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AMERICAN WOODTURNER

Journal of the American Association of Woodturners

April 2025 vol 40, no 2 • woodturner.org

FISHING FOR INSPIRATION

MY JOURNEY TO NATURAL FINISHES

MICHAEL HOSALUK: 2025 POP MERIT AWARD RECIPIENT

ART LIESTMAN'S PUZZLING CREATIONS

Lou Wilde

Ireland

My first woodturning teacher, Mick Hanbury, told me, "If you can throw it or blow it, you can turn it," which forever changed the way I view the potential of wood. That simple phrase ignited a passion to explore how the fluid, organic forms of glass and ceramic can find new expression in wood.

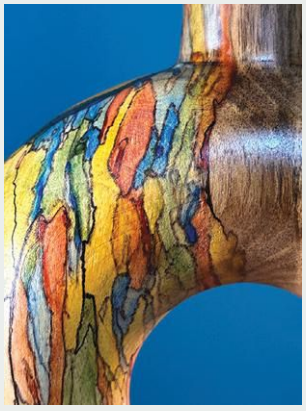
My journey with wood, however, began long before I turned my first piece. As a cellist, I have always felt a deep connection to wood. The resonant voice of my instrument revealed the living essence within it, and when I discovered woodturning later in life, I found that same vitality waiting to be revealed in every grain and knot. There is a joy in coaxing wood into intricate forms, balancing precision with the spontaneity that its natural features demand.

Relocating from an urban setting to the coastal and mountain landscapes of the West of Ireland has opened up a whole new world of creative forms to inspire me. To work with wood is an honor, and I am ever mindful of its origins in the natural world. Through my work, I hope to convey a sense of wonder and respect for the material, inviting others to appreciate the quiet beauty and boundless inspiration that nature offers.

For more, follow Lou on Instagram, @turningwilde. ■

Spiked Donut Vase, 2024, Spalted walnut, wood stains, oil finish, 12" × 9" × 3" (30cm × 23cm × 8cm)

Process



The form was turned on two axes, then carved and painted with wood stains.

Process



The body of the *Pushmi-Pullyu* was made from a simple lathe-turned spindle that was cut apart at the bandsaw at various angles (safely using a holding jig) and reassembled in a new orientation.

Pushmi-Pullyu, 2024, Sycamore, compressed wood, acrylic paint, modeling paste, spalted tamarind, walnut, 9" × 9" × 3" (23cm × 23cm × 8cm)

Process



The vertical spiral in *Rebirth of the Triffid* was made by turning a tapered spindle, cutting it apart at various angles, then reassembling and sanding it. For the head, the author turned a sphere and then carved, scorched, and textured it before adding copper inserts for detail.

Rebirth of the Triffid, 2023, Walnut, bubinga, copper inserts, scorching, carving, oil finish, 16" × 6" × 4" (41cm × 15cm × 10cm)

Process



Wave began as a natural-edge hollow form turned by Richard West and was then cut and carved to shape by the author.

Collaboration with Richard West (Instagram, @Richard_West_Woodturner), *Wave*, 2024, Spalted beech, Odie's® Oil, 16" × 12" × 9" (41cm × 30cm × 23cm)

AAW | AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF WOODTURNERS

Mission: Strengthen and empower the global woodturning community

Vision: A world where woodturning is valued, inspirational, and accessible to all

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Inside This Issue

April 2025 vol 40, no 2

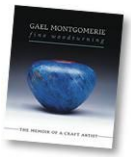
FEATURES

AMERICAN WOODTURNER

Journal of the American Association of Woodturners

ASSOCIATION NEWS

WOODTURNERS CHATTER



GALLERY

COVER

Cover: Art Liestman, *PBNoJ*, 2007, Spalted maple burl, pyrography, wipe-on polyurethane, 7" × 5¾" (18cm × 15cm)

Photo: Kenji Nagai

Back cover: Let's Go Fishing!

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

For tips on article submission and photography requirements, visit tiny.cc/AWsubmissions*.

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Ewald Consulting
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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.

Editor's Note

The AAW is a big tent and all are welcome. Our membership comprises a wide diversity of creative interests—all within the realm of woodturning. The many expressions of woodturning become visually evident at every symposium instant gallery, on the show-and-tell tables at chapter meetings, and within the pages of this Journal.

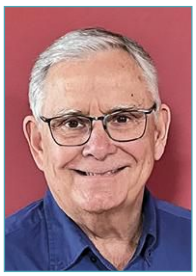
My editorial approach has always been to strive for balance and inclusivity—a good mix of articles addressing various skill levels. *AW's* sister publication, *Woodturning Fundamentals*, helps to maintain balance across AAW's spectrum of offerings by always presenting beginner-friendly projects. Check out the latest at **tiny.cc/AAWFundamentals** (URL is case-sensitive).

Sometimes an editorial theme materializes naturally, and that's pure serendipity. Such was the case in this issue of the Journal, with four springtime articles related to fishing. Three of those are functional items (bobbers, a handline, and a trout net) and one is sculptural.

The content of this Journal is *by* woodturners and *for* woodturners, so if there are topics you would like to see, please reach out with your ideas.

—Joshua Friend

From the President



2025 International Woodturning Symposium

This year's AAW Symposium, in Saint Paul, Minnesota, will be here before you know it! We have a great lineup of regional, national, and international demonstrators coming to inform and inspire you. A full listing of them and their rotations, as well as all the details you will need to plan your experience, can be found at our symposium website, **aawsymposium.org**.

We truly appreciate all of the hard work being done to prepare for the Symposium by many volunteers from local chapters and around the Minneapolis/Saint Paul region. Volunteers are vital to delivering an exceptional Symposium experience. To learn about volunteer opportunities at this year's event, visit **aawsymposium.org/volunteer**.

Many vendors have signed up to participate in our Symposium Tradeshow. We thank all of them for their commitment to come to Saint Paul, as they will bring an incredible variety of tools, supplies, and equipment for you to see and buy. A listing of the Tradeshow vendors can be found on page 7 of this issue, so start your shopping list soon!

A unique and exciting feature of this year's event is the ability for you to visit AAW's Gallery of Wood Art in Saint Paul's downtown Landmark Center, just blocks from the River Center Symposium site. Stop by to see historic lathes, educational displays, and valued pieces from AAW's collection of wood art.

David Ellsworth Legacy Project

We are pleased to be working with AAW member and author Craig Edelbrock on the David Ellsworth Legacy Project, which will develop and publish a major career retrospective book, *David Ellsworth: The Spirit of Woodturning*. You can read more about the project at **ellsworthlegacy.org** and on page 13 of this issue.

David Ellsworth is AAW's founding member #1 and was the organization's first president. At the AAW Symposium this June, you can meet Craig and share your stories of how David has impacted your woodturning journey.

AAW's core values

Last fall, the AAW Board of Directors adopted a set of values reflecting our guiding principles and root beliefs. These values—Community, Sharing, Growth, Safety, Ethics, and Respect—guide us in our decision-making, solidify our culture, and remind us of what is important to our association. Our values provide a compass for how we treat each other and all those who are important to us.

Community is at the heart of our organization. It was our founders' fundamental purpose to create a community of those interested in turning wood. This is at the core of why the AAW exists.

Turning wood is the shared purpose of why we gather in small groups, chapters, and an international association. Guided by this shared purpose, we help each other build skills. We share and delight in what we each create at the lathe and beyond. And we enthusiastically share this passion and serve an even broader community by working with programs like Beads of Courage and Empty Bowls, and by participating in other charitable outreach projects at the chapter level like making wig stands for cancer patients or pens for our military troops.

Please think about what Community means to you, perhaps including how you may benefit from or contribute to your Community.

Our other values flow from the fundamental concept of Community, and I will highlight one of AAW's values in each of my future letters.

As always, your comments and suggestions are welcome; please reach out to any of our staff or Board members. I look forward to meeting many of you in Saint Paul this June.

KC Kendall
President, AAW Board of Directors

2025 AAW INTERNATIONAL WOODTURNING SYMPOSIUM

June 12-15 in Saint Paul, Minnesota

2025 AAW Symposium Offers Wide Range of Demonstrations

At the 2025 AAW International Woodturning Symposium in Saint Paul, Minnesota, you will have the opportunity to learn from woodturning demonstrators from Australia, France, the United Kingdom, Luxembourg, Canada, Australia, and across the United States. There will be more than 70 demonstrations and presentations, ranging from fundamental skills to improvised collaborations. Here is just a glimpse of some of the topics being covered:

- Bowl Turning Fundamentals
- Turning Green to Finished
- Copper Lidded Box
- Pens without Casting
- Enclosed Forms using Gouges
- Improvisation on a Root Burl
- Box with Hand-Cut Threads
- Spindle Turning Fundamentals
- Urchin Ornament & Stand
- Endgrain Bowl with Carved Feet
- Multiaxis Wooden Bottle

Visit the Symposium website, aawsymposium.org, to see the full list of demonstrations.

Photo: Andi Wolfe

Can't Make it to Minnesota? WATCH FROM HOME!

20 Demonstrations Live-Streamed, Recorded, & Available to Watch Later

REGISTER FOR THE VIRTUAL SYMPOSIUM AT AAWSYMPOSIUM.ORG

PANEL DISCUSSIONS

An Eye for Form
- Dan Zobel (moderator)
- Robert Briscoe
- Kalia Kliban
- Heather Marusiak

So You Want to be a Professional Woodturner?
- Mike Mahoney (moderator)
- Jim Echter
- Ashley Harwood
- Noble Peters

Photography for the Woodturner
- John Beaver (moderator)
- Rudolph Lopez

Social Media for the Woodturner
- Emiliano Achaval (moderator)
- Matt Deighton
- Derek Weidman

An International Survey on Woodturning
- Kimberly Winkle (moderator)
- Sally Burnett
- Alain Mailland
- Graeme Priddle

Artist Showcase
- David Ellsworth (co-moderator)
- Sally Burnett (co-moderator)
- Lorin Brückin
- Rex Kalehoff

Critiquing the Critique
- Andy Cole (moderator)
- Kip Christensen
- Curt Theobald
- Andi Wolfe

Collaboration Nation
- Dan Zobel (moderator)
- Michael Hosaluk
- Mark Sfirri
- Kimberly Winkle

Turning with Disabilities
- Andi Sullivan (Moderator)
- Michael Blankenship
- Brent English
- Larry Mercier

KICKOFF & CONNECT: DON'T MISS THURSDAY'S SPECIAL EVENTS

Don't miss the Welcome Remarks to kick off the Symposium on Thursday, June 12! AAW is excited to welcome first-time attendees Kate Silva and her father, Tom Silva. A longtime contributor to *This Old House* and an avid woodturner, Tom shares a passion for woodturning with Kate. Together, they inspire more than a million followers on social media with their woodturning adventures. Join us as they share their story during the Welcome Remarks.

Afterward, enjoy early shopping, connect with your favorite exhibitors, and preview the special exhibitions at the Gallery during the Tradeshow Preview and Gallery Opening Reception from 6:00–8:00 p.m.

Cap off the evening by engaging with fellow woodturners in Special Interest Sessions, open to all attendees, from 7:00–8:00 p.m.

JOIN THE FUN – VOLUNTEER!

Photo: Andi Wolfe

Volunteers say they have the most fun at the Symposium. Volunteer for a shift or two in your favorite Symposium area to meet new people and help make the event run smoothly. Spouses and companions are welcome to volunteer, too! Sign up online at aawsymposium.org/volunteer.

THANK YOU, JPW INDUSTRIES!

Photo: Andi Wolfe

Our heartfelt thanks to JPW Industries (JET/Powermatic) for the use of lathes in the demonstration rooms and donations of the hands-on program lathes and raffle lathe. JPW Industries has supported woodturners through donations to the AAW Symposium for many years, and we continue to be very grateful and appreciative.

Be sure to buy your raffle ticket in Saint Paul for a chance to win a new lathe!

SPONSORSHIPS AVAILABLE

Express your support of AAW by sponsoring a demonstration room or event activity during the 2025 Saint Paul Symposium. Whether as an individual member, an AAW vendor, or a local chapter, you can visibly display your support of woodturning education, community, and the programs that mean the most to you. For more information, please email AAW staff at memberservices@woodturner.org.

WOODTURNING TRADESHOW

Photos: Andi Wolfe

Get your hands on all the latest gear and take advantage of exclusive discounts. See tools in action and meet the makers of your favorite tools and equipment.

Airbrushing Wood

Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts

AZ Carbide

Bad Dog Tools

Big Monk Lumber Company

Branches to Bowls, Ltd.

Carter and Son Toolworks

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Curt Theobald Studios

Easy Inlay

Easy Wood Tools

ExoticBlanks.com

Hunter Tool Systems

John Jordan Woodturning

Liquid Solutions, LLC

Lyle Jamieson Woodturning, LLC

MDI Woodcarvers Supply

Mullet Tools

Oneway Manufacturing

Planet Plus, Ltd.

Powermatic/JPW Industries

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Robust Tools

Rockler Woodworking & Hardware

Stainless Bottle Stoppers

Stuart Batty Tools

Teknatool USA, Inc.

The Walnut Log, LLC

Thompson Lathe

Tom's Tools

Transpiration Turning

Trent Bosch Tools

Turning Native

Walrus Oil

Vendor list current as of Feb 10, 2025. See the most up-to-date list at aawsymposium.org.

Make Your Souvenir Pen

You are invited to turn, finish, and assemble a souvenir pen in the Tradeshow pen-turning area. Volunteers will be available to guide new turners through the process of making their first pen, while experienced turners can showcase their skills.

Don't miss this hands-on opportunity to create a one-of-a-kind keepsake.

EMPTY BOWLS PARTNER – FIREWEED COMMUNITY WOODSHOP

Photo: Andi Wolfe

fireweed community woodshop

Bring a bowl (or two or three!) to contribute to the Empty Bowls fundraising—then purchase a bowl to bring home! All profits directly benefit Fireweed Community Woodshop, a local nonprofit that offers craft, furniture, and handyperson classes with equity-based pricing, fostering an inclusive, supportive learning environment that challenges traditional notions of who belongs in the woodshop. Volunteers from Fireweed will be available in the Empty Bowls booth to talk with you about their incredible program. Learn more at fireweedwoodshop.org.

This year's Empty Bowls honors Minnesota Woodturners Association (MWA) member Karl Foord, who set a life goal of turning 500 bowls but passed away just shy of his goal. To honor him, MWA members are turning and donating 130 bowls. Join them by contributing your own bowl to this meaningful fundraiser.

LEARN TO TURN YOUTH PROGRAM

Photo: Andi Wolfe

Do you know a young woodturner who would benefit from hands-on instruction and the camaraderie of other young turners? Hands-on turning classes are available free of charge to youth ages 10-18 (with a registered Symposium attendee). This year's instructors are Kip Christensen, Cindy Navarro, Katie Stofel, and Andi Sullivan. Register your youth attendee at aawsymposium.org.

Youth Classes include a variety of fun projects:

- Light House Christmas Ornament
- Kaleidoscope
- Bud Vase
- Kitchen Scoop
- Biscuit Cutter
- Secret Compartment Keychain
- 6-in-1 Screwdriver
- Mallet
- Christmas Ornament Droplet

If space allows, classes will open to new turners of any age, so if you, a spouse, or friend are interested, stop by the Learn to Turn area in the Tradeshow to check availability.

Our heartfelt thanks to the businesses and individuals who generously donated tools and materials in support of the AAW Youth Program and the Turning with Physical Limitations Visually Impaired program.

BE AMAZED AND INSPIRED IN THE INSTANT GALLERY

Bring up to three turned pieces for display in the Instant Gallery, one of the world's largest woodturned galleries. All skill levels are welcome, and pieces can be for sale.

You can also sign up for expert one-on-one feedback in an Intimate Critique, where you can receive encouragement, tips, suggestions, and a positive experience. Select pieces will be highlighted in Sunday's Instant Gallery Critique, and Youth and Adult award winners will be featured in *American Woodturner*.

SPECIAL EXHIBITIONS

Photo: Andi Wolfe

- **Professional Outreach Program (POP) Exhibition and Auction: *Open/Closed***—Creative makers from around the world bring distinctive perspectives and techniques to this diverse show of small-scale sculptures by emerging, established, and mid-career artists.
- **AAW Member Exhibition: *Beginnings***—Showcases and celebrates the full scope of excellent work being created by AAW members, from skillfully-crafted traditional turnings to innovative sculptures that push the boundaries.
- **POP Artist Showcase Exhibition**—Work by makers Rex Kalehoff and Lorin Brückin, who were selected as emerging artists of exceptional talent.
- **POP Merit Award Artist**: Michael Hosaluk—This award recognizes artists who have made significant contributions to the field of woodturning as an art form. See the feature article in this issue to learn more about Michael's contributions (page 51).
- **AAW Live! Auction**—A gathering of extraordinary and diverse works in wood that will be auctioned to support AAW's educational mission.

TIPS FOR FIRST-TIME ATTENDEES

- Attend the Welcome Remarks on Thursday, June 12, to get the inside scoop on how to make the most of your Symposium weekend.
- Kick-start your experience with the Thursday night Tradeshow Preview and Special Interest Sessions to meet woodturners with similar interests.

Photo: Andi Wolfe

- Bring up to three of your turned objects to display in the Instant Gallery. All attendees are welcome to show their work!
- Volunteer! Volunteering is a great way to meet other woodturners and get the most from your Symposium experience.

AAW Symposium Chapter Group Discount!

Five or more of your chapter members can get **$40 OFF** each registration!

We want AAW chapters to be able to send as many of their members as they can to the 2025 International Symposium in Saint Paul, Minnesota, so more people can experience the biggest woodturning event of the year. That's why we are offering a **$40 chapter discount to each member** of a group of five or more. Pull together at least five of your chapter friends and submit the form on the website (aawsymposium.org) to get your personalized discount code. Then, share the discount code with those chapter members and you can each register for a full registration at $40 off.

The AAW International Woodturning Symposium is the best event for local chapter members to learn together, make bulk purchases and connections with top vendors, and put their chapter on the map by showcasing their best work in the largest woodturning gallery anywhere. This is a great opportunity for new woodturners to accompany more experienced chapter members and soak in the wealth of knowledge from expert woodturners from around the world. Chapter leaders will have the opportunity to network with one another and share experiential knowledge to help grow chapters around the country.

Chapter discounts must be requested by June 11, 2025. Register by April 11 to get the early bird rate. To learn more, visit aawsymposium.org.

Photo: Andi Wolfe

Call for Demonstrators for the 2026 AAW Symposium

Application period: March 1 to June 1, 2025

The AAW's 40th Annual International Woodturning Symposium will be held in Raleigh, North Carolina, June 4-7, 2026. This is a great opportunity for experienced woodturners to share their skills and techniques at the largest woodturning event of the year. **You can apply to be a demonstrator between March 1 and June 1, 2025.** Learn more about the requirements at woodturner.org/calls.

Photo: Andi Wolfe

2026 AAW Board of Directors

Call for Nominees

Application due date: May 1, 2025

The AAW offers much to its members, and we are looking for a few good people with the passion to contribute something in return. Be part of moving the AAW forward—run for a position on the AAW Board of Directors! The AAW has a volunteer nine-member Board that represents the membership. If you have been a member in good standing for the past three years, you are eligible to apply.

A slate of applicants will be presented in the August 2025 issue of *American Woodturner*, and online voting will occur during the month of August. Election results will be announced by mid-September, with the new Board term beginning in 2026.

Interested, but still have questions? We would love to talk with you! For information on nomination application requirements and the duties of Board members, email Nominating Chair Linda Britt (lbbritt@comcast.net) or call Linda at 678-642-1700. You can also find the application requirements, as well as contact info for all current Board members, at tiny.cc/Board. **All applications are due no later than May 1, 2025.**

—Linda Britt, Chair, Nominating Committee

Your Generosity Matters

On behalf of the AAW, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to the generous supporters and AAW chapters who contributed during 2024. Your donations directly support our charitable nonprofit mission, including education, youth and arts programs, and grants.

Thank you, Monica Luce, Dale Larson, and Malcolm Zander for creating the Luce Collaborative exhibition and auction in memory of Bill Luce. It was a fun and inspiring way to honor Bill's legacy while supporting woodturning programs.

We are especially grateful to Bryce and Maxine Hill for their generous bequest gift. Bryce, a founder of the Dakota Woodturners, was a passionate woodturner. Learn more about their story in the AAW Donor Spotlight on page 12.

We also appreciate the nearly 350 members who added a donation when renewing their membership—an easy way to make a meaningful difference. Membership dues cover only a portion of the costs for programs and services—your generosity makes a significant difference. Thank you for your continued support of the AAW's nonprofit mission to strengthen and empower the global woodturning community.

—Jennifer Newberg, AAW Executive Director
—KC Kendall, President, AAW Board of Directors
—Reid Zimmerman, Chair, AAW Fundraising Committee

$10,000+

Estate of Maxine C. Hill

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John Peckham
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Mike Summerer
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Keith Baizer
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Martha Diefendorf
Cindy Drozda
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Linda Ferber
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Hap Gordon
Robert Harris
Scott Hendricks
Bonnie Klein
Kyle Koch
Jean LeGwin
Allen Miller
Michael Peace
Hartmut Rademann
Chip Scholz
Dan Swaim
Louis Vadeboncoeur
Kimberly Winkle
Helga Winter
David Wright
Reid Zimmerman

$100-$249

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Bob Amarant
Eli Avisera
Les Bauer
John Behrend
Roger Bennett
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Erik Betz
Robert Blum
Joyce Botsch
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Paul Pyrcik
Michael Richman
Martin Ring
Bob Rotche
Jean-Claude Roy
Jim Ryman
Joseph Seltzer
Russell Sharp
John Struckmeyer
Robert Suda
Tim Swihart
Curt Theobald
Holland Van Gores
Albert Vandam
Walt Wager
David Wahl
Andi Wolfe
Siouxland Woodturners
Richard Wray

Bill Luce Special Auction Contributing Artists

Nick Agar
Benoît Averly
Dixie Biggs
Trent Bosch
Sally Burnett
Cynthia Carden
Cindy Drozda
Kathleen Duncan
Melissa Engler
J. Paul Fennell
Robbie Graham
Stephen Hatcher
Michael Hosaluk
Phil Irons
Kevin Jesequel
Michael Kehs
Bonnie Klein
Jean LeGwin
Steve Loar
Heather Marusiak
Pat & Karen Miller
William Moore
Rolly Munro
Pascal Oudet
Jim Piper
Graeme Priddle
Bob Rotche
Betty Scarpino
Terry Scott
Curt Theobald
Neil Turner
Louis Vadeboncoeur
Jacques Vesery
Elizabeth Weber
Kimberly Winkle
Helga Winter
Andi Wolfe
Malcolm Zander

AAW Live Benefit Auction Contributing Artists

Dixie Biggs
Jason Breach
Christian Burchard
Jim Christiansen
Andy Cole
Luigi D'Amato
Rebecca DeGroot
Cindy Drozda
Kathleen Duncan
David Ellsworth
J. Paul Fennell
Roberto Ferrer
Dewey Garrett
Michael Gibson
Stephen Hatcher
Mike Jackofsky
Ulf Jansson
Kevin Jesequel
Dale Larson
Rudolph Lopez
Monica Luce
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Terry Martin
Heather Marusiak
Jon Sauer
Mark Sfirri
Jay Shepard
Eiko Tanaka
Holland Van Gores
Elizabeth Weber
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Hans Weissflog
Jakob Weissflog
Andi Wolfe
Malcolm Zander
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Daniel Zobel

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Roger Bennett
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Jim Christiansen
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Craig Lofton
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Adam Manley
Yann Marot
Heather Marusiak
Pat and Karen Miller
Rolly Munro
John Mydock
Jason Nemec
Jim Piper
Hartmut Rademann
Joshua Salesin
Matthew Shewchuk
Eiko Tanaka
James Thurman
Amy Umbel
Marjin Wall
Kathleen Walsh
Janine Wang
Derek Weidman
Hans Weissflog
Jakob Weissflog
Andi Wolfe
Donna Zils Banfield

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Angelo Artuso
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William Baird
Donald Ball
Stacy Bansback
James Barkelew
Mary Beardsley
George Beckwith
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David Bergeron
John Bergeron
Mark Berman
James Berryhill
Mark Bettes
Norman Bishop
Thomas Bishop
David Bleil
Thomas Bohan
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Francisco Boyero
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Wolfie Browender
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Josh Buettner
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Terry Butler
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Susan Canfield
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Paul Carter
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Jim Chandler
David Chapin
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Michael Cherry
Carl Christensen
John Cifonelli
Jason Clarke
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Brian Comolli
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Johnny Corbin
Aaron Crane
James Cregger
Larry Crouch
Paul Crowe
George Cunningham
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George D'Andrea
Dustin Davis
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John Deese
Jessica DeLeon
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Chadwick Gladhart
Bruce Gleason
Phillip Glick
Helga Goetz
Jose Gomez
Fernando Gonzalez
Joseph Gorman
Rob Gould
Gisele Graber
Ralph Grande
Andy Grief
Gerald Gudmundson
Craig Gun Hoon Yim
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William Hackett
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David Higa
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Jim Holcombe
Mike Holden
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Charles Hosford
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Chad Ishikawa
Richard Ivy
Linda Jennings
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Ben Johnson
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Dayton Johnson
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Gary Jones
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Steven Ringer
Jean-Pierre Riquet
Steven Rivera
Kris Roberts
Ned Roberts
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Marissa Rocafort
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Troy Sorensen
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Patrick St. John
Larry Stearns
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John Stiehler
Richard Stiers
Don Stogsdill
Erik Stromstad
Stephen Stromstad
David Struck
Aaron Stubbs
Sonia Villalobos
Brett Sutherly
Franklinville Teachers Association
Jean Teasdale
Sharon Thelen
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Andrew Walsh
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John Welch
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Tim Wheeler
John Whitley
Ken Whitley
Richard Widmer
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Rich Wilkinson
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Mitch Wolgamott
Ken Woodkey
Mike Yohanek
Mark Zeglen
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Legacy Donor Spotlight Bryce and Maxine Hill: The Rest of the Story

Stalwart club members Maxine and Bryce Hill, 2003.

Bryce Hill served in the U.S. Army military police in Germany, 1955-57. He and his son Gregory Bryce Hill spent valuable time in their garage shop at their home in Bismarck, North Dakota (photo c. 1980).

"Life is what happens while you are busy making other plans," or so it is said. That certainly was true for W. Bryce Hill. Born in Alva, Oklahoma, in 1933, Bryce had other plans when he was drafted into the U.S. Army at age 22 and found himself serving in the military police in Germany during the aftermath of World War II. Based on his military training and experience, he decided to pursue a career in law enforcement.

After discharge, Bryce obtained a degree in criminology at the University of California, Berkeley. He was a police officer in Tulsa and a detective in St. Louis before beginning his teaching career, eventually becoming Chair of the Criminal Justice Program at Bismarck State College. His second wife Maxine Olson Hill was born in 1940 in Ashley, North Dakota, and was a Burleigh County Clerk and Assessor.

By all accounts, Bryce and Maxine Hill lived a normal, quiet life. But as Paul Harvey famously used to say, "Now, the rest of the story."

The woodturning bug

Bryce was an enthusiastic do-it-yourselfer. When his son Gregory Bryce Hill (b.1970) was 10 years old, Bryce bought a Shopsmith Mark V that combined a table saw, lathe, drill press, disk sander, and router. Father and son often worked together on useful woodworking projects.

When Bryce retired in 1995, he was bitten by the woodturning bug and developed a passion for the lathe. He became a founding member of the Dakota Woodturners and later served as its vice president and president. Maxine supported Bryce's obsession with wood and woodturning. Despite the frightfully cold North Dakota winters, she gave up space for her car in the garage for Bryce's ever-expanding shop and wood stash.

Extraordinary givers

Maxine and Bryce were stalwarts of the Dakota Woodturners chapter for more than twenty years and helped build it into a vibrant, supportive, and service-oriented woodturning community. They loved the social aspects of woodturning and were often among the first to welcome new members and to volunteer when things needed to be done.

The Hills were extraordinary givers throughout their lives. Before they moved to an assisted living community, for instance, they donated their cabin and house to endow scholarships at Bismarck State College. Bryce served on the Bismarck Community Council and as a volunteer, member, or officer in several professional and community organizations. The Hills were enthusiastic supporters of a wide range of projects and organizations. When asked about donating their time and money, Bryce said it gave them tremendous satisfaction and meaning in their lives.

When Maxine died in 2023 (Bryce predeceased her in 2020), the couple gave one final gift to us all. The Hills had taken steps to ensure that their favorite charitable organizations, including AAW, would benefit from their estate after they were gone. Their legacy within woodturning is assured with a bequest to AAW that will support future outreach, education, safety campaigns, youth programs, and efforts to preserve and build our cherished woodturning community. ■

—AAW Contributing Staff

What's Your Legacy?

If you love woodturning and value the people, programs, resources, and events provided by AAW and your local chapter, consider how you can give back for future generations. Like Maxine and Bryce Hill, you can ensure a vibrant future for woodturning and that your name will be remembered as a leader and champion in the field.

Leaving a bequest to AAW in your will can help establish your legacy within the woodturning community. There are many giving opportunities, including education and outreach programs, scholarships, awards and exhibitions, or events at the AAW International Symposium. Depending on the size of the gift, you may be able to endow an ongoing program in your name or in the name of someone you wish to honor. In any case, AAW will be good stewards of your gift and will apply it as you specify.

AAW is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that relies on the support of members and other supporters to cover the cost of programs and services. AAW does not provide legal, financial, or tax advice, so talk with your estate planning professionals about how to build your legacy through a charitable contribution. **For more on donating to AAW, contact us at memberservices@woodturner.org.**

AAW AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF WOODTURNERS | David Ellsworth LEGACY PROJECT

The American Association of Woodturners is pleased and proud to announce the launch of the David Ellsworth Legacy Project, celebrating David's remarkable contributions to woodturning over the past fifty years.

Inspired and inspiring

David Ellsworth has been central to the founding and growth of the AAW, serving as its first president, pioneering new tools and techniques, and inspiring countless individuals through his teaching and mentorship. In addition to being an outstanding artist, David has been an articulate and effective representative, spokesperson, and advocate for our field.

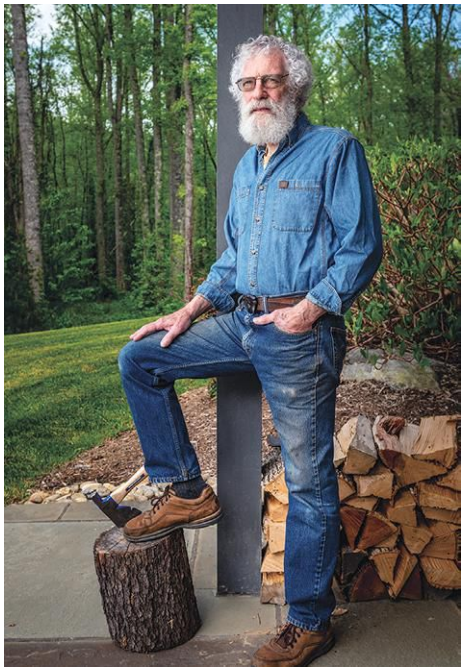
This exciting project aims to collect heartfelt reflections and tributes from the worldwide woodworking community, including David's friends, students, admirers, colleagues, and collectors. In partnership with author Craig Edelbrock and designer Dan Saal, the project will produce the ultimate collectible book, *David Ellsworth: The Spirit of Woodturning*. This must-have publication will feature David's fascinating life story, an insightful essay by distinguished craft historian Glenn Adamson, and a stunning gallery showcasing David's work.

One unique chapter will feature a selected subgroup of woodturners—ranging from beginners to accomplished professionals—inspired and influenced by David and his work. So, please tell us how David has influenced *your* personal journey in woodturning. Your story could end up in the book, enriching it with diverse perspectives and experiences.

Get involved

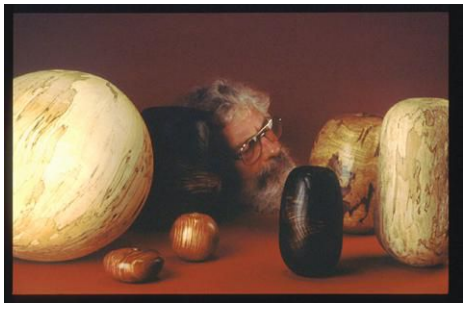
Please join us in documenting and celebrating David's extraordinary legacy. Share your stories, donate, volunteer, and sign up for updates via the project website, **ellsworthlegacy.org**.

—AAW Contributing Staff

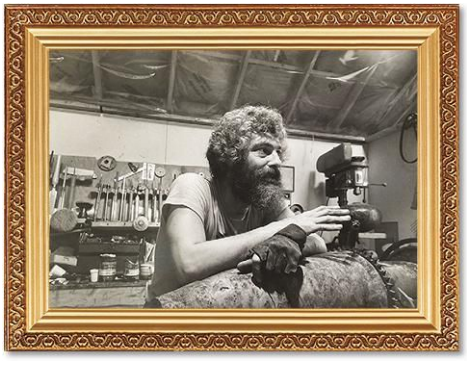


David Ellsworth at his home in Weaverville, North Carolina.

Photo: Paul Stebner



Tell us how David has influenced *your* personal journey in woodturning. Your story could end up in the book.



FROM THE EDITOR'S INBOX

Send emails to editor@woodturner.org

Ed Siegel's approach to choosing a woodturning technique, published as a letter to the editor in the February 2025 *AW* (vol 40, no 1, page 10), is, "If you find a tool that you are comfortable with, is *safe* for what you are doing, and gives you the result you are looking for, it is the right tool for your job." An alternative belief is that different techniques are optimum for different turners. However, the personal factors that would determine which particular techniques are optimum for each turner have yet to be determined.

A third belief is that there is a suite of techniques that are optimum for all turners without significant handicaps who desire to turn to their full potential. I have long held this belief because the quality of a cut is determined solely by the geometry and quality of the edge actively cutting, and by how it is presented and traversed. These factors for any particular cut are the same for all turners. AAW members would be well served to consider whether this belief is correct, and if so, whether it should influence woodturning instruction and the content of the woodturning media.
—Mike Darlow, New South Wales, Australia

In the wake of the devastating impact of Hurricane Helene, the Carolina Mountain Woodturners climbed a long road to recovery. We are happy to report to all our fellow AAW members that we are thriving and back to normal operations. We offer sincere thanks to all who supported our recovery.

We are now in a position to help other clubs facing similar calamities. Specifically, we are in search of clubs impacted by the wildfires in California. If your club, or perhaps a neighboring club, was impacted by the fires, please get in touch. CMW was heartened by the support we received from across the nation. We would now like to pay it forward.
—Don Blum, Treasurer, Carolina Mountain Woodturners



Several members of the Northeast Wisconsin and Green Bay area woodturning clubs also volunteer at our local Habitat for Humanity affiliate (Fox Cities of Wisconsin). About two years ago, we started a project where we are taking scrap pieces of the micro-lam and house beams and turning them into platters and bowls. We also take pieces of scrap oak railing and combine that material with a purchased kit for making screwdriver handles. Each Habitat homeowner receives a bowl/platter and screwdriver at their home dedication. In a typical year, we make fifteen to twenty sets of platters/bowls and screwdrivers. The gifts are well received by the homeowners.
—Mark Steine, Northeast Wisconsin Turners

Gathering wood for future turning projects has always been a challenge. The Central Texas Woodturning Association (CTWA) came up with a solution in an organized and club-sanctioned way.

My home in Austin is centrally located for many of our club members, so we decided to use my driveway as a place to make surplus wood available to club members. A conversation with my home insurance agent caused him to take an extra dose of antacid tablets! To ensure the activity would be covered by our chapter liability insurance, we started calling it the CTWA Wood Depot.

Since the very early days, the Wood Depot has been a much-used benefit to all members. Since it is outdoors, it is open 24/7 for members to access at their convenience. Many of our members not only contribute to the inventory, but find wood that they would like to use for special projects. Incoming wood is coated with sealer and labeled as to the wood species and date delivered. An email is sent to all members, along with a photograph to alert them of any new additions.

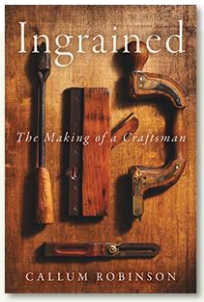
Editor's Note: CTWA's experience is not a guarantee that your chapter or AAW insurance would cover a similar scenario. Best to confirm insurance coverage independently.
—S. Gary Roberts, Central Texas Woodturning Association

Book Review: *Ingrained: The Making of a Craftsman*, by Callum Robinson, Ecco (an Imprint of HarperCollinsPublishers), 2024, 320 pages, hardcover

Everyone who takes pleasure in working with wood will enjoy Callum Robinson's memoir, his journey to becoming a craftsman. Like the bespoke furniture he and Marisa Giannasi (wife and business partner) design, this story is exquisitely constructed using a writing style that is easy to read yet deeply rich, complex, and thoughtful.

Early in the book, Robinson's description of a trip with his father to Ben's lumberyard delightfully transported me back in time to adventures of my own, sorting through unruly stacks of rough-sawn lumber, searching in dim light for the perfect board. He writes, "...as light shafts in through the many gaps in the shed's rough walls and my eyes become accustomed to the gloom, the silhouettes sharpen into forms I recognize. And all I can see is possibility."

On the brink of financial collapse after losing a major corporate commission, Callum and Marisa rent retail space in their small town on the east coast of Scotland. Callum readily admits he is not a social creature—he is most comfortable around other woodworkers such as the old man who is drawn in to take a closer look. Callum knows there will not be a sale, but he warmly welcomes the visitor. "Even before his hard hands rearranged the bones in mine there was something altogether too intimate about his interactions with the wood. The way he instinctively sought out the connections and the hidden surfaces [of the Dram Table], places only an old hand would know to reach for. It all hinted at a long acquaintance." This passage also resonates as a tribute to his own father.

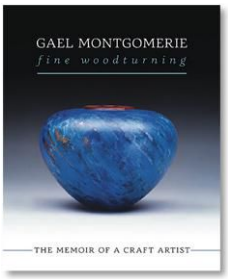


A *New Yorker* "Best Book of 2024" and longlisted for the 2025 Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Nonfiction

Photo: Ecco

There are no pictures; none are needed. Alluring photos of handcrafted furniture could not wholly tell Callum's story, although they assuredly would provide evidence of skilled craftsmanship were they included. Not visually evident are the trying times, personal struggles, and triumphs that undergird tables, desks, chairs. They are conveyed as stories within the pages of *Ingrained*. ■

—Betty J. Scarpino, Indiana



Book Review: *Fine Woodturning: The Memoir of a Craft Artist*, by Gael Montgomerie, Artisan Press (New Zealand), ISBN 9780473729950, 2024, 76 pages, paperback

Recently, out of the blue, I received an email from Gael Montgomerie asking if I would like a copy of the book she wrote. Of course I would! I met Gael during her first visit to the U.S. in 1990 and we connected several other times in the early 2000s. I suggested that Gael also contact Tib Shaw, AAW curator, to see if she wanted a copy. Unbeknown to me, Tib had been looking online, without success, to contact Gael because a collector had donated one of her turnings to AAW's collection.

Long ago, Gael gave up her lathe and gouges, but she wanted to chronicle this important period in her life. Hence this memoir, a compelling, well-written story of a craft artist's dedication—and struggle—to live a life and earn a living as a woodturner. *Fine Woodturning* also speaks to worldwide connections throughout the woodturning field.

Before visiting the U.S., Gael was becoming known in New Zealand for her fine craftsmanship and exquisite bowl designs. In 1987, Richard Raffan singled out Gael's pear bowl at a symposium in Timaru for its "fineness and elegance." When visiting New Zealand a few years later, David Ellsworth invited her to the next AAW Symposium, to be held at Arrowmont School, "and bring lots of work so he could introduce [her] to suitable galleries and collectors."

Emanating from that experience, connections abounded for Gael, and she became a sought-after demonstrator. Today, however, few woodturners have even heard of Gael Montgomerie. This slim volume will establish a place for her alongside some of the early, innovative turners who embellished surfaces and influenced others. Her brush strokes were skillful and painterly, as the many photos in the book show.

This book is a must-have for anyone interested in the early years of the woodturning field. New Zealand turners will enjoy reading about their country's woodturning history from Gael's perspective. ■

—Betty J. Scarpino, Indiana

Gael Montgomerie, *Shallow Bowl with Wide Rim*, c. 1998, Sycamore, pigments, acrylic paint, pyrography, 2¼" × 9¾" (6cm × 25cm)

Donated to AAW by Frank and Elizabeth Amigo

TIPS

Tips

Share your turning ideas!

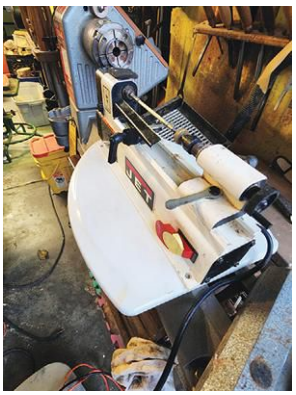
If we publish your tip, we'll pay you $35. Email your tips along with relevant photos or illustrations to editor@woodturner.org. —Joshua Friend, Editor

Repurposed toilet lid as lathe table

I periodically replace toilet seats and lids. I noticed that one lid had a nice finish, so I decided to take advantage of it in my workshop. I added a block of wood on the back of the lid to fit between the ways of my lathe to allow for easy installation, movement, and removal. The added block could also be fastened to a perpendicular second block of wood with a bolt and wingnut or knob that could be tightened to the bottom of the ways for extra stability. The lid can be used to provide a sturdy work surface on my lathe or to protect the ways from glue or finishes; a coat of wax helps to preserve its nice finish.

Importantly, the toilet lid is not a reflection of my workmanship.

—Ron Sanda, Tennessee, AAW member since 2015



Plywood floor cleat holds lathe in place

To prevent my lathe from shimmying across my wooden shop floor when turning an out-of-balance workpiece, I made plywood "saddle brackets" that fit around the two back feet. This meant I didn't have to use longer, wider screws in my flooring, which features in-floor heating. It allows some shimmy but not the dance. Works great!

—Don O'Neill, Alberta, Canada, AAW member since 2016

Plywood fixed calipers improve accuracy

The points on a conventional metal outside caliper can flex and be forced to fit over something that is wider than your intended measurement, leading to sizing errors. Having a set of plywood calipers with long fixed legs helps to avoid this kind of mistake.

I made a set of calipers, ranging from ½" to 1" (13mm to 25mm) in ⅛" (3mm) increments. I painted them yellow to make them easy to find in my studio. Then I color-coded one end to hopefully avoid mistakes when using more than one size on a project (*Photos 1, 2*).

I made my calipers out of ⅛"-thick plywood. For each caliper, drill a hole using a Forstner-style bit. This will accurately establish the size of the caliper's opening. Using a square, draw lines that extend the hole, and then cut out the opening (*Photos 3, 4*). Before using the calipers, true them up with a file and confirm the opening size with a ruler. The fine teeth on a metal-working file work well on plywood and allow you to fine-tune an accurate slot.

—Carl Ford, New York, AAW member since 2001

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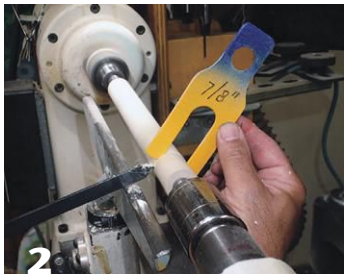

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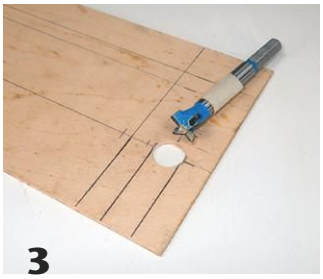
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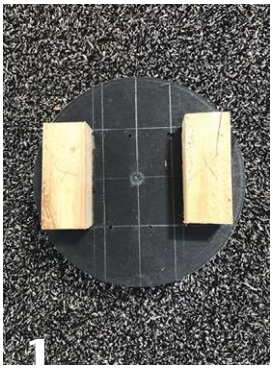
Bottle stoppers as cheese board feet

I recently made a natural-edge cheese serving tray with a lathe-turned handle. To attach the handle, I cut the turned piece so it would fit over the edge of the natural-edge board. Doing so left half of the thickness of the handle under the board, necessitating feet to add height. To solve the problem, I used four silicon bottle stoppers from a woodturning kit.
—Dustin Davis, Maryland, AAW member since 2009

"Crotch chuck" holds cylinders crosswise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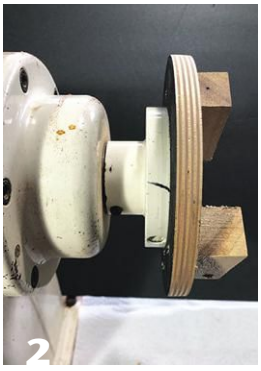
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When Great Grandpa Art toured my shop recently, I was eager to show him the wooden mallets I was turning. I explained that the final step was to drill a hole in the barrel-shaped mallet head to accept the handle. This is a tricky hole to drill. It needs to be centered on the round part of the barrel and in square alignment to the barrel. Great Grandpa Art suggested we make a "crotch chuck" to drill this hole. He said as a boy, he made and used a crotch chuck when making stools for milking cows. That Sunday afternoon, I learned a new method from the old times.

Cut a 6" (15cm) circle out of plywood and add a faceplate to its center. Mark the center of the plywood circle and draw parallel lines 1½" (38mm) on each side of the center point. Next, cut two pieces of wood 1" × 1" × 3" (25mm × 25mm × 8cm) and glue or screw them on each of the parallel lines (*Photo 1*). The 3" gap between the two parallel blocks is the "crotch." By design, the mallet head is 3" in diameter and will fit snugly into the crotch.

Mount the faceplate and crotch chuck onto the lathe (*Photo 2*), and install a drill chuck with the appropriately sized bit in the tailstock. Mark the bit with tape to show the hole's depth. Position the mallet head in the crotch chuck so the drilled hole will be centered. Advance the drill bit just far enough so it presses the mallet head in place, then turn on the lathe and begin drilling at a moderate speed (*Photo 3*).

I found this to be a handy shop tip and am looking forward to Great Grandpa Art visiting my shop again soon.
—Tim Heil, Minnesota, AAW member since 2001

Sandpaper keeper

There are probably as many tips on how to keep your sandpaper ready for use as there are AAW members. Here's mine. I tear up the sheets using an old hacksaw blade mounted on a board (*Photo 1*). Then I write the grit on the back of each piece, so I don't get confused. To keep the sandpaper handy, I use spring clips attached to a board, which I can move about the shop to get the sandpaper close to my work area (*Photo 2*). Having smaller pieces encourages me to use fresh sandpaper more often. I don't reclip used paper to the board. ▸
—Andy Kuby, Illinois, AAW member since 2001


1


2

TIPS

Tips for a smooth-acting toolrest

Having a smooth toolrest that is easy to adjust is key to making good cuts at the lathe. Here are a few tips for keeping your toolrest in great shape.

1) If you have problems sliding the toolrest post into the banjo without having to use your finger to align it, there is a simple fix that will save time and aggravation. Grind and polish a bevel on the bottom of the toolrest post. This will automatically realign the post so it will slide into place easily every time.

2) An economical way to adjust the height of the toolrest with repeated accuracy for a specific project is to use a measured ring of PVC pipe of the correct diameter. This easy fix can be used for years without having to replace the spacer.

3) Toolrests take a real beating, particularly when roughing in a project or using narrow chisels such as a parting tool. Over time, the surface of the toolrest will develop dents and dings, which can affect the sliding of your chisels; this is particularly noticeable when using a skew. As you glide the tool along the toolrest, dents can disrupt the chisel's movement, which are then transferred to the surface of the wood being turned. The solution is to periodically file the surface of the toolrest with a fine flat file until the dents are gone. After filing, sand the surface and apply a coat of paste wax.

—S. Gary Roberts, Texas, AAW member since 1986, member #16

Rubber doorstops extend chucking buttons

The rubber buttons supplied on Nova's Cole jaws are short and therefore can't chuck workpieces whose maximum diameter is not located at the workpiece's top or bottom. Hard rubber doorstops can be used to provide more chucking flexibility. You'll also need 2"- (5cm-) long high-tensile or stainless steel screws with 6mm threads to mount the doorstops. You can further increase the chucking capacity with washers, which I quickly bored and turned from plywood. The maximum recommended lathe speed for Cole jaws is 600rpm, and you should turn in a restrained fashion.

—Mike Darlow, New South Wales, Australia, AAW member since 1986

Grease chuck jaw screws

Sometimes it is difficult to loosen chuck jaw screws when you want to change jaws. This can happen because dirt has accumulated and/or the screws aren't removed often, and it can be a frustrating problem. Applying a little white grease on the chuck jaw screws when tightening them will help you get them out later. Rest assured, the grease will not cause the screws to loosen prematurely, so greasing them is not a safety issue.

This is an old trick I learned from my father. We greased all the bolts on our big farm tractor implements.

—Carl Ford, New York, AAW member since 2001

Sand to a superior finish

I sand at 200 to 300rpm (very slowly). Sanding at a low speed gives the grit more opportunity to work than at a high speed. Since the sandpaper is more efficient at low speeds, I am actually getting my sanding done faster and without burned fingers or creating heat checks (small cracks) in the wood.

My preference is to sand to a glossy finish. When the wood is glossy, most of the finish stays on the surface. If you use a wipe-on finish, you will need fewer coats to get a great glowing shine.

Sand out all scuffs and imperfections with coarse sandpaper before proceeding through to 200 grit. I then follow the initial sanding with 300-, 400-, 600-, and 800-grit foam-backed pads. This doesn't take long since I use each pad for only 30 to 60 seconds. I complete the process at 1200 grit but turn up the speed to medium fast (800 to 1000rpm). This last step burnishes the wood, making it shinier. You will see a big difference if you turn up the speed to burnish with whatever you are using for your final grit or with a handful of sawdust.

—Steve Schwartz, Virginia, AAW member since 1999

Calendar of Events

Send event info to editor@woodturner.org. June issue deadline: April 15.

Canada

June 25-July 26, 2025, Fraser Valley Woodturners Guild's *12 Turners* exhibition, O'Connor Gallery, Chilliwack Cultural Centre, Chilliwack, British Columbia. On view Wednesday to Saturday, Noon-5:30 p.m. The exhibition, free of charge, comprises a wide range of turned work by twelve members of the Fraser Valley Woodturners Guild. For more, visit fvwg.ca.

Ireland

October 18, 19, 2025, Irish Woodturners Guild (IWG) Seminar, Tullamore Court Hotel, Tullamore, County Offaly. Featured demonstrators to include Art Liestman (Canada), Ronald Kanne (Netherlands), Pierre Cornelis (France), and Seamus Cassidy (Ireland). For more, visit iwg.ie.

South Africa

October 3-6, 2025, The Association of Woodturners of South Africa's annual symposium, Northlink College, Cape Town. Featured demonstrator to be announced. For more, visit awsa.org.za

Alaska

May 3, 4, 2025, Alaska Woodturners Symposium, Glass Sash and Door Supply, Anchorage. Featured demonstrators Laurent Niclot (Colorado) and Andy Cole (Hawai'i), as well as others to be announced. For more, visit akwoodturners.org/symposium.

Colorado

September 19-21, 2025, Rocky Mountain Woodturning Symposium, The Ranch Events Complex, Loveland. Demonstrators to include Cindy Drozda, Rabea Gebler, Ashley Harwood, Kristin LeVier, Merryll Saylan, Janine Wang, Andi Wolfe, Sally Ault, Emily Ford, Jolie Karno, Heather Marusiak, Tib Shaw, Margaret Stiles, and Katie Stofel. Event features forty-five demos, a hands-on turning area, tradeshow, and instant gallery. To learn more visit: rmwoodturningsymposium.com.

Illinois

April 11, 12, 2025, The Midwest Pen Turners Gathering (PenMakers International Annual Symposium), Chicago Marriott Northwest, Hoffman Estates. Two full days of pen making—from beginner to advanced. Numerous social activities, chance to win a lathe, door prizes, vendor area. For more, visit midwestpenturnersgathering.com.

September 26–28, 2025, Segmented Woodturners Symposium, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Northbrook. The only symposium fully dedicated to segmenting. Demonstrators to include Robin Costelle, Tom Lohman, Malcolm Tibbetts, Curt Theobald, Steve Bonny, Martha Collins, Doug Drury, Reid Gilmore, Jeff Hornung, Gerald Jensen, Lloyd Johnson, Kip Lockhart, and Al Miotke. For more, visit segmentedwoodturners.org.

Minnesota

Multiple 2025 exhibitions, AAW's Gallery of Wood Art, Landmark Center, Saint Paul:

- March 16–May 18, 2025: *Open/Closed* (2025 POP exhibition)
- August 10–November 30, 2025: *Beginnings* (AAW's 2025 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.

North Carolina

November 7-9, 2025, North Carolina Woodturning Symposium, Greensboro Coliseum Special Events Center, Greensboro. Biennial event featuring a vendor tradeshow, instant gallery, and rotations from world-renowned and local turners. For details, visit ncwts.com.

Ohio

October 10-12, 2025, Turning 2025, Ohio Valley Woodturners Guild's 13th biennial Woodturning Symposium, Higher Ground Conference Center, West Harrison, Indiana (near Cincinnati, Ohio). Featured demonstrators to include Pat Carroll, Andy Cole, Elizabeth Weber, and Rebecca DeGroot, plus other regional demonstrators. The pastoral setting has onsite lodging, dormitories, and a dining hall. Event to feature demonstration stations, instant gallery, vendors, and a live auction. For more, visit ovwg.org.

Pennsylvania

September 19–21, 2025, The Mid Atlantic Woodturning Symposium, Lancaster Marriott Hotel and Convention Center, Lancaster. Featured demonstrators to be announced. For more, visit mawts.com.

Texas

April 4–6, 2025, Gulf Coast Woodturners' 28th Annual Hands-On Retreat, Cy-Fair Exposition Center, Cypress. Members teach a variety of courses for all skill levels. For the latest information, visit gulfcoastwoodturners.org.

August 22–24, 2025, SWAT (Southwest Association of Turners) annual symposium, Waco Convention Center, Waco. Demonstrators to include Mike Mahoney, Mike Nish, Toni Street, Sally Ault, Lyle Jamieson, Matt Monaco, and Jerry Bennett. Registration includes lunch each day, vendor tradeshow, and instant gallery. For more, visit swaturners.org.

Bernard Azéma (France), *Trembleur,* 2021, Boxwood, 15¾" × ½" (40cm × 13mm)

Turn Your Own FISHING BOBBERS

Tim Heil

I was inspired by the June 2024 *AW* article by Scott Hendricks, "As the (Sustainable) Cork Turns" (vol 39, no 3, page 36). I remember fishing with my dad when I was young and using a cork bobber. So I recently bought some cork and began turning a series of bobbers. They work well and come with the satisfaction of using a product I made myself. Here's how I made them.

Mount and drill cork

I started with a piece of cork 6" long by 2" square (15cm by 5cm). After turning a tang, or small tenon, on one end, I mounted the cork in a scroll chuck.

With the work mounted on the lathe, the first step was to drill a hole through it. In use, you will thread your fishing line through this hole. I mounted a drill chuck in my lathe's tailstock fitted with a ⅛"- (3mm-) diameter drill bit. When drilling with such a small bit, advance the drill slowly so it won't flex. Also, remember to back the drill out occasionally to clear the chips and prevent overheating (*Photo 1*).

Shape the bobber

With the drilling completed, remove the drill chuck from the tailstock and replace it with a revolving center. Next comes my favorite part—shaping the bobber. I used a ⅜" (9.5mm) detail gouge (*Photo 2*). For this bobber, I had in mind a long shape about 1" (25mm) wide, a style used for catching large fish. I wanted the bottom two-thirds of the bobber to be dart-shaped, so when a fish strikes, the bobber will submerge easily.

I sanded the bobber to 240-grit abrasive for a finished look (*Photo 3*). Sanding cork produces a fine powdery dust, so be sure to wear a dust mask to protect your lungs.

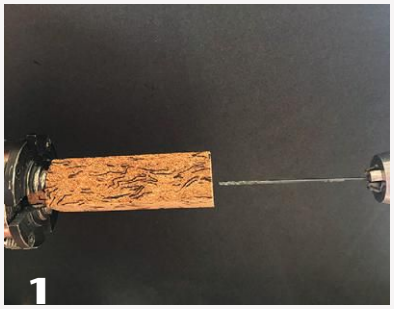
Embellish

The next step was to use a burnishing wire to add burn lines (*Photo 4*). These lines add a nice detail, plus they provide a border between different paint colors. I wanted to paint the top one-third of the bobber to make it more visible in the water. I applied the paint colors with the bobber still mounted on the lathe, loading the brush and spreading the paint as I rotated the bobber by hand (*Photo 5*).

When the paint was dry, I used a skew chisel to part the bobber from the lathe.

I made three different sized bobbers, as shown in *Photo 6*. The 6" size is for large fish like pike or muskellunge. I fish with a 4" (10cm) bobber for walleye and other similar sized fish. The small bobbers measure between ¾" and 1½" (19mm and 38mm); I use this size when

Drill through-hole



1

With the cork secured to the scroll chuck and the drill bit locked in the drill chuck, drill a small hole through the bobber blank.

Shape bobber

2

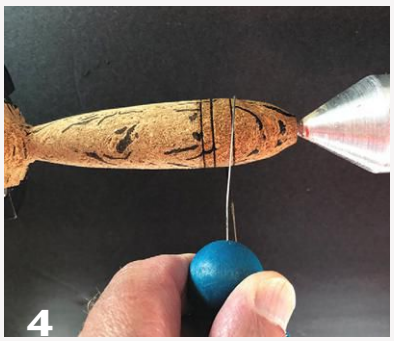
The author uses a small detail gouge to shape the cork bobber. A skew chisel or bowl gouge would work equally well.

Sand the bobber

3

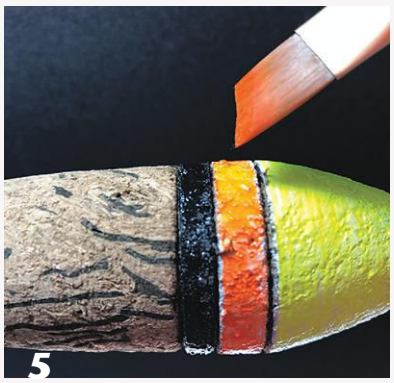
The author power-sands with the lathe rotating in reverse direction at a low rpm.

Add burn lines



Burn lines add interesting detail and create a border to contain paint colors.

Add color!



The top one-third of the bobber is painted with bright colors to boost its visibility in the water all light conditions.

Bobbers for various uses

A variety of bobbers in basswood, another good buoyant choice.

ice fishing. When I ran out of cork, I made several more bobbers out of basswood, which is buoyant, turns easily, and is easy to paint.

Using the bobber

To use the bobber, thread your fishing line through the center hole, and then tie on your fishhook. I use a simple bobber stopper to keep the bobber from sliding along the line. I simply use a piece of string tied tightly to the line followed by a small bead (*Photo 7*). The string and bead, placed at the top of the bobber, keep the bobber in its intended place. You can position the bobber stopper as desired to adjust the depth a bait is fished under a bobber.

One clear memory of bobber fishing with Dad was his use of a matchstick. He would light a cigar with a wood match, then use the matchstick to pinch the bobber to the line. ■

Tim Heil was introduced to woodturning in junior high school woodshop in 1966. He joined the AAW and the Minnesota Woodturners in 2002, and that put his woodturning skills in high gear. His favorite wood is lilac.

In use: a bobber stopper

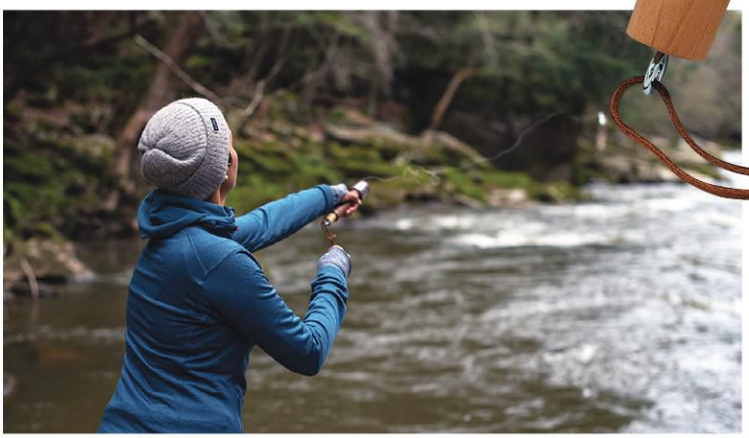
The author uses a simple bobber stopper (a string tied to the line, along with a bead) to set the depth of the bait below the bobber.

Cork Fishing Rod Handle

A fishing buddy passed away last spring, and his daughter gave me one of his fishing rods, but it needed a new handle. I bought some burl cork and began trying different ideas at the lathe. The rod handle has two sections. The large cork handle at the base was fairly straightforward to make once I figured out how to chuck and drill it. It easily slipped onto the rod. The upper grip was a different challenge, as I needed to do a split turning so I could fit both halves around the rod and glue them in place.

Turn a Solid-Wood Handline

Adam Nelson



What is handline fishing?

"Give a man a fish and he'll eat for a day; give a woodturner a handline and he'll start a new career." Such has been my experience, at least. I first discovered handline fishing in 2018 while searching for activities to add to my regular backpacking trips. When I learned about handlining, I was immediately "hooked" on the idea but couldn't find any handlines I liked. I started making my own, and now Daggerfish (my small woodworking business) makes thousands of handlines each year and has helped to revive the hobby of handline fishing.

If you're new to handline fishing, it's a minimalist fishing method that uses no rod or mechanical reel; instead, handliners use a carved or turned stick to cast and reel by hand. Handlining is an ultralight, ultra-simple fishing technique that's easy enough for beginners, while also providing a fun challenge for experienced anglers.

You can learn more about handline fishing at Daggerfish's website and see some of the custom jigs and other tools we use to make our handlines. Daggerfish handlines, also known as handreels, feature hollowed-out sections at the top and bottom for bait and tackle storage, but in this article, I demonstrate a simplified solid version to help you get started exploring the hobby of handline fishing.

Tools and materials

This beginner-friendly project requires only basic turning tools. You'll need a mini- or midi-lathe with a drive center and live center, a set of turning tools (I use square, circular, and diamond carbide tools for this demonstration), a parting tool or Japanese pull saw, and a caliper. *Figure 1* shows the dimensions of the shape we'll be using.

In addition to these basic tools, you'll need the following materials:

- **A solid hardwood turning blank** 2" (5cm) square and about 8" (20cm) long. We use a variety of woods for our handlines at Daggerfish, but I'd recommend choosing something relatively lightweight and rot resistant. Cherry is a great choice for domestic wood, and sapele is a good option for tropical.
- **A spool of 6-8 lb. fishing line.** We use high-quality monofilament, but you can also use copolymer or fluorocarbon line. I recommend starting with 8 lb.-test line; it's a good all-around line that will work in most handlining situations, and you can easily respool your line with heavier or lighter line in the future.
- **A small scrap of lumber** to make a line-winding jig. Start with a nominal 1" × 4" (25mm × 10cm) at least 6" (15cm) long, along with a few wood screws and washers. You'll also need a miter saw or miter box able to cut a 45-degree miter.
- **Sandpaper and your preferred wood finish**. I recommend a hard wax finish, but any natural finish will work well. We use a custom blend comprising one part beeswax, one part carnauba wax, four parts citrus solvent, and three parts shellac.
- **18" to 40" (46cm to 102cm) of leather cord** for a wrist strap.
- **A stainless steel screw eye**.
- **A piece of soft leather for a reel cover** (optional) at least 2" × 6" and leatherworking tools.

Turn your solid-wood handline

STEP 1 ROUGH-TURN

With the turning blank mounted between centers, round the blank to its widest diameter (1.8", or 46mm, based on the dimensions in *Figure 1*). Mark the key transition points, and part down to the specified diameters. Be sure to leave extra wood at the top of the handline for parting off.

You can adjust the thickness of the handle slightly to accommodate larger or smaller hands, but I recommend leaving the spool area roughly the size noted in *Figure 1*. It's tempting to go smaller to carry more line, but you don't need more line than will fit on this spool, and a larger diameter spool will make reeling the handline faster.

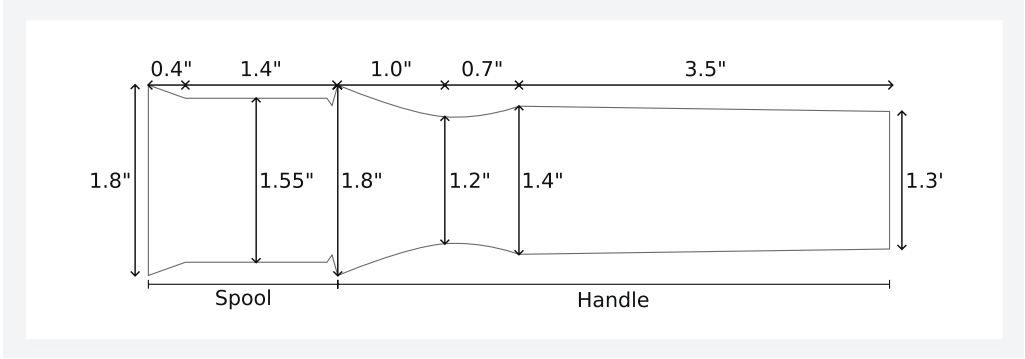


Figure 1.

STEP 2 SHAPE AND DETAIL

Connect the roughed-out diameters to create the final shape, and add detailing. These handlines have two areas, the spool and the handle. To help make casting easy, a flared edge at the top of the spool area and a smooth curve where the spool meets the handle are key. At the bottom of the spool, cutting a shallow notch helps when tying on and winding the fishing line. Note also the slight chamfer on the top of the spool.

STEP 3 SAND AND FINISH

Sand your handline, easing any sharp corners, then apply your preferred wood finish. At Daggerfish, we sand in two stages, first to 320 grit with the lathe turning, then we turn the lathe off and briefly sand the handle along the grain with both 220 and 320 grit. This helps to clear fine particles from the grain and removes cross-grain scratches, creating a better finish.

Take care when sanding the flared lips at the top and bottom of the spool. You want to maintain enough thickness to keep your line neatly wound on the spool itself. If you accidentally take too much off when sanding, you can sand away the flat surface of the spool to make up the difference. ▸

STEP 4 MAKE A LINE-WINDING JIG (OPTIONAL)

Safety Note: Steps 4 and 5 show how to use your lathe to wind fishing line onto your handline. If you choose to use this method, it is ***essential that your lathe be equipped with electronic variable speed control****, so you can wind the fishing line in a slow and controlled fashion. Lathes without electronic variable speed control may rotate too quickly, even at their slowest pulley setting, thus posing the safety risk of entanglement. An alternate method of manually winding line onto your handline can be found in the video, "Casting and Reeling a Handline," found at tiny.cc/handline.*

A line-winding jig positions your spool of fishing line so it unspools easily and can be wound onto your handline while it's still on the lathe. The jig is mounted securely just behind the lathe; ours at Daggerfish is screwed to the workbench. To build a simple line-winding jig, miter one edge of your scrap 1" × 4" to 45 degrees. Drill and countersink a couple of pilot holes through the mitered edge, and drill an additional pilot hole in the center of the board. Drive two wood screws into the holes along the mitered edge, and, using another screw and a washer, screw your spool of line to the center of your line-winding jig.

STEP 5 WIND LINE ONTO YOUR HANDLINE

Unspool a short length of line from the spool on your line-winding jig, ensuring it feeds cleanly off of the jig without catching on any screws or getting caught behind the jig itself.

With the lathe off, tie your line around the spool section of your handline using an arbor knot (check a website like netknots.com if you are unfamiliar with how to tie an arbor knot). Trim excess line from the tag end of the arbor knot using a pair of nippers, nail cutters, or scissors, and cinch the knot tight into the groove at the bottom of the spool area.

Turn your lathe speed down to its minimum. Position your hand between the reel and the line-winding jig, pinch the line between your thumb and forefinger, and pull gently away from your handline to create some tension on the line.

Turn on the lathe at its slowest speed and allow the line to begin winding around the spool area. Slowly move your hand left and right, guiding the line to fill the spool neatly. Keep your free hand over your lathe's power button, and turn the lathe off immediately if you accidentally slip past the spool area or if your fingers become entangled in the line. Continue winding line on until you can no longer see the wood grain of the spool. Turn off your lathe and cut the line free from the jig, then tuck it under itself a few times to temporarily secure it.

Cover the spool with painter's tape to protect the line, and, using a parting tool or handsaw, part the handline from the lathe. Sand and finish the endgrain at both ends.

STEP 6 ADD A WRIST LOOP (OPTIONAL)

Drill out the hole left by the lathe's live center and screw in a screw eye. Then run a length of leather cord through the screw eye and tie it off to create a wrist loop.

STEP 7 ADD A REEL COVER (OPTIONAL)

Reel covers help protect and secure your line while not in use and are a highly recommended addition to your handline. To make a reel cover, cut out a rectangle of lightweight leather and punch four holes in one side. The standard size of our reel covers is 5½" × 1½" (14cm × 38mm), made from 3-5 oz. leather, but you can adjust the width to match the flat section of the spool area on your handline.

Run an 18"- to 20"- (46cm- to 51cm-) length of leather cord through the holes, creating an X pattern on the back side, leaving approximately 6" of cord to the left of the holes and 12" (30cm) to the right. Wrap the reel cover around the line and tie to secure it. You can see a video of how to do this on our website, daggerfishgear.com. If you are not a leatherworker, we do offer reel covers for sale, or you can use a wide rubber band to keep your line secure.

FINISHING UP!

With that, your handline is completed! In a short while, you have made a tool to help you go fishing in parts of the wilderness that regular fishing rods can't reach, an always-ready rod you can keep in your glove compartment or tackle box, and an essential tool for wilderness survival, all in one. Now all that's left is to learn some basic handlining techniques and give it a try. Visit the Daggerfish website for written and video tutorials on how to get started handlining, as well as our recommendations for tackle and other accessories to improve your experience of handline fishing. Enjoy your new hobby, and the calm and confidence that comes from connecting to the wilderness. ■

Regulations on handlining vary from state to state. Check with your local fish-and-wildlife authority, and always fish with a license.

Adam Nelson is the owner and lead craftsman at Daggerfish, a craft manufacturer of wilderness exploration essentials. The son of a national park ranger, he is proud to have grown up in the National Parks and to make tools and equipment designed to help others explore the wilderness. Visit daggerfishgear.com for more tips and techniques for handline fishing, and to shop a variety of outdoor equipment made by hand in the USA.

Trout Net *with* Turned Handle

Robin Costelle

I am not a professional net maker or woodturner, but I enjoy making beautiful and functional fishing nets in various sizes. Of course, you should modify the approach shown here to suit your tastes and needs (woods used, size of net, etc.). The hoop section is made by bending and laminating thin strips of wood around a bending form; the strips are then glued onto the upper part of the turned handle.

Make a bending form and handle template

The first step is to decide on a shape and size. I like a nice flowing curve from the tip of the handle, around the hoop, and back to the handle. You can explore net designs by doing a quick internet search.

Bending form & handle template

Make a bending form in the size and shape of the net you want, along with a template for the handle.

Glue up handle blank

A laminated handle adds strength and beauty.

When you have a design in mind, make a handle template and a hoop bending form out of plywood (*Photo 1*). I used ¾"- (19mm-) thick plywood to cut the shape in two halves, ensuring the hoop form would be symmetrical. To get the shape just right, experiment with curves and sizes until you are happy with them. Keep in mind that the interior circumference doesn't have to be exact but should be within an inch or so of the actual circumference of the net bag.

One way to size the circumference of the hoop form is to base it on the size of the net bag you intend to use. A small hand net like the one shown in this article has a circumference of around 30" (76cm). Larger long-handled boat nets have a circumference of around 47" (119cm). But the most popular size I make is between these two: a circumference of 39" (99cm).

Make the handle

For the laminated handle, I chose woods based on beauty and strength. Using a strong straight-grained middle layer allows me to use pretty woods for the outside that may not be as strong, such as burls or spalted woods. *Photo 2* shows two pieces of yew for the outer layers, each about ⅜" (9.5mm) thick, along with a piece of curly maple for the inner layer. I glued them together, with some added layers of dark and light veneers for accents, to form a handle blank about 1⅜" (35mm) thick (*Photos 3, 4*). Most of my net handles measure about 1⅛" (29mm) finished diameter at the thickest point.

After the handle blank glue-up was completely dry, I roughed out its shape at the bandsaw and sanded the upper sections where the hoop will be attached (*Photos 5, 6*). I also smoothed the top of the handle so I could accurately mount it on the lathe between centers (*Photos 7, 8*).

Now turn a pleasing shape and size for your handle, but don't turn the upper portions where the hoop woods will be glued (*Photos 9-11*). That portion of the handle will be shaped by hand later.

Make the hoop

Just about any straight-grained flat-sawn wood will work for the laminated hoop layers. Ash, oak, and wenge are examples of good strong woods, but when you consider the combined strength of laminating several layers together, any wood will probably work for all but very large nets. As with the handle, I sometimes add layers of veneer for detail, but those are only for show, not strength.

I cut the hoop strips on my table saw to just over 1/16" (1.5mm) thick (*Photo 12*). I have found that ⅛"- (3mm-) thick strips can be difficult to bend. If the strips don't ▸

Refine upper area of handle


5


6

Prior to turning the handle, refine the upper area that will later accept the laminated hoop strips.

Prepare for mounting between centers


7


8

The top end of the handle should be sanded smooth and the center marked in preparation for mounting on the lathe.

bend easily, you can pre-bend them prior to glue-up by soaking them in water for a couple of hours and then bending and clamping them to the form. Allow them to dry in place before proceeding to the glue-up stage. I have never steam bent the hoop strips, but that is certainly another option.

I typically use five strips of contrasting woods for the hoop, which ends up being around ⅜" thick on my hand nets; longer, larger boat nets have a thicker hoop of about ½". The height of the hoop, determined by the width of the strips, is usually about ⅝" (16mm) on smaller nets and up to ⅞" (22mm) on larger nets with bigger hoops. These are all finished dimensions, so be sure to cut the wood strips a

Turn handle

Turn the handle to a pleasing and comfortable shape, but stop short of the already refined upper area.


9


10


11

Prepare hoop strips


12

The author cuts long thin strips at the table saw for the laminated hoop section of the net frame.

Glue up hoop with handle


13


14


15


16

The author loosely glues all the strips together and then, with lots of clamps at the ready, quickly clamps the strips to the form, starting at the top and working his way down to the handle.

little wider to allow for trimming and shaping.

Now the fun begins—the fast-paced glue-up! I covered the plywood form with packaging tape to ensure the glue wouldn't stick to the form. I use Titebond III wood glue, which is waterproof and very strong, but you could also use epoxy or other waterproof glues.

After marking the center of the edge of the strips to align with a centerline on the top of the form, I used a roller glue bottle to spread the glue evenly on the hoop strips. Use plenty of glue, even though it will make the process quite messy. As quickly as possible, start clamping the strips to the bending form, working your way from center top down to the handle on both sides. It doesn't matter what type of clamps you use as long as you can work quickly. Don't apply glue to the handle until you get close to that point. Then apply plenty of glue to the upper handle area and use several clamps to tighten this tricky area (*Photos 13-16*).

Shape and smooth

After the glue is completely dry, remove the clamps and knock the net loose from the form. I added a small strip of wood to the very top of the hoop where I will embed a magnet for a quick-release function, explained below (*Photo 17*). If you are not using a magnet, there is no need for this step.

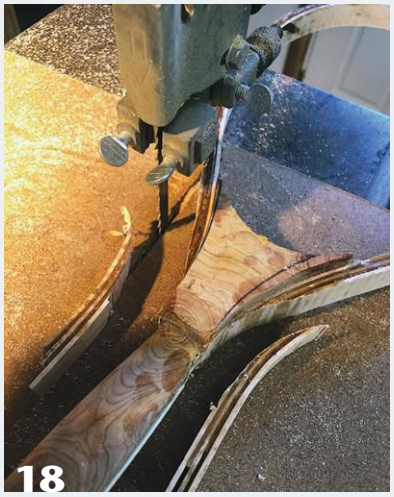
I used the bandsaw to trim away extra portions of the hoop layers to make a smooth transition into the handle (*Photo 18*). I then used an assortment of carving tools, rasps, and sanders to shape and smooth the hoop and handle joint. I usually start with a shaping wheel mounted on a grinder; the finest wheel is plenty coarse enough, so be careful. I generally sand my net frames to 320-grit abrasive (*Photos 19-21*). ▸

Extra thickness at the top

17

The author glues on an extra layer at the top of the frame where a magnet will be embedded.

Cut away excess

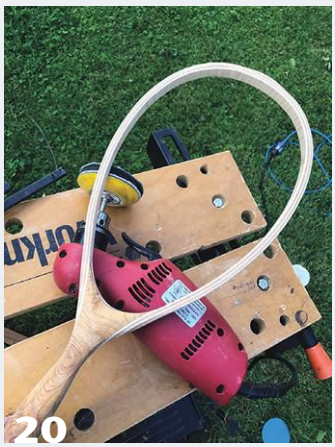


18

When the glue has dried, remove the frame from the form. The author cuts away excess material prior to hand-shaping and refining.

Shape and sand

19



20

21

Use grinders, rasps, and sanders to refine the frame and to make a smooth transition from hoop to handle.


22


23

Add D-ring for lanyard

To add a D-ring at the base of the handle, drill and tap the appropriate-sized hole and reinforce the connection with epoxy.

Drill holes in hoop


24

At the top of the hoop, a drilled recess will accept a rare-earth magnet.


25

The author applies spar urethane inside the drilled net holes using a pipe cleaner.

Quick-release button

26

A turned button with a recessed magnet offers a quick-release function, keeping the net out of the way until it is needed.


27


28


29

Turn and install quick release

Drill, turn, and install a magnet in the quick-release button. Not shown, drill a small hole near the top of the button to allow a split ring to be attached.

Finishing touches

Drill and tap a hole in the bottom of the handle to accept a D-ring screw. The D-ring is used to secure the lanyard. It is a good idea to coat the hole and threads with epoxy prior to installing the D-ring for added strength (*Photos 22, 23*).

To attach the net bag to the hoop, I use 100- to 300-pound braided fishing line. A sharp ⅛" drill bit for the holes allows the large-diameter braided line to pass through twice when securing the net. I also start the holes with a scratch awl or center punch before drilling to help keep the drill on center.

The holes on my net were spaced about 1⅛" apart, starting from the top, with a little extra between the top two holes to allow room for a hole for a ½"-diameter magnet (*Photo 24*). To keep from splintering the holes on the exit side, be sure to back the hoop with a piece of scrap wood. After cleaning up the holes, I applied some finish in them using a pipe cleaner (*Photo 25*). I use a gloss spar urethane, applying two coats inside the holes and wiping away any excess. I then sprayed a few coats of the urethane finish onto the rest of the net frame. Even with the spar urethane, wood nets shouldn't be submerged in water for long periods. Dipping to get a fish or hanging around in the rain should be fine.

Add a quick-release magnet

I like to use a magnetic quick-release button, which enables the net to be hung between the shoulder blades, clipped to the back of your fishing vest (*Photo 26*). This keeps the net out of the way for casting but within reach for when you need it. A strong rare-earth magnet in the top of the hoop holds the net in place, but a good tug will break it away so you can land that big fish on your line.

Use a dense wood for the small button, so it will be less likely to crack during drilling. Drill and turn the button, then glue the magnets into the hoop and button (*Photos 27-29*).

String up the net bag

One online source for both nylon and rubber net bags is flyfishing-nets.net. Most nets come with a needle and string. That's fine for nylon nets, but with rubber nets the small-diameter string can cut through the rubber if bound too tightly. That's why I opt for the larger-diameter braided fishing line noted earlier. It is tough stuff and not very expensive.

Working your way around the hoop with the needle and line, affix the net bag to the hoop (*Photos 30-32*). A dab of cyanoacrylate (CA) glue helps keep the first and last knots intact. If you have included a magnet at the top, be sure to run the line *inside* the hoop at that point to avoid interfering with the quick-release function.

I hope this article will get you started on your own net-making journey. It is a fun project that combines a few different woodworking skills, including turning, resulting in a functional tool I consider to be art. At least that's how I see it. ■

Robin Costelle is a hobby woodworker from Fern Creek, Kentucky. His interests are quite extensive and ever growing. Woodturning has been a constant for over twenty years, but he has branched out to other hobbies such as fishing, net building, music, and instrument making. Robin demonstrates for clubs and at an occasional symposium. He can be reached through his website, robincostelle.com.


30


31


32

Secure net bag to frame

Using a needle and strong line, secure the net bag to the frame.

PRO TIPS: LESSONS FROM PRODUCTION BOWLS

Terry Martin

Most hobbyist woodturners admire the skill and speed of professional turners, whose rotations at symposia are often the best attended. Many of those professionals have spent much of their time on production work, which usually means the rapid turning of a large number of identical items to be sold at a relatively low price. To make such work financially viable, a professional turner needs to develop routines that shorten the time to make each piece, conserve materials, and ensure a quality product. Along the way, they fine-tune their skills and develop "muscle memory," so they don't have to constantly think about positioning the tool, creating a consistent line, or making final cuts that require almost no sanding. To show how some of these efficiencies work, I made a production run of small bowls, probably the most commonly made item by amateur woodturners.

Tools and wood

For this run of bowls, I used three chucks—the Vicmarc VM100, VM120, and VM150, each set up for a different purpose. I also used two dividers, a ½" (13mm) bowl gouge, a ¾" (19mm) spearpoint scraper, and a ¾" round-nose scraper. If you don't own similar tools and accessories, I hope you can at least learn from how I approach the process and adapt the ideas to your own workshop.

To produce a consistent product, you need predictable wood. It should be easy to cut and sand, and stable when finished. Fine color and figured grain are good qualities, but for the purposes of this exercise, it doesn't matter what color the wood is. Every region will have different woods available, so identify a suitable species in your area. I chose camphor wood because it is readily available where I live in Australia, and I can obtain it for just the cost of my own labor.

Design and prep

At the start, you need to decide what shape you will make your bowls. It is important that you get this right before you commit to a long production run, so take your time to make the model for

Cut blanks in multiples

1

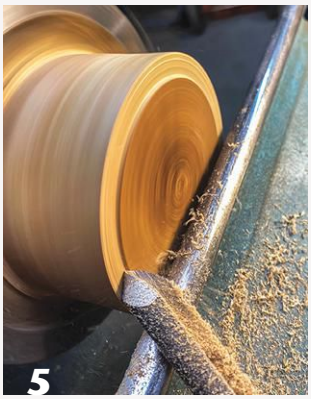
With the fence set, repeated identical cuts are easy, a staple of production work.

Mount square blank

2

The square bowl blank mounted in the chuck.

True side and face



(3) Rolling the gouge into the wood is an effective approach to nibbling away the corners of the blank.

(4) Remove material from the side of the bowl until it is round. A remnant of the spinning "shadow" shows that more should be removed.

(5) True the face of the blank with cuts from outer perimeter to center.

subsequent copies. My design choice was partly guided by the dimensions of my chuck jaws, which will become clear as we proceed. Making the first bowl gives you an opportunity to think through your mounting and remounting requirements, and that should help you speed up the production process on subsequent bowls.

Instead of starting with round blanks, which I'd have to precut on my bandsaw, I used a much simpler method that works for smaller bowls and is a real time-saver. The VM150 chuck, with large jaws, will hold a 3½" (9cm) square, so I cut a 2"- (5cm-) thick plank into multiple 3½" squares at the bandsaw (*Photo 1*). Setting the fence and making repetitive identical cuts streamlines the process.

Copying the first bowl

There are three ways to ensure you can exactly reproduce your model bowl. The first is to use a profile gauge. (*See my June 2024* AW *article, "Using a Profile Gauge," vol 39, no 3, page 20.*) The second is to hold the first bowl you made against every subsequent bowl and eyeball it. The third way is what develops after you have made enough copies—you just know when it's right.

First chucking

I mounted a square blank in the VM150 chuck, as shown in *Photo 2*. If you don't have chuck jaws suitable for mounting wood like this, you can mount the blanks on a screw chuck. Draw diagonal lines from corner to corner on the blanks, mark the center, then drill the pilot hole for the screw. This method will take longer, adding a few steps to your process, but it will do the job.

Turn the base

Turning at a speed of around 1500 rpm, I rolled the bowl gouge into the spinning corners of the blank (*Photo 3*). Don't rush this cut. Let the lathe do the work as the wood comes down onto the tool, which you should press downward onto the toolrest for stability. Then steadily raise the handle of the tool and roll it to the left into the wood. Repeat the cut almost to the chuck jaws, until the blank is round. You don't need to turn off the lathe to check this—just gently touch the back of the tool (not the cutting edge) to the wood and you will feel when it is round. Alternatively, you can see when it is round by looking through the spinning blank from the side; when the irregular "shadow" profile is gone, you know it is round (*Photo 4*). Next, make a cut to true up the base (*Photo 5*). ▸

Turn a chucking spigot

Use dividers to scribe the diameter of the chucking tenon, or spigot. Touch the wood with only the left leg of the divider. Preset dividers are a tool of efficiency and repeatability in a run of bowls.

A custom-shaped spearpoint scraper is used to perfectly shape the dovetailed tenon *and* create a flat area on the bowl's bottom. When time is money, having pre-shaped tools for repeatable cuts means less fiddling around and getting steps completed faster.

Shape lower one-third of outside profile

(8-9) Again, roll the tool into the cut and shape the bottom one-third of the bowl. Fine, hair-like shavings are an indication of good tool presentation.

(10) The completed underside of the bowl.

Turn the tenon, or spigot

With dividers set to 1½" (38mm), I scribed a circle on the base. It is important to touch the wood with only the left arm of the dividers; if the right arm touches, you will get a big surprise as they flip around or even fly out of your hand (*Photo 6*). With the bowl gouge, I quickly cut away enough wood to clear the way to turn the base and spigot. Finally, using a dedicated scraper that has an angle of around 85 degrees, I cut the dovetail on the spigot and a flat area that will become the base (*Photo 7*).

Shape the underside

To start shaping the bowl's outside profile, I cut a rounded line one-third of the way up the blank. For this pass, many turners would use what is now often called a push cut, but I drop the handle and roll to my left in a slicing action to create the underside curve of the bowl. The fine shavings show exactly why I use this cut (*Photos 8, 9*). After confirming that this new profile matches the underside of your model bowl, the blank can now be removed from the chuck (*Photo 10*). At this point, I kept the chuck on the lathe so I could repeat this step for every blank. Soon you will see how it gets a little easier each time.

Finish the outside

Next, I remounted the bowl in my VM100 chuck with the standard jaws, gripping the spigot in compression mode (*Photo 11*). You can cut the corners off the blanks at the bandsaw, but that takes extra time, so I just repeated what I did at the start and rolled a cut into the corners until it was round (*Photo 12*). Next, I used my other dividers to scribe a circle for the outside diameter of the bowl rim. I set this diameter just large enough for it to accommodate the standard jaws on my VM120 chuck in expansion mode (*Photo 13*). Once again, touch only the left arm of the dividers to the wood.

As before, I rolled the tool into the wood to start shaping the upper two-thirds of the outside of the bowl (*Photo 14*). I cut down to the scribed circle, then blended the line of the upper part with the lower section. At first, you will have to adjust often to combine these areas smoothly, but as you proceed it will become easier. Again, check your work against your model bowl. Now is the best time to sand the upper part.

Rechuck blank, turn away corners

(11-12) With the bowl reversed and held by the chucking tenon in a different chuck, turn away the corners. Having chucks set up for different steps in the process means less time spent changing jaws.

Hollow the bowl

I used a gouge to hollow the bowl, as shown in *Photo 15*. I prefer a rim that leads into the interior.

I finished the bottom inside the bowl with a scraper and then sanded the whole interior and rim (*Photo 16*). Now you should eyeball the shape against the original bowl one final time (*Photo 17*).

Remove the spigot

To gain access to the bottom to remove the spigot, I reverse-mounted the bowl on the VM120 chuck. I gently expanded the jaws inside the bowl while pressing towards the chuck body. It is important to do this gently so you don't split the bowl. If you make an open bowl with walls that splay out, this method of mounting (expansion mode) will not work. In that case, you would need to find another way to reverse-mount the bowl, such as on a dedicated jam chuck.

I turned away the spigot with light cuts rolled towards the chuck. This motion pushes the bowl towards the chuck, eliminating the possibility of pulling the bowl off of the jaws (*Photo 18*). When that step is completed, it's time to sand the lower third of the bowl and the base.

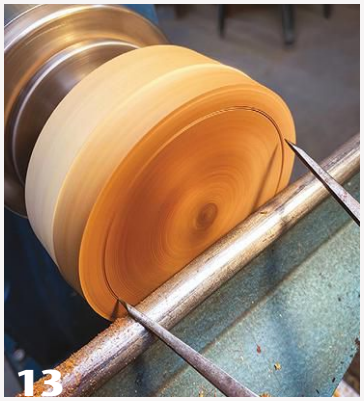
The end result

As the number of bowls you have turned increases, so will your confidence and productivity. You can lose these skills if you don't use them regularly, so I refresh my skills with a week of production work every now and then. This helps pay my bills and hones my skills, which not only benefits my production work, but also improves my efficiency and accuracy when I make one-off pieces.

If you make only five pieces, you won't achieve much. For a modest improvement, I suggest a minimum of twenty. If you are persistent, finishing 100 will really help you develop a higher level of skill and efficiency. You may ask, "What would I do with 100 bowls?" If you are not going to sell them, there are many charities that would benefit from a donation of such work. ■

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

Shape upper two-thirds of bowl profile



(*13*) The author uses preset dividers to scribe the rim diameter, again touching only the left leg of the divider to the wood.

(*14*) Shape the upper two-thirds of the outside of the bowl, blending the curve with the already turned lower one-third.

Hollow and sand interior

(*15-16*) Hollow and sand the bowl.

Visually check duplicates

A final check against the original "model" bowl confirms consistency.

Reverse-chuck, remove spigot

The bowl is reverse-mounted on the chuck, now held in expansion mode, to remove the spigot and finalize the bottom.

MY JOURNEY TO NATURAL FINISHES

Jim Sannerud

Photos by M. Baxley/Bear Witness Media, except where otherwise noted.

Wouldn't it be better if you could trust that a finishing product was truly safe to use from start to finish, not just after it is fully cured? Firsthand experience opened my eyes to a harsh reality: The marketing labels on commercially available finishes—*natural, safe for the environment, green*—are not to be taken at face value and often untrue. In this article, I'll share the journey that led me to this perspective, the research I've done, and how my wife Mary and I carefully choose safe and natural products in both our woodworking business, Sannerud Studios, and in our daily lives.

Firsthand experience

When I began working in cabinet shops in the 1980s, safe practices concerning chemical exposure were far from what they are today. Back then, we sprayed lacquer without wearing a respirator, and lacquer thinner was our go-to cleaner for glue overspray on countertops, applied barehanded. This routine exposure to toxic chemicals—through both inhalation and skin contact—was simply part of the job. According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), symptoms of toluene exposure, one of the chemicals found in lacquer thinner, worsen with increased exposure. Over time, this took a toll on me; today, even being near an open container of lacquer thinner makes me lightheaded.

Consumer concern about health, environment, and safety has prompted manufacturers to use minimal or vague labeling. Terms such as *natural*, *environmentally friendly*, or *food safe when cured* are commonly used but rarely offer the full picture. As an example, there is a popular wood finish marketed as "100% organic and safe for the environment." But it turns out the product includes, among other ingredients, white spirits, which is a mixture of petroleum-derived products like mineral spirits or turpentine substitutes. For most of us, "100% organic" conjures up images of natural, nontoxic materials—not petrochemical-based substances with environmental and health risks.

By sharing knowledge and encouraging informed choices, we can all work toward practices that minimize harm to both our health and the environment—without compromising the quality and beauty of the woodwork we so proudly create.

SYMPOSIUM DEMONSTRATOR IN SAINT PAUL!

Jim Sannerud will be a demonstrator at AAW's International Woodturning Symposium in Saint Paul, Minnesota, June 12-15, 2025, where he will share his wealth of experience with attendees. Don't miss this chance to learn from Jim, live and in person! For the latest details, visit aawsymposium.org.

Origin stories

I've always been fascinated by origin stories—our roots and how they shape us. This curiosity has deeply influenced my creative practice, leading me to questions like: *Who were the first woodturners? What did the first chairs look like?*

My interest in history, particularly the Second Industrial Revolution (1870–1914), has shaped much of my thinking about materials and methods. This period marked a turning point when synthetic chemicals began to emerge, replacing earlier, more traditional products. Understanding these historical shifts has given me a valuable perspective on how materials and processes have evolved, which continues to inspire questions about how we choose and use the substances in our work today.

In 2015, while studying in Northern Europe, I encountered homes, furniture, and wooden bowls painted with vibrantly pigmented linseed oil paints. This practice demonstrated that natural materials could be functional, durable, and beautiful, sparking a deeper appreciation for traditional methods. During that time, I visited the Maihaugen Museum in Lillehammer, Norway, an open-air museum showcasing rural life from the Middle Ages through the 20th century. The museum vividly illustrated the evolution of homes and farms—from the smoke-filled medieval house with its central firepit and lack of windows, to the painted interiors and decorated furniture of the 18th and 19th centuries. By the 20th century, homes featured vibrant, colorful designs that surpassed anything I had imagined.

One moment from that immersive experience stands out. In the 1930s kitchen of the Olsengården house, I met a costumed interpreter—Mrs. Olson—who was mopping the floor. The room was filled with the fresh, fragrant aroma of a pine forest, and I felt completely transported. Curious, I asked her about the scent. Smiling, she brought out a bottle of Gronnsåpe, explaining that it was a pine-sap-derived turpentine-based cleaner.

That simple moment, steeped in the senses, deepened my appreciation for the ingenuity and beauty of natural materials and traditional practices. That moment made me reflect on how people once made their own cleaners—or bought ones crafted from simple, natural ingredients. It was a reminder of a time when natural materials were central to daily life, from cleaning products to finishes. I couldn't help but wonder why we moved away from simpler, chemical-free solutions.

I've made a conscious decision to eliminate petrochemical-derived finishes from both my creative practice and my daily life.

My curiosity led me to research the rich history of natural finishes. For example, during the Song Dynasty in China, tung oil was used to waterproof wooden boats—a practice still relevant today. Milk paint, made from casein (milk protein), lime, and pigment, dates back an astonishing 49,000 years.

I began collecting historic books on finishes, including one from 1854. These texts confirmed what I'd suspected: most natural finishes, whether from centuries ago or today, are based on linseed oil, tung oil, or other similar oils. Their enduring popularity makes sense—they're effective, sustainable, beautiful, and even smell good.

The more I learned, the more determined I became to embrace these materials in my own work and life. It was a lightbulb moment: I needed to fully explore these natural finishes, not just for my creative projects, but as a way to live more intentionally and sustainably. My experiences have transformed how I think about materials. Over the past year, I've made a conscious decision to eliminate petrochemical-derived finishes from both my creative practice and my daily life. In our woodworking business, we use only organic, safe, natural finishes for bowls, furniture, and other handmade items.

Collecting pine sap for natural turpentine, or 100% pure gum spirits of turpentine.

Photo: Dorothea Lange, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Case in point

During a recent remodel of our home, I used organic finishes on high-wear surfaces like kitchen cabinets and wood countertops. For low-wear areas, such as the white pine wall and ceiling paneling, I chose to leave the wood unfinished. Even the exterior pine board-on-board siding of our house is untreated—demonstrating that living sustainably doesn't mean sacrificing beauty or function.

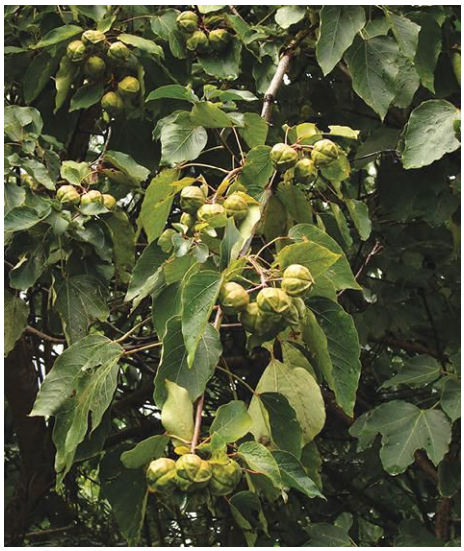
Through this journey, I've come to view traditional practices not as outdated but as deeply relevant to modern creativity, health, and sustainability. These methods honor our roots while providing meaningful and effective solutions for the future. What became clear to me is that the answers I sought lay in the natural finishes and colors I ▸

was already working with. Researching historical practices and experimenting in my own work revealed that the materials I was looking for had always been there—rooted in traditional practices.

I have also confirmed that many finishes and paints marketed as "natural" or "safe" contain potentially harmful ingredients. By thoroughly researching and testing products, I developed a framework for evaluating finishes and paints based on three key criteria: safety, functionality, and longevity. This framework has allowed me to make informed choices that align with my values and enhance my work.

I won't say that these natural/organic finishes are more durable or long-lasting than pre-catalyzed lacquers or polyurethanes. But I will say that I don't leave the studio with headaches or feeling dizzy. I feel good making choices that don't adversely affect my health, the health of my family and clients, or the health of the people who manufacture toxic petrochemical-based finishes and the communities where their factories operate. I also know that what I'm doing is the best I can do for the environment in my practice.

My dream is that we all move toward using safe, nontoxic products and therefore limit the risks of exposing ourselves and the environment to harmful chemicals, while still having beautiful, lasting results. Mrs. Olson, at the museum, was onto something.



Tung oil is naturally derived from the fruit of the tung tree.

Photo: Tatiana Gerus (Brisbane, Australia), via Wikimedia Commons

Use natural finishes. Implement safe practices. Become your own best expert!

Reading Safety Data Sheets

Safety Data Sheets (SDSs) are designed to provide detailed information about the chemicals in a product, and OSHA requires all chemical products have an SDS. However, even these documents can be misleading and difficult to decipher. For example, a common chemical found in turpentines is listed as "(1S)-2,6,6-Trimethylbicyclo[3.1.1] hept-2-ene." At first glance, it looks like something I don't want to use. But I really don't know what it is, so I took it a step further and went to the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Institute of Standards and Technology website. I still don't know what it is.

Since OSHA is the governing body requiring the availability of SDSs, I called them, but they couldn't give me any information either and simply suggested I contact the manufacturer. The manufacturer said that certain items are proprietary and I should call Chemtrek, a company that helps manufacturers comply with industry standards. At that point, I gave up and decided not to use any product containing that ingredient.

OSHA does offer a free training tutorial, "Understanding GHS Safety Data Sheets," which "Explains the GHS [Globally Harmonized System] format for Safety Data Sheets (SDSs) adopted by OSHA when they revised their hazard communication standard in 2012." You can view this training video at tiny.cc/SDStraining (URL is case-sensitive).

Know your products

Solvents

- **Industrial-grade turpentine**: Purchased from your local home center, this turpentine is *not* 100% pure gum spirits of turpentine, despite its label's claims. It will have residual or added chemicals in it. This type of turpentine originates from the paper and pulp industry where extracting turpentine from wood fibers is a chemical process.

True milk paint comes in powder form and must be mixed with water.

- **Natural turpentine**: Natural turpentine, or 100% pure gum spirits of turpentine, is derived from the oleoresin (essentially tree sap) of pine trees. The oleoresin is collected by making a scar on the tree that allows the natural resin to slowly ooze out. The resin is collected and distilled, and the result is pure natural turpentine. Your nose knows. Home center turpentine stinks like, well, turpentine, and natural turpentine smells like a pine forest.
- **D-limonene**: D-limonene is a colorless, oily liquid with a light, citrusy scent. It is used in fragrances, green cleaning products, and other applications. The oil is extracted from citrus fruit rinds either by mechanically cold pressing or through distillation.
- **Denatured alcohol**: This is pure alcohol with methanol added to make it poisonous to drink. Thus, it is not regulated and can be sold without a liquor license.
- **Alcohol**: Pure grain alcohol can be used as a substitute for denatured alcohol for cleaning or dissolving shellac flakes.
- **Mineral spirits**: Without splitting hairs, mineral spirits, paint thinner, white spirits, and odorless mineral spirits are essentially all in the same family. They are petrochemical-based products, and we do not use them in our studio.

Penetrating oils

- **Tung oil**: Tung oil is produced by pressing the fruit of the tung, or China wood, tree. It has an amber color and hardens upon exposure to air.
- **Linseed oil (raw)**: Linseed oil, also known as flaxseed oil or flax oil (in its edible form), is a yellowish oil obtained from the dried seeds of the flax plant. The oil is extracted through a mechanical process. Raw linseed oil sometimes can take forever to dry and may seem not to dry at all.
- **Linseed oil (boiled; home center)**: Boiled linseed oil from your local home center contains petroleum-based chemicals and metallic driers.
- **Linseed oil (boiled organic)**: Purified boiled linseed oil is a refined, cold-pressed linseed oil with a dark amber color and will dry easily to form a protective surface finish.
- **Walnut oil**: Walnuts are mechanically pressed to extrude the oil, which is then filtered and heat-treated to remove the protein that causes allergic reactions.
- **Sunflower oil**: When I taught woodturning in Ukraine, I learned about the local finishing process for wooden bowls. They place a bowl, turned from green wood, in a large kettle filled with hot sunflower oil. The bowl is left there until it stops bubbling, at which point the moisture in the wood has been displaced and the oil has penetrated the pores. I can't say whether the oil turns rancid or affects the flavor of food. But I *can* say it looks very nice, as it warms up the color of the wood and leaves a nice satin sheen.
- **Mineral oil**: This is a colorless, orderless liquid that is a byproduct of crude oil production. It does not polymerize. At best, mineral oil is a temporary color enhancer for wood. It does not offer much else, despite the claims on labels and countless YouTubers proclaiming they have found the greatest new wood finish. There are many products sold as butcher block, cutting board, and wooden bowl finishes that are 100% pure mineral oil. I can't say with certainty whether they are truly food safe, so we don't use it in our shop.

Topical finishes

- **Shellac**: Shellac comes from the secretion of the lac bug found on trees in India and Thailand. Traditionally, the lac is scraped off the trees and heated over a fire in fabric tubes. The fabric filters the liquid, and while the lac is still warm, it is stretched onto large sheets. The lac is then broken into flakes after cooling. Today, lac is harvested, heated, and then hydraulically forced through filters to clean it before cooling into flakes.
- **Beeswax**: This is a naturally occurring wax produced in the hives of honeybees. I use a purified and pelletized form called pearls, which is easy to melt. Studies continually show that yellow and white beeswax offer no toxicological concerns.
- **Urushi, or Japanese, lacquer**: This product is made from the sap of the lacquer tree. We do not use urushi lacquer in our shop, but it is worth mentioning because of its natural origins, durability, and long history of use. Note that urushi can cause a severe allergic reaction for some people. ▸

The author uses 100% pure gum spirits of turpentine as part of his commitment to applying only natural, safe finishes.

Some natural finishes can be applied with bare hands.

Colorants

- **Milk paint**: Milk paint is made from simple, natural ingredients: limestone, earth pigments, and casein. True milk paint comes only in a powdered form and must be mixed with water prior to use. Some premixed "milk paint" products come in liquid form, but they are actually acrylic-based paints and don't offer the same characteristics. True milk paint has depth and character, and its durability is unmatched (like a coating of cement on the wood surface).
- **Earth pigments**: Earth pigments are naturally occurring minerals and clay deposits that artists have used in paints for thousands of years: mix it with oils or into milk paint.

Our favorite finishing recipes

Following are a few finishing recipes we use in our woodworking business on a regular basis. Each wood species has different characteristics, so don't expect just one finish to work well on all woods. Experiment with your own ratios, and always make test samples.

Safety Note: Linseed oil, turpentine, and tung oil are flammable. Spread out wet rags and applicators outdoors until completely dry before disposal. Rags and applicators still wet with these finishing products (and other oil-based products) can spontaneously combust.

- **A simple finish for bowls, cutting boards, and treenware**: Mix pure tung oil and 100% pure gum spirits of turpentine in a 1:1 ratio. Apply subsequent coats for a richer build by reducing the amount of turpentine.
- **For furniture and cabinetry (also works great over milk paint)**: First coat: pure tung oil and 100% pure gum spirits of turpentine, mixed in a 1:1 ratio. Second through fourth coats for a richer look, use just 100% pure tung oil, no diluting.
- **An oil and wax paste finish**: 3 cups of 100% pure tung oil, 3 Tbsp of 100% pure gum spirits of turpentine, and 1½ cups of beeswax. For the second and third coats, apply with your bare hands or with a coarse lint-free rag. Wipe off any excess, wait 24 hours, then apply another coat. To mix, pour the oil, turpentine, and a large pinch of beeswax into a saucepan. Heat on medium low until the beeswax melts. Slowly add ¾ cup of beeswax and stir until dissolved. Repeat with remaining wax. Remove from heat and let cool into a paste wax. ■

Sannerud Studios is a husband and wife team—Jim and Mary Sannerud—who work with metal, wood, and fiber, creating sculpture, furniture, turned bowls, and textiles for the home. They share a studio near Grand Marais, Minnesota, that has expansive, inspirational views of Lake Superior. For more, visit sannerudstudios.com.

Resource list

Following is a list of products we use in Sannerud Studios. My research confirms that the companies listed sell what they advertise. I have spoken with most of the owners and can assure you they are committed to providing safe, natural products.

- **Tung oil**: Tallahassee Tung Oil (tallahasseetungoil.com); the only tung oil grown and produced in the USA
- **Linseed oil (raw)**: Viking Sales (solventfreepaint.com); I buy the majority of my raw linseed oil here, as Viking Sales grows and produces it in the USA
- **Linseed oil (boiled organic)**: (sagerestorations.com); for mixing with earth pigments or using straight, I prefer Allbäck Purified Boiled Linseed Oil. Grown and produced in Sweden
- **100% pure gum spirits of turpentine**: Creekwood Naturals (creekwoodnaturals.com); made in the USA
- **D-limonene**: (alliancechemical.com); food-grade, organic
- **Beeswax pearls**: Bulk Apothecary (bulkapothecary.com)
- **Milk paint**: Old Fashioned Milk Paint Company (milkpaint.com); I love this product and have used it for twenty years
- **Earth pigments**: (earthpigments.com); an extensive variety of earth pigments and a DIY library
- **Variety of finishing products**: Heritage Natural Finishes (heritagenaturalfinishes.com)
- **Heat-treated walnut oil**: Mahoney's Finishes (bowlmakerinc.com)
- **Soft Wax 2.0**: Anarchist's Daughter (etsy.com/shop/AnarchistDaughter)

Fishing for Inspiration: Evolution of an Idea

Don Frank

History

I recently retired from running a full-time fish taxidermy studio. For the last forty-two years, I specialized in fish and fish replicas, and for a ten-year period, I enjoyed carving wood in my spare time, primarily making fish. In the 1990s, I created a series of replica world-record-sized fish, carved from wood in 3D habitats for Johnny Morris, the owner of Bass Pro Shops. Those carvings were realistically detailed and painted, so most viewers don't realize they are in wood. Those commissions are on display in a huge wildlife museum in Springfield, Missouri.

With young children, I quickly found I had no spare time and gradually quit woodcarving. Over the next couple of decades, I dabbled in other artistic pursuits as time would allow, such as bronze sculpture.

I began woodturning about eight years ago as a hobby; I was burned out and needed an outlet that had nothing to do with fish. For several years, I enjoyed the complete freedom of putting a block of wood on the lathe without any plans or idea of what the finished piece was going to look like. It was like a breath of fresh air—no plans, no rules, just complete freedom. As my skills improved, I paid attention to what other turners were doing in the form of embellishments and paint and began to enjoy branching out a bit.

Initial inspiration

For anyone who strives to be artistic, inspiration is sometimes the most difficult part of the process. Usually, you just have to wait for the lightbulb to go on in your head. A few years ago, my wife and I and some friends made a trip to Bonaire, a small island near Aruba. We snorkeled in the warm waters, watching the ribbons of colorful fish below us snake through the coral. A lightbulb moment happened, and that led to my first fish vessel, *The Reef*. When I returned home, I turned a tall hollow form and cut and carved the shapes of several fish and coral in the sides with some see-through areas.

While I was working on that piece, I happened to discover the work of Gordon Pembridge, an amazing artist and woodturner in New Zealand. Gordon is originally from South Africa, and many of his turnings are thin hollow forms intricately pierced and painted with African wildlife. His painting and attention to detail are remarkable, and he paints the *inside* of his turnings so that the colors show through the holes he has created by piercing. The effect is quite stunning. (*See D Wood's February 2013* AW *article, "Gordon* ▸

An early inspiration

The Reef, 2019, Hackberry, acrylic paint, 18" × 8" (46cm × 20cm)

Pembridge: Capturing Human/Nature," vol 28, no 1, page 59.)

Seeing Gordon's work caused a second lightbulb moment for me, and I realized I could add a bluish interior to improve the overall look. I used metal reactive paints to create the blue/green water effect in the center of the vessel. In retrospect, that first reef fish piece seems a little crude and clunky to me, but it was the first spark, or indication, that I could combine my woodcarving and woodturning skills to have a little fun with fish subjects.

Refining the effect

Bitterroot Grand Slam, 2019, Sycamore, acrylic paint, metal reactive patinas, 9" × 8" (23cm × 20cm)

An evolving idea

My second attempt was a similar-shaped vessel to what Gordon makes. I turned it thin and carved several species of trout swimming in a circle so that you got a different view as the piece was rotated. Again, I used metal reactive paints for the interior and upper rim and it worked quite well. However, I felt that this piece, *Bitterroot Grand Slam*, came too close to imitating Gordon's already-established style. I needed to find a slightly different twist.

Then when I was fishing a farm pond for bluegill, I had yet another lightbulb moment. Beautiful lily pads adorned the pond surface, and I got the idea to bring individual lily pads out well past the edge of the turned vessel. I roughed out the shape from a fresh piece of basswood (linden) from a tree I had recently cut down. I hollowed the vessel from a small hole but drilled a second hole off to the side so I could do a better job of keeping the thickness of the top uniform all the way to the interior edge of the vessel shape. The sidewall thickness of the vessel and lily pad surface were turned thin and uniform.

Using cutout patterns, I worked out the placement and spacing of the fish. I tried to ensure that any void in the front would align with a fish or group of fish on the backside so that the interior bluish/green color would simulate water. *The Loafers* was the first of the fish projects that I was actually satisfied with. The lily pad surface created a waterline, and because it overlapped the edge of the vessel, the

The Loafers Process

During turning, a wide rim was reserved for the lily pads. The circular form resulting from the lathe adds a sense of motion to the carved and expertly painted fish.

The Loafers, 2022, Basswood, acrylic paint, metal reactive patinas, 13" × 12" (33cm × 30cm)

composition seemed to work visually. The goal was to make these fish vessels from a single piece of wood, with nothing added.

The final piece shown here, *The Eddy*, was conceived while fishing the Bitterroot River in Southwest Montana. A friend has a place on the river, and we fly fished for rainbow and brown trout for a few days. While we were pulled over in the drift boat one day eating a sandwich, I looked at the ripples the river made where a small driftwood branch stuck up through the surface. Another lightbulb moment!

I turned *The Eddy* from a block of sycamore. It had to be a very odd-shaped turning in order to have the wood needed to create the carved form. I decided to make an upper "tube," knowing that the vast majority of that material would be cut away to create a small protruding branch. Most of the rest of the piece would also be cut away. I kept the river surface area thick so I'd have enough wood to remove. I created a small dry fly resting in the slack water, or eddy, just behind the branch—the exact place you would want to gently drop a fly onto the surface while fishing. The fish were realistically painted using acrylic paints, and the water surface was created using metal reactive paints.

All four of these pieces reside in private collections. The last two were recently purchased by the same person. I suppose I will have to come up with a fish design to keep for myself. I'm just patiently waiting for another lightbulb moment. ■

Don Frank is a two-time world-champion fish taxidermist living in Missouri. After forty-two years of being self-employed, he retired and now spends most of his time turning wood or running his sawmill. Don can be reached on the AAW forum, messaged through Facebook, or emailed at dfstudios@gmail.com.

The Eddy, 2023, Sycamore, acrylic paint, metal reactive patinas, 15" × 9" (38cm × 23cm)

The Eddy Process

Because the author's goal was to make all of his fish vessels from a single piece of wood, each element had to be predetermined during the turning phase.

ART LIESTMAN'S PUZZLING CREATIONS

Craig Edelbrock

Photos by Kenji Nagai except where noted.

Art Liestman is a puzzling woodturner. He is widely known for his puzzle illusions where the surface of the vessel looks like a jigsaw puzzle, but not quite completed. The missing pieces draw attention immediately and create a twinge of anxiety due to our deep human desire for closure. Liestman often eases our minds by adding two or three pieces strewn around the base of the vessel. But sooner or later we realize there are more holes to fill than pieces provided, and our anxiety starts to build again.

Art gained notoriety in 2001, when he created his first puzzle-illusion vessels. After shaping the outside of the vessel, he would drill into the blank somewhat arbitrarily in several places before hollowing the form. Predrilling allowed him to check the wall thickness at multiple locations as the piece was hollowed. Moreover, holes scattered around the vase dictated where the missing pieces had to be.

To Art, much of creativity arises from problem-solving. Imposing constraints on yourself leads to problems that require creative solutions. Rather than laying out the entire puzzle design beforehand, missing pieces and all, he forces the issue by drilling holes first. He carves out the missing pieces, then he burns in the outlines of the other pieces one at a time until the surface of the three-dimensional form is filled. This results in a more convincing illusion that the work comprises interlocking puzzle pieces.

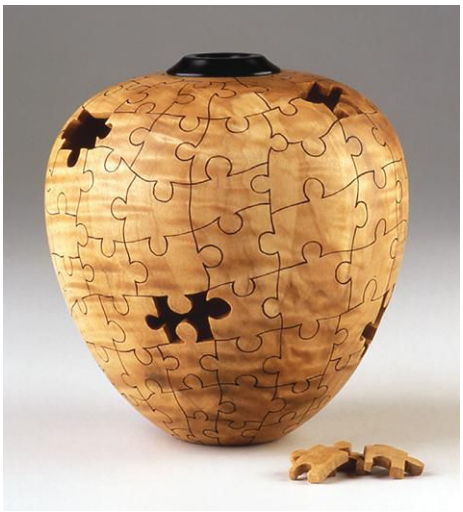
Photo: Andi Wolfe

Liestman revels in being a trickster and has puzzled us in surprising and confounding ways with many whimsical creations that, at least at first glance, could not possibly come from a lathe—but they do. He readily admits that he wants to make wooden objects on a lathe that do not look turned or even look like wood!

Therming

Some of Liestman's most puzzling artworks involve therming. Although therming dates back to the 1700s, the method is not widely known. Most turners today are familiar with multiaxis turning, where the axis of rotation is altered one or more times to create complex forms that depart from the simple circular limitations of regular spindle turning. But no matter how many times the axis is changed, it is always *within* the turning blank. With therming, the blank lies entirely *outside* of the axis of rotation.

As he explains in his article, "Beyond Round: Therming" (April 2010 *American Woodturner*, vol 25, no 2, page 48), therming involves a jig that holds two or more blanks—typically square spindle blanks—outside the axis of rotation. Mounted in this way, only the exposed face of each blank is cut as the jig rotates, and the resulting cuts are minor arcs of a circle. The jig holds the blank a distance away from the axis, thus increasing the effective radius of the cuts compared to a blank mounted between centers. As a counterexample, a 2"- (5cm-) square spindle blank



Luck of the Draw, 2004, Quilted bigleaf maple, pyrography, wipe-on polyurethane, 7" × 5⅝" (18cm × 14cm)

Therming jig

Art demonstrating the use of a therming jig, Portland, Oregon, 2024. The jig holds the blank a distance away from the central axis, thus increasing the effective radius of the cuts. Mounting one blank would create imbalance, so at least two are required, even if one is discarded.

Photo: Andi Wolfe

could normally be turned to create a cylinder with a 2"-diameter. When the blank is held in a fixed position a few inches away from the axis of rotation, only one face will be cut, and the result will be only part of a larger circle.

After cutting the first face, the blanks are repositioned in the jig (i.e., rotated so a different face is exposed). Repeating the process for all four sides can produce complex forms in which the four turned sides of a piece meet at sharp angles—something that would be extremely difficult to do in regular spindle turning.

The wooden teapot *Freydis* was created by therming. Each of the four sides taper from bottom to top and are slightly convex horizontally. The resulting four-sided piece was mounted between centers, a tenon was cut from extra wood at the bottom, and the blank was remounted in a scroll chuck for hollowing. Add a top, a handle, and a "spout" and *voilà*—a wooden teapot!

Not satisfied to simply use an ancient turning technique, Art pushed therming even further. The teapot *Kadlin* adds another twist—literally. Not only do the sides of the pot taper towards the top (like *Freydis*), but they are also slightly twisted. This can be seen by comparing the convex curve of the bottom of the right side of the teapot, to the curve at the top. This twisting appearance was achieved by positioning the blank in the therming jig at an angle to the axis of rotation when shaping each of the four sides. The result is that the piece appears to both taper and twist from the bottom to the top.

Lost wood

Art has explored another lathe technique that produces somewhat confounding results. In the lost wood process, three slabs of wood are glued together, turned, and then separated. The middle slab is discarded and the outer two are glued together, resulting in a piece that is football shaped in cross section. As Art explains in his article, "Beyond Round: The Lost Wood Process" (August 2012 *American Woodturner*, vol 27, no 4, page 29), if you resaw one thick piece of wood down the middle to use for the two outer slabs, and then carefully align ▸

Kadlin, 2009, Bigleaf maple burl, ebony, acrylic ink, wipe-on polyurethane, 4½" × 6" × 2" (11cm × 15cm × 5cm)

Freydis, 2015, Bigleaf maple burl, ebony, acrylic ink, wipe-on polyurethane, 5" × 5⅝" × 2" (13cm × 14cm × 5cm)

the pieces when gluing, you can match the grain of the two outer pieces. Hiding the glue line in this way might not be necessary, of course, if the final piece is to be colored or textured. *Lidded Box* clearly shows the ovoid shape that results from the lost wood technique. Another lost wood creation is *TeaPod*, which in Art's whimsical world is an evolutionary ancestor of the teapot. It appears to be crawling out of a primordial sea.

Ever the trickster, Art has realized that if the lost wood process is used to make hollow forms, and the entry hole is totally within the middle sacrificial piece, the final product will be hollow but with no opening! The pair of whimsical bigleaf maple pieces, *Reboot and Restart*, were created in this way. First hollowed on the lathe through the bottom, the tops of the separate halves were shaped after the lost wood was removed. Reassembling the halves results in a lightweight hollow form without an entry hole. (Don't buy a used car from this guy: It might not be what it seems.)

Background

What compels Art to push beyond the conventional limits of woodturning? Born and raised on the edge of the Great Plains in Shawnee, Kansas, he grew up exposed to art and music—his grandmother was a piano teacher and painter. Art learned to play piano, percussion instruments, and double bass, and he still plays electric bass in a swing band. His father and both grandfathers held different jobs, all involving physical skills and mechanical abilities.

Art developed a strong sense of identity within his family and an expansive and inquisitive view of the world. He loves exploration, experiment, and discovery. By means of personality and intellect, he roams the landscapes of ideas, art, music, and other cultures. When something catches his interest, he dives deeply into it. He applied these wide-ranging interests and compulsion toward mastery to graph theory and computer networks, which became his career as a university professor. At the same time, he delved into vastly different types of music from rock, jazz, and jazz fusion, to world music, Indonesian gamelan, and African drumming. These broad interests and deeper dives have unquestionably influenced his creations in wood. The results have been spectacular—and often puzzling.

Reboot and Restart, 2018, Bigleaf maple burl, acrylic ink, wipe-on polyurethane, Each: 8" × 3⅜" × 2½" (20cm × 9cm × 6cm)

Lidded Box, 2011, Bigleaf maple burl, wipe-on polyurethane, 3½" × 2½" × 2" (9cm × 6cm × 5cm)

TeaPod, 2011, Bigleaf maple burl, walnut bendable hardwood, acrylic ink, wipe-on polyurethane, 3½" × 8½" × 4½" (9cm × 22cm × 11cm)

Entwined Towers, 2023, Quilted bigleaf maple, basswood, flame-texturing, pyrography, acrylic paint, Each: 6½" × 3" × 2" (17cm × 8cm × 5cm)

Music related to his start in woodturning when he entered a local woodworking contest to make something entirely from a single eight-foot-long two-by-four. In true Liestman style, he designed and built a fully functional programmable automated xylophone, which required turned parts. His brother dubbed it *Hunka Hunka Churnin' Wood*, and he won first prize. From there, as Sherlock Holmes would say, the game was afoot. Art was hooked on woodworking, and he quickly gravitated to woodturning and methods of surface texturing, coloring, and finishing.

Influences

Many people contributed to Art's artistic development, including the late Frank Sudol. "Frank's demos were a lightbulb moment for me," says Liestman. "He inspired me to go beyond the standard turned object and put more personal meaning in my work." This is one example of where Art learned far more from a demonstration than what was being taught. His goal has been to learn not only *how* master woodturners work but *why*. He has therefore sought to glean insights about each teacher's attitude, approach, and aesthetics, as well as their motivations and larger artistic goals.

A lesson from Christian Burchard (profiled in this journal in June 2023 (vol 38, no 3, page 46) permanently altered Liestman's approach—namely, not to rigidly impose a design but let the piece of wood have some say in the final product. Art credits Jacques Vesery for encouraging him to research, experiment, and develop his own surface treatments using pyrography, acrylic paints, and techniques for texturing and coloring off the lathe. Clay Foster taught him the important sculptural concept of *gesture*, where a static object appears to have been caught in motion. Achieving that dynamic appearance is often Art's goal in his sculptures. Lastly, Art regards Michael Hosaluk as a fountain of creative ideas and solutions. "Mike has great depth of knowledge and often thinks laterally," says Liestman. Because of Hosaluk's wide-ranging experience in woodworking, Art has often found solutions to technical and design problems in Michael's work. Art readily credits these mentors and many others for providing inspiration and advice throughout his woodworking career.

Vertical sculptures

Art has made a variety of vertical forms using different turning techniques and surface treatments. His early *Archaic Tower* was turned on a therming jig. After therming the four sides, the top and bottom halves were separated, hollowed, and then glued back together. The illusion of ancient, stacked stone layers was achieved by sawing horizontal lines up and down the length of each side, then breaking out random chunks of wood with a screwdriver. This result is a random surface of jagged wood across each horizontal band that looks like deteriorating stone.

Other thermed sculptures by Liestman include Dr. Seuss-like little houses with tiny roofs and Rapunzel windows. The highly figured surfaces of these whimsical creations come from burning with a propane torch, then brushing with a natural-bristle brush. With burls and other complex grain patterns, the denser areas resist burning and abrasion more than the less-dense areas. The result is a pronounced texture of ridges and valleys that can be left as is, brushed, or colored with layers of acrylic paint. ▸

One of Art's surface treatments is flame-texturing, whereby highly figured grain is burned and then brushed (and sometimes painted), accentuating differences between dense and less-dense areas.

Photo: Janis Horne

Archaic Tower, 2010, Bigleaf maple, scorching, 14" × 5" × 3½" (36cm × 13cm × 9cm)

Pieces in Art's new *Crenelated Series* are gracefully leaning castle towers, also thermed, with dry-brushed layers of acrylic paints like those used in fine-scale modeling to achieve an aged and weathered appearance.

Liestman has produced more tightly curved architectural sculptures using a technique he learned from Michael Hosaluk. In this series, a vertical form is thermed and assembled, then sawn horizontally into segments. Triangular wedges are removed from the bottoms of these segments and when reassembled, the structure has a pronounced curve. By varying the angle of the wedges, different curves can be produced. Again, the result does not look like a lathe was used in any way.

Art has made several vertical sculptures using the lost wood process that he calls the *Terpsichorean Series*. The name itself reveals Art's scholarly bent toward obscure knowledge. Terpsichore was one of the nine muses in Greek mythology. She was the patron of dance. The name is highly fitting, as these are among Liestman's most dynamic and gestural creations. They are relatively thin, gracefully curved forms that twist slightly from the bottom to the top. The sides reflect gentle compound curves, and a pair can be positioned to create yet another elegant form in the negative space between the two. Positioned in this way, they appear to be dancers in motion. David Ellsworth told Art that these pieces looked to him like maquettes for much larger public sculptures to be constructed out of metal—something that Art has not yet pursued.

Professor whimsy

Art had an academic career as a university professor, and he has continued his commitment to both research and teaching in woodturning. He is highly engaged in the woodturning community, was the founding president of the Greater Vancouver Woodturners Guild (British Columbia, Canada), and has subsequently served as an advisor. He has also served on the AAW Board of Directors. An important carryover from academia is that Art believes that research and scholarship gain most of their value when new knowledge is disseminated to others in the field. Over the last twenty-five years, Art has provided numerous workshops and demonstrations at woodturning clubs and symposia in North America and abroad. He has also taught several week-long courses at top craft schools. His teaching has typically focused on his own discoveries and developments regarding surface treatments and turning methods. Accordingly, Art has written and published articles on lesser-known turning topics, including the therming and lost wood methods.

Crenelated Towers of Oz, 2024, Quilted bigleaf maple, flame-texturing, acrylic ink, Each: 8¼" × 3" × 2" (21cm × 8cm × 5cm)

Three Houses, 2024, Bigleaf maple, basswood, scorching, pyrography, acrylic ink, Tallest: 6¼" × 3⅜" × 3" (16cm × 9cm × 8cm)

Art has often combined his scholarly and playful sides in his creations in wood. His *Dancing Men* bowls, such as *I Have a Cunning Plan*, epitomize his Professor Whimsy persona. At first glance, these look like conventional turned forms with comical stick figures cut out all around the bowl below the rim. Anyone who knows Art would suspect that there is more to the story than that. The figures originally appeared in the 1903 Sherlock Holmes short story, "The Adventure of the Dancing Men." Researching it further, Art found that it is a simple substitution code—now extended by Holmes scholars to a complete alphabet—where each figure represents a letter. Ever the puzzler, Art uses the code in his turned creations to spell out secret messages (hint: the titles of the pieces).

Among Art Liestman's most tongue-in-cheek creations are his so-called *Popcorn Bowls*. Technically, they are large enough in diameter for a serving of popcorn, but they feature only a tiny concave bowl. "Sorry Art," we might say, "These are anything but popcorn bowls." Art's reply, of course, would be that they are perfectly functional bowls that hold one piece of popcorn. Aside from his intended humor, Art wanted a broad rim to provide plenty of area for a variety of surface treatments.

Standing puzzle pieces

In recent years, Liestman has returned to his puzzle illusion by making freestanding puzzle-piece sculptures. At last, his fans can breathe a sigh of relief because those missing pieces from years ago have been found. Never mind that these freestanding sculptures are far too large to fill any voids in previous puzzle-illusion vessels. They are interesting artworks in their own right and doubtless popular among puzzle fanatics. Art makes them by using a faceplate to turn a thick shallow bowl, then cuts out the puzzle shape using a bandsaw. This gives them a slight curvature, with the convex side of the piece being the front.

Art sees these standing puzzle forms as little people, cavorting around, standing on one foot, dancing, and so forth. The surface treatments vary widely in these creations and look like anything but wood. His piece *After Throwing the Salt* is like a little sumo wrestler (salt is traditionally thrown on the mat before a sumo wrestling match). It is a puzzle piece that appears to comprise bits of different colored plastics. The piece *Go On Then* looks metallic, while *Stoney* looks like, you guessed it, stone. Some of the other surface effects that Art has achieved include steel plate armor, polished silver, gold, molten silver and gold, and black-textured cast iron. ▸

Terpsichorean Pair, 2007, Quilted bigleaf maple burl, pyrography, acrylic ink, Each: 12" × 4½" × 2" (30cm × 11cm × 5cm)

(*Left*) *Dancing Men Bowl: I Have a Cunning Plan*, 2009, Bigleaf maple burl, wipe-on polyurethane, 2½" × 3¾" (6cm × 10cm)

(*Right*) *Stone Popcorn Bowl*, 2021, Bigleaf maple burl, flame-texturing, acrylic ink, heavy-body acrylic paint, wipe-on polyurethane, 2" × 7½" (5cm × 19cm)

After Throwing the Salt, 2006, Bigleaf maple burl, pyrography, acrylic ink, 12" × 12¾" × 2½" (30cm × 32cm × 6cm)

Go On Then, 2021, Bigleaf maple burl, flame-texturing, Chroma-Gilt™ metallic paste, 6" × 6½" × 2½" (15cm × 17cm × 6cm)

Stoney, Bigleaf maple burl, flame-texturing, acrylic paint, wipe-on polyurethane, 11" × 11¾" × 3½" (28cm × 30cm × 9cm)

Encrusted Puzzle-Illusion Vessel, 2024, Bigleaf maple burl, flame-texturing, pyrography, acrylic ink, soft-body acrylic paint, wipe-on polyurethane, 6" × 3⅝" (15cm × 9cm)

See the sidebar, *Art Liestman's Evocative Finishes*.

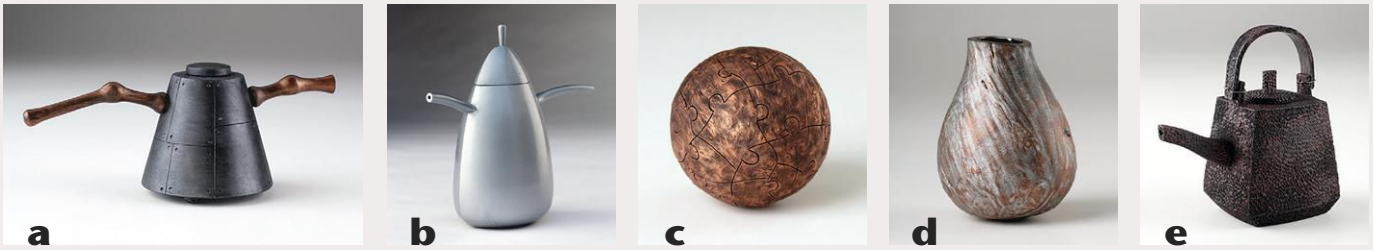
Art continues to experiment with surface treatments involving combinations and sequences of fire, bleaching, abrasion, and applying layers of color. He has also been exploring the idea of making his puzzle-illusion vessels look like prehistoric artifacts unearthed at an archeological dig, as in *Encrusted Puzzle-Illusion Vessel*. Is it partially embedded in ancient sedimentary rock? Or hatching from a prehistoric dinosaur egg?

No one knows what Art Liestman will pull out of his trickster's hat in the future. He probably does not know himself. Even if he does, no trickster wants to reveal his next tricks. We can assume he will draw inspiration from an extremely wide range of sources, some of which will be rather arcane. The only certainty is that he will continue to tease, puzzle, confound, and delight us with what he can do with wood and a lathe. ■

For more, visit Art's website, artliestman.com, or contact him at artliestman@shaw.ca.

Craig Edelbrock is an author and woodworker who lives in Gig Harbor, Washington. His books include Emil Milan: Midcentury Master *and* Spoons to Stir the Soul: The World of Norm Sartorius *(both published by The Center for Art in Wood, 2018 and 2022, respectively). His article on pioneering woodturner Joyce Anderson appeared in the October 2023 issue of* AW. *Craig is a member of the South Puget Sound Chapter of AAW. Follow him on Instagram, @craigedelbrock.*

Art Liestman's Evocative Finishes



Examples of surface treatments by Art Liestman: (a) steel plate armor, (b) polished silver, (c) copper, (d) molten silver and copper, and (e) hammered cast iron.

Michael Hosaluk:

2025 POP Merit Award Recipient

Albert and Tina C. LeCoff

Photo: Michel Choquette

Photo: Andi Wolfe

Each year the AAW's Professional Outreach Program (POP) awards its esteemed Merit Award to an artist who has shown exceptional development and whose artwork and creative practice have directly influenced or had a significant impact on other artists within the woodturning field. This year, this prestigious award goes to Michael Hosaluk of Saskatchewan, Canada. Learn more about the program, the Merit Award, and past recipients at tiny.cc/AAWPOP.

When you have witnessed the career of someone as creative and technically off the wall as Canadian Michael Hosaluk, it's natural to look back on how it all happened and to wonder what comes next. Betty Scarpino's February 2021 *AW* article, "What Else Can a Spindle Be? The Playful Creativity of Michael Hosaluk" (vol 36, no 1, page 44), masterfully dissects Michael's creations and mind-blowing techniques, which are often strange and mathematical, leaving viewers wondering, *How did he make that?* This article instead examines what earned Michael Hosaluk—father, teacher, student, artist, and so much more—the AAW's POP Merit Award.

True to his passion

Who we are born to is the luck of the draw. Michael grew up on a farm and spent hours in nature, learning to use his hands. He noted, "I have always loved making things. I grew up in an environment where handwork was a way of life, in a culture that was vibrant and colorful, where my imagination could run rampant."

Michael's schoolteachers saw his potential and set him loose in the woodshop. In ninth grade, he took manual training: "They had old Delta lathes, and it was all scraping. They showed me the gouges, [but] they did exactly that! Turning was so immediate: the material, the process, and the objects. We made bowls and candlesticks. My shop teachers let me have fun on the lathe and make whatever I wanted."

It's a good thing people recognized Michael's hand/mind coordination ▸

SYMPOSIUM DEMONSTRATOR IN SAINT PAUL!

Michael Hosaluk will be a demonstrator at AAW's International Woodturning Symposium in Saint Paul, Minnesota, June 12-15, 2025, where he will share his wealth of experience with attendees. Don't miss this chance to learn from Michael, live and in person! For the latest details, visit aawsymposium.org.

Michael Hosaluk founded the ever-popular Emma collaborative event, which continues today and has inspired similar initiatives around the world. A spirit of fun and open creativity prevails. From left: Michael Hosaluk, Andy Buck, Kim Kelzer, Mark Sfirri, Russell Baldon (2018).

Photo: Laura Hosaluk

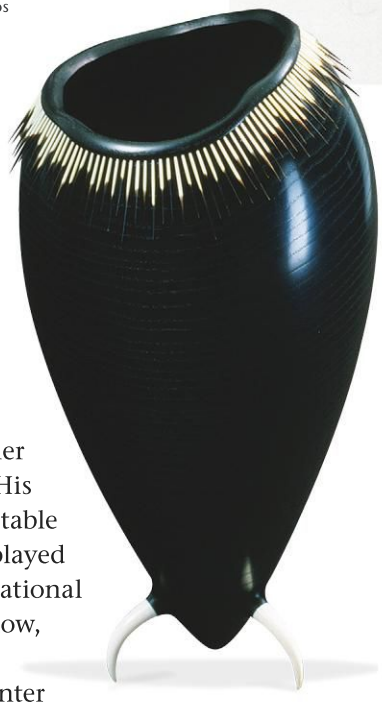
and aptitude. Although most of his friends went straight to college after high school, Michael's mother told him, "You don't need that." He went off to trade school at Kelsey Institute of Applied Arts and Sciences in 1974 and studied cabinet making and mill work. Then he started MH Cabinets and built residential and commercial cabinetry. This produced a middle-class income but never satisfied the direction Michael wanted to take. He decided to follow his passion to create unique wooden objects that excited him and gave up his commercial business to do so. When he told his wife Marilyn he was quitting MH Cabinets, she responded with encouraging support. Monetarily, their income changed to poverty level, but their lifestyle turned to gold.

Maple Burl Bowl, c. 1980, Maple burl, 3¼" × 7" (8cm × 18cm)

Photo: Grant Kernan-AKPhotos

Zap, c. 1987, ColorCore®, aluminum, maple, glass, acrylic glass, threaded rod, lacquer, 18½" × 37" (47cm × 94cm)

Photo: Eric Mitchell



Ceremony Series, c. 1987, Ebonized ash, porcupine quills, ivory, 10" × 4½" (25cm × 11cm)

Photo: Eric Mitchell

Bold expression

Michael's father influenced his woodworking career. He recalled, "I borrowed his lathe but [in return] had to do all of his turnings for furniture restoration." After reading articles in *Fine Woodworking* in the 1970s by Del Stubbs, Alan Stirt, and David Ellsworth, Michael discovered the broader world of woodturning. He received a call for entry in the mail for a 1981 exhibition, *The First North American Turned Object Show*, and two of his pieces were accepted. He and Marilyn attended the conference, and the people he met were so open and helpful that it confirmed his choice of career. He explained, "I came for the woodturning and stayed for the people."

That conference changed Michael's life. Upon returning home with a carbon steel bowl gouge, he bought a new lathe and proceeded to fill his shop with shavings. He was also inspired to venture into unconventional uses of materials such as ColorCore® (a multi-color polymer sheet) and metal. His large round metal table titled *Zap* was displayed in the 1988 International Turned Objects Show, organized by The Wood Turning Center (now The Museum for Art in Wood). The table was reviewed as "painted beyond redemption," perhaps a foretelling of the boldness in Michael's life-long body of work.

Collector David Waterbury would later comment that Michael's piece, *History of Woodturning Compressed Archives #1-Bird Bowl/Blue Bowl*, was "way ahead of whatever [anyone was] trying to think about."

Another early Hosaluk piece that stood out from the crowd was his white triangular vessel, *Tri-Cone*, which was radically different from the round-and-brown forms others were creating. *Tri-Cone* combines the intricacies of a vessel form with the rigors of furniture design. It was turned on a lathe, with wood subtracted to create triangles. The legs are attached by mortise-and-tenon joints.

Eventually, teaching became an option for Michael, and he

traveled up to three months a year. Woodturning took him around the world to share his experiences, and his journeys inspired him to tell stories through his work. He observed, "Once you develop the technical [side] of woodworking, personal content becomes the focus."

Michael loves sharing his knowledge and thrives on what he learns from others, noting that "teaching is learning; everybody knows something." In fact, his long boats of "strange fruits," such as *Bowl of Strange and Unusual Objects*, germinated from the mix and match of people he has met over the years—"all of us together but so radically different."

Community organizer

Michael's excitement for the field led him to organize Canada's first woodturning conference in 1982, which brought together woodturners from across North America. However, his involvement in community didn't start there. He had previously founded the Saskatchewan Woodworkers Guild, the first of its kind in Canada, and was active in the Saskatchewan Craft Council. He was also instrumental in forming The Furniture Society and was a founding member of the AAW.

Michael continued to organize furniture and woodturning conferences that morphed into the Emma Lake International Collaboration. Today, this biennial event is called, simply, ▶

History of Woodturning Compressed/Bird Bowl/Blue Bowl, 2018, Yellow cedar, acrylic paint, dye, copper, graphite, maple, acrylic glass, 12" × 12" × 2" (30cm × 30cm × 5cm)

Photo: John Carlano

Photo: John Carlano

(*Above*) *Tri-Cone*, 1987, Birch, maple, 6" × 10" × 10" (15cm × 25cm × 25cm)

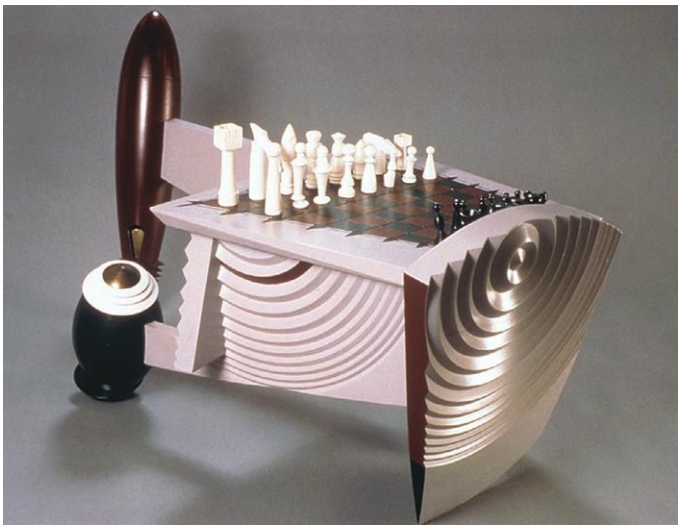
The Museum for Art in Wood Collection, Gift of the Artist

(*Left*) *Mach IV*, 1986, ColorCore®, aluminum, glass, acrylic glass, Renaissance wax, 24" × 18½" (61cm × 47cm)

The Museum for Art in Wood Museum Collection

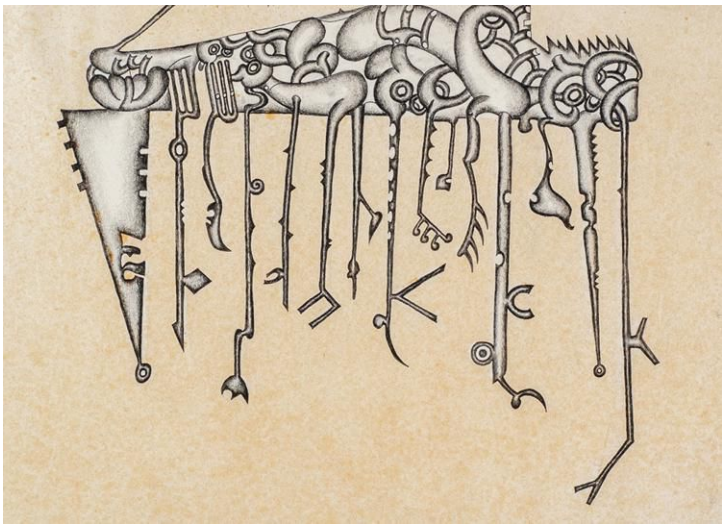
Bowl of Strange and Unusual Objects, 2019, Birch, maple, arbutus, horsehair, bronze, acrylic paint, dye, milk paint, 9" × 32" × 6" (23cm × 81cm × 15cm)

Photo: Trent Watts



Collaboration of Michael Hosaluk, Steve Loar, Mark Sfirri, and Graham Carson, *Chessed Table*, 1997, Poplar, maple, acrylic paint, 28" × 54" × 24" (71cm × 137cm × 61cm)

Photo: John Carlano



Collaboration of Michael Hosaluk and Lyonel Grant, *Finding Your Roots*, 2014, Pencil and charcoal, 24" × 36" (61cm × 91cm)

Photo: Trent Watts

Emma International Collaboration (see emmacollaboration.com). The website notes, "Every two years, one hundred artists from across the globe come together in the boreal forest of Saskatchewan to share in an experience of raw creation and open possibility." The event spurred a movement of gatherings in this format, emphasizing the sharing of knowledge where everyone is student and teacher, no hierarchy. Canadian wood artist Gord Peteran summed it up, "Emma sends a ripple that is felt globally."

Testimonials

Michael's daughter Laura said that his workshop was a constant source of play for her and her siblings, a cherished place where they could let their imaginations run wild. She reflected on the many experiences related to his career that "brought our family closer together. From demonstration trips, to visits to other artists like installing a chair in a tree at Garry Knox Bennett's studio, to welcoming students from regional and international backgrounds into our home to work alongside him, these moments fostered a unique culture. This brings to mind the concept of craft culture—the value of working with our hands to create things with care, commitment, and curiosity. I feel incredibly fortunate to have been raised by someone with such a distinct vision of the world; joy from creativity continues to inspire me."

Most recently, Laura and Michael have collaborated on bangles, which Michael turns and Laura paints.

Not surprisingly, Michael has inspired a deep reserve of other tributes that make it clear why he is receiving this year's POP Merit Award:

- **Mitch Ryerson**: "It is safe to say that Michael is a life force. His creativity and enthusiasm are without bounds, but his truly unique power, which he wields joyfully, is his ability to get other artists off their high horses and out of their ivory towers to join the fracas of genuine collaboration."
- **Dale Larson**: "Michael is one of the best demonstrators and technical turners in North America."
- **Richard Raffan:** "Michael has a formidable array of woodworking techniques to back his imagination and support his energy. He's one of the very few turners I'm always happy to watch for hours at a time."
- **Mark Sfirri:** "Michael took the idea of collaboration to a whole new level with his creation of the Emma Lake conferences. Inviting artists from around the world to convene for a weeklong event has served to greatly broaden the world of woodturning as well as that of many other media. Michael's work is a rare combination of production turning as well as ever-changing artistic output. An artist can easily stick with a series that becomes their most signature work, but to evolve and expand is to grow as a creative artist, and Michael is all about that."
- **Bonnie Klein:** "Mike's quirky imagination and enthusiasm are extremely contagious. If I wasn't already a woodturner, I would just have to give it a try after being around him. I've been fortunate to cross paths with him many times over the past twenty-five years or so. He is an inspiration and a great demonstrator."

- **Andi Wolfe:** "Michael has been an inspiration for so many of us. His playfulness in making has especially left a mark on the field of woodturning. I remember seeing his whimsical teapots for the first time, and wondering what kind of mind comes up with such a creative expression of art. After having the opportunity to interact with him at symposia, club demonstrations, and at the Emma International Collaboration, I've come to realize that his overactive imagination is who he is, and it is a privilege to see the results of his creative energy."
- **Jamie Russell:** "Mike decided that it was worthwhile to dedicate entire conferences to the free exchange of skills and knowledge, and the Emma International Collaboration was born. Mike was the catalyst and, in addition to the Craft Council, he partnered with the Windgate Foundation and the Wood Turning Center for the event. He generated enough energy in our community that folks brought all the tools we needed, two three-ton truckloads and several pickups full, to give 100 people from a wide range of disciplines from all over the world some of the most exciting creative times of their lives."
- **Gord Peteran:** "All those artists from around the world enthusiastically clamoring to join Michael repeatedly in a remote corner of Saskatchewan! ...says a lot about the man. Corralling a dedicated team around him to organize every aspect so that these conferences run smoothly, and still remain lighthearted, energetic, gracious, and searingly innovative, [he] always seemed superhuman to me."
- **Merryll Saylan:** "[When I first met Mike, he] seemed like a teenager to me. We just became friends. And we've always had fun. We set up a room for paint and texture at the early Furniture Society conferences. I remember one year, we made a load of fish blanks for people to play with. Of course, somehow I bought them all at the auction at the end. Mike has always been creative and experimental, all the things I admire in a maker."

What's next? What now?

Tragically, Michael lost his life partner Marilyn after a two-year illness. While he was her caretaker, he was not actively turning, but new work was percolating. During the pandemic, Michael and Marilyn visited a cancer clinic two or three times a week. Except for dire circumstances like this, people had stopped getting together. Michael noted that every face was covered with a mask. After acquiring permission, he took photos of people. ▸

Unusual Fruit Tables, 2002, Maple, acrylic paint, acrylic gel, hair, steel, Each: 27" × 28" × 16" (69cm × 71cm × 41cm)
Photo: Grant Kernan

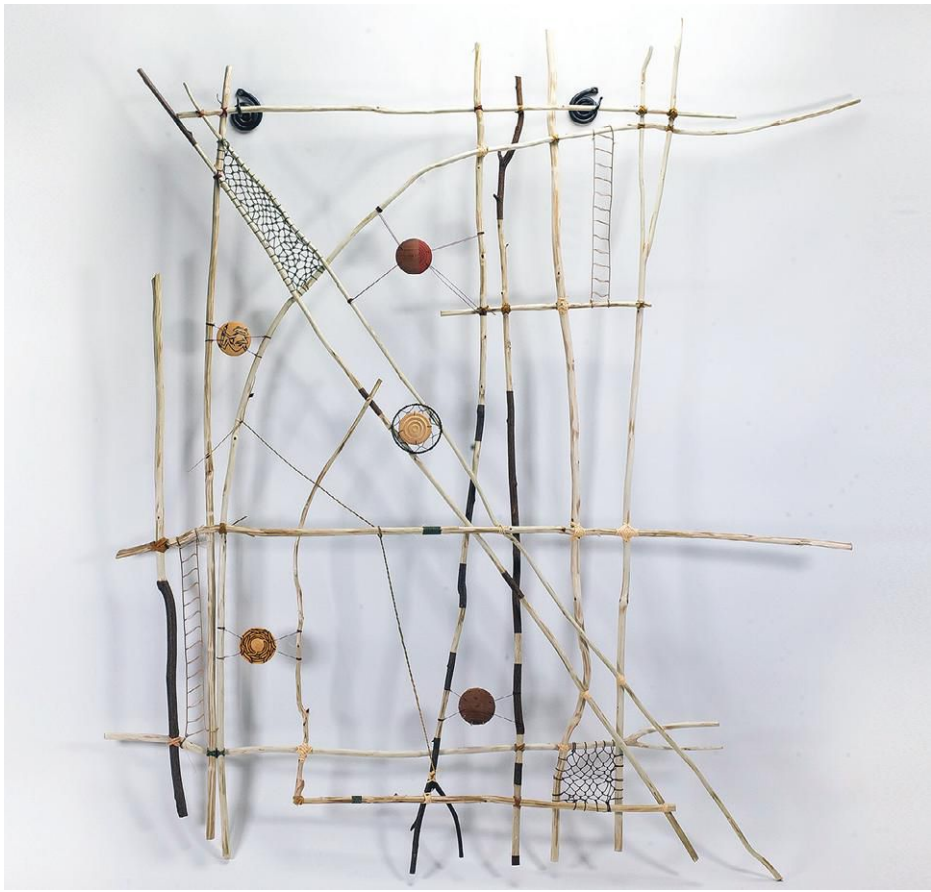
Collaboration of Michael Hosaluk and Mark Sfirri, *Trumpot*, 1996, Maple, paint, 7½" × 7" × 5" (19cm × 18cm × 13cm)
Photo: John Carlano
The Museum for Art in Wood Collection, Gift of the Artist

Tower of Babble, 2022-2024, Baltic birch plywood, acrylic paint, birch, 9½' (2.9m) tall
Photos: Trent Watts

Tribal Gathering, 1991, Elm, willow, linen thread, copper leaf, acrylic paint, beads, 20" × 8" (51cm × 20cm)

Photo: John Carlano

Yale University Art Gallery Collection, courtesy of Ruth and David Waterbury, B.A. 1958, Fund



Emma collaboration of Michael Hosaluk, Jan Hopkins, Karen Ernst, Lynn Szymanski, Eva Seidenfaden, Joan Carrigan, Lyonel Grant, Andy Buck, Wendy Naepflin, Russel Baldon, Bob Rotche, Adrian Legge, Grant Irons, and John Monteath, *Ripple*, 2024, Wood, various binding materials, found objects, steel, 1m × 1m (100cm × 100cm)

Photo: Matthew Joseph, PearFilms

Bangles are an ongoing collaboration between Michael, who turns the bangles in quantity, and his daughter Laura, who embellishes them.

His 9½'- (2.9m-) tall *Tower of Babble* is inspired by the bible story that explains the existence of different languages and cultures. Michael said the idea took a while to germinate, but the premise is, "When we all get together, we babble." He asked a bunch of people to send him a photo of their mouth. Finally, he rough-turned the tall form, then began to carve the mouths of friends from around the world. His family is on top. Toward the bottom are two carvers who Michael respects and works with, the Māori Lyonel Grant and the Tlingit Dempsey Bob. The results are contemplative and autobiographical.

A new series for Michael, created collaboratively, is *Ripple*, which maps the location of collaborations that have occurred worldwide. It is inspired by his love of maps and working with people around the world—and by the various ways different cultures depict

places and information. The first is a wall piece, but he foresees them becoming 3D sculptures and a "map" of his life history.

Patricia Kane, Friends of American Arts Curator of American Decorative Arts at Yale University Art Gallery, noted, "The Yale Art Gallery is delighted to have recently brought Michael Hosaluk's *Tribal Gathering* back to New Haven where this work was exhibited in 2002 in the exhibition *Wood Turning in North America* organized by the Gallery and the Wood Turning Center (now the Museum for Art in Wood), Philadelphia. It was chosen for the exhibition since Hosaluk was one of the leaders in the use of paint, mixed media, and found objects." Michael made *Tribal Gathering* after returning from two months teaching in Australia. While it reflects aspects of ancient cultures, it also addresses the current movement of woodturning, which has evolved into a kind of tribe of people from all over the world, connected by an incredible openness that leads to sharing and exchange.

Production turning may be the last thing you'd expect from Michael Hosaluk, given the years of colorful, impossibly playful and distinctive furniture and objects he has made. But guess again: the shavings are flying. Currently, he's turning bowls for four upcoming exhibits "to use up accumulated wood and stuff." He has made stacks of uniform bowls, most with colorful finishes. Ideally, he would like to show them as a huge pile. Then there's the multitude of bangles he turned for Laura to paint. Michael laughs, "I'm like a machine at the lathe."

Even as his production exhibits are happening, Michael is completing an atypical commission: an 11' (3.4m) table made from reclaimed fir. He also has donated all of his archival materials to a university library. And he's making and assembling a body of work to exhibit at the 2025 AAW International Symposium in Saint Paul, Minnesota, where he will receive the POP Award (visit aawsymposium.org for more).

Michael's creative practice is brimming with new ideas, adding to his prolific body of work and his legacy as an organizer, teacher, student, and collaborator. Given his talents and ingenuity, it is a mystery how he has remained so humble. It is truly a pleasure to congratulate the 2025 POP Merit awardee. ■

For more, visit michaelhosaluk.com.

Albert and Tina C. LeCoff, both trained in art and design, have been married and writing collaboratively since 1990. Work for The Museum for Art in Wood (formerly the Wood Turning Center, which Albert co-founded), inspired joint articles for Turning Points, *exhibition catalogs, and other publications covering early wood artists. Architecture, sculpture, folk art, and long-time friendships with artists are all major inspirations.*

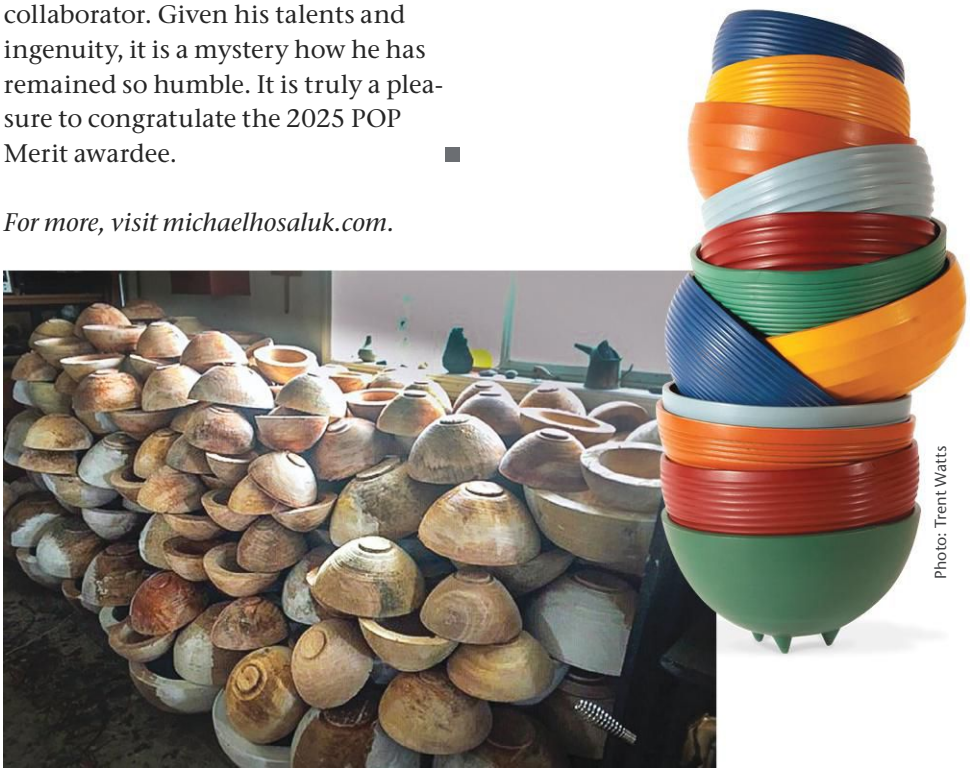


Photo: Trent Watts

These days, Michael is content to churn out beautiful functional bowls in production mode.

Photo: Trent Watts

Members' Gallery

Emma Cook, England

My first venture into woodturning was at the age of 16 on my brother's lathe, which resided in the garage. I was intrigued. Fast-forward nearly twenty-five years and woodturning has totally consumed me. I built my Tiny Turner brand through which I demonstrate, teach, and sell woodturning kits and supplies. In 2024, I became the chair of the Register of Professional Turners and was accepted by the Worshipful Company of Turners of London to become a Freeman. The journey from my parents' garage to demonstrating throughout the U.K. and Europe is mind-blowing to me, and this year marks my first turning-orientated visit to the United States (see sidebar).

Alongside woodturning, I enjoyed a brief wood-carving apprenticeship when I created (with help from my tutor) one of my proudest works, *Errol the Swamp Dragon*, a fan art piece representing a character from Sir Terry Pratchett's Discworld® novels, illustrated by Paul Kidby. I now enjoy combining both disciplines, mainly using carving as a texturing technique on my turned work.

For more, visit thetinyturner.co.uk or follow Emma on Instagram, @thetinyturner.

Errol the Swamp Dragon, 2014, European lime, Danish oil, 8" × 15" (20cm × 38cm)

Banded Bowl, 2022, Yew, leather cord, chameleon powders, microcrystalline wax, 3" × 3½" (8cm × 9cm)

Flower Series 001, Sycamore, yew, European lime, colored quartz, Danish oil, 4" × 12" (10cm × 30cm)

Cupcake Box, 2017, European lime, kingwood, wood stain gel, Swarovski crystals, Jo Sonja® opal dust, Danish oil, 4½" × 4" (11cm × 10cm)

Pumpkin Boxes, 2018, European lime, Danish oil, Each approx. 3½" × 3" (9cm × 8cm)

SYMPOSIUM DEMONSTRATOR IN SAINT PAUL!

British turner Emma Cook (The Tiny Turner) will be a demonstrator at AAW's International Woodturning Symposium in Saint Paul, Minnesota, June 12-15, 2025, where she will share her insights on a variety of topics. Don't miss this chance to learn from Emma, live and in person! For the latest details, visit aawsymposium.org.

Paint Can, 2025, Pine (paint can), basswood (paintbrush), acrylic paint, lacquer, plastic screw covers, wire handle, paper, 2½" × 2¾" (6cm × 7cm)

Carol Riley and Chris Holland, Missouri

My partner Chris and I had been retired for a couple of years and wanted to find a hobby we could do together. We decided to join our local chapter, Woodturners of Southwest Missouri, in 2023. The club project challenge for the month of January 2025 was boxes. I was always more of a wood carver than a turner and had previously carved a paintbrush that I thought would look great on top of a turned paint can box. Chris said he would work up a prototype, and he practiced on a blank of glued-up pine. I liked this initial box so well, I decided it was the one I would finish.

Donna Stewart, Manitoba, Canada

My love for working with wood began as a child, when I helped my father build a barn on our family farm after the old one was destroyed by fire. The experience stayed with me.

I took on some small furniture-building projects—futons, cradles, etc.—and then got into restoring furniture. It was when I was restoring an old piano stool (the kind with the brass claw feet) that I needed a replacement spindle and went to see a neighbour who had a small lathe. He pulled a piece of firewood from the pile and fashioned a new spindle. That was in 2005. I was hooked.

For me, woodturning is as much about the process as it is about the finished product. The words *satisfying*, *therapeutic*, and *calming* come to mind. Seeing the shavings fly off the gouge, the shape taking form, the grain popping after applying a finish—all are part of the magic.

Much of what I turn is functional. I love coming across burls and finding ways to display their unique beauty. I use local woods, primarily from trees that have been taken down for various reasons. ▶

For more, follow Donna on Instagram, @das_woodturning.

Large Poplar Burl, 2023, Poplar burl, wipe-on polyurethane, 10" × 11" (25cm × 28cm)

Undercut Textured Rim, 2024, Burr oak, pyrography, fumed with ammonia, tung oil, 2½" × 12" (6cm × 30cm)

Footed Elm Burl, 2024, Elm burl, Tried & True™ finish (linseed oil and beeswax), 4" × 8" (10cm × 20cm)

Handles, 2024, Burr oak, tung oil, 2½" × 14" (6cm × 36cm)

Fumed Oak Pot, 2024, Burr oak, fumed with ammonia, tung oil, 5" × 6" (13cm × 15cm)

Plum Mills, 2024, Plum, colored resin, polyurethane, Each: 10" × 2½" (25cm × 6cm)

Gnarly Oak Burl, 2024, Burr oak burl, colored resin, wipe-on polyurethane, 6" × 6" (15cm × 15cm)

Winged Cherry, 2023, Cherry, tung oil, 3½" × 13" (9cm × 33cm)

Bernard Azéma, France

Since 2014, I have been making pieces in ornamental turning. All my creations are on the theme of the *trembleur,* which I turn and sculpt in off-center, unbalanced, and multiaxis or off-axis positions. Initially following in the footsteps of master journeymen from the 17th and 18th centuries, I now interpret the work in my own way, making complicated pieces whose construction and specialty tools are *de rigueur.*

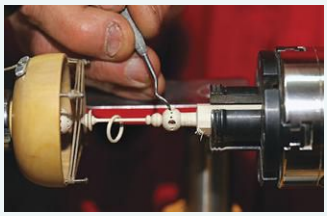
Trembleurs are manufactured in defiance of the laws of resistance, yet each of them is made from a single piece of wood. They result from a methodical, precise approach where no step supports the approximate. The traditional tools of the woodturner are modified or replaced by specially manufactured tools, forged generally from other trades such as watchmaking, prosthetics, dentistry, or mechanical fitting. The adaptation of special mechanisms to my wood lathe—accompanied by milling machines, drills, and routers installed on trolleys and adapted to a pivoting cross table—multiplies the possibilities of meticulous interventions.

Having attended many exhibitions, symposia, and demonstrations in France and other countries, I have become a recognized trainer in the world of *trembleur* woodturning and welcome to my workshop trainees who wish to acquire gestural precision, self-control, and tooling.

For more, visit trembleur-azema.fr.

Process

Work in progress on a holly *trembleur.* A custom steady rest supports the thin parts already turned. Not visible, the *trembleur* head is safely supported at the tailstock end in a polystyrene socket.



Cleaning the interior of a sphere detail with a dental tool.

Trembleur, 2022, Pistachio, 12" × ½" (30cm × 12mm)

Trembleur, 2023, Nectarine, 13¾" × ½" (35cm × 12mm)

Fine details in a holly *trembleur,* 33½" × 9⁄16" (85cm × 14mm)

Scott Hoefs, Oregon

I have been casually turning for the past fourteen years. Until the spring of 2023, when I retired, I didn't have the time to explore and refine my turning skills, as well as my embellishments. As a professional forester, I spent my career working in the forests of Oregon, which has been instrumental in shaping a key element of my work: my use of highly figured woods.

When you start with a piece that features birdseye, curly figure, flame, fiddleback, or any other grain distortion, you can create a truly beautiful piece. I believe that a delicate balance of embellishment enhances the overall experience. All of my pieces are crafted from salvaged timber, weather-hazard trees, or blow-downs, and I strive to utilize the best that each tree offers.

Fall Leaves was made from a maple tree that was burned in the 2020 wildfires. This piece was inspired by my mentor, Jim Hodson, who has shared a lifetime of experiences with me in just a few short years. I look forward to creating many more inspired pieces in the near future.

Fall Leaves, 2024, Salvaged bigleaf maple burl, ink dye, lacquer 3" × 16" (8cm × 41cm)

Ted Pelfrey, Tennessee

I started turning about twenty years ago but only turned game calls for the first ten years. Over the next six or seven years, I started turning bowls, pens, and hollow forms. I have had more time to focus on my turning in the last two or three years and have devoted most of my time to hollow forms, embellishing some of them. A chronic foot problem was taking away valuable shop time, so I learned carving and embellishing—thanks to Sammy Long, Dixie Biggs, and J. Paul Fennell! But I always come back to the lathe.

I am thrilled to be part of this issue's Members' Gallery, as it is my favorite part of the Journal. It reminds me of the show and tell at a club meeting. ■

Untitled Platter, 2024, Ambrosia maple, oil finish, 3" × 17½" (8cm × 44cm)

Untitled, 2024, Cherry, pyrography, oil finish, 7" × 5" (18cm × 13cm)

Untitled, 2024, Cherry burl, oil finish, 8¼" × 5¾" (21cm × 15cm)

Untitled, 2024, Cherry crotch, oil finish, 7" × 6" (18cm × 15cm)

advertisingindex

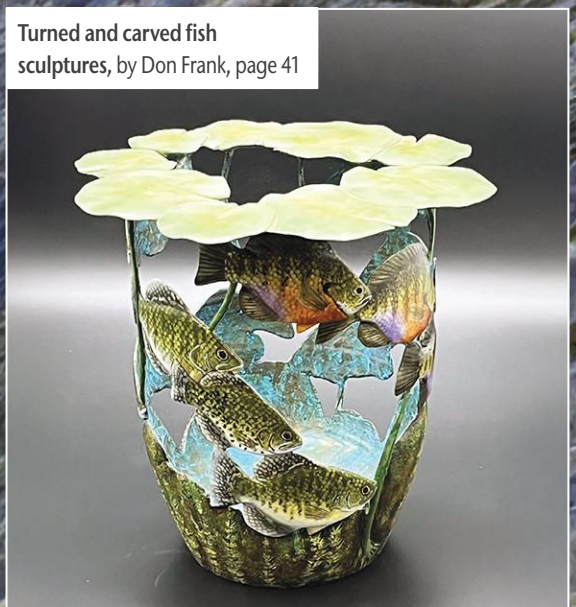
*St. Paul symposium tradeshow vendor as of 2/1/25.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

LET'S GO FISHING!

Turned handline, by Adam Nelson, page 22

Turned fishing bobbers, by Tim Heil, page 20



Turned and carved fish sculptures, by Don Frank, page 41

Trout net with turned handle, by Robin Costelle, page 26