks.org) provides education, job training, and support services to young people. It focuses on helping individuals who may have faced barriers to traditional education or employment opportunities.

—S. Gary Roberts, Central Texas Woodturners Association

AAW Annual Financial Statement for 2023

Dear AAW Members,

The year 2023 marked a period of transition and careful planning for AAW. We entered the year with a planned deficit budget and welcomed a new executive director.

We focused on paying close attention to managing our expenses while diversifying revenue through increased fundraising efforts. Some program investments were postponed to ensure that our Symposium and membership not only regained ground but also experienced growth.

We are honored to have investments from donors who want to give back to the woodturning community, as well as from foundations committed to the growth of woodturning as both a craft and an art.

Looking ahead, a new strategic plan, along with a refreshed mission and vision, will guide our programs into the future. All signs point to a successful future for our organization and woodturning community.

—Chuck Lobaito, AAW Treasurer

Revenues and Expenses

Income

Annual Dues.....	\$769,330
Symposium	\$546,053
Publications & Products	\$220,122
Contributions.....	\$298,864
Other Income.....	\$35,369
Investment	\$192,684
Total Income	\$2,062,422

Expenses

Symposium	\$552,319
Publications & Products	\$525,348
Gallery & Exhibitions.....	\$64,132
Scholarships	\$12,290
Professional Outreach	\$25,188
Other Programs	\$65,453
Administrative	\$257,034
Member Development.....	\$304,192
Total Expenses	\$1,805,956

Net Income Change	\$256,466
Restricted Portion.....	\$104,618
Unrestricted	
Net Income	\$151,848

Balance Sheet (as of 12/31/23)

Assets

Checking & Savings	\$596,131
Accounts Receivable.....	\$48,670
Inventories	\$25,726
Prepaid Expenses	\$46,336
Investment Securities	\$1,292,859
Total Art Collections	\$448,690
Property & Equipment.....	\$14,731
Total Assets	\$2,473,143

Liabilities

Accounts Payable	\$5,249
Accrued Expenses	\$52,529
Deferred Revenue.....	\$680,958
Total Liabilities	\$738,736

Net Assets

Without Donor Restriction...	\$1,240,184
With Donor Restriction.....	\$494,223

Total Net Assets	\$1,734,407
-------------------------------	--------------------

Total Liabilities & Net Assets	\$2,473,143
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Apply for an AAW Grant

AAW Grants are available to individuals, chapters, schools, and non-profit organizations. Examples include but are not limited to outreach programs and/or events to encourage youth and under-represented populations (women, minority, disabled, etc.) to learn and pursue woodturning, support of existing or developing unique woodturning programs, educational

workshops or class participation, professional development opportunities, chapter projects, etc. In addition to monetary awards, up to ten mini-lathe packages are available for award each year.

Regular AAW Grants are awarded on a bi-annual basis. To be eligible, applications must be received by December 31 for grants given January through May, and by May 31 for

June through December. However, Women in Turning (WIT) grants and others for under-represented populations, events, and exhibitions are awarded quarterly.

Find detailed grant descriptions and application information at tiny.cc/aawgrants. If you have questions, please contact the AAW office by calling 877-595-9094 or emailing memberservices@woodturner.org.

The Continuing Story of Turning in South Africa

History

The Association of Woodturners of South Africa (AWSA) was formed in 1995 in Port Elizabeth. Alec Jardine was elected the first chairman, and other founding members were Elliot Murray, Mike Kaplan, Grant Marshall, Thys Carstens, Andrew Stevens, Schalk van Niekerk, Tony van Niekerk, Dave Stephenson, and Peter Nicolle. We held our first convention in Bloemfontein in November 1997. Woodturners converged on this centrally located town from Johannesburg, Durban, East London, Port Elizabeth, and Cape Town—the latter contingent having to travel 1,100 km (684 miles) to get there.

An instant gallery showed a wide variety of the remarkable turning talent in South Africa. Demonstrations were offered by turners from Johannesburg and Cape Town. They demonstrated platters, natural-edge and thin-walled bowls, a lidded box, hollow-form vase, and miniatures turned in bone. At that congress, Alec Jardine was re-elected chair and Elliot Murray, secretary. Special mention to Wally Rossini, who had a huge influence on woodturning in South Africa. Wally was inspired by the works of David Ellsworth, Del Stubbs, and Bert Marsh.

The AWSA now

There are currently fourteen turning clubs in South Africa. Some consist of both woodworkers and woodturners, as fewer members do just woodturning. The Western Cape Woodturners Association in Cape Town is currently the largest club in the country.

We are fortunate to have Thys Carstens, one of the top turners in the country, in our club. His work has been featured internationally, including in *Creative Wood New Zealand* and *American Woodturner*. Thys was also recognized by the First National Bank's Evita awards and the online forum, World of Woodturners (thewows.com).

Another well-known South African turner is John Wessels, who has been a demonstrator at past AAW Symposia, and his beautiful red ivory and pewter items have certainly inspired many turners.

Butch Smuts is another turner who has produced incredible works of art. He recently published a book, *Of Wood and Woodturning: A Creative Journey*, that showcases his work. Notably, Butch has connected with leading local and overseas galleries and collectors who will undoubtedly inspire

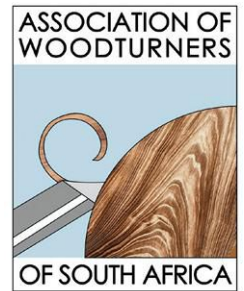
future artists to do the same.

Unfortunately, the market for woodturned items in South Africa is not large, so many turners are making smaller items they can sell at local markets. Most of our tools and accessories are imported, and that plays a role in what turners can afford. It has been encouraging to see more women in woodturning, and we are encouraging more young people to take up this beautiful hobby, too.

Next symposium

Covid had a detrimental effect on our woodturning scene, but we are trying to return to hosting a national symposium every year. We have been fortunate to have had quite a few overseas presenters, and this year we will feature the U.K.'s Phil Irons. Our next symposium will take place in Cape Town, September 20-23, 2024. **To learn more, visit awsa.org.za.**

—Gert Ferreira, Chair, AWSA



(Left) **Thys Carstens**, *Hollow Forms*, 2023, Camphor, yellow wood, African rosewood, pink ivory, pyrography, Largest: 7 $\frac{7}{8}$ " x 3" (20cm x 8cm)

(Top) **John Wessels**, *Bowls*, 2009, Red ivory wood, cast pewter, sheet pewter, Largest: 3 $\frac{3}{8}$ " x 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ " (9cm x 10cm)

(Bottom) **Butch Smuts**, *New Planets*, 2008, Pyrographed and ebonized African wattle burl, wood stain, Danish oil, 7 $\frac{7}{8}$ " x 22" (20cm x 56cm)

Turners Anonymous Makes Wig Stands Club Project

Turners Anonymous, an AAW chapter in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, recently made wig stands for cancer patients. We used teaching materials from the Women in Turning (WIT) webpage. I first learned about the WIT wig stand



program when they had a display in the instant gallery at the 2023 Louisville Symposium. The teaching materials explain how to make wig stands, provide artistic examples, and offer recommendations for how to get them into the hands of cancer patients. **To learn more, visit tiny.cc/WITwigstands** (URL is case-sensitive).

I made a prototype wig stand and then did a demo for our club. In addition to serving a good cause, the wig stands present an opportunity for turners of all skill levels to practice both spindle

and faceplate turnings and can be made with only basic tools and fixtures typically accessible to beginning turners. We also provided wood to our members for this project—a combination of timbers donated by club members and our local Woodcraft and Rockler stores. Two volunteers assisted me with cutting blanks. We distributed the completed stands through Creative Hair Solutions, which is a wig salon that serves many cancer patients in the Pittsburgh area. ■

—Andrew Horowitz, Vice President, Turners Anonymous

LIWA Beginners Workshop Continues Tradition of Mentorship

The Long Island Woodturners Association (LIWA) held its 3rd Annual Bob Storch Memorial Beginners Workshop, where club mentors worked with Northport High School students and parents to cultivate the art of woodturning. Ed Moloney, Technology & Engineering teacher at Northport High School, organized the workshop with LIWA board members Bob Lee, Jim Moloney, and Barry Saltsberg.

My father Bob Storch and Frank Torre, former principal of Wilson Tech BOCES (Boards of Cooperative Educational Services), were founding members of LIWA. They were self-taught woodworkers who helped each other renovate their homes. We

bought Dad his first lathe for his 50th birthday, and for years following we invariably found him in the basement shop turning countless projects. I fondly remember attending LIWA meetings with my dad and quickly developing an interest in woodturning. Dad, Frank, and I worked together developing our turning skills with the help of LIWA mentorship.

When my father died in January 2022, LIWA decided to dedicate an annual beginner's workshop named for him to honor his memory and commitment to sharing his love of woodturning. Now, having held the 3rd annual event, the Bob Storch Memorial Beginners Workshop has become a

hallmark outreach opportunity for LIWA. Club member Mike Josiah, who served as a mentor at this year's event, said, "I really enjoy teaching woodturning to new students. There is a moment when you watch them get a feel for the tool and then see the smile that comes from it. That brings me back to when I first started turning." Another club mentor, Mitch Friedman, said of his student Liam Shaw, "Liam showed real interest in learning how to work on the lathe. He had some good skills, and it was a pleasure to coach him. I look forward to doing another workshop." ■

—David Storch, Long Island Woodturners Association



Club mentor Mitch Friedman and Northport High School junior Liam Shaw showcase Liam's first two turning projects.



Mentor Mike Josiah offers Northport High School sophomore Andrew Mead guidance at the lathe.

NMW Continues Support of Cowell Family Cancer Center

The Northwestern Michigan Woodturners (NMW) of Traverse City, Michigan, has a real heart for public service and community support projects. In 2019, club member Dennis Ferguson saw an AAW article with plans for making wig stands. Within a month, he had made one and then did a demonstration for our club. Following the demonstration, he approached the Cowell Family Cancer Center to ask if they could use turned wig stands. That started our five-year partnership with the Center, and since then, we have provided more than 200 stands to them and a smaller cancer center in a nearby city.

Recently, a club member whose wife teaches seventh- and eighth-grade

art classes said her students would like to paint and decorate some wig stands as a community-outreach project. The club provided twenty unfinished stands, and the results were beautiful and very well received by the Center.



NMW member Dennis Ferguson demonstrates the turning of a wig stand, 2019.

NMW President Gary Perkins says this is an effort on the part of the club to provide a little cheer to someone going through a rough time. We are always looking for and are eager to assist with community projects that help people out and showcase the talent within our club. ■

—Gary Perkins, President, Northwestern Michigan Woodturners



Members of our turning club with the first thirty wig stands donated to the Cowell Family Cancer Center.

GCWA Annual Retreat a Success

In April, the Gulf Coast Woodturners Association (GCWA) of Houston, Texas, held its annual retreat at the Jimmy Burke Activity Center. Club members enjoyed a weekend of camaraderie with fellow turners, along with lots of turning, a couple of excellent lunches, a sale/exchange table, and a raffle.

This event drew sixty-one attendees and twenty-one instructors, and there were twenty-seven different projects/demos available to choose from. They ranged from beginner/novice instruction to advanced turner classes. As always, the retreat's emphasis was on teaching tool skills and safety to the club's newest turners. Of course, those

who have been turning for a while enjoyed the challenges of advanced turner classes. We were able to amass sixty-four lathes, several grinders, a drill press, and a small bandsaw, along with all the usual turning supplies like wood, glue, sandpaper, and turning tools.

During our lunch break on Saturday, Chuck Graham, along with his wife Gena, were honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award for Chuck's many years of service to GCWA, including serving as president for the past five years. Chuck's award was presented by Bill Berry, who is a long-time club member and past recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award.

Additionally, Frank Rodriguez was honored with the Luna Ford Award, which the club president selects each year for the member who has provided outstanding volunteerism and support for GCWA.

All in all, it was an excellent event, and thanks go to the many volunteers who made it happen. Without them, the annual retreat would not happen. And finally, a special thanks goes to Dan Schmoker, who has coordinated this event for the past several years. ■

—Paul T. Mugridge, Secretary, Gulf Coast Woodturners Association



Beginners at the retreat are taught to turn safely in an encouraging, well-organized format.



Chuck and Gena Graham were honored with the club's Lifetime Achievement Award for Chuck's many years of service to GCWA.



Frank Rodriguez (left) was honored with the Luna Ford Award for his outstanding volunteerism and support of the club.

Observations from AAW's Portland Symposium

Jolie Karno

I was so fortunate to have attended this year's AAW Symposium in Portland, Oregon, thanks to an anonymous donor who paid for my registration. When I arrived in Portland, I was met with warm greetings from smiling turners and was checked in by hotel staff wearing woodturning-themed shirts. The AAW clearly thought of everything. I shared a room with the funny and gifted artist Merryll Saylan, who is the only woman to have served as AAW president and knows absolutely everyone. She introduced me to scores of cool people, including her friend Kris Marubayashi, a gifted ceramicist.

Over the next two days, the area hotels filled with brilliant craftspeople and artists, some of them old friends and others waiting to be met. There were meals and lounging between demos, exhibits, and tradeshow visits, late nights with friends laughing, and early mornings with desperate folks in line for coffee before the first demos began.

Demos and panels

Christian Burchard taught a multiaxis approach to turning a sphere. He's a gifted craftsman, so he made it look incredibly easy. I don't believe it is as easy as he says but will try the project anyway. There was a panel discussion on photography for woodturners, and

with some practice, my photos should start looking better soon. I'd never heard of "reflection killers" before, but now I understand all about them.

Saturday morning started with Rolly Monro from New Zealand. I was not familiar with his work and was overwhelmed; there is so much going on there, from sculpture to texture to color. I left to get more coffee and figured I'd need to let those seeds germinate for a year or so. It's possible Rolly may have time-traveled or be from an alternate universe.

Donna Zils Banfield did a demo on how she embellishes her work. There are many more steps than I had realized, and it shows the varied ways people apply color. She ended her demo by saying if we copy her piece and put it on the Internet, we had better make sure it's good enough, or she will critique it publicly. Be warned!

Dave Landers did a demo on sliced hollow forms, and it gave me so many ideas that I filled most of a book with sketches. He uses a jig made by John Beaver to do it well and let us know how we can access plans for the jig.

The last panel on the schedule was on how to be a better demonstrator, hosted by Cindy Drozda, Mike Mahoney, Kip Christiansen, and Stuart Batty. This star-studded crew did not



disappoint. Funny anecdotes and ribbing kept everyone engaged, along with helpful, practical advice. Having a chance to learn from people who are the very best at what they do is what the AAW Symposium is all about.

Meeting like-minded folks

Pro turner and frequent demonstrator Mike Mahoney was his usual warm and generous self, always offering a seat at the table and letting people know he supports Lower 48, the woodturning school I run in Oakland, California. He is a super mensch.

I also ran into multiaxis-turning expert Barbara Dill, who recently retired and started her new role as mentor. She graciously offered to teach the Lower 48 students about multiaxis turning via Zoom and is committed to spreading the love of turning for the next generation.

The Bay Area Woodturners Association (BAWA) had a solid



The author (left) with pioneering woodturner Merryll Saylan and ceramicist Kris Marubayashi.



The night shift, friends old and new.



Smiling faces, from left: Kelly Dunn, Karen Freitas, and Mike Mahoney.



The author (left) poses with Canadian turners who had “too much fun.” The one on the right even won an (unofficial) award for best hair in Portland.

showing this year, including Cindy Navarro who is the most consistent and gifted volunteer at Lower 48.

Tradeshow

Brent English from Robust had a booth in Portland, and I love those lathes. He has donated toolrests to Lower 48 and even made us a bowl steady for large pieces. I have never seen a sturdier accessory. Also, he’s a super nice guy and a great lathe maker, so if you get to see him at a show, be sure to stop by and say hello.

Joe Fleming from Airbrushing Wood showed his wares, but fortunately for him and unfortunately for the rest of us, he was too swamped with buyers to socialize.

I met some cool people at the Peke Safety booth, which makes comfy respirator/faceshields. Ever since wood artist Kristin LeVier talked about lung health in her demo at the Bay Area Woodturners Association, I have taken this threat more seriously. The people at the Peak Safety booth even offered to send some respirators to Lower 48.

Canadians were everywhere at this event, and there was a sweet couple tending the Clapham’s Beeswax booth from British Columbia. Clapham’s seems to have the market cornered on happy bees up north.

Special exhibitions & instant gallery

The special exhibitions area was put together by Tib Shaw, AAW Curator, who takes incredible care in placing and protecting each piece on display. She is the best person to trust with your art. She curates the AAW’s annual member and POP exhibitions and takes the best pictures of turned objects I’ve ever seen.

Every year, attendees bring turned pieces to display in what becomes a huge instant gallery. I am always impressed with the creativity and skills displayed there. Several pieces in the instant gallery were chosen to be critiqued, including work by Lower 48’s very own Maryalice Birk. She and POP Showcase Artist Kevin Jesequel collaborated on a lovely hollow form with an unusual texture and color.

The awards ceremony at the Saturday banquet was exciting. Several POP pieces won big, and none of them disappointed. There were also awards for work by regular attendees who brought their work to display in the instant gallery.

Final thoughts

If you haven’t had a chance to attend an AAW Symposium, I urge you to make it a priority. These events bring people together from around the world who really should have met long ago. The

only complaint I heard was the same as it is every year: there is simply not enough time to see all of the things and people you want to see. This is the same complaint I hear from Lower 48 students. I tried adding more time to my classes, but it doesn’t seem to matter. One thing is clear—that feedback is not an indictment of the AAW’s planning abilities but a testament to the fact that people love woodturning and its remarkable community. ■

Jolie Karno is the director of Lower 48, whose mission is to make the joy of turning wood into beautiful objects an accessible experience for as many people as possible. Learn more at lower48.org.



Select pieces from the instant gallery were chosen (with artist consent) to be critiqued—always a useful exercise for makers and viewers alike.



One of the Special Interest Night sessions was a gathering of the Women in Turning (WIT) group, and it was a fantastic and encouraging turnout.

A Collaboration Project Born and Nurtured in Social Media

It began with a phone call from my friend Roberto Ferrer: “Hey Marie, wouldn’t it be fun to get all of our Instagram friends together [at the 2023 AAW Symposium] in Louisville for a meet and greet and maybe we could combine it somehow into a collaborative?” I thought it was a great idea, and by the end of our call, I was putting together a video reel to post on Instagram (IG) inviting anyone coming to Louisville to bring an unfinished piece that could be completed by a collaborator.

Not everyone who joined the collaborative saw my IG post. Some joined when our group gathered in Louisville. This added another guideline; since not everyone had something on hand to trade, shipping costs would be the responsibility of the participants. Everyone’s name was put in a bowl and pulled to form fifteen teams of two turners each.

We kept the guidelines simple. The piece had to fit into a medium USPS flat rate box. Control goes to your collaborator, but ownership stays with the original turner. The work was to be completed by the 2024 AAW Symposium in Portland, Oregon, where we would meet and display our collaborations.



About six weeks before the Portland Symposium, I posted a reminder on Instagram that time was getting short and projects should be completed soon. Messages started flying and progress photos began appearing. Roberto called again: “Hey, are we doing this again? Maybe post another invitation.” So I posted again, this time inviting people to bring a piece to Portland to join for the 2025 Symposium in Saint Paul.

As the projects started to arrive in Portland, pride in what we had accomplished soared. These projects were amazing. Spirits lifted and community bonds were cemented as each piece was added to our dedicated table in the instant gallery. In all, twenty finished projects created by twelve teams were displayed.

Join us

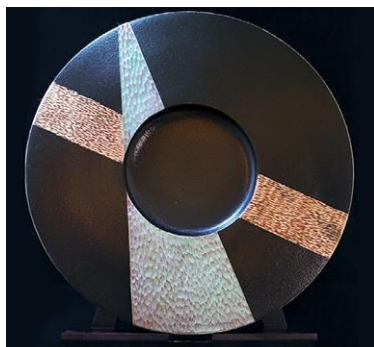
As photos of the collaborations made their way onto Instagram, more people wanted to participate. Buzz about the collaborative spread in Portland, and people wanted in. Names were drawn, new teams were created, and unfinished pieces were exchanged. The IG collaborative challenge for 2025 was on! Join us next year at the AAW Symposium in Saint Paul, where the fruits of this collaboration, born from the love of woodturning and nurtured through social media connections, will be on display.

If you would like to participate in the 2026 IG collaborative, send me a direct message (DM) on Instagram, @woodturner_marieanderson. ■

—Marie Anderson



Kirk DeHeer (@kirkdeheer) and Heather Marusiak (@heathermarusiak), *Threaded Box*, 2024, Maple, epoxy, acrylic paint, 5" × 2½" (13cm × 6cm)



Cindy Navarro (@unicorn_woodturning) and Marie Anderson (@woodturner_marieanderson), *Surprise*, 2024, Power-carved poplar, metal reactive paint, alcohol ink, metallic-effect paste, polyurethane, 7/8" × 9" (22mm × 23cm)



Jeff Peters (@lawesometurner) and Michael Anderson (@ulmus_woodturning), *Lucky Collaboration Box*, 2024, Maple, koa, leather dye, acrylic paint, lacquer, 6" × 3¾" (15cm × 10cm)



Elizabeth Weber (@icosa_woodworks) and Roberto Ferrer (@robertoferrer_sculptor), *Untitled Box*, 2024, Carved, pyro-engraved, and dyed cherry, copper wire, 10" × 3" (25cm × 8cm)

Calendar of Events

Send event info to editor@woodturner.org. October issue deadline: August 15.

England

October 4–6, 2024, Association of Woodturners of Great Britain (AWGB) 18th International Woodturning Seminar, Yarnfield Park Training and Conference Centre, Staffordshire. Demonstrators to include Mick Hanbury, Simon Hope, Margaret Garrard, Jason Breach, Kade Bolger, David O'Neill, Yann Marot, Jan Hovens, Neil Joynt, and Rolly Munro. For more, visit awgbwoodturningseminar.co.uk.

Ireland

October 12, 13, 2024, Irish Woodturners Guild (IWG) Seminar, Tullamore Court Hotel, Tullamore, County Offaly. Demonstrators to include Emmet Kane, Derek Weidman, Chris Parker, Nikos Siragas, and Roberto Cecconello. For more, visit iwg.ie.

South Africa

September 20–23, 2024, Association of Woodturners of South Africa (AWSA) National Woodturning Symposium, Northlink College Tygerberg campus, Cape Town. Demonstrators include Phil Irons from Great Britain and local demonstrators. For more, visit awsa.org.za.

Colorado

September 27–29, 2024, Rocky Mountain Woodturning Symposium, The Ranch Larimer County Events Center, Loveland. Demonstrators to include Jean-François Escoulen, Dale Larson, Rudolph Lopez, Jacques Vesery, Kimberly Winkle, Michael Anderson, Christian Brisepierre, Linda Ferber, Joe Fleming, Chris Hoehle, Vinny Luciani, Randall Olander, Doug Schneider, and Chip Siskey. Symposium to include hands-on learning, tradeshow, instant gallery, and auctions. For more, visit rmwoodturningsymposium.com.

Illinois

September 26–28, 2025, Segmented Woodturners Symposium, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Northbrook. The only symposium fully dedicated to segmenting. Save the date for next year; details to come. For more, visit segmentedwoodturners.org.

Minnesota

Multiple 2024 exhibitions, AAW's Gallery of Wood Art, Landmark Center, Saint Paul:

- May 19–September 1, 2024: *Art from the Lathe—Selected Works from the AAW Permanent Collection*
- September 8–December 29, 2024: *Common Roots* (AAW's 2024 member exhibition)
- Ongoing: *Touch This!; Around the Hus—Turning in Scandinavian Domestic Life; She's Tops! Selections from the Linda Ferber Collection;* vintage and historic lathes and turned items

For more, visit galleryofwoodart.org or email Tib Shaw at tib@woodturner.org.

Montana

September 20–22, 2024, Yellowstone Woodturners Symposium, Roaring 20s Club House, Billings. Featured demonstrator/instructor will be Michael Roper, whose sessions will be geared toward both beginners and experienced turners. For more, visit the Yellowstone Wood Turners Facebook page or email Sam Angelo (samandcheryle@gmail.com) or Roger Kesler (rogerkesler@msn.com).

Pennsylvania

February 9–September 15, 2024, *Experiencing Form: Phil Brown and the Museum's Residency Artist Alumnae*, Museum for Art in Wood, Philadelphia. An exhibition of bowls and sculpture initiated by the late Phil Brown and completed by the residency alumni. For more, visit museumforartinwood.org.

September 20–22, 2024, The Mid Atlantic Woodturning Symposium, Lancaster Marriott Hotel and Convention Center, Lancaster. Featured demonstrators to include Stuart Batty, Alan Lacer, Keith Gotschall, Carol Hall, Mark Hancock, Greg Gallegos. Featuring Friday night meet & greet demonstrator presentations, Women in Turning meeting, vendor room, silent auction, raffle, instant gallery, and a hands-on room with tips and tricks from professionals. For more, visit mawts.com.

Tennessee

January 31–February 1, 2025, Tennessee Association of Woodturners' 36th Annual Woodturning Symposium, Marriott Hotel and Convention Center, Franklin. Featured demonstrators to include Donna Banfield, Trent Bosch, Laurent Niclot, and Matt Monaco. One of the longest-running and most successful regional symposia in the U.S., the 2025 event will feature a tradeshow, instant gallery, People's Choice award, and Saturday night banquet with auction. For more, visit tnwoodturners.org, or email David Sapp at symposium@tnwoodturners.org. Vendors contact Grant Hitt at vendorinfo@tnwoodturners.org.

Texas

August 23–25, 2024, SWAT (Southwest Association of Turners) annual symposium, Waco Convention Center, Waco. Demonstrators to include Stuart Batty, Sammy Long, Kurt Hertzog, Kirk DeHeer, Jason Breach, Beth Ireland, and Laurent Niclot. Registration includes lunch each day, vendor tradeshow, and instant gallery. For more, visit swaturners.org.

Virginia

November 2, 3, 2024, Virginia Woodturners, Inc., biennial symposium, Expoland, Fishersville. Headline artists include Donna Zils Banfield, Trent Bosch, JoHannes Michelsen, Kristin LeVier, Andi Wolfe, Bob Rotche, Nick Agar, Joe Fleming, Barry Gross, Jeff Hornung, Linda Ferber, Willie Simmons, and Steve Schwartz. Forty-six demonstrations, large vendor tradeshow, instant gallery. For more, visit virginiawoodturners.com.

Washington

October 19, 2024, Northwest Washington Woodturners' 12th-annual all-day demo, A Day with Keith Gotschall, Anacortes First Baptist Church, Anacortes. Full-day demonstration including bowl-turning techniques and turning a stool. Deli lunch provided, and classes will also be available. For more, visit nwwwt.org, email questions to info@nwwwt.org, or call Charley Drake at (425) 785-2994 or Rod Parker at (480) 338-3395.

Tips

Share your turning ideas!

If we publish your tip, we'll pay you \$35. Email your tips along with relevant photos or illustrations to editor@woodturner.org. —Joshua Friend, Editor

Sandpaper disk as CA applicator

It's common for woodturners to fill a crack in their work by rubbing sawdust into the crack and then hardening it with cyanoacrylate (CA) glue. However, it is important to be very careful with this glue because once it starts to harden, it happens very quickly. If the glue runs over a large area of the piece, it takes time to remove it. Also, spilling it on your lathe can be very messy. Worst of all, many turners have had the embarrassing experience of gluing their fingers together.

One way to control the application of the glue is to use a disposable applicator that makes it easy to prevent these problems. I have dealt with this for years with used sandpaper disks because the hook-and-loop backing will safely hold a small amount of glue for application. For a crack, I fold the disk in half and apply a small amount of glue to the edge (*Photos 1, 2*). That line of glue can then quickly be applied very accurately to the crack, which I would have already filled with sawdust (*Photo 3*). Your fingers stay clear of the glue, and it won't drip where you don't want it.

If you need to re-apply glue, just use another sanding disk. For larger patches of glue, I use the flat surface of the disk. I have more used pads than I can ever use, and it is good recycling. If a turner doesn't use sanding disks, any hook-and-loop-backed sandpaper scraps will do.

—Terry Martin, Queensland, Australia, first joined the AAW in 1996



Color-code your tools for quick identification

How many tools does a woodturner need? Just one more, of course! But when the tools pile up, it becomes more difficult to identify what's what. I use a color-coding scheme to help sort them out, so I can find the tool I'm looking for quickly. If you store your turning tools in a bucket with handles up, the color-coding is effective there, as well.

I chose to use red for bowl gouges, green for spindle gouges, orange for scrapers, and blue for skew chisels. I masked the handles with newspaper and masking tape and sprayed them with spray paint.

—John Hogg, California, AAW member since 2001

Having multiple drill chucks improves efficiency

The price of new keyed drill chucks on the web has come down to around \$20 each. At that price, I can afford to purchase several of them and keep the drills I use most often semi-permanently mounted in a drill chuck. This allows me to quickly switch between drill sizes when making pepper mills and other projects that require drilling different-sized holes.

I prefer small lightweight keyed ½" (13mm) drill chucks, rather than big heavy ⅝" (16mm) chucks. Keyed chucks hold more securely, and there is no sense in paying extra for a keyless drill chuck when the intent is to keep the drill chucked all the time anyway.

—Carl Ford, New York, AAW member since 2001



Drawer slide tucks away storage rack

My smallish shop dictates that no space goes unused, so I am constantly seeking ways to efficiently store tools and accessories. The narrow spot between my carving/pyrography bench and a shelving unit was a good spot for me to hang the assortment of corded burning pens that I have accumulated. The downside was that the pens were increasingly harder to remove, since I had to reach back through the narrow slot toward the wall. I solved or at least eased the

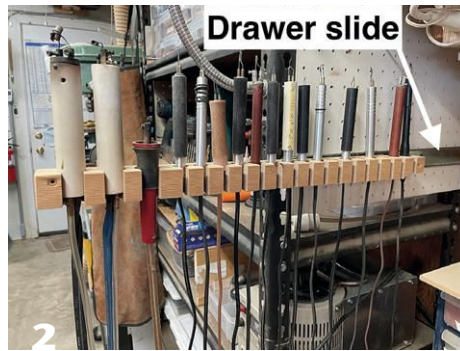
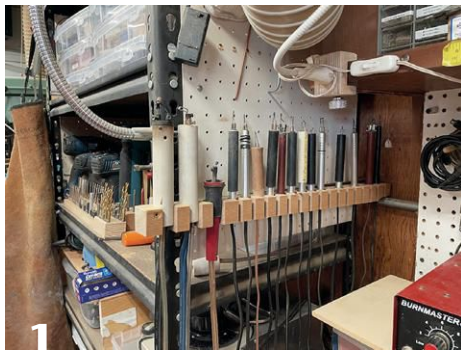
difficulty of reaching the back-most pens by mounting a single-roller drawer slide to the shelving unit and then attaching my pen rack to the slide. Now I just pull the rack out for easy access to even the farthest pen and push the rack back into the narrow space to keep it out of the way (*Photos 1, 2*).

In addition, I used a step drill (the type normally used to drill assorted sized holes in thin metal) to drill spaced holes in a piece of clear fir to

make the rack that holds the burning pens. The steps provide several diameters to grip the various-sized pens, letting me hang any of the pens in any of the holes (*Photo 3*). Lastly, I spent an afternoon shortening all of the power cords, so they just clear the floor, eliminating some of the drag and tangle.

Making the most of the space I have available helps me work more efficiently and safely.

—Pat Miller, Washington State, AAW member since 2011



Foam-core board as jam chuck

After turning a large platter, I made a simple jam chuck so I could reverse-mount the work and trim the foot. I started by cutting a circle 22" (56cm) in diameter from a piece of plywood $\frac{3}{4}$ " (19mm) thick. I centered a face-plate on the back of the disk, so I could mount it on the lathe and taped a piece of $\frac{1}{4}$ "- (6mm-) thick foam-core board on the front of it. I drew marks on the foam to help center the platter. As I advanced the tailstock quill, the platter rim was pressed securely into the foam. Then, with a sharp tool in hand and the lathe running at a moderated speed, I was able to safely trim the foot.

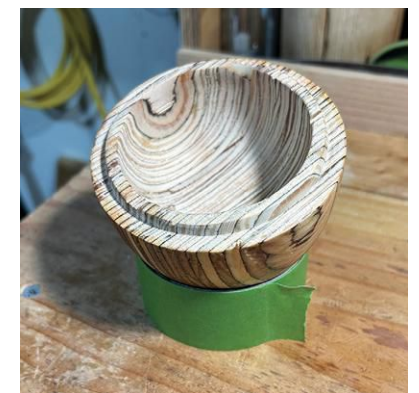
—Tim Heil, Minnesota, AAW member since 2001



Tape roll center holds work

Recently I was putting a finish on a small, irregular piece, and I was looking for a way to hold it. Looking around the shop, I found the cardboard center of a roll of tape. Simple and perfect. ►

—Ron Sharman, Oregon, AAW member since 2022



TIPS

Fluid Film® prevents rust on lathe bed ways

I now use Fluid Film® to prevent rust on the bed ways of my lathe, band saw, drill press, and other shop machines. This product is well known in the automotive industry. I purchase it at my local big box hardware store. I spray it on the bed ways of my lathe and spread it around with a chunk of synthetic steel wool and/or a paper towel.

Lanolin-based Fluid Film® is a little thicker than some other lubricants, and based on my experience, it works better. The label on the spray can says, “Simply the best since 1943.” I agree.

—Carl Ford, New York, AAW member since 2001

**Freshness film protects electronics in the shop**

In this modern world we find a myriad of electronic devices in our shop—from remote controls for dust collectors, lighting, or televisions to smartphones. These devices have to survive in the dust and hostile work environment of our shops. After replacing several remotes, I thought there must be a better way. The zip-shut plastic bags block the dust but make it hard to access controls, and they sometimes open when you don’t want them to open. I stumbled across another product that works better: a “cling film” food wrap such as Press’n Seal®. It is heavy duty, sticks to itself, and conforms to the shape of the buttons on remote controls. Now I can use electronic devices in my shop and keep them protected from dust and finishes. A roll lasts forever and can also seal glue and finish containers in a pinch.

—Mark Palma, Wisconsin, AAW member since 2007

**Tips for tuning up your banjo**

The banjo may be the hardest-working and most-ignored part of the lathe when it comes to maintenance. But ignoring it can allow dirt to accumulate until it doesn’t slide well on the bed ways or doesn’t lock down securely, which can be a safety hazard. Spending just five minutes tuning up this critical component can pay dividends in your woodturning.

Slide the banjo off the end of the lathe’s bed ways and place it upside down on your workbench. Most banjos comprise four parts: a locking handle, the main housing, an eccentric bar, and a sliding block or disk that moves back and forth on the bar (Photo 1).

Start with the banjo’s main housing. Wrap a block of wood with a piece of silicon carbide sandpaper. The grit you choose will depend on how well your banjo was machined at the factory. If you can see noticeable grooves or marks, start with 180 grit. Use a light machine oil to lubricate the cast iron as you rub the sandpaper on its flat bottom, adding oil as needed (Photo 2). Proceed through the grits to 400 or until there are no more machining marks visible. It may take a few sessions to achieve a nicely polished banjo. Then use 180 grit to ease the sharp edges on both the outside and along the groove in the middle (Photo 3). Finally,

apply a coat of paste wax along the bottom runners.

Now turn your attention to the eccentric bar inside the banjo. Wipe it clean and then lubricate it with a spray-on dry lubricant (Photo 4). Oil the two pivot points on the end, too. Remount the banjo on the lathe and adjust the nut on the bottom of the sliding block/disk so that the handle is in a comfortable and out-of-the-way position when locked.

Since you have the tailstock off the lathe, you might as well give it the same tune up.

—Mark Palma, Wisconsin, AAW member since 2007



Custom mini-plate jaws offer versatility

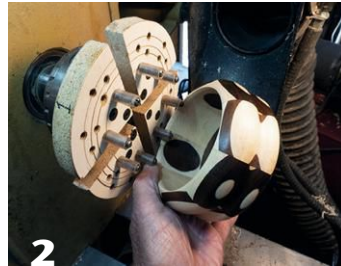
Sometimes I need to mount or remount odd-sized bowls and other projects that don't fit in my jumbo jaws. So I made a set of auxiliary jaws sized for those projects.

To make the custom jaws, I cut a circle of particle board into quarters, predrilled holes, and secured them to the chuck body. I then drilled and tapped holes all around the

jaws at four different diameters. For the holding buttons, I cut pieces of threaded rod such that when they are screwed into the jaws, they stick up either 1" or 2½" (25mm or 6cm). I cut slots in their ends, so I could use a screwdriver to install or remove them. Finally, I cut clear rubber tubing to fit over the threaded rods to protect the work (*Photo 1*).

With these jaws, I can grasp workpieces in either expansion (*Photos 2, 3*) or compression mode (*Photo 4*). When holding a piece in compression mode, I use the longer screws/buttons. My custom jaws work better than I thought they would. I used them while teaching a box-making class and saved a few student pieces.

—John Lucas, Tennessee, AAW member since 1994



Fender washer as CA bottle scraper

Every now and then the exterior tip of my cyanoacrylate (CA) glue bottles get crusted with dried glue, preventing the glue bottle cap from snapping shut. I made a tool that easily and quickly cleans the tip by sharpening the edges of a hole in a fender washer with a chainsaw file. Just place the sharpened fender washer over the encrusted bottle tip and scrape off the CA glue. At times, the hole in the bottle tip needs to be cleared with some form of needle and/or cut off to make a new opening. The bottle cap will snap in place unless crusted glue has formed inside the bottle cap.

—Andy Greif, New Mexico, AAW member since 2022



Cone center aids in vase remounting

Although I had virtually finished my project (a vase), I decided to make some minor alterations. However, having completed the hollowing and finishing of the foot, I faced the challenge of remounting it on my lathe. For other projects such as bowls, I could have used my vacuum chuck, but the long and relatively narrow shape of the vase made that a poor choice. After a bit of thought, it occurred to me that I had just the thing: a large cone center for my Oneway live center.

I was able to mount the cone center in a scroll chuck with 3" (8cm) jaws. I didn't want to risk marring the mouth of the vase, so I placed strips of adhesive-backed foam around the perimeter of the cone center. I used a small wood cup, faced with similar foam, to fit over the live center's nose to press the vase onto the large cone, compressing the foam strips a bit. Centering the live center wasn't a chore, and it was secure enough for me to achieve the minor changes I wanted to make.

—Gary Miller, Ontario, Canada, AAW member since 2006

INEXPENSIVE SHOPMADE CHATTER TOOL

Bob Amarant

The New Jersey Woodturners is an educational and charitable organization. Like many other chapters, we contribute to various charities. Our favorite activity is turning spinning tops. We make hundreds per year and 100% of the donations collected go to the

Children's Specialized Hospital of New Jersey. We have roughly thirty members who participate in this outreach effort.

We add texture to the tops with a variety of tools, including chatter, spiral, and knurling tools. Commercially available chatter tools can cost up to \$100. I find making my own tools is a great way to spend a few hours in the shop and save some money in the process. This article details the process of making a shopmade chatter tool.

and 4" long. For the actual cutting tool, I repurposed a jigsaw blade, and to hold it in place, I used a cap screw $\frac{1}{2}$ " long $\times$ $\frac{1}{4}$ " (6mm) diameter with 20 tpi (teeth per inch). I also turned a length of wood for a handle and used a piece of 1" (25mm) inside diameter (ID) copper pipe for a ferrule (Photo 1).

You will also need a $\frac{1}{4}$ " twist drill, a center drill, a $\frac{1}{2}$ " twist drill, and a $\frac{1}{4}$ " $\times$ 20 tap to cut threads, along with a #7 drill for the tap. *Note: The video referenced at the start of this article shows an alternate method of holding the blade to the handle using two hose clamps, requiring less metalworking.*

Process

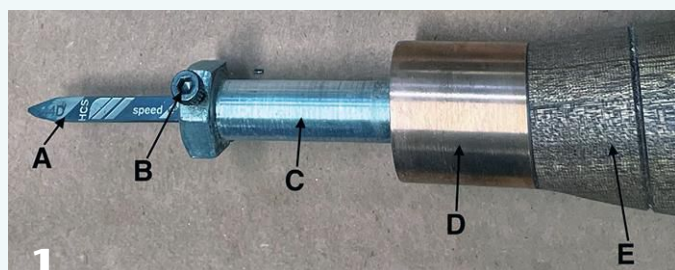
Chuck the metal rod or bolt with a maximum of 1" overhang for rigidity and concentricity. Drill a small starter hole/dimple using the center drill (Photo 2). If you don't have a center drill, use a $\frac{1}{8}$ " (3mm) twist drill to form a dimple on one end. Once the dimple is formed, drill a $\frac{1}{4}$ "-diameter hole about $1\frac{1}{4}$ " (32mm) deep (Photo 3). Keep the lathe speed low, about 500 rpm. A drop of oil while drilling metal helps to lubricate the cutting and evacuate the chips.

Once you have drilled into the end of the bolt (or rod), use a drill press to drill a side hole for the cap screw (Photo 4). The cap screw will hold the jigsaw blade in place. Use a #7 drill bit to prepare for the thread tap. Cut, or tap, the threads in the hole (Photo 5). If you have never cut threads before, refer to my companion video for helpful tips.

For the cutter, I started with a jigsaw blade that was 4" long, put it in my metal vise, and used locking pliers to snap it in half. Don't forget your safety glasses! Grind the teeth off using a grinder or benchtop belt sander to form

Accompanying Video!

Bob Amarant has created a video that illustrates some of the finer points of making a chatter tool. To view the video, visit tiny.cc/chattertool or scan the QR code.



Chatter tool parts

A: repurposed jigsaw blade, B: cap screw, C: bolt, D: ferrule, E: woodturned tool handle.

Drill hole for the blade



Use a center drill to create a dimple, or starting point for the drill bit.



At a slow lathe speed, drill a hole in the end of the bolt (or rod) to accept the chatter blade.

Drill and tap for cap screw



The author drills a hole and then taps threads for the cap screw, which will hold the blade in place during use.

Shape jigsaw blade



A jigsaw blade will serve as the chatter tool cutter. Grind off its teeth and shape it using a grinder or belt sander.

either a pointed or rounded profile on one end (*Photo 6*). Commercial chatter tools feature an angled bend, but this detail is not necessary. Grind the other end to fit snugly in the $\frac{1}{4}$ " hole in the bolt or rod.

Turn a handle

I'm a big believer of making your own tool handles. Over time, you can save hundreds of dollars and it's another good excuse to use your lathe. Plus, handles are great beginner spindle projects.

As with any spindle-turning project, mark the centers on each end and initially turn between centers. Form a tenon on one end to fit into a scroll chuck, and then mount the blank in the chuck.

At the tailstock end, form another tenon to accept the copper pipe to be used as a ferrule. Once the ferrule is in place, use a drill chuck and a $\frac{1}{2}$ " twist

drill to drill a hole $1\frac{1}{2}$ " (38mm) deep. The ferrule will be glued on later.

Bring up your live center and rough out the spindle. Then shape the blank so it is both attractive and comfortable for your hand (*Photo 7*). Consider adding a few accents with a point tool or perhaps some beads. Sand and finish with your favorite finish. I usually use boiled linseed oil for tool handles. I've also used my favorite EEE polish combined with a friction polish if I want a shiny finish.

Part the handle from the lathe, sand the end, and apply finish to that area. I use five-minute epoxy to attach both the ferrule and the bolt (or rod). When the glue has cured, insert the blade and lock it in place with the cap screw.

In use

The chatter tool creates patterns in the wood because its flexible metal blade skips on and off, cutting intermittently.

These tools work best on endgrain. Our club uses hard maple for our tops.

I have found that presenting the blade slightly below center and pointing it down to about the 8:00 position produces good chatter (*Photos 8, 9*). Other designs can be achieved by pressing just the tip or side of the blade into the wood. If you hear the blade make a screeching sound, you are probably getting good results. Experiment with different blade lengths, lathe speeds, and presentation angles. There are numerous videos on YouTube demonstrating various possibilities. ■

Bob Amarant is president of the New Jersey Woodturners, which meets at the Essex County Environmental Center in Roseland, New Jersey. Bob has produced hundreds of videos on his YouTube channel, "Bob's Woodshop Bob Amarant." Email Bob at bobamarant@gmail.com.

Turn a tool handle



Turn a handle with a ferrule. A hole drilled into the end will accept the bolt, or rod.

Chatter tool presentation



The author presents the side of the flexible blade to the hardwood endgrain, producing intermittent cuts. Adding color accentuates the chatter marks beautifully.



Turning Dead-Limb Heal-Over

Dr. Robert Harris

Most woodturners are familiar with burls and galls on trees. There are also bumps and protrusions that occur on the trunks of trees that are neither burls nor galls. The “bumps” to which I refer are formed when a limb has either died or broken off, and the tree has added layers of new wood tissue and bark over

the damaged area. A tree with heal-overs is shown in *Photo 1*.

Why heal-overs occur

I use the term *heal-overs* to describe these bumps because they are caused when limbs die and eventually break off at the surface, and the tree “heals over” the defective tissue to keep out insects,

disease, and invasive animals. It is easier to envision the process by looking at a heal-over that has been removed from a tree. *Photos 2 and 3*, respectively, show the outside bark surface and where the heal-over was cut from the tree. What remains of the limb, which died, broke off, and was subsequently covered with new tissue and bark, is clearly visible in *Photo 3*.

White oak seems particularly prone to producing uniform, symmetrical heal-overs. These are often found on large white oaks at old home sites. In many cases, these trees grew in the open with plenty of sunlight, producing many limbs. Then if property maintenance is neglected and trees are allowed to grow up around the older tree, the resulting competition shades the lower limbs of the older tree, causing them to die.

Heal-overs can, many times, occur in quantity when a tree grows in the open, producing many limbs, and is subsequently exposed to competition from surrounding trees, causing it to shed limbs. This was the case with a tree I found on the property where I grew up as a child. The tree grew along a fence line between two pastures. The pastures were abandoned, and a mixed pine hardwood forest grew up around the older tree. Many limbs died and the tree, which was still healthy and vigorous, naturally healed over the openings.

Note: Cutting heal-overs from a tree will create a pathway for insects and disease, so I do not recommend cutting them from live trees that are intended to be preserved.

Grain patterns

The grain patterns in heal-overs can be quite interesting and varied. They don’t contain typical growth rings like in the trunk of a tree, but rather swirly

Heal-overs in the wild



Multiple heal-overs on a white oak. These bumps seal off areas where limbs have broken off, protecting the tree from insects and disease. Don’t harvest them for turning unless the tree is slated to come down anyway.

A heal-over, outside and in



The outside and cut inside surface of a heal-over.

Unpredictable grain



Like burl wood, the grain in a heal-over is often random, swirly, and beautiful.

patterns unlike anything else you will find. The bowl shown in *Photos 4 and 5* illustrates the unusual grain in a heal-over, which is very different from a tree's normal patterns.

There are often cracks and bark inclusions in heal-overs, adding interest to the resulting turnings. *Photos 6-9* show the sequence of turning a bowl from a heal-over with internal inclusions.

Heal-overs can also come in strange and interesting shapes. The heal-over in *Photo 10* was so interesting, I could not bring myself to turn away its remarkable grain and shape. So I allowed it to dry, took away the bark, and simply turned a shape at the bottom to serve as a stand for it. I call this my white oak "brain."

One of my favorite bowls ever turned is from a heal-over (*Photo 11*). It is about 12" (30cm) in diameter and was turned to final thickness while green, wrapped in paper and allowed to dry, and then finished. The surface of this bowl has a distinct texture that could, at first touch, be mistaken for leather.

I have also noticed that the shrinkage patterns of heal-overs are different from those of "normal" wood. Typically, there are distinct shrinkage values for the radial, tangential, and longitudinal directions of wood grain, and these show up in relatively predictable patterns in bowls turned to final thickness green and allowed to dry. You can pretty much predict a final bowl shape, depending on the growth ring pattern and where the bowl was cut from the tree. With heal-overs and the varied grain patterns that occur, the shrinkage is unpredictable. My perception, from the limited experience I have in turning heal-overs, is that I don't get much cracking, but instead more distortion in different directions. I believe that is why I was successful in drying the large bowl in *Photo 11* without much cracking.

Keep an eye out for trees with heal-overs, particularly around old home sites that may have been neglected,



where trees may be slated to be taken down. Again, I don't recommend cutting heal-overs from living trees that are to be preserved, but if you are lucky enough to find some on trees that are coming down anyway, you will be rewarded with some unique and interesting turning wood.

Dr. Robert Harris earned a B.S. and M.S. in Forestry and Wood Science from Clemson University, and a Ph.D. in Wood Science from Virginia Tech. He served on the Clemson University faculty for approximately thirty years and taught such classes as Wood Mechanics, Wood Chemistry, Pulp and Paper, and Wood Moisture Relations. He has been turning wood for twenty years.

FOREIGN TIMBERS

VARIATIONS ON A SINGLE BRANCH

Terry Martin

For hundreds of years woodturners needed a ready supply of wood that was easy to turn but hard enough to suit its purpose, not prone to cracking, stable when finished, and generally bland in color. This

all changed in the second half of the 20th century when production turning rapidly declined and woodturning was reinvented as a creative craft. Once woodturning was valued for how quickly and inexpensively products

could be made, but the new breed of creative turners often chose wood for its quirky character and color, and often spent long hours finishing each piece.

I live in Australia, where around 24,000 species of trees grow, and the



The lopsided hairy oak branch

A lopsided branch of hairy oak, around 26" (66cm) long and 5" (13cm) in diameter. The tree grew with the pith far from center, and turning various forms from it in different orientations yields stunning results.

1st project: natural-edge bowl



A natural-edge bowl blank mounted between centers, with the grain running perpendicular to the bed ways (faceplate orientation).

Turn outside profile



(3) The author removes the split sections.

(4) A chucking tenon, or spigot, is formed using a parting tool.

(5) Hairy oak scrapes very nicely, which helps when refining the outside profile.

harsh environments many of them grow in mean they are among the toughest woods in the world. To put this into perspective, the USA is reported to have somewhere over 800 species. Many of the Australian trees are not only difficult to turn, but also hard to find. Of all of the Australian trees, I value hairy oak more than any other.

Like many Australian trees, hairy oak has a false name. The early botanists from Europe struggled to classify the enormous number of previously unknown species, so they tended to categorize them according to their similarity to European trees. Because of the strong medullary rays in this particular tree, it was classed as an oak, and it has several names, with hairy oak being the most common. The scientific name of the tree is *Allocasuarina inophloia*. Once it was discovered that it could be made into beautiful objects, the more appealing name (flame she-oak) was coined. The tree grows inland from the east coast of Australia, often in harsh and sparsely populated regions. It grows from 10 to 30 feet (3 to 10 meters) high and its most distinctive characteristic is that the bark grows in long fibers that look like hair.

The bark protects the tree from the heat of the sun, but the tree is also protected by the fact that the growth

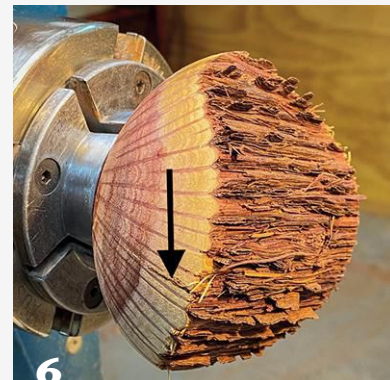
rings develop on the opposite side to the sun, leaving the pith facing north to take the heat (remember, Australia is in the Southern Hemisphere).

Photo 1 shows this clearly, with the pith on one side of the branch and the new growth that developed in fan-shaped arcs from that point. This creates interesting challenges for a woodturner trying to use the wood, and the biggest of these challenges is that when the wood dries out, the differential forces cause it to split a lot. Even the living tree can be split from top to bottom. Sometimes after cutting up a large piece of hairy oak into workable pieces, I end up throwing away up to seventy percent of the wood. To illustrate both the challenges and rewards of working with hairy oak, I decided to make a series of pieces all from just one branch.

Natural-edge bowl

I cut a piece the same length as the width of the branch and mounted it between centers, with the hard pith positioned where I would turn a tenon, or spigot (*Photo 2*). There is a clear crack with bark inclusions at the top, which shows that this crack formed while the tree was still growing. The wood was still wet, so I had to work fast to remove the bulk of the wood before it cracked further.

Remounted in a chuck



The bowl is now mounted in a chuck for turning the interior. A crack remains, which the author fills with sawdust and CA glue. Note how the medullary rays correlate directly with valleys in the bark.

Hairy oak is very hard when it is dry, but roughing this wet piece to round was easy (*Photo 3*). After turning away the split wood, I formed a spigot for remounting the work in a chuck (*Photo 4*). Refining the outside curve was very easy because hairy oak can be scraped better than any other wood I know (*Photo 5*).

With the piece remounted in a chuck, I noticed the crack was still visible (*Photo 6*), so I filled it with sawdust and cyanoacrylate (CA) glue. ►

Hollow the bowl



Use ample downward pressure on the toolrest when making the intermittent entry cuts on a natural-edge bowl.



The author uses a scraper on the interior of the bowl.



The roughed-out bowl ready for drying.

Completed natural-edge bowl



10

The completed natural-edge bowl, 2024, Hairy oak, 2¾" × 3½" (7cm × 9cm)

2nd project: endgrain hollow vessel



11

For an endgrain piece, the blank is mounted between centers with the grain running parallel with the bed ways.



12

The author rounds the blank at the tailstock end.

I wire-brushed the hairy bark away, but you can see there are semi-rigid tongues sticking up that serve to anchor the bark.

Turning the inside of the bowl was the same as for any natural-edge bowl. The entry has to be precise, with the bevel of the gouge parallel to the outside wall of the bowl and downward pressure on the toolrest while

the tool cuts intermittently (*Photo 7*). For the final interior cuts, I scraped the bottom of the bowl, again with wonderfully fine shavings cascading off the tool (*Photo 8*). I then put the rough-turned blank aside to dry (*Photo 9*). When I finished this bowl some months later, I turned the spigot into a rounded foot to elevate it nicely (*Photo 10*).

Endgrain hollow vessel

I turned three natural-edge bowls and two regular bowls from this branch, but to fully demonstrate what can be done with this wood, I also turned an endgrain hollow vessel. This was the most challenging piece. I mounted a section of the branch between centers, this time with the grain running parallel

If I had turned the wood down until all of the faults were removed, I would have had only a thin spindle to work with.

Hollowing



13

The natural voids in the hairy oak allow the shavings to escape during hollowing.



14

The piece is ready for interior sanding.

The completed vessel



15

The completed hollow vessel, 2024, Hairy oak, 7" × 4" (18cm × 10cm)

to the bed ways (*Photo 11*). If I had turned the wood down until all of the faults were removed, I would have had only a thin spindle to work with. Instead, I wanted to feature the faults as voids that offer a peep-view into the interior.

First I turned a spigot on one end, then rounded each end to create a solid base and rim for the vessel (*Photo 12*). Once I had created the ovoid shape I wanted, I bored out the center with a sawtooth bit prior to hollowing. After checking that there were no cracks in the top and bottom of the piece, I proceeded to hollow using my Stewart tool with a rounded scraper as the cutter. This was where the good scraping qualities of hairy oak helped. The voids that opened up as I turned it down to the final thickness of around 0.12" (5mm) allowed the shavings to escape (*Photo 13*). With the hollowing complete, I could see a lot of the interior (*Photo 14*). I sanded the interior with a sanding pad attached to the end of the Stewart tool and then reversed the piece onto a chuck and removed the spigot. The completed piece shows how the faults in this wood can be used to advantage (*Photo 15*).

Hairy Oak is easy to sand and I went to 600 grit, which left a perfect surface. But, as with many of the really hard Australian woods, the best finish is obtained by buffing, so I buffed each piece three times with cotton buffing wheels, going through red stick, white stick, and hardening carnauba wax. *Photo 16* shows the other bowls I turned from this branch.

Bowl with sapwood feature

After I finished these pieces, I felt I had not done justice to the hairy oak because sometimes when I am able to save a large piece, I can make more impressive forms. So I cut a section off a larger branch (*Photo 17*) and at the bandsaw cut a bowl blank

slightly offset (not centered on the pith) to include a small section of the sapwood and natural edge. This is the kind of bowl that stays in the gallery for only a few days before it sells (*Photo 18*). The grain of hairy oak is irresistible to buyers and it's easy to see why.

I can't finish this story without thanking my good friend Albert Takken. I have no way to get this wood myself,

but Albert regularly travels enormous distances to gather hairy oak, and he always shares his bounty with me. My gratitude goes to Albert and to the trees that create such a wonderful palette for me to work with. ■

Terry Martin is a woodturner and writer working in Ipswich, Australia. Visit his website, terrymartinwoodartist.com, or contact him at tmartin111@bigpond.com.

Sibling bowls



16

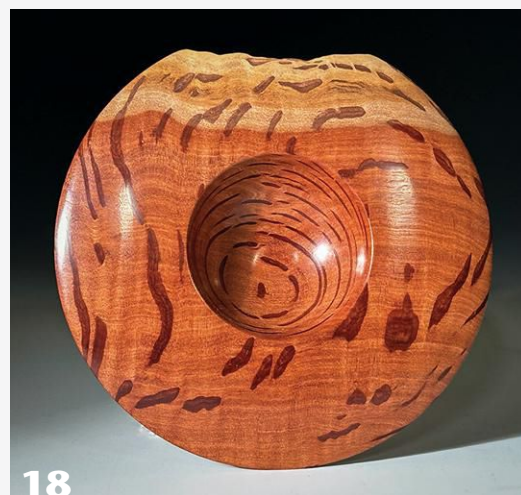
Brother and sister bowls from the same branch, 2024, Hairy oak, ranging from 2½" to 4½" (6cm to 11cm) high × 3½" to 4½" (9cm to 11cm) diameter

Highlighting the sapwood



17

A relatively crack-free larger piece on the bandsaw.



18

There is no other tree with grain like this. The author positions the bowl blank with the pith off center to highlight the medullary rays inside the bowl and to include the sapwood in the final form, 2024, 3" × 7½" (8cm × 19cm)

SKILL-BUILDING PROJECT

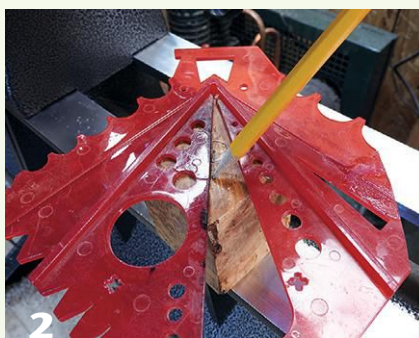
Turn an ELEGANT ROUND-BOTTOM BOX

Gabriel Hoff



When it comes to lidded boxes, there are many possible designs, shapes, and styles. It can be as simple as a well-turned cylinder box with simple yet elegant styling, or it can be more complex, with multi-axis elements or piercing, for example. I prefer a simple design with pleasing proportions and styling features that elevate the already stunning wood. In this article, I demonstrate one of my favorite boxes—the round-bottom style. This includes the use of exotic wood, a true round bottom or semi-circular shape, and small but important styling details, such as a domed lid, chamfered rim, and subtle flairs.

Material prep



The author chose masur birch for this project and uses a center-finder to locate the turning centers at each end.

Material prep

When choosing a blank for a lidded box, a close, straight-grained, dense wood is best. I use mostly exotic and figured or burl woods, as they cut cleanly and have beautiful grain patterns. The wood must be dry, around 10% or less moisture content. Using a wood that has either a straight grain pattern, or a burl-like pattern is critical in ensuring a pleasing grain match from bottom to lid. With a burl or swirled grain, it can be easier to

Mount and rough-turn



3 The combination of a multi-toothed drive and a live center whose point is adjusted to protrude only slightly reduces the chance of splitting the wood when it is mounted between centers.



4 Turn the workpiece round and form a tenon at each end.



achieve an uninterrupted flow since the wood does not contain a defined grain pattern. This type of wood may be more prone to tearout, but sharp tools and negative-rake scrapers can help you attain a clean surface. As for domestic woods, I find hard figured maple, figured walnut, and curly cherry work very well.

For the box shown in this article, I have chosen masur birch. A rare wood and one of my favorites, it offers the woodturner a fine, even texture. Although it is not as dense as a true exotic, it cuts cleanly, has a birdseye- or burl-like appearance, and packs a pleasant smell. Its figure is created by the boring larvae of a certain beetle, but in some cases it can be hereditary.

I cut the blank on the bandsaw to 2¼" (6cm) square and 3" (8cm) long. Prior to mounting the blank on the lathe, I find and mark the center of both ends (*Photos 1, 2*).

Mount and rough-turn

When mounting a box blank on the lathe between centers, I use a multi-spur drive center in the headstock and a ball-bearing live center in the tailstock (*Photo 3*). The drive center has small teeth that bite into the wood and spread out the tailstock pressure, reducing the chance of splitting the wood. This is very important, especially for exotic woods, as they tend to split more readily than domestic woods. On the live center, I retract the cone-shaped point so it protrudes about ¼" (1.5mm), or just enough to create a small pinhole in the wood. This reduces the chance of the piece splitting on the tailstock end. Mount the blank by referencing and lining up the center marks.

Before you begin turning, lock down the tailstock and quill and

ensure the piece is securely mounted between centers. Using a spindle-roughing gouge, rough the blank to round (*Photo 4*). I keep the speed around 1500 to 1800 rpm, as I want the cutting action to be as smooth and clean as possible. I then reduce the blank to around 2½" (5cm). Ensure the diameter is the same at both ends and check for any flat spots.

Once the blank is round, I use a parting tool to form a tenon at each end, both about 1⅞" (48mm) diameter and ¼" (6mm) wide (*Photo 5*). I aim to keep the tenon diameter as wide as possible, as this will help the chuck grip the piece securely and aid when designing the box lid's domed shape. The chuck I am using has dovetailed jaws, so I match the dovetail profile on both tenons. Form tenons suited to the chuck jaws you are working with. ►

Shape box, part lid



6 A spindle gouge is used to rough-shape the box's round bottom.



7 Use a very thin parting tool to separate the lid from the box. The golden ratio provides good proportions.



Lay out box shape

I use a spindle gouge to shape the box's round bottom before parting the lid from the base (*Photo 6*). I find this makes it easier to visualize the shape I am aiming for and simplifies the process of marking the proportions on the box. Start with small cuts and work the continuous curve down toward the base. Leave a small amount of wastewood on the headstock side of the tenon to add stability and keep you from running into the chuck.

Next, draw a line for parting the lid from the base. Using the golden ratio (one-third on top and two-thirds on the bottom), mark the line with a pencil. I usually leave extra length on the base so when I come back and make the mortise for the lid, I have enough length to comfortably cut and not interfere with the ratio. If I don't take this precaution, then I risk making the base too short, creating something closer to a 50-50 proportion, and effectively ruining the box's proportions.

Once I have established the line, I use a super thin parting tool ($\frac{1}{16}$ " wide) to part the lid from the base (*Photo 7*). I turn the speed down to keep the friction of the tool to a minimum. I keep parting and then stop just before the two halves separate. I then use a small saw with the lathe off to cut through

Remount lid, true face



The lid material is mounted in the chuck and its face trued up.

the remaining wood and then set the base and lid aside (*Photo 8*).

Hollow the lid

Mount the lid in the chuck, ensuring the tenon shoulder is seated on the top of the jaws. I like to tighten both sides of the chuck. Using a wide parting tool, clean up the face until any saw or burn marks are removed (*Photo 9*). I then use a depth gauge set to around $\frac{1}{2}$ " (13mm) to indicate how deep I can hollow without going through the top of the lid (*Photo 10*).

With the interior depth noted, begin hollowing the lid. When hollowing any endgrain box, my go-to tool is a small carbide-tipped hollower, but a

spindle gouge would also work (*Photo 11*). This type of carbide hollower is easy to use, cuts dense interlocking grain really well, and reduces, or in some cases eliminates, the need to sand with the coarser (lower) grits. When using this tool, I hold it at a 30- to 45-degree angle to the toolrest. This sets up a shear-cut for smooth, catch-free hollowing.

I begin hollowing with the lathe speed around 1800 to 2000 rpm for the smoothest cuts, and my goal is to make the inside top of the lid flat and the side walls 90 degrees to the top. This reduces a lot of weight and is crucial to a thin, light box. After removing the bulk of the wood, confirm the depth. I hollow very close to my set depth and then clean up the remaining tool marks and tearout with a curved negative-rake scraper, leaving a very clean surface at the predetermined depth ready for sanding (*Photo 12*).

The next step is to establish a mortise, or flat recess just inside the lid's rim, which will fit to the tenon you'll later create on the box base. I use a parting tool to plunge toward the top of the lid at a slight undercut angle, pointing the tool toward the middle of the box (*Photo 13*). This slight angle will help me achieve a nice tight fit of the lid to the base. Be sure to leave

Hollow lid



Use a depth gauge to note how deep you can hollow the lid without busting through the top.



Most of the hollowing is accomplished using a carbide-tipped tool. Then the surface is refined using a negative-rake scraper, whose bottom bevel is sharpened to 70 degrees and top bevel, 20 degrees.



enough thickness on the outer wall so when you shape the box in the next step, the wall won't get too thin and compromise the mortise or remove it completely. If my tool is freshly sharpened, I don't sand the mortise, as sanding would round over the crisp undercut edge and potentially interfere with the lid fit.

Once the mortise has been cut, I start sanding inside the lid, progressing from 220 to 600 grit. I like to add two decorative lines on the inside of the top before buffing with a nontoxic polishing wax that has an ultra-fine abrasive. This abrasive improves the sanded surface and polishes the wood to a nice matte sheen (*Photo 14*). I then remove the lid from the chuck and set it aside.

Fit lid to base

Now mount the base of the box in the chuck and use a parting tool to establish the tenon that will accept the mortise in the lid (*Photo 15*). This step is very important; the fit of the lid needs to be fairly tight, as this friction fit will hold the lid while shaping and styling both the lid and base. If the lid fit is too loose, you will have to hold it in place using tailstock pressure, which would prevent full access for shaping the top of the domed lid. So part in slowly and stop the lathe frequently to check the fit. The extra material I had left when parting off the lid now gives me more to work with to sneak up on a good fit. Remember, you can always loosen the fit by taking off more material, but you can't put it back on.

Once I have established a snug fit, I put the lid on the box and line up the grain to help visualize the next step. I use a spindle gouge to shape the box's outside profile before hollowing the base. On this box, I opt for a continuous curve through the base, a slight dip toward the centerline of the box, and a flared top with chamfered rim (*Photo 16*). After checking for any ▶

Complete lid



13 A wide parting tool, or bedan, is used to form a mortise, or stepped recess, inside the lid. This mortise will later fit precisely to a tenon on the box body.



14 The author sands inside the lid, but not the carefully shaped mortise. He applies and buffs an abrasive wax finish.

Fit lid to box



15 With the lid removed from the chuck and the box body mounted, form a tenon sized to accept the mortise inside the lid. Stop the lathe frequently and test the fit of the top to the box.



16 The lid is friction-fit onto the box tenon, allowing for final shaping of the outside of the box. The chucking tenon at far right will be removed.

Remove tenon, shape lid dome

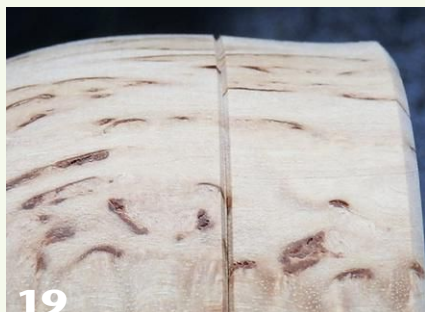


17 The author applies painter's tape over the lid-to-box union for added holding power. He then turns away the chucking tenon and forms a subtle dome at the top of the lid.



18 The author forms a subtle dome at the top of the lid.

Add accent lines



19 With the tape removed, two accent lines are added, one at the lid joint and one near the edge of the top of the lid. Understated styling details along with good form highlight the wood's natural beauty.



20

irregularities in the shape, I sand the outside profile to 220 grit.

Shape the domed lid

Before removing the lid's tenon and shaping the top of the domed lid, I tape the lid to the base with painter's tape for extra holding security, as I won't have the tailstock in place (Photo 17). Use light cuts to remove the tenon at the top of the lid. I use a sharp negative-rake scraper to shape the domed lid.

When forming the dome, keep $\frac{1}{8}$ " (3mm) of wood proud of the rim edge and create a subtle dome from

the top center down to the rim of the lid. I try to keep the domed curve continuous, without lumps or high spots (Photo 18).

Once I have completed the dome shape, I sand the lid's top to 220 grit. I then remove the tape so I can sand both the lid and base together. For the final sanding, I work from 220 grit to 600 grit and then add two decorative lines, one at the lid/base joint and the other on top of the lid, about $\frac{1}{8}$ " in from the edge (Photos 19, 20). A fun fact about the line on top of the lid is that I try to position it where, when the box is opened, it coincides

with the inner edge of the box's wall thickness. I believe these two lines distinguish the box and help the viewer's eye register the design and proportions.

Hollow the box

Remove the lid and set it aside. Before hollowing the box body, set a depth gauge to the desired depth (Photo 21). I keep about $\frac{1}{4}$ " of wood in the bottom so it doesn't become too thin. Using the same carbide-tipped hollower I used on the lid, I hollow the bottom (Photo 22), taking light cuts and working my way down to the bottom. Strive to keep the wall thickness consistent as you hollow, and stop when the walls are about $\frac{1}{8}$ " thick.

Once the walls are to the correct thickness, I blend the interior curve with a small negative-rake scraper and then sand to 600 grit. I then polish the interior with an abrasive wax and buff it to a nice sheen (Photo 23). I fit the lid back onto the base, finish sanding the exterior of the box to 600 grit, and polish the exterior to a nice sheen just as I had done on the interior (Photo 24). The box is now complete and ready to be parted off.

Hollow box



21 A gauge indicates hollowing depth, and the author hollows, sands, and finishes the inside of the box, just as he did the lid's interior.



22



23

Complete the bottom

With the lid removed, I use a parting tool to slowly part the box from the tenon. I like to leave about ¼" of extra wood at the bottom, which can be used to finish shaping the curve and reduce the chance of accidentally creating a hole in the bottom and making a funnel (Photo 25).

Now I set the base and lid aside and create a jam chuck for finishing the bottom of the box. When selecting wood for a jam chuck, I use a hardwood for maximum holding power; this helps stop the fibers of the wood from compressing and causing the fit to become loose. For this box's jam chuck, I choose a piece of cherry about 2" (5cm) square and 4" (10cm) long. Since it is just a jam chuck, I mount it in the chuck while still square and use a spindle-roughing gouge to rough it round.

Create a tenon on the end of the jam chuck for a good fit of the box opening. When I am creating this tenon, it is important to proceed slowly and take paper-thin shavings to sneak up on the fit. It should be fairly tight, but not so tight as to crack the base (Photo 26). Once I have a nice tight fit, I use a piece of tape for added security. Using a

spindle gouge, I shape the bottom to a continuous curve to mirror the top curved section (Photo 27). I then form a flat to create a base for the box to sit on and undercut the base slightly, so it sits flat on a surface without wobbling. The last step is to sand up to 600 grit, add two or three decorative lines, and polish with abrasive wax (Photo 28).

Carefully remove the base from the jam chuck and fit the lid back on. Your round-bottom box is now complete. ■

Gabriel Hoff, who is now 21 years of age and started turning when he was 16, is a member of the Ohio Valley Woodturners Guild (OVWG). He has been very active in the woodturning community and enjoys advancing his skills and knowledge at every opportunity. Aside from turning elegant boxes, Gabriel has committed to making a Beads of Courage box every month. Examples of his work can be found on the AAW Forum and the OVWG website, ovwg.org.

Finish box, part off



24 After sanding and finishing the outside of the box (with the lid on), the author parts the box from the wastewood, leaving extra material to work with when completing the bottom.

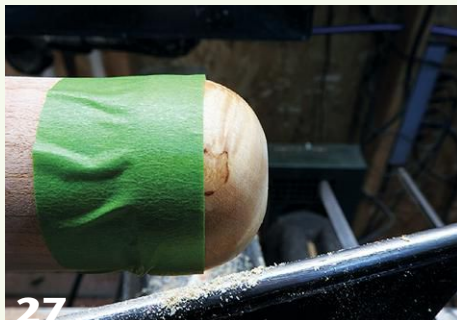


25

Remount box, complete bottom



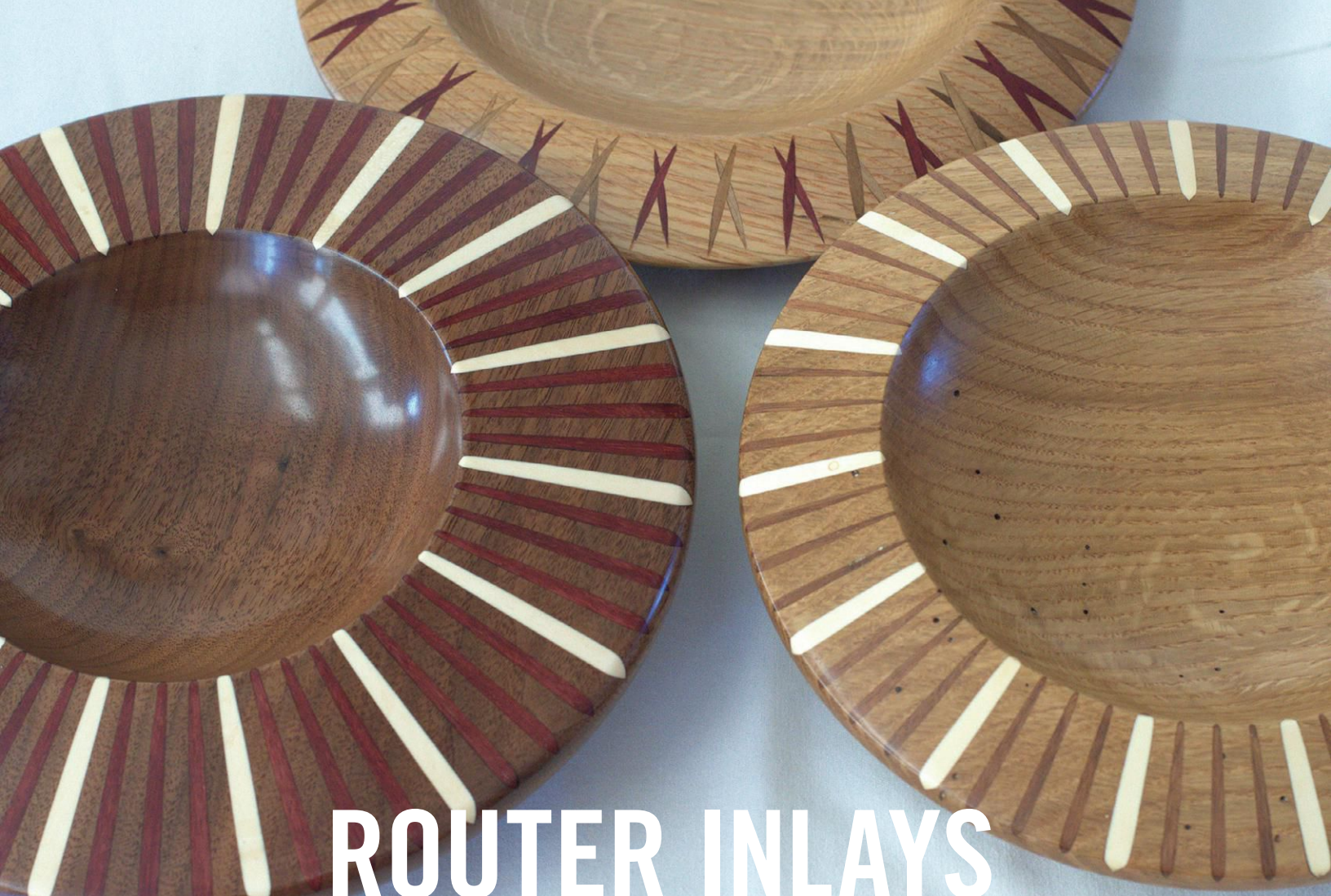
26 A length of scrap wood is mounted in the chuck, and the author forms a jam chuck. Not shown is a short tenon at the end of the jam chuck onto which the interior of the box is friction-fit.



27 With a good fit and the added security of some painter's tape, the author can complete the bottom without the tailstock obstructing access. A continuous curve is formed, making a round bottom.



28 A flat is cut into the round bottom, making a stable base so the box can sit upon a surface without rocking.



ROUTER INLAYS WITH A CLEVER INDEXING WHEEL

Pete Meyer

My first exposure to woodturning was in middle school shop class. Our instructor taught us safe practices for all of the shop machinery, but it became clear that the lathe was very special to her. It was intimidating, but I quickly grew to like it and even wanted one, but I soon moved on to the more typical adolescent distractions. About twenty-five years later, I finally bought my first lathe for \$25 at a barn sale. I got it running and tried to remember the different tools, cuts, and sharpening methods. Eventually, I got some help and joined the Northwestern Michigan Woodturners. On a couple of different occasions, I heard the name Palmer

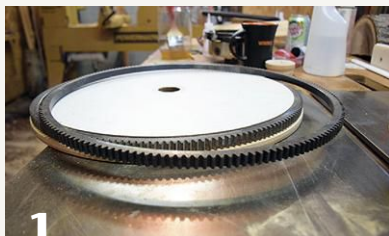
Sharpless mentioned. An internet search quickly revealed that the Johnny Appleseed of woodturning was also the father of my middle school shop teacher, Nancylynn Sharpless. Now it all made sense.

After getting reacquainted with the lathe and turning an assortment of bowls, platters, and hollow forms, I had a yearning to create something a little different. I have perfectionist tendencies that have kept me from attempting any hand-carved or textured embellishments. I really dislike the feeling that some (if not every) freehand cut will be a mistake or that I might somehow ruin an otherwise nice piece. Inspired by the works of

others, the idea of creating indexed flutes with a router intrigued me.

I never gravitated to rose engine lathes. They're fascinating in their design and capabilities, but their cost and more autonomous operation doesn't appeal to me. Still, I wanted to create that kind of precision and detail, but without spending a small fortune. My lathe has some stops built-in, but they are neither tight nor numerous. I see them more as just multiple convenient locations to lock the spindle. I began to look for a budget-friendly, more accurate indexing system and compact router. Choosing a router was pretty easy, but indexing system choices were limited, seemed complicated, and were somewhat pricey.

Automobile flywheel ring as lathe indexer



1 To improve his lathe's indexing function, the author found an inexpensive engine flywheel ring with 180 teeth.

Adapting flywheel for lathe use



2 The flywheel ring is modified to fit on a lathe spindle.



3

Custom indexing wheel

I recalled rebuilding an old Ford truck engine that had a flywheel ring gear with 180 teeth. Combined with some kind of locking mechanism, it could provide positive stops spaced precisely 2 degrees apart, and a full 360° is easily divided into useful increments. Another plus—flywheel rings are available at just about any auto parts store for about \$25. I bought two of them, thinking I would stagger the teeth to have 360 stops but ultimately didn't end up using both of them (*Photo 1*).

To mount the gear on the lathe, I used a disk of plywood ¾" (19mm) thick and a layer of hardboard ¼" (6mm) thick. With the plywood mounted on a faceplate, I turned it round to about the outer diameter of the gear teeth. Then I drilled a hole to fit snugly over the shoulder of the

lathe spindle. I glued the hardboard to the face of the plywood and added a layer of white aluminum flashing for an easier marking surface, then drilled a 1¼" (32mm) hole to fit over the spindle threads. This created a stepped bore that allowed a tightened chuck to pinch it firmly in place on the lathe spindle (*Photo 2*). The last step was to turn a groove to recess the gear flush into the face of it (*Photo 3*).

I made a pivot arm from scrap aluminum bar stock with a single tooth to lock the gear and create the stops, as shown in *Photo 4*. A bolt through the center of a roller skate bearing allows the arm to pivot easily with no slop. Initially, I mounted the arm pivot to the electrical box on the back of my lathe's headstock with a weight hanging from the arm (*Photo 5*). But in order to move the setup for a club

demo, I mounted the arm to a wood frame that attaches to the lathe bed ways (*Photo 6*). A heavy rubber band pulls the arm into place, but it does require a little extra downward pressure to keep any torque from causing it to jump or skip to another tooth.

Router-holding jig

When mounting a router to a holding jig, I wanted to keep the jig's axis parallel to the axis of the router spindle and still keep the on/off switch and depth adjustment easily accessible (*Photo 7*). Lateral stability is important because any tipping or rocking would distort the path of the router bit, so I kept the height to a minimum. More recently, I added some Corian runners to the bottom, both for more stability and to have a straightedge for cutting straight grooves on a small round Christmas ornament. ►

Pivot arm registers index location



(4) A pivot arm made from aluminum locks the indexing wheel in place.

(5) The author's first attempt: the arm is mounted to the lathe's electrical box, and a hanging weight pulls the arm into the indexing wheel teeth.

(6) A subsequent mounting allows for the unit to be mobile.

A simple router-holding jig



7 A trim router is mounted on a holding jig for use at the lathe.

Platform mounts in banjo



8 A double layer of plywood, mounted in the lathe banjo, serves as a platform for the router.



9

I replaced the lathe's toolrest with an adjustable platform. Fortunately, I had scored a cache of prefinished plywood scraps (perfect for shop jigs) from a local cabinet shop. I drilled a 1"- (25mm-) diameter hole through one layer of plywood to insert a steel tube, then topped it with a second layer (*Photos 8, 9*).

First flutes

I bought a bearingless roundover bit and, after a little practice, decided to cut finger-like flutes on a large walnut bowl I had turned a few months before. I was proud of the finished bowl as it was, so I took my time planning. The depth of cut was already

determined by the radius of the bit, and the width was twice that. I had to figure out the spacing to determine how many passes to make. Too many cuts and they would run into each other, but having them too far apart wouldn't give me the look I wanted. Making ninety cuts looked like the solution, so I picked a starting point, locked the spindle and made the first cut. I used every other tooth on my fly-wheel indexing system and repeated the cuts until I had gone all the way around. I was excited about the new look and after lots of sanding applied the final coats of finish (*Photo 10*). I turned a few other pieces and tried with other router bits and spacing, but

even on small pieces, the extra effort made me wonder how much I was really going to use this new setup. I really liked the results, but the sanding felt like too much of a chore.

Eureka moment

After putting my router setup aside for a while, a thought came to me: If I used a 45° bearingless V-bit, I could glue in short square sticks of contrasting wood and then turn them flush, eliminating the extra sanding in the grooves. I bought a V-bit and made a zero-clearance insert for my table saw, a must for safely ripping narrow pieces. I have found that a thin-kerf 7¼" (18cm) blade seems to make nicer cuts on tiny

First attempt—simple grooves

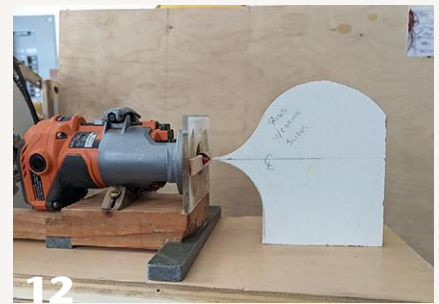


10 The author's first attempt: routed grooves with no inlays. This requires a lot of sanding.

Jig enhancements



11 A strip along the bottom of the router helps maintain consistent depth and serves as a zero-clearance support.



12 A simple depth gauge helps to align the router height with the lathe spindle.

sticks and is not as intimidating or aggressive as a 10" (25cm) blade.

Up to this point, I had mostly turned green wood from start to finish. I'm too impatient to twice-turn bowls, and I like how they get distorted and out of round as they dry. I had made a couple of fluted pieces with fresh wood and enjoyed seeing a natural wave appear in the rim as they dried, but for pieces with inlays, I prefer to use dry wood. Any movement or shrinkage after completion might alter the final appearance or glue integrity.

I start with a round blank mounted in my chuck. I cut the rim area flat to a pleasing size and angle, leaving enough thickness in the rim so it won't flex during routing and turning. I also make a cut to roughly establish the width of the rim and where the bowl begins. This also determines the rough length of the inlay pieces.

Typically, the router's baseplate is the reference point for the depth of cut, but to prevent the first grooves from interfering with the last, I glued on a small strip of wood over the plate opening. When adjusting the depth, I turn the router on and slowly raise the bit to the desired depth (*Photo 11*). This strip becomes a zero-clearance guide that controls the depth right next to the cut. Without it, an inward sloping rim might cause the last few cuts to be deeper than the rest. It also allows for a little space, so I can see exactly where the bit is.

As with cutting flutes, the diameter of the bowl and the desired width and spacing of the inlays will determine the number of cuts. Setting inlays deeper makes them wider, while shallower cuts will create narrower inlays. If you crowd them too close together, the cuts (and inlay wood) will interfere with each other. If the cuts are close, but not touching, carving a little off the ends of the inlays may be necessary if less than half of the inlay piece is actually in the groove. The other solution is to glue in every other one,

Simple routed inlays



13 The author glues in contrasting inlays and then turns them flush.



turn away some material, then glue in the rest. It can be done, but it's extra steps, so I try to spread them apart enough to keep them from running into each other. Also keep in mind that they are closer together toward the center than at the outer edge.

For most pieces, I set the axis of the router at the same height as the lathe spindle, which creates a pattern that radiates from the center. It is difficult to line up the point of the router bit on the center of a blank, especially if the center is carved out at all. So I made a simple jig that copies the router height profile and allows you to visualize the height (*Photo 12*).

Once all the grooves are cut, the quantity and rough lengths of the required inlays are known. I rip the square inlay sticks at the table saw, then use my bandsaw to cut them to length.

Gluing and turning

You can glue in the inlays while the bowl is still on the lathe, or unscrew the chuck and remove it from the lathe. If you are doing a pattern with different woods, it is helpful to mark where different pieces go. If there are only a few, I usually glue those in first, then go back and fill in the rest. It's very easy to glue a piece in the wrong spot. I pick the best adjacent sides, put a bead of glue on both, and quickly push and slide it into place. My theory

is the sliding action helps ensure each piece is fully seated in its groove and helps to distribute the glue evenly.

Before turning, I remove the indexing wheel. I have turned with it in place, but it is large, and its teeth could be grabby. Running the lathe without it is safer.

Turn away the extra height and length of the inlays using light cuts with a sharp bowl gouge. The sound is very odd, but it does give valuable feedback on whether you are slicing the wood or just knocking off chunks. Once the inlays are flush, the noise disappears and it is just like the final steps in turning any bowl. My first pieces were just cut to that point, sanded, and finished. They were fairly easy and looked pretty cool, but short straight inlays were just the beginning (*Photos 13, 14*).

Considerations

It is not as critical when cutting flutes, but for inlays, the grooves need to be flat and straight. To do that, the router needs a well-defined (and flat) plane of travel. It can pass over a convex surface, but if the cut follows the contour, the grooves will arc and the inlays may "rock" on the high spots, leaving gaps along their edges, rendering an uneven appearance. Similar problems arise if debris prevents a piece from seating fully. It sounds ►

Contrasting Wood Inlays

After cutting grooves in the rim of an oak bowl using a V-shaped router bit, I ripped square strips of walnut and maple to use as inlay material. I then glued them into the routed slots and turned them flush.



Convex rim



15

The shape of the inlay is altered by turning a convex rim.



16

minor, but it can affect the size and shape of that inlay.

Since the width of the inlays in the completed piece can be varied by their depth, a mix of sizes can be created by changing the router depth. On the first pass, I make all of the cuts at one depth, then set the router deeper and repeat the ones I want to look wider/bolder. Using a second type of wood for those inlays can make them stand out even more.

I also learned that reshaping the rim profile will change the inlay shape. If you want the inlays to have a consistent shape and width, the finished surface has to be parallel to the original surface. Taking off more on one end creates more space between the inlays and makes them narrower, even down to points as the full depth is cut away. Rounding the rim profile can turn the inlays into football-shaped accents (*Photos 15, 16*).

I decided to try a piece with crossing inlays by repeating the inlay process. After the first set was cut down flush to the original profile, I cut grooves for a second batch of inlays. I kept the same router depth and set the same table height but made the cuts from the other side. This gave them the same angle, but in the opposite direction. To achieve the same exact width, you would have to return to the original profile. You have to sneak up on it and try to remove all extra height of the first inlays without removing any of the

Criss-crossed inlays



17



18



19

Routing across an existing inlay at an alternating angle produces X-shaped inlays.

Inlay within an inlay



20

What happens when you put an inlay into an existing inlay? Interesting visual effects...

surrounding surface. I missed it slightly, but I still like the result (*Photos 17-19*).

An inlay in an inlay requires repeating the process, but with shallower router cuts the second time (*Photo 20*).

I have also experimented with using brass as the inlay material. Brass is harder than wood, but with a sharp edge and proper technique, a bowl gouge will cut it well enough. A couple of these experiments have failed, but I learned some valuable lessons in the process. An edge profile that brings the inlays to a sharp point can cause the cutting action, no matter how gentle, to catch and bend the point up from the glue. Also, unlike wood, cutting brass too aggressively can heat it up, which can also affect the glue joint. I've had some brass pieces come out, not so much a failure of the glue, but more my own failure to set them deep enough. If only about a third of the profile is glued in, the cutting action creates a repeated lateral hammering force on the opposite corner, which may have enough leverage to exceed the limits of the glue joint.

I found brass online in square sticks of different dimensions. The selection of available sizes and shapes is somewhat limited, so I try to cut deep enough to get at least half of the profile glued in. (Of course, a triangle profile would be ideal.) I'm not thinking about trying to rip them smaller, so I try to plan accordingly. To help with

Brass inlays



21

Alternating wood and brass inlays.



22

An all-brass inlaid rim adds noticeable weight to the piece but has remarkable visual appeal.

the adhesion, I clean them with brake cleaner and sand lightly with coarse-grit sandpaper.

Another thing to consider, especially with setting the brass deeper, is weight. I had planned to make another piece, alternating wood and brass inlays. Making sixty cuts would put the inlays too close together, so I used every fourth tooth on the wheel instead of every third. In my rush, I figured the next step down was forty-eight cuts and made twenty-four of each, brass and wood pieces. I started gluing brass in every other cut, and as I was getting closer to the end, I realized I had extra pieces and the pattern wasn't going to work. I had forty-five cuts and an odd number wouldn't alternate as I had planned. The result was a piece with all

brass inlays, and it had a very solid feel to it (*Photos 21, 22*).

Another idea I've played with was to offset the center of the pattern. This was done by shaping the blank, then mounting it off-center just for making the router cuts, then rechucking it and turning the final shape. The effect of the off-center cuts was a sort of sunrise pattern, as shown in *Photo 23*. It will be fun to explore this idea further.

I also tried a small piece with maximum-depth router cuts and fatter inlay pieces. I turned the final piece thinner, so the inlays pass through and show on both sides. I recently used the indexing wheel with my laser to put repeated burns around the rim of a shallow bowl. I might try some lasered designs, alternating with inlays or crossing over or down the center of each inlay. Burning lines along the inlays might also highlight them in an interesting way.

I feel like I've only scratched the surface, but I'm hoping by sharing these ideas, others might take this in different directions that I haven't thought of. I'll be very interested to see what others come up with. ■

Indexing off-center work



23

Here the author mounts the work off center for the indexed inlay work and then returns it to the original center for final turning.

Pete Meyer is a retired carpenter/builder living in Traverse City, Michigan. When he's not hoarding downed wood (for turning or heating his home), he enjoys music, motorcycles, and sharing his mechanical/electrical skills with his local and online communities.

RING TURNING:

A MODERN TAKE ON THE GERMAN TRADITION

Simon Begg



Whale Tail, 2024, American walnut, jelutong, lacquer, Half circle: 3" × 77⁄8" × 31⁄16" (75mm × 200mm × 100mm)

German ring turning has been around for about 200 years. It was used in the mass production of small carved toys. A large ring would be turned endgrain with a profile shaped in such a way that its cross-section would result in the desired form, often an

animal. The ring could be sliced up into many identical pieces, ready for chip-carving, which is far more efficient than carving them from scratch.

I stumbled across an example of this technique in 2018 but struggled to find much information, which led me to develop my own way of making them. Since then, I have completed almost fifty ring turnings with the shapes getting more and more complex. What really drew me into this technique is the challenge and desire to improve my accuracy when turning. While in the German tradition turners mounted the work in endgrain orientation, I make mine in faceplate orientation, where the wood grain is running perpendicular to the lathe's bed ways. Thus, I use fundamental bowl-turning techniques with modern tools, quite different from the German tradition.

Design and materials

The most important work happens even before finding a block of wood to turn, and that is coming up with a

design. I have wanted to do a whale's tail for some time; I really like the flowing curves and details at the top of the tail, making it a suitable shape for this style of turning. I find most of my design images by sorting through silhouettes found on Google images. Then I make minor modifications in Microsoft Paint if needed. Photoshop or a similar program would also work well. The main modification I made on the whale's tail design was to flare out the base a little, which suits my rechucking method (more on this later). I also combined two different images to arrive at a shape I really liked (Photo 1).

The layout of the image is important in the planning stages. Make sure you print the image at full size, as it will serve as a full-scale template. The height of the image is dictated by the thickness of wood—in this case, 3" (about 75mm). The blank's diameter is dictated by the size of my chuck jaws. I'm lucky enough to own quite a range of the larger dovetail jaws. My combination jaws

Computer-generated image



1

Select an image to use as a template. The author finds silhouettes by searching on Google images and then tweaks them on the computer. Print the image at full size to make a template.

hold up to 5" (127mm), and the base that I will hold in the chuck is based on that size limitation. The total diameter of the blank ended up exactly at $7\frac{7}{8}$ ", or 200mm.

As noted, I have always made these forms with the wood mounted in sidegrain orientation. This was simply because that is what I had in my workshop the first time I turned one. I like to add a length of wood down the center of the blank to highlight the final profile. You can also paint or stain the ends a different color, but I have grown to love the contrast from different species of wood. The timber choices for this whale tail are American walnut for the inlay strip and jelutong for the main section. Jelutong is a great pattern-maker's timber from Southeast Asia that is fantastic for work like this. I look for timbers that do not have a lot of obvious grain or special character, as I don't want the wood to distract from the shape, which should be the main focus.

Prepare blank and template

To prepare the wood, I cut a square blank in half and glued in the inlayed walnut strip, which measured about $\frac{5}{8}$ " (16mm) thick—plenty of wood for the screw chuck to bite into and leave about $\frac{1}{4}$ " (6mm) of material on the final piece. I glued these pieces together using normal wood glue, applying strong, even pressure (*Photo 2*). After the glue dried, I ran the blank through a planer to arrive at its final thickness, 3". This preliminary thicknessing could be done on the lathe, but I like knowing my complete parameters and find this method helps with accuracy. Next, I cut the blank round on the bandsaw, making sure my compass mark is in the center of the walnut inlay (*Photo 3*).

On the printed template, I drew a box around the whale's tail shape, which created my working parameters and set a reference point (0,0) from which all other measurements were taken. The idea is to take measurements from

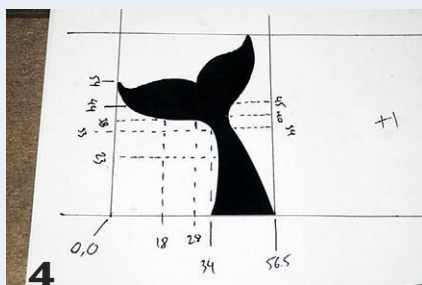
Blank preparation



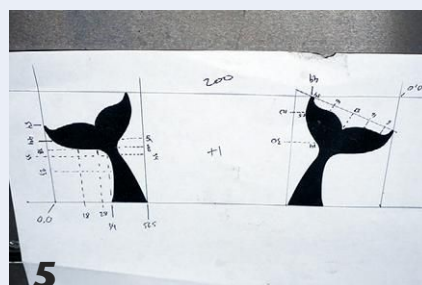
2 The turning blank is first laminated with an accent strip in the middle, then bandsawn round, ready for the lathe.



A paper template



4 The full-sized printed image is used to generate key measurements that will be applied to the turning blank. The author works in millimeters, as accuracy in small increments is important in this style of turning.



5 The full template includes both sides. The +1 in the center reminds the author to add 1mm to the diameter, as it can be hard to get sizing exact using Microsoft Word.

key points to help in transferring the shape into the wood (*Photo 4*). With all my ring turnings, I try to be accurate within a half-millimeter. The whale tail design had a lot of curves, which meant I looked for direction changes when deciding on measurement points. In contrast, a shape like a star has some very definite reference points in the tips and valleys.

To complete the paper template, a mirror, or reverse, image of the design shows what the whale tail will look like at the other side (*Photo 5*). The blank is sized to this template, so another measurement that is important to note is the gap between both sides.

At the lathe

Now for the turning, which can sometimes feel like the easy part after all of

the detailed planning. I start basically every bowl on a screw chuck, and my ring-turning projects are no different. A trick I learned a while back is to use a spacer ring with a recess in it when using a screw chuck. The spacer rests on the full body of the chuck rather than on just the jaws, providing more support. These spacer rings also create more friction between the work and the chuck, which makes for a better hold (*Photo 6*).

To use the 0,0 reference point on the design, it needs to be matched accurately to the wood blank. I turned the blank to exactly $7\frac{7}{8}$ " diameter, with the outside surface square to the face. This is the only time I can think of to use a square on a woodturning blank (*Photo 7*). Now the key measurements can be transferred to the blank with ►

Spacer adds stability



6 A spacer ring with a recess adds surface area when using a screw chuck, increasing stability during turning.

Turn to exact diameter



7 The author turns the blank to the exact diameter and checks for square.

Transfer measurements



8 Transfer the measurements from the paper template to the wood blank.

a sharp pencil. Make sure to draw as many key lines as possible, all referenced from the 0,0 starting point, to minimize compounding errors (*Photo 8*). It is also helpful to attach the design to the banjo of the lathe with a magnet to help visualize the shape as you turn.

Working from the pencil lines, start by removing some of the larger areas of waste wood. I did this by making square cuts so I could redraw some of the dimensions as accurately as possible (*Photo 9*). A bevel-rubbing cut with a bowl gouge ensures clean cuts with minimal tearout, though a detail gouge does a better job of reaching into tight corners (*Photo 10*). Scraping tends to leave more tearout, which is why I cut as much as I can.

To set depths in areas that cannot be blocked out, I use a thin parting tool (*Photo 11*). This has to be done with care and smaller cuts, and I make them shallowly and incrementally to avoid binding on the tool. I also stop the lathe often and measure to ensure accuracy. I still haven't come across a tool that puts wood back on, so it is worth taking your time.

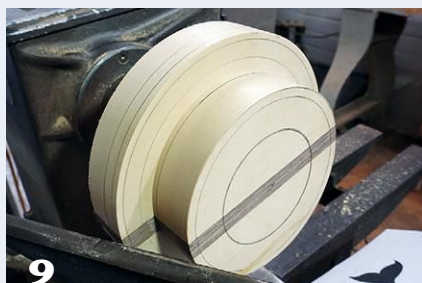
With the shape blocked out and the depth cuts made, I could begin shaping the curves of the whale's tail, which required making some educated guesses. For me, it is the most exciting but also the most stressful part of the process. The more reference points you have created, the easier this step is, as there is more information to go on. Bevel-rubbing cuts are my primary

approach, but I will also drop the handle and make light shear-scraping passes to blend some of the surfaces (*Photo 12*). Just like cutting beads in spindle turning, I try to retain my center lines until light sanding to get the most accurate shape I can.

Confirm shape

One of the ways to assess how successful my cuts have been is to check the shape with a pin, or profile, gauge. These tools are often used for skirting, or base, boards, but I have found them to be extremely helpful for this application. By holding the profile gauge up to my paper template, I can see the areas where I need to remove more wood and make fine, incremental cuts until I get it right (*Photos 13-15*).

Remove wastewood

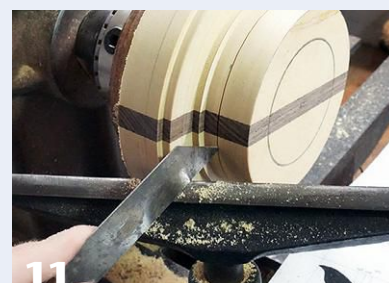


9 To remove the bulk of the wastewood, the author makes square cuts, which is simpler than attempting the final curves straightaway and allows for the pencil lines to be renewed for the next cuts. A detail gouge is used to reach cleanly into tight corners.



10 A detail gouge is used to reach cleanly into tight corners, ensuring a smooth finish.

Part to key depths



11 A parting tool is used to indicate key depths in the design.

Remove the center

Remove the bulk of the center just as you would any other sidegrain bowl. A bowl gouge is the easiest and most efficient tool for this process (*Photo 16*). The sidewall cut in the center should be made straight in, as you will use this face as a reference to draw more lines. A ruler confirms the cut is parallel to the bed of the lathe (*Photo 17*).

The internal cuts are the most challenging, as it is difficult to see the cuts you are making. This is where trusting your measurements and accurate depth cuts are crucial. Achieving a flowing curve in the opening proved more challenging than I had expected, as there was only limited access with this design. Generally, the larger diameter the hole in the middle, the easier it is to access these cuts. Nonetheless, I still managed

Shape curves



12 The curves are formed and blended using shear-scraping cuts with the wing of the bowl gouge.

a bevel-rubbing cut all the way through, working section by section. A cut-down plastic ruler helped me make those internal measurements (*Photo 18*).

When all of the cuts were made, I sanded the work lightly. I try to do as

little sanding as possible to preserve the shape I have turned (*Photo 19*). At this point, the form still looks nothing like a whale tail, and you have to simply trust in the process.

Reverse-mount the work

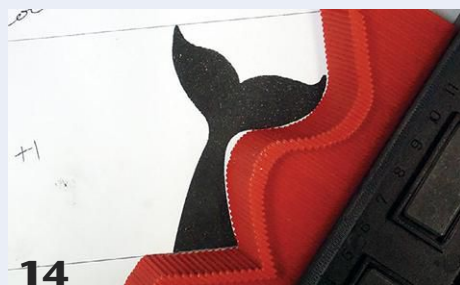
The project can now be removed from the screw chuck and remounted in the chuck jaws—in my case, large dovetailed jaws. A slight gap between the jaws when tightened and a profile that matches the dovetail meant there would be no chucking marks left on the piece (*Photo 20*). A quick test showed that the remounted work ran perfectly true, which is a good indication of accurate cuts.

Before making any more cuts, it was necessary to locate my next measurements. I decided that a straight cut ▶

Profile gauge confirms shape



13 The author uses a profile gauge to test the shape of the wood against his template. The gap at the base of the tail indicates where more wood needs to be removed to achieve the desired shape.



14



15

Remove wastewood from center



16 The author uses a bowl gouge to remove wastewood from the center.



17 The walls in the center should be straight in (parallel with the bed of the lathe). A metal ruler held tight against the wall visually confirms this.

Interior measurements



18 The author transfers measurements to the enclosed central area using a cut-down plastic ruler. Making cuts precisely in this area is more challenging than on the outside.

from the two tail tips would make the depth cuts easier, so I marked that line on the paper and took my measurements from there (*Photo 21*). That straight cut was the first one I made with the wood in this orientation, and it allowed me to accurately mark the required lines (*Photo 22*).

I also reduced the center area until it matched up with the hole from the other side. For the first few ring turnings,

it might feel strange deliberately going through the bottom like so many of us have done accidentally when learning bowl turning. This is another time to trust in the process.

Cutting the depth with a parting tool across the face is not ideal, but I have found it to be the right tool for the job, providing I am not going deep enough for the tool to bind. If I do need to go deeper, I use a wider parting tool

to remove the shoulders and thereby avoiding any binding (*Photo 23*).

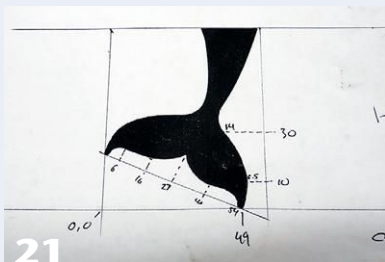
The shaping of the tip of the tail can be done with bevel-rubbing cuts using a bowl gouge, and fine cuts in the middle can be accomplished with the detail gouge (*Photo 24*). For cuts with longer overhangs over the toolrest, bowl gouges are definitely the tool to use, but any time I am working close to the rest, the detail gouge is well

One side completed



19 With the curves of the first side completed according to the measurements on the template, sand the piece lightly.

Apply tail tip measurements

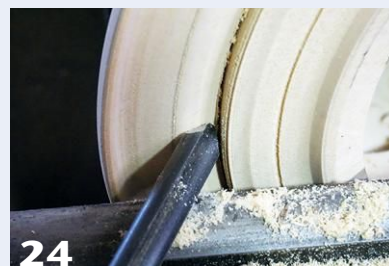


21 With the work reverse-mounted, the author applies the next set of measurements.



22 A straight angled cut represents the line between the tail tips, on which intermediate points are drawn.

Shape tail tip



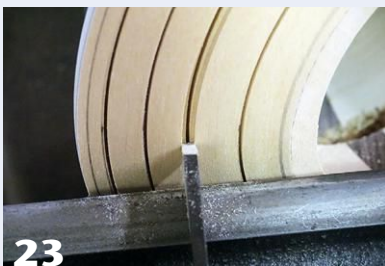
24 The depth indicators help in shaping the curves of the tail.

Reverse-mount work



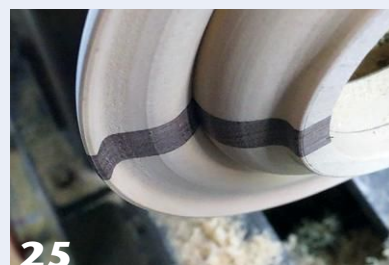
20 The work is reversed and held in large dovetail jaws.

Part to key depths



23 The author uses a parting tool to define key depth lines, stopping the lathe frequently to measure and confirm.

Confirm shape with profile gauge



25 Check the tail shape against the paper template using a profile gauge.

supported. Ring turning can lead to some unorthodox ways of presenting the tool, but as long as you are working safely and understand the tool's capabilities, many tools can be used.

After the top of the tail was turned, I double-checked the shape with the profile gauge and began to see the shape coming together (Photos 25, 26).

With a few final cuts to match the inside with the internal section I had already done from the other side and a quick sanding, the project was ready to come off the lathe. At this point, there were hints of the shape being right, but it can still be hard to visualize (Photo 27).

Cut the ring in half

Cutting the piece in half is what reveals the success or failure of the past few hours. I have a board of plywood with

a hook and a center line that I place on the bandsaw. This helps line up the piece and reduces splintering where the blade exits the wood. I also made sure to cut this one upside-down to minimize the unsupported leading edge. After cutting the workpiece in half, I felt the great relief and satisfaction of seeing some whale tails (Photos 28, 29).

To remove the bandsaw marks, a light touch on my linisher sander and a hand-sanding with a finer grit was all that was needed (Photo 30).

Final test

The last step I like to take is to test how accurate my final piece is. As my reference design was perfectly to scale, I should be able to place the half-ring on the image and see barely any difference in the profile. This is where you

might be self-critical but also feel quite encouraged by the achievement of turning accurately (Photos 31, 32).

This style of work has really challenged me to be accurate and intentional with my turning, and I am a far better turner for it. It requires a different way of thinking, but trusting in the process does lead to good results. It might take a few attempts to get the hang of a project like this, but I believe it is worthwhile. Even if it isn't this style of ring turning, find an avenue of woodturning that will push you and hopefully you will grow in your abilities like I have. ■

Simon Begg is a fulltime woodturner in Sydney, Australia. He has taught nationally and internationally, specializing in his modern take on German ring turning, carved embellishment, and bowl turning. For more, visit simonbeggwoodturning.com.

Completed profile



27 The turning is complete. Sand lightly to avoid altering your carefully achieved shapes and transitions.

Cut in half



28 At the bandsaw, cut the ring in half, splitting the accent wood down the middle.



29

Remove bandsaw marks

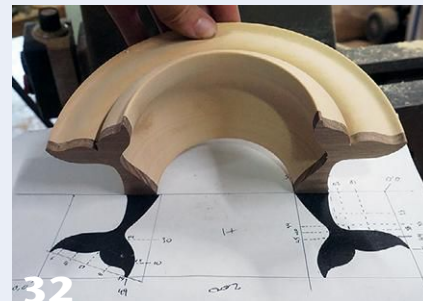


30 Flatten the ends and lightly sand away the bandsaw marks. The author uses a linisher and then sands by hand.

Test for accuracy



31 A final check against the paper template confirms accurate turning.



32

GERMAN RING TURNING-INSPIRED WORKS BY SIMON BEGG



Horse, 2020, Fijian mahogany,
lacquer, India ink, 3" × 7½" × 3¾"
(8cm × 19cm × 10cm)



Orca, 2020, Queensland walnut,
rock maple, lacquer, 2¾" × 6" × 3"
(6cm × 15cm × 8cm)



Kangaroo, 2023, Fijian mahogany,
Huon pine, lacquer, 2" × 7¼" × 3⅝"
(5cm × 18cm × 9cm)



Bald Eagle, 2023,
Rock maple, Tasmanian
blackwood, Huon
pine, ebony, lacquer,
4" × 8⅝" × 4⅜"
(10cm × 22cm × 11cm)

TRADITIONAL GERMAN RING TURNING

A Family Affair

Christine Smith

Since beginning woodturning in 2016 and being born and raised in Germany, I have taken a special interest in the history of German ring turning. The practice is thought to have originated in the mid-18th century in Seiffen and nearby small towns in the Ore Mountains, or *Erzgebirge*. The mining industry in the area declined over the next century, and families turned to woodcarving to support themselves. Coincidentally, wood lathes were by then frequently driven by waterpower instead of the traditional foot pedal, which helped to increase ring-turning production.

German woodturners and carvers were dependent on each other to produce an end-product, usually turned from spruce, for the toy market. This afforded women and children the opportunity to become fulltime carvers and painters, processing the woodturned rings at home to earn an income. And due to the unusual techniques employed in this style of turning, competition was low and professional pride was high. Their skillfully produced folk-art toys were admired worldwide.

Methods

Since traditional German ring turning was done in endgrain orientation, only a few tools were needed to easily split a ring into animal shapes.



Vintage postcard from Germany showing both a ring turner and family members carving and painting the resultant wood toys. Published c. 1918 by Emil Flade.

Photo collection of Tib Shaw

Typically, women would use a small hammer and knife to split a ring into approximately sixty pieces. It was a clever way to mass produce wooden toys.

Next, the carver would refine the toy's contours by easing the sharp edges with a carving knife. Some of the more skilled carvers could make it difficult to tell if the toy was first turned or if it was carved from scratch. If the wood dried before being shaped, it would be placed in water to soften it prior to splitting and carving. Larger rings would even be boiled.

There were approximately 200 different types of animals a ring turner could produce, and industrious turners (usually men) were capable of making up to forty-five rings per day. German women and children would be employed to carve and process the many pieces at their kitchen table. Children would be taught to make simple carving cuts on the belly or back of an animal, for example. If the whole family participated, they could process an average of 150 turned rings per week. At sixty pieces per ring, that would be 9,000 toy animals per week.

It is no surprise then that German families found toy-making from ring turning a fruitful industry.

Christine Smith, a member of the Southern Highlands Craft Guild and Carolina Mountain Woodturners, lives in Murphy, North Carolina.

FOR FURTHER READING!

EXPLORE!

Alan Lacer's Spring 1999 *AW* article, "Turnings of the Erzgebirge: Toys and Other Delights from Germany" (vol 14, no 1, page 12), provides an in-depth view of this remarkable German tradition. Log on at woodturner.org and use the Explore! search tool to find this and other valuable resources.



RELENTLESS DEDICATION: MIKE JACKOFSKY'S REMARKABLE WOODTURNING JOURNEY



Photo: Tina Chou

Tina Chou

The year is 1999 and it's a warm-ish winter evening in San Diego, California, where Mike Jackofsky has had a long day. It started at 6:00 a.m. in line at the local Christmas craft fair, with Mike nabbing one of the first-come-first-serve vendor booths. It's his first time selling his turned items and he'd been warned not to expect much. His wife Jeanie calls and wants to know how it went. Mike answers, straight to the point, "Honey, I think we have a problem..."

"That's okay. Don't worry about it," she consoles. "We can give them away."

"No," he responds, "that's not the problem. I sold everything. And I think I might want to quit being a lawyer."

And so began Mike Jackofsky's foray into woodturning—a journey spanning more than twenty-five years that would lead to many adventures, accolades, friendships, maybe some scorpions and rattlesnakes, and, of course, the stunning hollow forms for which he has become known.

Beginnings

Mike describes himself as being stubborn and competitive—likely originating from his youth in Long Island, New York, where he excelled as a competitive high school runner. Track led to an opportunity at Georgetown, and in 1973, he



From AAW's Permanent Collection

Maple Burl Natural-Edge Hollow Form, 2004, Maple burl, 8½" × 12¾" (22cm × 32cm)

"We are fortunate to have one of Mike's maple burl hollow vessels in the AAW Permanent Collection—it's an impressive piece. With very thin walls and multiple voids, it is astonishing even for the uninitiated. It gives us a great opportunity to educate visitors about the balance of skill, risk, and luck that goes into many turned works."

—Tib Shaw, Curator, AAW Gallery of Wood Art

Photo: Tib Shaw

helped win a mile relay as a freshman at the prestigious Millrose Games at Madison Square Garden. Unfortunately, injuries halted his running career and he channeled his competitive spirit instead into kickboxing. After graduation, he moved out west to San Diego and, from a catalog, picked the University of San Diego law school.

Kickboxing eventually led to *jiu jitsu* and meeting reconstructive surgeon Dr. Larry McCarthy. The duo hit it off and would go diving off the California coast, playing around with underwater cameras and photographing the local marine wildlife. Mike likens the experience of macro photography to an artist creating a painting: "You're framing how the colors and shapes come together in the viewfinder. It taught me so much about color, shape, and form and that was my first real experience with anything artistic."

Underwater is likely where Mike honed the patience and willpower needed for his demanding hollow forms. "This was before digital photography," he recounts. "We were shooting on film and sometimes it would be weeks before it was developed to see what you actually shot. You threw away most of the photos hoping for one good one."

Woodturning

Recently, Jackofsky found his first turned bowl dated from 1994. He guesses that's when he was introduced to woodturning by Dr. McCarthy. With decades of surgical experience, the doctor impressed upon Mike the importance of the tiniest changes altering a shape. This is a lesson that Mike now imparts to all of his students: the smallest detail can make the biggest difference.

Woodturning didn't seriously begin for Mike until around 1998, when he bought a lathe and built a shop for it. From early on, he recalls, he was making hollow forms. McCarthy gave him a David Ellsworth VHS tape, and the tape became Jackofsky's instructor. Mike would watch the tape, try something out in the shop, come back and rewind the tape (at this point, he explains to the author what a VHS tape is), and watch it again. A few months later, he joined the local San Diego woodturning club—just in time to attend his first Utah Woodturning Symposium.

Connections

The Utah Symposium was the first time Mike met other woodturners

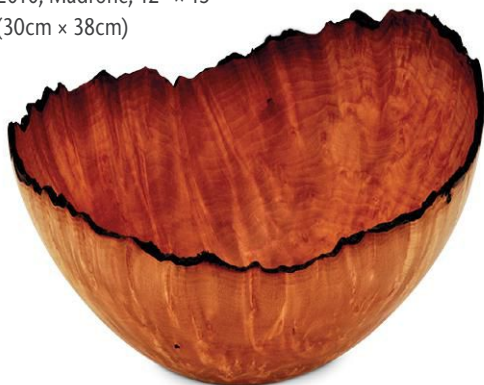
who made hollow forms. The demonstrators included Dale Nish, Mike Mahoney (a former member of the same San Diego club who had since moved to Utah), and Michael Hosaluk. Jackofsky remembers being particularly impressed by Mahoney's efficiency and Hosaluk's creativity. He formed many friendships at that event he'd turn to for advice in the years to come.

In 2002, at the AAW Symposium in Providence, Rhode Island, Jackofsky finally met David Ellsworth. Ellsworth and John Jordan were on a panel together about gallery work and Mike was in the audience. Afterwards, Mike went up to Ellsworth and thanked him. "For what?" David asked. "Some ►



Masur Birch Hollow Vessel, 2019, Masur birch, 6" × 7" (15cm × 18cm)

Madrone Natural-Edge Open Bowl,
2010, Madrone, 12" x 15"
(30cm x 38cm)



days I want to thank you for your VHS tape," Mike replied, "and other days I wish I had never heard your name." Ellsworth clapped him on the shoulder and responded, "I know exactly what you mean."

Ellsworth would later say of Jackofsky, "Every young field within the crafted arts needs leadership in helping to move the medium toward a legitimate art form. Mike Jackofsky, through his skills in technique and design, has helped provide that leadership with the exposure of his work

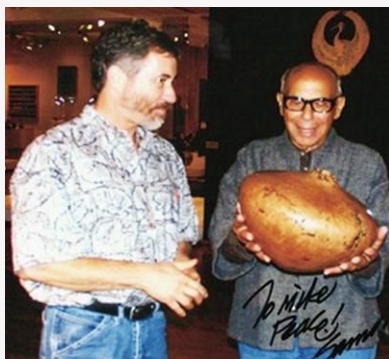
in the professional marketplace from both craft shows and gallery representation."

Serendipity

In the mountains of California, there is a small town called Idyllwild with a vibrant restaurant and art scene. Jackofsky recounted how in 2001 a gallery owner there, who had just warned him about all the dead trees around the gallery presenting a fire risk to his very flammable wooden hollow forms, called to tell him some news. "Mike," he said, "I hope you're sitting down. Something happened today in the gallery, and I have some news for you." Expecting the worst, Jackofsky braced himself.

"Do you know who Sam Maloof is?" he asked. "He just bought one of your big pieces!" The late wood-working legend had been looking

The Sam Maloof connection



Mike with renowned woodworker Sam Maloof in 2001 at San Diego's Mingei International Museum, where the two first met. They went on to enjoy a lasting friendship, and Maloof ultimately acquired twenty-eight of Jackofsky's works for his personal collection.

Photo: Jeanie Jackofsky

for a birthday gift for himself, and Jackofsky's hollow form fit the bill.

Several months later, Mike was at the Mingei International Museum in San Diego for a show while Maloof was there for a book signing. Mike introduced himself and the two formed a fast friendship. Whenever Maloof was in town, they'd meet for dinner, and Jackofsky would often bring a small hollow form as a surprise. Or he would follow up on his standing lunch invitation and visit the Maloof estate in Alta Loma. Maloof always encouraged him to bring his newest work. The woodturner would display his hollow forms on Sam's desk and they'd sit around chatting before going to lunch. When they returned, Maloof would immediately point out which hollow forms he wanted without ever touching a single one, ultimately amassing twenty-eight of Mike's pieces in his personal collection.

This experience instilled in Jackofsky the significance of form. While he strives for perfection in both form and weight in his hollow forms, he considers form to be the most important. However, that still doesn't stop him from handing his hollow forms in a gallery display to potential customers so they can *feel* the weight of the piece (to the gallery owners' delight).

Coincidentally, around the same time Mike first met Maloof, one of his hollow



Buckeye Burl Hollow Vessel, 2022,
Buckeye burl, 9" x 11" (23cm x 28cm)



Maple Burl Hollow Form, 2022, Maple
burl, 8½" x 10" (22cm x 25cm)

forms was awarded first prize at the *Design in Wood* competitive exhibit—the first of more than forty awards and counting. Hosted in his hometown of San Diego, the annual event attracts entries from all around the world in several categories of woodworking. From Mike's early accolades, more opportunities and gallery showings followed as his work gained renown.

Signature shape

Jackofsky's distinctive hollow forms are often recognizable from the tiny opening at the top that extends to a small elegant base. This originated from wanting to continue the curve of the shape "as far as it could go. I think a large bottom reduces the space for a curve. And you're not going to put anything in the hollow form, so you don't have to worry too much about a base design that prevents it from tipping over."

Mike tells students he doesn't have a formula for the perfect curve but that it should have a flowing and continuous line. The smallest flat or high spot can be easily detected by his trained eyes and is smoothed over with precise shear cuts to attain the final shape on the lathe—all the more crucial given his preference for burl and dislike of sanding. Excellent tool work is critical because Mike does most of his finish-sanding off the lathe when the piece is fully dried with a rare, low-vibration *Porter Cable* hand sander that is no longer manufactured.

Having made more than 5,000 hollow forms, Jackofsky has arrived at a straightforward perspective on design: "Rather than call it good or bad, I'll call a hollow form pleasing or not. To me, it has to be pleasing or I don't bother making it, because it has no function. You can have an ugly chair but still sit in it, and you can have a less-than-pleasing salad bowl and eat salad out of it. With a hollow form, if you don't like the shape or form, it doesn't matter what you did on the inside of it—it belongs in the fireplace." As Mike

sees it, he will always be pursuing the perfect form but will never achieve it.

Mike's relentless dedication also explains the impressively thin and consistent wall thickness in his hollow forms—a sign of his adept hollowing skills and perhaps an explosion waiting to happen (if it is dropped or accidentally flung across the room from a buffing wheel mishap or maybe both on the same day; ask him how he knows). Helpfully, one of Mike's mind-sets is that a hollow form does not exist until it is off the lathe.

Collaborations

In 2004, Jackofsky was one of 100 artists around the world invited to participate at the Emma Lake Collaboration (or simply "Emma")—a biennial creative exchange started by Michael Hosaluk that has been taking place since 1982. This was Jackofsky's initial experience with collaborations and rubbing shoulders with blacksmiths, painters, carvers, and people from other non-woodworking disciplines. For subsequent exchanges, he spent the time not as a woodturner, but someone experimenting in other areas of the art world by learning firsthand from experienced masters in their fields. He describes his Emma experiences as "summer camp for talented, slightly crazy, artistic adults" and credits Hosaluk with teaching him about how to best collaborate with others. ►

Emma Lake collaboration



Mike Jackofsky, Michael Hosaluk, Graeme Priddle, and Lyonel Grant, *Drifting Apart*, a 2006 collaboration from Emma Lake, Maple, milk paint, pyrography, 3" x 12" x 5" (8cm x 30cm x 13cm)

David Marks collaboration



Mike Jackofsky and David Marks, *Geode Series*, a 2006 collaboration, Mesquite burl, metal leaf, chemical patina, 8" x 12" (20cm x 30cm)

"Mike and I first met in 2005 at the Furniture Society Symposium in San Diego. I was impressed with his hollow vessels, and he was impressed with my gilded metals and patina work. We decided to collaborate and that became the *Geode Series*. His hollow vessels had natural edges and my silver leaf and patina work on the interior filled the inside with rich colors—similar to geode rocks. Mike is an exceptionally talented woodturner and a master of the freehand hollowing technique." —David Marks



Disc Thing, 2007, Rosewood, ink, 13" x 13" x 4"
(33cm x 33cm x 10cm)

Over the next few years, Jackofsky's collaborations would include an array of artists like Hosaluk, David Marks, Norm Sartorius, Graeme Priddle, Lyonel Grant, and many more. But despite experimenting with large wall hangings, tables, architectural pieces, and other projects, Jackofsky found himself drifting back to hollow forms. By 2013, Mike was well-versed in collaborations when, on a lark, he mailed his sister-in-law Georgianne a few small pieces on which she could try out her new wood burner. About fifty collaborations later, their partnership is still going strong.

Since 2015, the Jackofsky duo has created work for the AAW Live Auction, and "although these extraordinary pieces are different each year," explained Tib Shaw, AAW Gallery of Wood Art Curator, "they achieve what I always hope to see in a collaboration: both voices present in a coherent whole. I think they both respond to the wood itself. Mike's forms, which embrace wood in all its imperfect glory, provide a perfect starting point for Georgianne's designs, which are created extemporaneously."

Teaching

About five years into his woodturning career, Mike finally caved to repeated requests and did a club demonstration—the first of many. Pretty soon, between traveling and club visits, he realized he didn't have much time to create and that he preferred teaching classes instead. He switched his format to a four-day minimum, offering demos along with two- to five-day classes, so that students would have enough time to absorb the material. This suited his fondness for teaching and made more business sense, reducing his time spent traveling.

Having gradually moved away from being a lawyer (he says he never liked it), woodturning for Mike has always been both a creative outlet and a business. He firmly believes that in order to be a professional making a living as a woodturner, he has to be making enough money to pay the bills. And this means balancing making what he wants with finding what sells. He credits being able to make a living by being fast and efficient through constant repetition and practice.

Speedy hollowing helps Jackofsky in demos where he needs to turn quickly to keep the audience engaged, as he believes that since you

The Georgianne Jackofsky connection



Photo: Annalee Jackofsky



Photo: Rick Jackofsky

Mike's sister-in-law Georgianne Jackofsky has contributed her pyrography skills to around fifty of Mike's turned works, establishing a meaningful and ongoing collaboration.



Mike Jackofsky and Georgianne Jackofsky collaborative works, 2019-2022, Various woods, pyrography, ink

can't see what's happening, there is nothing more boring than watching someone hollowing a vessel. He likens demonstrating to how a musician puts on a performance: it might be the only time the audience ever sees you, so you need to be on top of your game, energetic, and entertaining. He hopes that his demos pique the audience's interest for an in-depth class, where they have time to absorb his teachings through repetition.

Mike is also quick to teach students about safety; he warns them not to feel complacent just because they are wearing a faceshield. "I'd rather teach people not to get hit by anything at all than for them to have a false sense of security." He tells his students that many years ago, when he was a beginner, a 50-lb. piece of buckeye burl hit him in the forehead and he couldn't feel whether he had been wearing a faceshield (he was). Now he keeps a hockey-style catcher's helmet in his shop for any large risky pieces, but those are few and far between. In addition to always standing out of the line of fire, Mike drills a small recess to match the spur drive for added security when mounting a piece between centers.

Jackofsky's body movement and environmental awareness when woodturning are influenced by his martial



AAW demonstrator

Mike demonstrating at the 2012 AAW Symposium in San Jose, California.

Photo: Andi Wolfe

arts and sports background. A good example is always knowing where the line of fire is when the lathe is on and staying out of it. This also influences how he grips his hollowing tools—using his last three fingers wrapped around the handle—and leverages his body weight appropriately to be able to spend hours at the lathe.

Unfortunately, a mysterious stomachache in 2006 turned out to be stage-four cancer, and Mike's woodturning came to a brief halt. But he was back on the demonstration circuit just two weeks after his last treatment. He started teaching at Craft Supplies USA soon after, and in 2009 recorded his DVD, *Woodturning with Mike Jackofsky: Making a Hollow Vessel*.

"Being able to see him take students of all levels to confident hollow-form turners over the course of a five-day class is amazing to watch," said Kirk DeHeer, a resident instructor at Craft Supplies USA who has assisted in Mike's classes more than fifteen times. "You see a lot of students taking Mike's class multiple times because it's so much fun and they keep coming back to get their skills to a higher level."

Hollowing

Mike describes his method of hollowing as the opposite of "paint by numbers." While he has a loose order of steps, his approach is always whatever works for a particular piece of wood. A solid piece of maple, for example, can be hollowed almost entirely before returning to the top to thin out the wall, while a fragile piece of buckeye burl requires progressing in sections so it does not fall apart. Mike's penchant for miniscule openings adds significantly to the hollowing challenge. His very repeatable process is perhaps best described succinctly: "It depends."

It is all the more impressive that Jackofsky hollows freehand; he finds little use for captive systems when years of experience have honed his feel for where the hidden cutter tip meets the wall inside. "The key to hollowing something with a small opening is finding the wall," he advises. "Tip the tool over to barely touch the wall before making the cut. Hollow forms break when the tool hits the wood before you're ready for it." He turns everything to final thickness in one go using partially dried wood, carefully seasoned enough so that it is not too wet. "Hollowing once is hard enough, why would I want to do it twice?" is his usual response to the idea of twice-turning a hollow vessel. ►



Sculptural Hollow Vessel,
2012, Maple, ink,
4" x 8" x 4" (10cm x 20cm x 10cm)

His pursuit of perfection and attention to detail is also evident in the interior surface of his hollow forms. Using a small scraper, he smooths the inside and checks with a penlight before considering the hollowing complete. Then Mike sands the inside of his hollow forms within reaching distance (noting that Jeanie's pinky finger, not his, is the final decision maker). He cites his inspiration from Sam Maloof's chairs: even if the chair is turned upside down, there are no tool marks to be seen and it looks perfect from all angles. Everywhere a hollow form can be touched, Mike wants it to be smooth.

Hollow-Pro

Like other hollow-form makers, Mike eventually crafted his own tools because he found the available tools insufficient for his designs. In particular, he was not able to reach through his preferred small openings to where he wanted. Having taken up blacksmithing earlier, he experimented during the weekends at the local forge. He would bend metal bar stock into different shapes, attach a cutter, and

try them out on the lathe. Like his ventures with underwater photography, many of these attempts did not pan out, but eventually he forged a set of tools that worked for him. Subsequent requests from many turners to buy them led to Mike's line of Hollow-Pro tools released in 2007. However, he is often trying to convince new turners not to buy his tools until they know they need them and only if they will use them.

Present day

Regrettably, in 2016 an odd lump in Mike's neck revealed another round of stage-four cancer. While he occasionally still has some bad days after the ensuing treatment, his eye for form remains as sharp as ever and he continues to contribute new work to galleries and the annual AAW Symposium auction.

Nowadays, Jackofsky says he is pretty retired and is rarely coaxed into traveling or teaching beyond his annual five-day workshop at Craft Supplies USA. With his wife Jeanie and Boston terrier Emma, he spends his time at his log cabin in the hills of Escondido

gardening on his property (trying to grow the hottest peppers), catching up on games during basketball season, and keeping the local scorpions at bay from his woodpile and the occasional rattlesnake out of his shop. A self-proclaimed technology dinosaur, he recently ventured onto Instagram (@mikejackofsky) with the significant help and patience of a younger woodturner (the author). Mike has been sharing his latest adventures with new audiences—both from the shop and with his new electric motorcycle.

Still competitive as ever, Mike says his goal is to go back to the Penn Relays in Philadelphia next year when he turns 70, where he raced as a teenager, and compete in the 70-and-older 100-meter dash (even if they have to carry him out afterwards). He's a long way from that first winter craft show in 1999 and is living proof that—just maybe—good things can come from our “problems.” ■

Tina Chou is a member of the West Bay Woodturners and sometimes a woodturning instructor at the Palo Alto Adult Education School in California.



Natural-Edge Redwood Hollow Form, 2023, Redwood, 7½" × 9" (19cm × 23cm)



Buckeye Burl Hollow Vessel, 2023, Buckeye burl, 6" × 7" (15cm × 18cm)

MEMBERS' GALLERY

Gabriel Hoff, Ohio

I was introduced to the art of woodturning in 2019, when I was 16 years old. After purchasing a lathe, I quickly realized that I needed a mentor. My mentor, Bev Connelly from the Ohio Valley Woodturners Guild, taught my brother and me the fundamentals and helped me improve my woodturning. From there, my love of the craft was born. After three years with our mentor, focusing mostly on spindle turning, I was introduced to the lidded box.

I like that lidded boxes can be made with small, distinctive pieces of wood, each box an artistic statement. Form, beauty, and style can all be packed into a one-of-a-kind well-turned box. I especially enjoy using exotic, figured, and burl woods because of their visual appeal. With each box, I strive for thin, light walls and visually pleasing forms. Though I use different variations and forms for each box, I try to keep my overall theme and style consistent. ►



Beads of Courage Box, 2023, Hard maple, cherry, African blackwood, buffed wax, 5½" × 6" (14cm × 15cm)

Gabriel has committed to making one box per month for use in the Beads of Courage program. Learn more at beadsofcourage.org/bead-bowls.



Brown Mallee Burl Tower Box, 2024, Australian Brown Mallee Burl, lacquer, 1¾" tall × 2" (44mm × 51mm)



Tulipwood Victorian Style Box, 2024, Brazilian tulipwood, lacquer, 1¾" × 1¾" (44mm × 44mm)



Amboyna Burl Cylinder Box, 2023, Amboyna Burl, lacquer, 1⅞" × 1⅞" (48mm × 48mm)



Masur Birch Pagoda Box, 2023, Masur birch, lacquer, 2¾" × 1⅞" (70mm × 48mm)



Camatillo Capsule Box, 2024, Camatillo (Mexican kingwood), lacquer, 2" × 1¾" (51mm × 44mm)

Dick Worthey, Oregon

I have been a woodworker for most of my 86 years, and a woodturner for the last thirty-four. As a woodturning artist, I have concentrated on learning different techniques and am intrigued by basket illusion, open spiral, and multiaxis turning. In the last year, I have been inspired by tensegrity (a word combining *tension* and *integrity*). Tensegrity is not a turning technique, but a method of suspension whereby opposing forces hold separate components in place. These forces can include gravity, weight, or magnetic pull along with tension lines for stability. In many of my tensegrity pieces, a turned plate or bowl feature is supported by lines at the center and tensioned with lines pulling down at the edges.

I have sold my work in galleries in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and on the Oregon coast, as well as at art festivals in California, Oregon, and Washington. I currently have work displayed at the Arts Center in Roseburg, Oregon, and the Mindpower Gallery in Reedsport, Oregon. I have shown my work in the instant galleries at five AAW Symposia and have been an AAW member for thirty years.



It's California's Fault (ring-turned profile of California), 2012, Redwood burl, polyurethane, 10" x 12" x 6" (25cm x 30cm x 15cm)



Three Ring Circus, 2024, Poplar, walnut, holly, nylon string, monofilament, polyurethane, lacquer, 26½" x 10½" x 10½" (67cm x 27cm x 27cm)

Three Ring Circus is a tensegrity sculpture comprising three segmented rings and five ring-turned bears. The rings are suspended on nylon strings and tensioned with monofilament.



Off Center, 2024, Myrtle wood, screw eyes, monofilament, magnets, polyurethane, 5" x 6" x 4½" (13cm x 15cm x 11cm)

Tensegrity is at play in *Off Center*. Hidden magnets pull the central disks together, which pushes the two off-center bowls apart. Lengths of monofilament at the corners are under tension due to the magnets' pull and prevent the central disks from coming together.



(Above) *Sentinel*, 2023, Cherry, oak, spalted myrtle wood, archival pens, black gesso, lacquer, 11" x 6" x 3" (28cm x 15cm x 8cm)



Tensecherokee, 2024, Poplar, maple, archival pens, lacquer, monofilament, 9½" x 19½" (24cm x 50cm)



Tim Soutar, British Columbia, Canada

My engagement with woodworking began as a child when my parents caught me trying to chop down a “tree,” which happened to be a post holding up the house. This lesson proved quite valuable when I later built my own house and workshop. A few years before retiring from a career in oceanography, I discovered woodturning. Joining the AAW and the Island Woodturners Guild (Brentwood Bay, BC, Canada) and attending innumerable symposia, demonstrations, and classes have all played a critical role in my development, for which I am very grateful.

My woodturning projects tend to be equally divided between functional items (notably bowls) and artistic or decorative pieces. For the latter, much of my inspiration comes from the geometric and symmetrical patterns found in marine life and on seashores. For embellishing, I enjoy using a variety of techniques (pyrography, rotary- and hand-carving, burning, butterflies, and biscuits) as well as a variety of colorants such as inks, dyes, and paints. While I enjoy working with maple, arbutus, and fruit woods, my favorite woods by far are burls and those with extravagant grain patterns. ►

Untitled Vessel, 2021, Pear, carving, acrylic paint, branding, dye, 11" x 5" (28cm x 13cm)



Untitled Bowl, 2023, Arbutus, branding, acrylic paint, India ink, dye, 4" x 13" (10cm x 33cm)



Untitled Sphere, 2012, Cherry, pyrography, rotary-carving, dye, paint, Arbutus branch, Sphere: 7" (18cm) diameter



Nested Bowls, 2023, Arbutus root burl, tung oil, 12", 9½", and 7" (30cm, 24cm, and 18cm) diameters



Untitled bowl, 2016, Arbutus, acrylic paint, carving, 5" x 15" (13cm x 38cm)



Stool, 2024, Maple (charred), milk paint, 24" x 18" x 18" (61cm x 46cm x 46cm)



Three-Tiered Table, 2024, Maple (charred), milk paint, 27" x 20" x 20" (69cm x 51cm x 51cm)

Ben Martinelli, Maine

I enjoy creating objects that appear abstract but still have a purpose. At Green Point Woodworking, we strive to experiment often and be creative in the materials and methods we use. Recently, I have been pairing charred wood with milk paint. And it has been fun experimenting with 1" (25mm-) diameter maple spindles to see what creations I can think of. This reminds me of playing with Lincoln Logs as a kid.

For both the stool and table shown here, I paired and clamped together two pieces of squared lumber and drilled a 1" hole, leaving a ½" (13mm) half circle on each piece. Turning the two pieces resulted in a lap joint, which I glued together and pinned with brass dowels.

Since participating in the wonderful nine-week woodturning intensive last winter, taught by Beth Ireland at the Center for Furniture Craftsmanship (Rockport, Maine), I have been inspired to incorporate more turned objects into our furniture lines.

For more, visit greenpointwoodworking.com.

Alan Stratton, Utah

To me, the toy/box shown here brings to mind a child's plastic stacking toy all grown up. As an adult, I enjoy stacking and unstacking the rings and hiding something inside the box. The box is an illusion—seemingly cut from a single block of laminated wood. It is also a bit of a puzzle since the shaped rings and inner box are tapered. The rings fit together only one way. It took me a while to figure out the sequence of operations to make this box; it required multiple shifts from faceplate to faceplate and precision cutting alignment. I had to update my bandsaw jig to saw the wavy rings safely. Sanding, instead of routing, the sharp corners of the sawn rings was also a challenge. For more construction details, see my video at aswoodturns.com/2024/05/stacking-box. ■



A Child's Stacking Toy Grows Up - Now My Fancy Wood Box, 2024, Walnut, yellowheart, wenge, maple, cherry, padauk, bloodwood, dyed veneer, polyurethane, 5" x 6" (13cm x 15cm)



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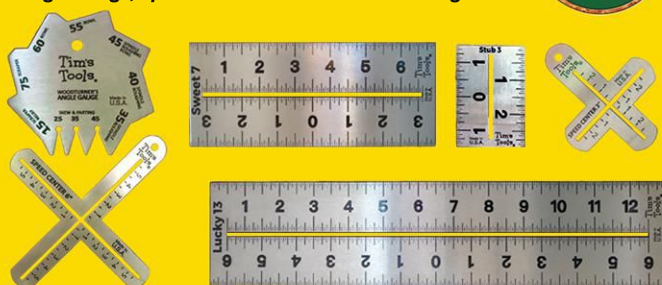
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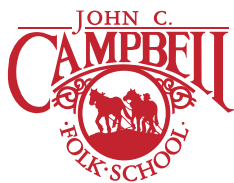
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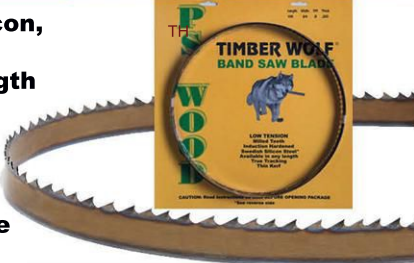
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JERRY BENNETT

TEXAS

Cirque de Bois

Cirque de Bois was a long time coming. Sure, it is about the circus, but the back story is much more interesting. Over the years, I have postulated that the AAW embraces a “big-tent philosophy.” They actively recognize and support the various roles that turning plays in the making world. Turning can be the star, or it can play a secondary role, but each will find a place in the big tent. Observe the work at any AAW woodturning meeting or symposium, and you will see the most astounding and varied works. This is no accident.

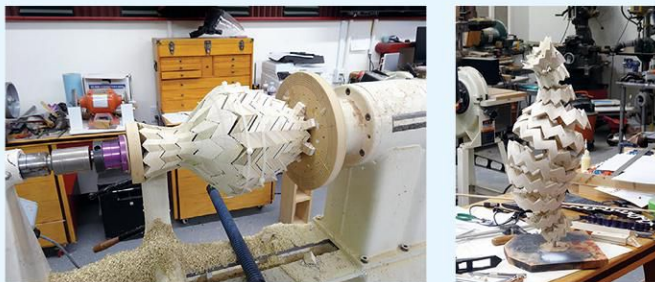
Betty Scarpino and Joshua Friend, former and present editors of this journal, ushered in the big-tent philosophy with their vision. They chose to look into the future and see what woodturning *could be*. As a result, artisans from all walks have ventured into that big tent and found a home, me included.

Cirque de Bois is not traditional, but everything was turned on the lathe, with the exception of the flags and hat. This is what the big tent is all about—it is the spirit of the AAW.

Cirque de Bois, Poplar,
tupelo, steel, acrylic paint,
33" x 17" x 11"
(84cm x 43cm x 28cm)



Realigning turned layers



It was not necessary to glue the zig-zag layers for turning, and that opened the door for stacking layers at different angles on an armature. Bennett tried various configurations and, with the rock and roll music cranked up, *Cirque de Bois* seemed to design itself.