

BIRDHOUSE ORNAMENTS • CELTIC-INSPIRED DRINKING HORN • TURN A WOOD SOCCER BALL

AMERICAN WOODTURNER

Journal of the American Association of Woodturners

December 2025 vol 40, no 6 • woodturner.org

**ERIC
LOFSTROM**
TEACHER OF ALL AGES

**CREATIVITY IN
PRODUCTION WORK**

.....

OPEN/CLOSED
2025 POP EXHIBITION
AND AUCTION



Bill Karow Oregon

I fell in love with woodturning fifteen years ago. I'm a member of both Cascade and Northwest Woodturners, and I'm fortunate to learn alongside many skilled club members.

Lately I've been developing a process I call erosion finishing. Using wire brushes and hand wire tools, I deliberately wear away the spalted, softer grain to create deeply worn, irregular textures. I keep the form simple and the inside as smooth as possible, so the rough exterior and calm interior play off of each other. From a distance, the vessels suggest artifacts weathered by time; up close, the smooth interiors offer unexpected contrast.



Big Black, 2025, Spalted maple, India ink, acrylic paint, hard wax oil, fixative, 8" x 11" (20cm x 28cm)

(Left) Crumble Burl, 2024, Spalted maple, hard wax oil, fixative, 3" x 6 1/4" (8cm x 16cm)



(Right) Chippy Bowl, 2024, Fumed black walnut, oil, wax, 8" x 6 1/4" (20cm x 16cm)



(Left) Moon Bowl 4, 2024, Cherry, milk paint, oil, wax, 2 1/4" x 4" (6cm x 10cm)

(Right) Black Disc 1, 2024, Ash, India ink, wax, 2 3/4" x 5 1/2" (7cm x 14cm)



Present Imperfect, 2024, Spalted maple (charred rim), fixative,
4" x 3¾" (10cm x 10cm)



White Lake Bowl, 2025,
Spalted maple,
pigmented hard
wax oil, 5½" x 8"
(14cm x 20cm)

Smooth Top Vessel, 2024, Spalted
maple, fixative, hard wax oil,
4¾" x 4¼" (12cm x 11cm)



Citrus Bowl, 2024, Spalted maple, linseed oil,
beeswax, 4" x 6" (10cm x 15cm)



Earthen Vessel, 2025, Spalted maple, walnut oil, wax, 9" x 7"
(23cm x 18cm)

Mission: Strengthen and empower the global woodturning community

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

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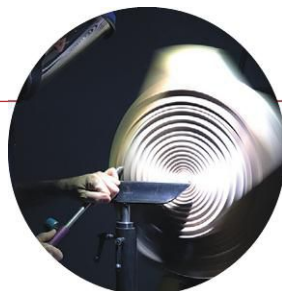


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Cover: Eric Lofstrom at work on
Harmonic Introspection.

Back cover: Michael Kehs



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

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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/AWDDiversity*

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



To all of the woodturning community, I want to say thank you. This issue will be my last as your editor, and while the experience has been fulfilling on many levels, the best part has been the relationships I've built. You sustained my tenure with your willingness to share knowledge, ideas, tips, artwork, and processes. The generosity of our community is truly inspiring and serves as a shining example of how to live as humans on this earth. Then there's the creativity, the ingenuity, the problem-solving spirit that won't be suppressed. Yes, holding each newly printed journal in my hands has been fulfilling, but

it is the human connections, the friendships, I've made that fill my heart.

Our new journal editor, Sarah Marriage, is already on board and working hard to get up to speed. (That's right, the AAW is going straight from Friend to Marriage.) She is a highly capable editor, so you'll be in good hands. You can continue to send emails to editor@woodturner.org, as Sarah will take over that address in the new year. In the meantime, please welcome Sarah at her temporary email address, sarah@woodturner.org, and look forward to meeting her at next year's AAW Symposium in Raleigh, North Carolina.



—Joshua Friend

From the President



2025 in review

December is a good time to reflect on the year that has passed by. The passing of AAW Member #1, David Ellsworth, saddened all of us.

You may wish to revisit the feature article in the October 2025 AAW Journal and visit ellsworthlegacy.org to share how David may have influenced your woodturning journey. We also mourned the passing of notable and influential members Avelino Samuel and Nick Agar.

Organizational transitions have made it an eventful year for the AAW Board and staff. We said goodbye to our previous executive director, Jennifer Newberg, and welcomed Gretchen Wilbrandt in May. We have just hired Glenn Hansen for the marketing director role. Alexa Manning departed this spring from our staff but has embraced woodturning, so we hope to see her at future AAW Symposia. We have added a new position, finance and operations director, and have welcomed Tamecka Johnson to that role. After almost twelve years of service as editor of *American Woodturner*, Joshua Friend announced his retirement effective the end of this year. We are pleased to welcome Sarah Marriage as our new editor.

We welcomed Keith Baizer to the Board of Directors. Tib Shaw and Robyn Priestley have continued in their roles, and we are thankful for their continued support and dedication during all of these changes. Throughout these transitions, our dedicated staff have worked hard to provide you with the strong customer service and support you have come to expect from our organization. We owe a great **thank you** to all of the folks who have served the AAW so well in many different roles.

2026 AAW International Symposium

We are well into planning for the 2026 AAW International Symposium in Raleigh, North Carolina, which will be part of our ongoing celebration of the 40th anniversary of the AAW. Stay tuned for more on how we will commemorate our organization's founding. I hope to see many of you in Raleigh (June 4-7, 2026). See pages 6-7 of this issue for more information about the event.

AAW values in action

Our guiding values include Community, Sharing, Growth, Safety, Ethics, and Respect. Safety is a focus I hope you associate with everything the AAW represents and promotes. Nothing that we do in woodturning is worth getting injured or enduring

worse. I know from personal experience that an accident can happen in a flash. My faceshield has sustained a bump or two over the past nine years of turning. So please take steps to be safe and regularly review the AAW's safety guidelines at tiny.cc/turnsafe. If you see someone turning in an unsafe manner, find a tactful (and respectful) way to bring attention to it—let's all set a good example.

Code of ethics

The AAW has long had a code of ethics to guide the conduct of our Board, staff, contractors, volunteers, and all who might work on our behalf. The Board believes it is appropriate that our code of ethics guide the conduct of all AAW members. Accordingly, we have published our Code of Ethics document on woodturner.org. Under the "Learn" dropdown menu, click "About AAW," then "Code of Ethics."

From the AAW's Board and staff, we wish you all a happy holiday season and look forward to being in touch in 2026 and seeing many of you in Raleigh to celebrate the important milestone of our 40th year.



KC Kendall
President, AAW Board of Directors

Call for Entries Turning 40

2026 AAW Member Exhibition

Key dates

Submission period:

January 1–March 15, 2026

Notification: April 15, 2026

The American Association of Woodturners (AAW) turns 40 in 2026—and we invite you to help us celebrate. This isn't an over-the-hill moment, but a milestone anniversary that honors our shared legacy

and looks ahead to the future of woodturning.

Each year, the annual AAW member exhibition at the International Symposium showcases a diverse range of outstanding work from our members around the world. For the 2026 exhibition, themed *Turning 40*, the jurors will be looking for a variety of works expressing the extraordinary range of techniques, topics, materials, and approaches woodturning offers—from a traditional bowl with a perfect curve to work that pushes our ideas of what is possible to pieces that explore the title theme.

Work will be juried blindly through photographs and text. Two cash awards will be presented: the \$300 Masters'

Choice Award, selected by the jurors or their representatives, and the \$200 People's Choice Award, selected by attendees at the 2026 AAW International Symposium in Raleigh, North Carolina (June 4–7, 2026). The show is open to any current AAW member anywhere in the world, and to full-time students in art, design, or industry-related degree programs, regardless of AAW membership status.

More information

Full details on this call for entries were published in the October 2025 issue of *American Woodturner* (vol 40, no 5, page 11). Also check the AAW's Calls for Entry page, found at tiny.cc/Calls, or email Tib Shaw at gallery@woodturner.org. ■

Call for Entries Holding Space

2026 POP Exhibition and Auction

Key dates

*Submission Period: December 1, 2025–
January 15, 2026*

Notification: February 8, 2026

*Accepted work due in Saint Paul,
Minnesota: March 1, 2026*

The Professional Outreach Program (POP) is pleased to announce the theme for its 20th annual exhibition and auction: *Holding Space*. Each year, this much-anticipated exhibition shows an exciting mix of small-scale work created by familiar

names and new voices from around the world.

Holding Space invites exploration of what it means to create or contain space—physically, emotionally, or metaphorically. Woodturning has long been associated with vessels and containers. Vessels, bowls, and boxes are objects that define a space: things are inside or outside of a container, but that definition is more open than we might think. In *The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction*, Ursula K. Le Guin argues that the greatest invention of humankind is the container, allowing us to gather and save the things that sustain us: food, supplies, fuel. In her essay *Vessels for Holding*, potter Grace Cady says, “the container was a tool to carry energy home,” with home interpreted as a space, a shelter, a body, a relationship, a mind. Whether interpreted as a literal vessel or

a metaphor, the theme of *Holding Space* is rich with possibilities.

POP themes are designed to provide a dynamic springboard for creativity and highlight extraordinary small-scale work. Research shows that limits can inspire innovation—our size limitation of **6" × 6" × 6" (15cm × 15cm × 15cm)** offers a creative constraint we hope will spark your imagination. Entries must incorporate woodturning, but you are free to use any materials and additional techniques.

More information

Full details on this call for entries were published in the October 2025 issue of *American Woodturner* (vol 40, no 5, page 10). Also check the AAW's Calls for Entry page, tiny.cc/Calls, or email Tib Shaw at gallery@woodturner.org. ■

Call for Videographers and Streaming Technicians

The American Association of Woodturners (AAW) is seeking talented volunteer videographers and streaming technicians for its 2026 International Woodturning Symposium, June 4–7 in Raleigh, North Carolina. Do you have an eye for capturing the perfect shot or a knack for live-streaming smooth, seamless events? Join our production crew and help bring the world's largest woodturning gathering to life—both in person and online!

- **Videographers** should be comfortable operating video camera equipment, making quick creative decisions on framing, angles, and how best to showcase the turning action.
- **Streaming Technicians** should have experience supporting AAW chapter demos or hybrid meetings and be skilled in switching between camera feeds and managing streaming gear.

Volunteers accepted into the program will assist with setup/teardown and cover six demo rotations during the Symposium. In return, you'll receive complimentary registration and the opportunity to work alongside some of the most talented woodturners in the world.

Applications open December 15, 2025, and close February 15, 2026. Selected participants will be notified in March 2026. Learn more or apply at tiny.cc/CallVideo.



2026 AAW INTERNATIONAL WOODTURNING SYMPOSIUM

June 4-7 in Raleigh, North Carolina



Photos: Andi Wolfe

FEATURED WOODTURNING DEMONSTRATORS



Troy Grimwood,
New Zealand



Yann Marot, France



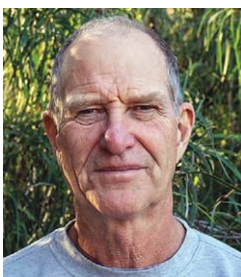
Mark Gardner,
North Carolina



Seri Robinson, Oregon



Molly Winton,
Washington State



Neil Turner, Australia



Matt Monaco, Missouri



Mike Mahoney,
California

Plus, dozens of other demonstrators and presenters.

INSTANT GALLERY – ALL ARE WELCOME!



For many, the Instant Gallery is the heart of the Symposium. Hundreds—even thousands—of pieces fill tens of thousands of square feet. Featuring work by youth turners discovering their craft to internationally recognized artists—it is the world's largest display of turned wood, a collection where every piece matters.

For those wondering, “Is my work good enough to display?” The answer is, YES! The Instant Gallery is for everyone. We envision a Symposium where *every* registered attendee brings up to three pieces to share with the woodturning community. Remember, it's not about perfection: it's about participation, passion, and pride.

New this year: First Time Exhibitor Showcase to celebrate those making their debut in the Instant Gallery! Plus a Please Touch table, inviting visitors to *feel* the texture, balance, and form.

So join us in Raleigh June 4-7, 2026, and bring up to three pieces to display. Imagine your work as a part of an exhibition that celebrates woodturning from around the world! The Instant Gallery isn't just an exhibition—it's a celebration of everyone who turns wood, including you!

START MAKING PLANS

Symposium Venue

Raleigh Convention Center
500 South Salisbury Street
Raleigh, NC 27601

Discounted Hotel Blocks

The following hotels feature discounted rooms for this event. The hotels may sell out, so book your rooms soon. Visit aawsymposium.org to learn more.

Sheraton Raleigh Hotel

421 South Salisbury Street
Raleigh, NC 27601
(919) 834-9900

Raleigh Marriot City Center

500 Fayetteville Street
Raleigh, NC 27601
(919) 833-1120

Raleigh Residence Inn by Marriot

616 South Salisbury Street
Raleigh, NC 27601
(919) 856-0017

POP SHOWCASE ARTISTS

The Professional Outreach Program (POP) is excited to announce the 2026 Artist Showcase awardees: Janine Wang (USA) and Matthew Shewchuk (Japan). These emerging artists are being recognized for both the excellence of their current work and their potential to make significant creative contributions

to the field. As part of the award, during the 2026 AAW Symposium in Raleigh, North Carolina, they will each give a presentation of their work and artistic practice, offer demonstrations, and have a shared show in the Special Exhibitions area. The awardees will also receive a \$2,000 honorarium, made possible by

the generous support of the Maxwell/Hanrahan Foundation.

Call for 2027 artists

Applications for the 2027 POP Artist Showcase Awards will be accepted from March 1 to June 30, 2026. See online application at tiny.cc/POP_AS.



Mark Your Calendars/Coming Soon:

Call for Demonstrators and POP Showcase Artists For the 2027 AAW International Symposium

Application period: March 1 to June 30, 2026

The AAW will open its 2027 call for demonstrators and POP Showcase Artists on March 1, 2026, with applications accepted through June 30, 2026. We may not be ready to reveal the next Symposium location *just yet*—but trust us, it'll be worth the wait! So keep your gouges sharp and your eyes peeled for the big announcement.

Demonstrators

This is your chance to share your expertise, inspire others, and be part of the largest woodturning event of the year. Whether you specialize in bowls, boxes, hollow forms, or creative innovations, AAW invites you to apply and share your craft on the international stage. Application details to be announced.



POP showcase artists

Each year the Professional Outreach Program (POP) showcases two wood artists at the AAW's Annual International Symposium. They are either experienced artists who have made significant contributions to the woodturning field but have not received appropriate recognition, or emerging artists who have the potential to make significant contributions to the field.



Emma Cook (left photo) and Jim Echter, demonstrators at the 2025 AAW Symposium, Saint Paul, Minnesota.

Photos: Andi Wolfe

The two selected artists give a presentation of their work and artistic practice, offer demonstrations, and have a shared show in the Special Exhibitions area. The awardees will also receive an honorarium and Symposium registration. Applications will be juried by the POP committee. Application details can be found at tiny.cc/POP_AS.

AWGB Seminar's New Name and Location

The Association of Woodturners of Great Britain (AWGB) is pleased to announce that our biennial seminar will return in 2026 with a new name, the Festival of Woodturning, and in a new and inspiring location, the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Stratford-upon-Avon, England. Stratford-upon-Avon is famous for its heritage, its ties to William Shakespeare, and now its woodturning excellence. **The event will take place October 10-11, 2026.**

Iconic new venue

After many successful years at Yarnfield Park, the Festival is moving to a town

full of historical and cultural significance. Stratford-upon-Avon, nestled in the Cotswolds, offers not just an exciting venue, but a vibrant setting perfect for turners, partners, and families alike. With its theaters, restaurants, boutique shops, churches, and nearby National Trust properties and heritage sites, it is the ideal place to extend your trip into a memorable vacation. You could also continue over to Ireland and attend the Irish Woodturners Guild Seminar, taking place shortly after.

The four-star Crowne Plaza Hotel will host a dynamic, rotating program of demonstrations by world-class turners, an expanded tradeshow area, and various hands-on and partner activities—all under one roof.

2026 demonstrators

This is a unique opportunity to learn from an incredibly diverse group of turners, each offering inspiring ideas,



techniques, and perspectives. Our 2026 demonstrators include Ruby Cler (Canada), Tomislav Tomasic (Croatia), Ronald Kanne (Netherlands), Pascal Oudet (France), Emmet Kane (Ireland), Chris Fisher (U.K.), Katie Armstrong (U.K.), Emma Cook (U.K.), Phil Irons (U.K.), and Stuart Mortimer (U.K.).

Join us in 2026

With a superb venue, an international lineup of demonstrators, a welcoming community, and an unforgettable setting, the AWGB Festival of Woodturning 2026 promises to be the most exciting yet. Whether you're coming for the craft, the culture, or the company, we can't wait to welcome you to Stratford-upon-Avon.

For more details, visit awgb.co.uk/festival-2026.

—Steven Gordon Vice Chair, AWGB

AI-generated image. Always wear a faceshield when turning.



Calendar of Events

Send event info to editor@woodturner.org. February issue deadline: December 15.

England

October 10, 11, 2026, Association of Woodturners of Great Britain (AWGB) biennial seminar, under the new name Festival of Woodturning, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Stratford-upon-Avon. Demonstrators to include Ruby Cler, Tomislav Tomasic, Ronald Kanne, Pascal Oudet, Emmet Kane, Chris Fisher, Katie Armstrong, Emma Cook, Phil Irons, and Stuart Mortimer. For more, visit awgb.co.uk/festival-2026.

Florida

January 9, 10, 2026, The South West Florida Wood Art Expo and Competition, Charlotte Harbor Event Center, Punta Gorda. An annual event now in its 40th year that includes woodturning, woodcarving, and furniture juried competitions. It also showcases work (on display and for sale) and includes a vendor marketplace, prizes, and a silent auction. For the latest info, entry forms, and more, visit swflwoodartexpo.org.

February 20–22, 2026, Florida Woodturning Symposium, RP Funding Center, Lakeland. Demonstrators to include John Beaver, Andy Cole, Kirk DeHeer, Matt Monaco, Cheryl Lewis, Jason Meneely, Steve Pritchard, and Brian Rosenkrantz. Event to include an instant gallery, raffle, auctions, and great vendor market. For more, visit floridawoodturningsymposium.com.

Illinois

July 30–August 2, 2026, Turn-On! Chicago 2026, Hilton Chicago, Northbrook. Featured demonstrators to include Kirk DeHeer, Greg Gallegos, Janice Levi, Matt Monaco, and Sammy Long. Additional regional demonstrators to be announced. Event to include a tradeshow, instant gallery, banquet, raffle, and auction. For more, visit turnonchicago.com.

September 25–27, 2026, The 7th Segmented Woodturners Symposium, Hilton Chicago, 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. Event to include a tradeshow, instant gallery, banquet with awards and entertainment, and spouse event. For more, visit segmentedwoodturners.org.

Minnesota

Multiple 2026 exhibitions, AAW's Gallery of Wood Art, Landmark Center, Saint Paul:

- March 15–May 22, 2026: *Holding Space* (AAW's 2026 POP exhibition)
- August 10–November 30, 2026: *Turning 40* (AAW's 2026 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.

Tennessee

January 30–31, 2026, Tennessee Association of Woodturners' 37th Annual Woodturning Symposium, Marriott Hotel and Convention Center, Franklin. Demonstrators to include Roberto Ferrer, Emma Cook, Mike Mahoney, and Rick Rich. One of the longest-running and most successful regional symposia in the U.S., the 2026 event will feature a tradeshow, instant gallery, People's Choice award, and Saturday night banquet with auction. For more, visit tnwoodturners.org, or email David Sapp at symposium@tnwoodturners.org. Vendors contact Grant Hitt at vendorinfo@tnwoodturners.org.

From AAW's Permanent Collection



**Bud Latven
(New Mexico),**
Vessel, 2009, Satinwood,
ebony, 17½" × 12"
(44cm × 30cm)
Photo: Tib Shaw/AAW



Gregory Conti's article, "Using AI to Elevate Your Woodturning," in the August 2025 issue (vol 40, no 4, page 46) was excellent. I'd like to share how I've used AI (artificial intelligence) in a different way to support my own projects.

As a former software developer, I've found it surprisingly easy to create programs with the help of AI to handle the details of coding. I used this method to develop a set of graphic utilities to help woodturners creatively embellish their work.

For example, a friend asked for a simpler way to perform image warping—putting flat, rectangular images onto curved projects like pierced bowls. I realized simple mathematical algorithms could achieve this and asked an AI to create the programs. One thing led to another, and I've now created a set of graphic utilities that run directly in a web browser, making them accessible to any woodturner.

I would like to make these utilities available at no cost to AAW chapters. They can easily link to my code repository from their club website. The utilities include user documentation and examples, and I plan to add videos in the future.

You can view the utilities on my website, **studiojoec.com**, on the **Interactive Design Utilities for Creative Turners** page. Members of the Seattle Woodturners Chapter can also find them on **seattlewoodturners.org**.

—Joe Cornell, Communications Director, Seattle Chapter-AAW
joe@studiojoec.com

I have been trying for decades to understand the commonly accepted formula for determining lathe speeds. It goes like this:

Workpiece diameter (in inches) × rpm = a product between 6,000 and 9,000, with specific formulas for minimum and maximum speeds being $6,000 \div \text{Diameter}$ and $9,000 \div \text{Diameter}$, respectively

For example, a 12"-diameter workpiece would have a safe starting rpm of 500 ($6,000 \div 12$) and a maximum rpm of 750 ($9,000 \div 12$). But to me, plugging in a random rpm value (which you are trying to determine) doesn't make sense. I posed a question on a popular woodturning forum and received the same formula, reference to charts, and other advice such as, "Turn it up until the machine vibrates, then turn it down."

I was looking for something more mathematically accurate and was advised to think about it as a machinist would. Machinists use surface feet per minute (SFM) to determine spindle speed because it provides a consistent value for the material's velocity at the tool's cutting edge. In woodturning, a safe value for roughing is 1000 SFM and for finishing, 1800 SFM. I found that using these values in the following formula results in a definitive rpm range:

$$(3.82 \times \text{SFM}) \div \text{Diameter} = \text{rpm}$$

Using this formula, I prepared the following chart, which shows a safe range of speeds for commonly turned diameters. Other factors, including wood being

out of balance, wood density, and defects will affect the determination of lathe speed. Always proceed with caution!

—Lyndal Anthony, Iowa

Safe Range of Lathe Speeds

Diameter Inches	Roughing RPM	Finishing RPM
1	3820	6875
2	1910	3438
3	1273	2292
4	955	1719
5	764	1375
6	637	1146
7	546	982
8	477	859
9	424	764
10	382	688
11	347	625
12	318	573
13	294	529
14	273	491
15	255	458
16	239	430
17	255	404
18	212	382
19	201	362
20	191	344
21	182	327
22	174	313
23	166	299
24	159	286

Planting Seeds at the Lathe

On my first day on the job at The Schoolhouse in South Burlington, Vermont, where I had just been hired as a preschool and afterschool director, the staff shared what we had done over the summer. I mentioned offhandedly that I enjoy woodturning as a hobby. After the meeting, one of the middle school teachers pulled me aside and asked if I would consider offering woodturning lessons as part of the Project Based Learning program. I hesitated because my background is working with preschoolers, not middle schoolers, but I said yes. That yes has now turned into an annual tradition.

Each year, about fifteen middle schoolers participate. Everyone is included unless they choose to opt out. Some years we pick a particular project, like pens or spinning tops. Other years, the students decide what they want to try in a single forty-five minute session. At first, I was not sure if they would listen, or care. But once I put the tools in their hands, the energy in the room shifted. They were hooked, and so was I.

Value of a mentor

Like many turners, I got started because someone made time for me. In my case it was Vermont turner Edwards Smith, who welcomed me into his shop and shared not just technique but the larger world of the craft. Edwards passed away recently, but the lessons he gave me live on every time I share turning with someone else. What struck me most was how freely he gave his knowledge. No strings attached, just a love of the craft and a desire to pass it on.

That kind of generosity is the heartbeat of woodturning. Every time we make ourselves available to someone else, we are planting a seed. Sometimes that seed takes root right away. Other times, it waits quietly until the right moment. Either way, sharing keeps the possibility alive.

Yes, teaching takes effort. It takes time, preparation, sharp tools, and often a bit of hauling and setup. But the smiles when someone holds up a finished piece make it all worthwhile. And even if they never turn again, they walk away with something valuable: a new understanding of just how much skill



The author poses with her (now passed) woodturning mentor, Edwards Smith.

and patience go into every turned piece they will see from then on.

Woodturning does not live in books or on YouTube, it lives in us and in what we share. I was fortunate that Edwards gave me that gift, and I am determined to keep doing the same for others. Each time we share what we know, it sends out ripples we may never see. A lesson, an afternoon in the shop, even just a word of encouragement, it all matters. ■

—Elsa Oppenheimer, President, Vermont Woodturners Guild



Passing the love of the craft to a new generation of turners.



Cascade Woodturners Share Craft at Festival of Arts

The Festival of Arts in Gresham, Oregon, is a one-day event in July now in its twenty-first year, combining four elements: artists selling their wares, a food court, a farmers' market, and an interactive area where Cascade Woodturners Association and others set up their awnings.

Our main purpose in participating in the Festival is educational; we want to plant “seeds” to grow the next generation of woodturners, and as a side benefit, we occasionally recruit club members from those passing by. To foster that, we have two display tables filled with turnings from our members. We also turn tops and hand them out to Festival attendees, who are then invited to another lathe to color their tops.

Angela Barrie, the Festival's artist coordinator, said, “Cascade Woodturners bring an infectious enthusiasm and deep skill to the interactive area at the Festival of Arts—it's always a highlight to see them engage so many visitors hands-on.”

The combination of movement, shavings flying off the lathe, colors, and the hands-on nature of decorating tops is popular year after year. We have been selected to participate in the Festival for six straight years (Covid years excepted). “Year after year, Cascade Woodturners deliver not just demonstrations, but inspiration. Their presence helps make the Festival of Arts truly interactive and welcoming,” Barrie commented. “What sets Cascade Woodturners apart is their generosity with knowledge—every demo becomes a conversation, and every visitor leaves with a spark of curiosity and a cool wooden memento.”



Club member Rick Rich demonstrates top turning at the 2024 Festival of Arts.

Club members pitch in

Club members Don Jensen (who was the inspiration behind having a “coloring lathe”) and Joyce Botsch managed the set-up and take-down this year, with an assist from Brett Williamson and Gerald Stutts. Other members filled in as top-turners: Rick Rich, Miguel Hernandez, Kevin Reed, Steve Walgrave, Gerald Stutts, and Don Jensen. Some members were hosts and/or helpers with the coloring station (and some did all three jobs): Joseph and Irene McIntosh, Scott Taylor, Rob Vogtman, Alan Stickel, Harvey Rogers, Steve Walgrave, Dennis Tanner, Len Otto, Gerald Stutts, John Vaeth, Jerry Harris, and Joyce Botsch. Other members generously loaned their turnings as display pieces.

The top turners have a double duty: they function as ambassadors for woodturning, plus they crank out tops for children who walk past. Children leave our booth with a new



Cascade members hand out freshly made and pre-turned tops to passersby, who are then invited to a second lathe where the recipient colors the top as it spins slowly.



Turned items on display attract attendees into the booth.

Photo: John Vaeth

toy and perhaps a “seed” of inspiration that will someday sprout into a talented woodturner. “Cascade Woodturners don't just turn wood—they turn on creativity. The Festival of Arts wouldn't be the same without them,” Barrie explained. ■

—Len Otto, Cascade Woodturners Association

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

Shopmade sanding jig

I have a very small workshop and do not have room for a drum sander. I made a two-sectioned jig that does an excellent job of flattening segment rings prior to final glue-up and takes up very little room in my shop.

The headstock component is simply a disk of $\frac{3}{4}$ " (19mm) plywood outfitted with a threaded faceplate and a

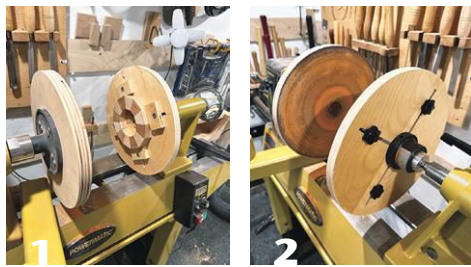
piece of adhesive-backed sandpaper. The tailstock component comprises a second plywood disk with four $\frac{1}{4}$ " (6mm) routed channels that hold sliding blocks to secure segmented rings (*Photo 1*).

The tailstock component is mounted with a tapered tailstock chuck adapter (*Photo 2*). Note that this is not a "live,"

or spinning, center, as the tailstock component has to remain fixed during ring sanding. The adapter threads onto a standard $1\frac{3}{4}$ " (4cm) screw center chuck.

Once a segmented ring is mounted in the tailstock component, a gentle turn of the handwheel brings the face of the ring up against the turning sandpaper (I set my lathe speed to around 225 rpm). This jig creates a nice flat surface ready for glue-up. *Photo 3* shows two rings, the one on the left, before sanding and the one on the right, after sanding. The total cost for parts was less than \$100.

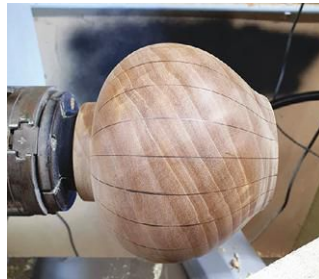
—Kirk Dackow, New Jersey, AAW member since 2016



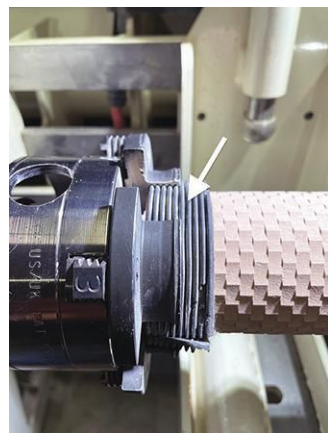
Black background improves visibility

One improvement I have made in my woodturning shop was to paint a black background behind the lathe. This helps me to see better how a turned profile develops and to identify flat spots.

—Roberto Brambilla, Italy



Lathe drive belt as chucking cushion



I recently discovered that an old lathe drive belt cut into strips makes excellent protective inserts for serrated jaw chucks. The grooves inside the jaws lock into the belt's grooves for a secure fit, and the rubber is thick enough to prevent clamping marks without leaving black smudges. The cut ends of the belt can stick out between the jaw edges, so one length accommodates several diameters. Automotive serpentine belts should also work well.

—Dave Roberts, British Columbia, Canada, AAW member since 2023

Seal endgrain with plastic bags

When a black walnut tree in my front yard came down, I eagerly cut and stacked it for future turning projects. My plan was to seal the endgrain with wax, but the weather was so cold the wax was too thick to spread. Instead, I wrapped plastic bags around the endgrain and secured them with bailing twine.

Months later when I unwrapped the logs, there were no cracks. Now I wrap instead of wax, even in warm weather—it's faster and easier to apply, especially

on large surfaces. ▶

—Tim Heil, Minnesota, AAW member since 2001



TIPS

Fan eliminates fog

In my shop, my safety glasses and faceshield fog up quickly. Every few cuts I need to wipe them dry before resuming so I can see what I'm doing.

While there are specialized faceshields available with built-in air filtration systems, I've found that a small fan attached to a basic shield is a simple alternative that works well. These fans are readily available online and typically have multiple speed settings. With earplugs in, the noise is minimal.

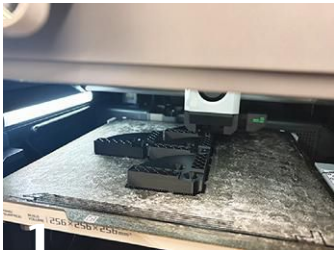
—Bob Patros, Wisconsin, AAW member since 2005

**3D-printed lathe accessories**

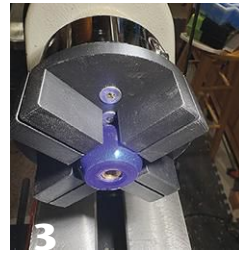
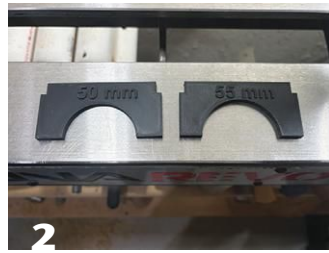
We use our 3D printer to create custom accessories for turning (Photo 1). Our tenon guides (Photo 2) can be sized to any dimension we need, and we added a magnet to a pocket on the back so they're always within arm's reach on the lathe.

We also designed custom chuck jaws to hold epoxy-cast spheres (Photo 3). Unlike steel jaws, these printed jaws grip the sphere securely without marring the surface, allowing us to face it with a Forstner bit and drill for a threaded insert.

—Ed and Debi Thomas, Illinois, AAW members since 2024



The 3D printer at work.

**Twist tie tool organizer**

Turning tools have a habit of rolling off the bench or getting misplaced during a project, so I use a 17" (43cm) foam twist tie as a simple tool organizer (Photo 1). I shape the tie into multiple vertical waves and insert each end into dog holes on my workbench. This keeps tools accessible, organized, and stable while turning, and the tie removes easily when you need the bench for other tasks. For a version that doesn't require dog holes, cut two blocks from dimensional lumber and drill holes to accept the tie ends (Photo 2). This creates a portable tool holder that works on any work surface and is perfect for club demonstrations.

—Mark Warner, Virginia, AAW member since 2016

**Peanut butter jar chuck for Mason jar lids**

When turning wooden Mason jar lids with embedded metal rings (Photo 1), I needed a way to remount them on the lathe without damaging the threads. My solution: I cut the top portion from a plastic Skippy® peanut butter jar (which has the same thread size as a Mason jar), epoxied it to a wooden chuck blank, and mounted the blank in my four-jaw chuck (Photo 2). The wooden lid screws onto the plastic threads, allowing me to safely make adjustments or refinish it without damaging the metal ring.

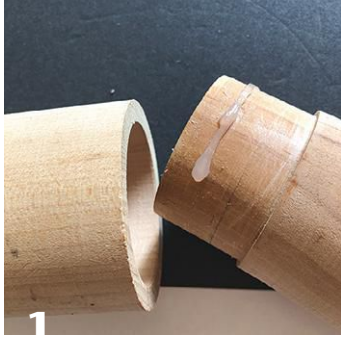
—Dustin Davis, Maryland, AAW member since 2009



Silicone improves lid fit

When I turn a box with a suction-fit lid, I know humidity and moisture will cause the fit to fluctuate over time. To mitigate these effects, I use clear silicone gel. I spread a bead of gel on the tenon (*Photo 1*) and smooth it to a thin film (*Photo 2*). The silicone acts like a rubber gasket, keeping the lid snug through the seasons.

—Tim Heil, Minnesota, AAW member since 2001



Lightbulb threads as ferrule

I'm always on the lookout for potential tool ferrules, and I recently found one in the most unusual way. I accidentally dropped a light bulb on the shop floor, and there it was: the metal threaded insert broke cleanly away from the glass. Its size and shape are perfect for a ferrule.

—Tim Heil, Minnesota, AAW member since 2001

Budget-friendly wavy-edge disks

Wavy-edge abrasive disks prevent the harsh marks that straight-edge disks can leave on curved surfaces, but they cost significantly more than standard disks. I now make my own wavy-edge disks by using pinking shears to trim straight-edge ones. They work just as well as pre-made wavy-edge disks at a fraction of the cost. Be sure to dedicate a pair of pinking shears to this purpose—

abrasives will dull them for fabric use.

—Michael Hamilton-Clark, British Columbia, Canada, AAW member since 2013

Spring-loaded pencil conforms to irregular surface

I twice turn vases, and after hollowing and sanding, the outside is rarely perfectly round. To draw accurate radial layout lines on these irregular surfaces, I created a spring-loaded pencil holder. Drill a blind hole in a small hardwood block and insert a pen spring and short pencil. The spring allows the pencil to float over high spots while maintaining contact with low areas, ensuring consistent lines around the entire surface. Squeeze a drop of glue in the bottom of the hole to keep the spring in place.

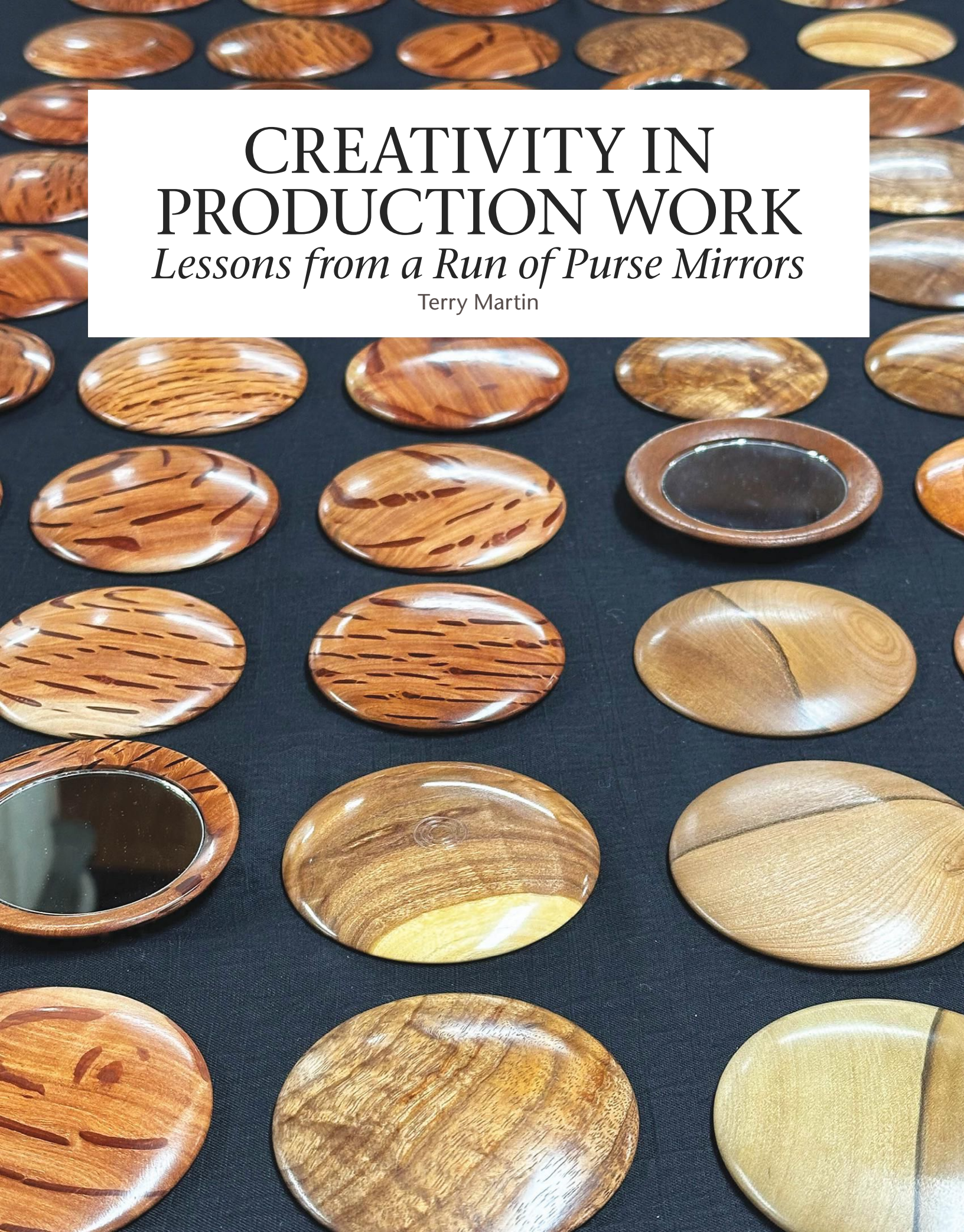
—Lyndal Anthony, Iowa, AAW member since 2008



(Top) A spring-loaded pencil maintains contact with uneven surfaces.

(Bottom) The device sliced in half shows how the spring and pencil sit inside the small hardwood block.





CREATIVITY IN PRODUCTION WORK

Lessons from a Run of Purse Mirrors

Terry Martin

For thousands of years individual woodturners have honed their skills with one purpose in mind: to be able make large numbers of identical items rapidly, efficiently, and inexpensively. We call these people “production turners,” but sadly in most countries there are relatively few left who make their living this way. It might be a surprise for some to learn that many woodturners who are famous for their creative approach to turning have also been production turners at different stages of their lives. For example, David Ellsworth used to make salt and pepper shakers, and Mark Lindquist made paperweights (I have one he made in 1974). The skills they applied to production work made it easier to begin their explorations of artistic turning because once they had acquired the muscle memory for all the cuts required, it stayed with them for life, refreshed every time they made a cut. It’s easier to develop a form that you have never done before when the cuts themselves are made on autopilot.

I started making purse mirrors in the early 1990s and have made thousands since then. I used to demonstrate this project at craft shows and was able to consistently finish both sides of a mirror casing in three-and-a-half

minutes. I might be a little slower these days, but I still hardly have to give a thought to what I am doing. In this story I will explain how I developed the process.

Prepare the blanks

The casing for a purse mirror is made from a wood blank measuring $3\frac{3}{8}$ " square and $\frac{3}{4}$ " thick (86mm square and 19mm thick). When I am cutting wood for any purpose, I look at all the offcuts to see if any are suitable, looking for flashes of interesting grain, fiddleback, and vibrant color. First, I cut boards to thickness. To cut these boards into square blanks, I have a standard blank by my bandsaw, which I use to set the fence. Then I can rapidly cut the blanks using a push stick (*Photo 1*). Once they are cut, I store them in open boxes to cure and at any time I have hundreds of blanks from different woods.

Turn the first side

The essence of production work is to reduce the number of steps you need to take, so at this stage I don’t cut these blanks to round. Instead, I mount the squares very securely between the large jaws of my chuck (*Photo 2*).

I remove the corners of the blank by lifting the handle and rolling

Prepare the blanks



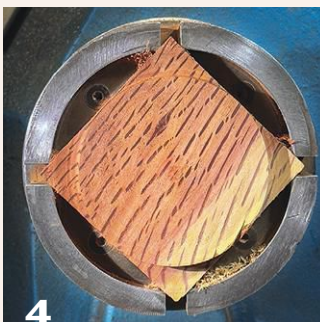
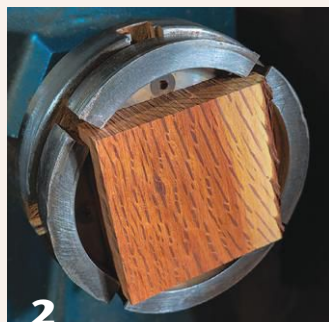
1 Cut multiple blanks the same size. The author keeps a mirror blank near the bandsaw for quickly setting the fence.

the tool over the toolrest towards the headstock, taking a series of cuts stopping just short of the chuck jaws, until I have achieved a perfect circle (*Photo 3*). I can see by the “shadow” when it is complete, or test by gently touching the rim with the back of the tool. In this way I can turn every single blank to the same diameter without measuring (*Photo 4*). I then turn the front of the blank flat.

A specialized cutter

When I started making these mirrors, the next stage used to be the most time consuming. I needed to cut the recess for the mirror as well as a smaller but deeper recess inside that ►

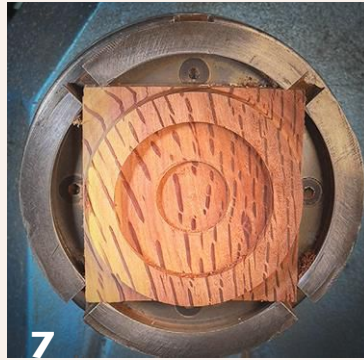
Mount blank, rough in shape



(2) Mount the square blank for the first turning, each corner positioned in the gaps between the chuck jaws.

(3-4) Roll the tool towards the headstock to turn away the corners, stopping just shy of the jaws. Achieving the largest possible continuous circle on each blank ensures the same size without measuring.

A specialized recess cutter



(5) The author's custom-ground two-step carbide cutter mounted in a drill chuck in the tailstock.

(6-7) A few cranks of the tailstock handwheel reaches the appropriate depth for both the inner and outer recesses. The outer is for the mirror, and the inner, for rechunking in expansion mode.

Confirm recess diameter



After refining the rim, the author confirms the diameter of the outer recess using a suction cup to hold the mirror.

for remounting the blank to turn the other side. It required me to change to a smaller gouge to cut the first recess, switch to a scraper to define the rim of the recess, then flatten the base of the recess. After I did the same for the inner recess, it added up to six separate steps.

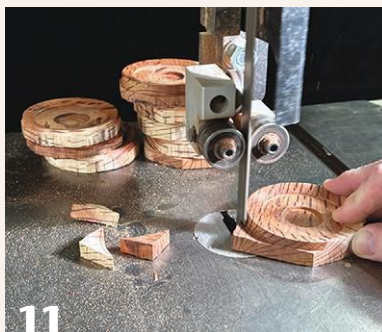
Eventually I found a way to reduce this process to one single step by repurposing a flat carbide cutter that was provided with Woodfast chucks back in the 1980s for cutting recesses. I ground the profile of the two recesses, so I can make both inner cuts in a few seconds (*Photos 5, 6*). The cutter is held in a drill chuck and remains in the tailstock at the end of the lathe bed until required. I slide the tailstock up, drop the speed to around 200 rpm, then wind in the cutter with three-and-a-half turns of the handwheel, producing a perfectly repeatable compound recess every time (*Photo 7*). Is it cheating? No more than using electricity, chucks, and high-speed steel, all of which were opposed by traditionalists at some stage.

Refine inner recess



Refine the edge of the inner, chucking, recess.

Cut off remaining corners

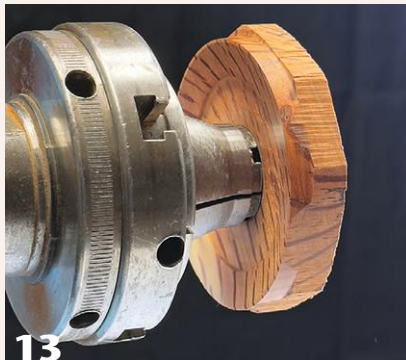


At the bandsaw, the author removes the remaining corners.

Shape the rim

Once the recess is cut, I can shape the rim. I cut an inflowing line to the recess and then refine it by rolling the tool on its left side and using the

Modified chuck jaws



(12) The author's modified chuck jaws, the end of which he reshaped using the wood lathe and a scraper. "This is my oldest chuck. I have been using it since 1988, and these jaws have been on the chuck since at least 1990."

(13) The modified jaws hold the blank in expansion mode. The extra "step" cut in the jaws allows for positive registration of the wood against a shoulder on the jaws, improving the holding strength.

edge in shear-scraping mode to reduce the need for sanding (Photo 8). Depending on the wood, I usually sand to 600 grit.

Refine the recesses

The outer recess has to be just wide enough to leave a tiny gap between the wood and the mirror in case the wood contracts. I use a skew chisel in scraping mode to refine the edge of the recess, then check the fit using a mirror held with a small suction cup (Photo 9). The mirrors I use measure $2\frac{3}{8}$ " (60mm) in diameter, but you should adjust your recess dimensions to match the mirrors you have sourced.

I also refine the edge of the inner recess with the skew used in scraping mode (Photo 10).

Once I have completed the inside of all the blanks, I cut away the remaining corners at the bandsaw because when the blank is remounted on the much smaller chuck (in the next step), there is more possibility of it coming loose than during the first chucking step. It takes only seconds for each blank (Photo 11).

Modifying chuck jaws

When I started making these mirrors, I thought I would remount them into the recess that the mirror

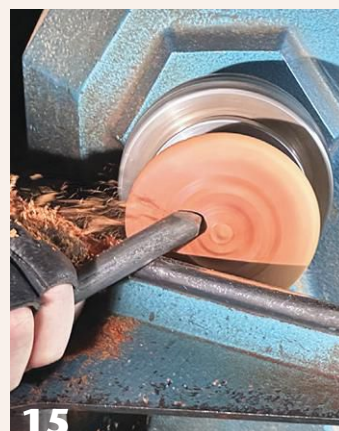
fits into, but the wood at the rim was too thin to resist expansion chucking. To hold the blank, I needed a smaller recess in the center where the wood is thicker (hence the specialized recess cutter noted above). I decided to modify the long-nose jaws on my chuck to better fit this inner recess. I discovered many years ago that it is easy to modify such jaws as they are made of soft metal that can easily be scraped on the lathe (after all, the mother of the metal lathe is the wood lathe). I have also used this method to refine, or reset, the edges of jaws after they have been used for hundreds of hours.

Modifying chuck jaws requires closing them into a perfect circle (which I achieve by placing a plastic spacer between the jaws) and scraping them at a slow speed using a scraper held with the handle very high to create a negative rake that cleanly cuts the metal. I adapted this method to customize the long-nose jaws (Photo 12). The mirror blank sits with the rim of the recess firmly seated against the shoulder I cut in the jaws (Photo 13).

Turn the second side

Once the blank is remounted, I use a pull cut to shape the rim, avoiding any ►

Shape and refine the back



(14) With the blank now remounted, use a pull cut to shape the rounded outside.

(15) Shear-scraping with the gouge rolled on its side and cutting gently with the bottom wing reduces the need for sanding.

pressure towards the tailstock that might lever the blank off the chuck (*Photo 14*). When I am close to the final curve, I again roll the tool on its left side to shear-scrape for a fine finish (*Photo 15*).

After sanding, I do a final touchup with 000 steel wool for a very fine finish (*Photo 16*). Usually the grain features are the big selling point for these mirrors, but sometimes I add grooves or beads to the back of the casing for customers who might like a little decoration.

Polish the wood, glue in mirror

The end product is ready for polishing (*Photos 17, 18*). I usually apply a coat of sealer, then buff each blank with standard three-stage buffing: red stick, white stick, and hardening carnauba wax. I glue the mirrors in place with a thin circular bead of silicone because wood always moves with the ambient humidity and I don't want it to crack the glass. The silicone remains flexible enough to accommodate these changes. Each mirror

I never met a creative turner who did not respect the skills of production turners, and I believe similar respect should be due to creative turners who develop new ways for woodturning to evolve.

goes into a small velour bag that I have outsourced.

The business of production work

My best mirrors wholesale for \$25, so the run of 100 mirrors I made while preparing for this story will earn me \$2,500. Not bad considering they are made from offcuts. Over the years these mirrors have covered much of my operating costs and have filled the gaps between the less frequent sales of my more creative endeavors.

Production turning is the best way to refine and solidify your skills. I have also been creative in the way

I found solutions to the technical challenges for this process, and that is what makers have always done. I have never met a creative turner who did not respect the skills of production turners, and I believe similar respect should be due to creative turners who develop new ways for woodturning to evolve. ■

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

Polish with steel wool



With the work still on the lathe, the author polishes it with 000 steel wool.

Ready for buffing



The completed mirror casing, ready for final buffing.





A DIFFERENT SPIN ON BIRDHOUSE ORNAMENTS

Larry Randolph

In 2006 I learned pen turning but soon went down the rabbit hole and became interested in boxes, bowls, vessels, peppermills, and almost every other project we see demonstrated. I really enjoy making Christmas-related items, and ornaments were about the only project I hadn't tackled. I considered the ornaments other turners were making but wanted to come up with my own design, and since I wanted to make a lot of them, it needed to be simple. Following are the steps I use to turn a birdhouse ornament—an approach that can be enjoyed by turners of any skill level.

Wood selection

This birdhouse ornament comprises two separate components: the roof and the body. I typically choose hard maple for the roof because it takes texture well, and just about any other wood for the body, such as white oak, ash, sycamore, or walnut. The wood for the body doesn't have to be special, since the roof, with texture and color added, will attract the most attention.

The blank for the roof should measure about $2\frac{3}{4}$ " (7cm) in diameter and 2" (5cm) long. The wood for the body can be a little smaller, but I like to start with material at least 2" square. In its completed form, the roof should be a bit wider than the body. The beauty of this project is that you can use those valuable cut-offs that we all just can't let ourselves throw away.

Turn the roof

Mount the roof blank on the lathe in spindle orientation—with the grain

running parallel to the bed ways. I normally am a strong advocate for using a properly turned tenon on anything mounted in a four-jaw chuck, but as my Uncle Buster used to say, there are always exceptions. As these blanks are quite small and I'm not applying very much torque to them during turning, it's fine to mount their square corners directly in the chuck (*Photo 1*).

Drill a hole in what will become the bottom of the roof (*Photo 2*). I do this using a $1\frac{1}{8}$ " (29mm) Forstner-style bit mounted in a drill chuck in the tailstock. This shallow hole, initially about $\frac{1}{2}$ " (13mm) deep, will serve as a recess for remounting the workpiece and as a connection point when gluing the roof to the body.

Next, turn the blank to a cylinder about $2\frac{1}{2}$ " (6cm) in diameter, being careful not to contact the chuck jaws.

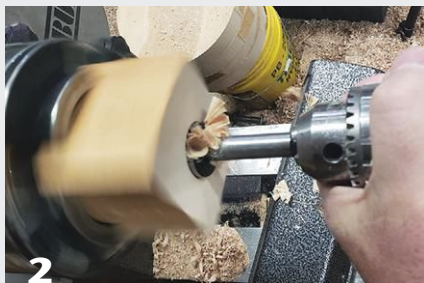
With the blank rounded, undercut the bottom of the roof slightly (*Photos 3, 4*). This surface will be the "soffit" under the roof's overhang. After this step, the hole depth will have been reduced to about $\frac{1}{4}$ " (6mm), ▶

Mount roof blank in chuck



1 The square roof blank is mounted in the chuck.

Drill recess, refine “soffit”



2 A recess drilled into the underside of the roof allows for reverse-mounting the work and for final gluing to the ornament body.



3 The author slightly undercuts the roof soffit.



which is also the depth I strive for on the tenon of the body.

Reverse-mount the roof blank, using pin jaws to hold the work in expansion mode. As you expand the jaws inside the recess, push the blank against the jaws to keep it centered and squared. I also use the tailstock for added support.

At this point, I shape the roof to my liking. Since the workpiece is small, I turn it at a lathe speed of 2500 to 3000 rpm. I shoot for a finished roof diameter of about 2½". Once I have achieved the basic shape I want, I try to get the best cut I can with a freshly sharpened gouge, which will alleviate excessive sanding. The final passes are made without tailstock support (*Photos 5, 6*).

Once I achieve the final shape and finishing cut on the roof, I select a tool

for adding texture. I own a couple of different commercially available texturing tools (*Photo 7*); both are fun and produce a nice texture that is easily enhanced by the application of color. The trick to getting a good textured surface is not speed but concentration and deliberate movement. As this is an endgrain project, the tool will work for you and produce more definition than in a facegrain project. I prefer the spiraling cutters to be on center or slightly below center. The lathe speed is slow, approximately 400 rpm. You can go slower, but I prefer not to turn the project faster, as it can damage the tool if spun too fast.

Rotate the texturing tool from horizontal so that the angle of attack is somewhere between 9 o'clock and 12 o'clock. Once you contact the wood with the texturing

tool, hold it against the endgrain with firm pressure. You don't have to push hard into the wood. Before you start moving the tool, confirm you are getting a pattern while holding it firmly in one place (*Photo 8*). Once you see the pattern emerge, slowly move the tool downhill (from right to left). *Photo 9* shows the textured surface.

I suggest practicing with your texturing tool on a piece of hard maple, cherry, or other closed-grain, dense wood before you start on your masterpiece. The tools don't require a lot of practice to start seeing success; just don't expect your first try to be the best. Experiment with a few different angles and slight variations in speed.

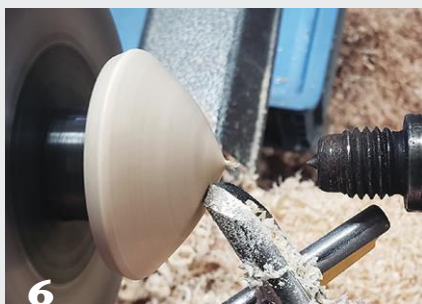
Sometimes I frame the textured area by adding a groove with a point tool. In this example (*Photo 10*), I am separating two different patterns and creating the illusion of a front facia to the roof.

Next, drill a hole for the brass screw eye at the top. I use a welding oxyacetylene tip cleaner, which can be found at most hardware stores or online. These tip cleaners have multiple tiny drill bits. I find that if I pre-drill a hole a little smaller in diameter than the threads on the screw eye, I won't get any splitting of the wood and it doesn't require glue. Another

Shape top of roof

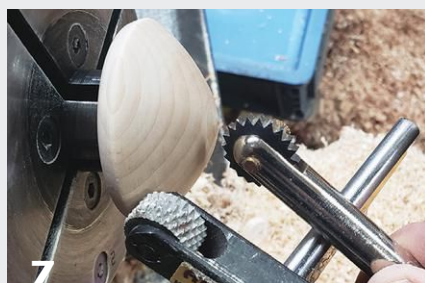


5 Reverse-mount the roof, now gripping it with pin jaws in expansion mode. Shape the roof top.

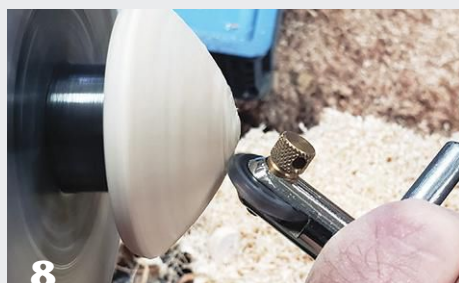


6 Reverse-mount the roof, now gripping it with pin jaws in expansion mode. Shape the roof top.

Add texture



7 The author chooses a texturing tool and then applies it to the spinning roof top. The trick is not speed but concentration and deliberate movement of the tool.



8



9

option is to use a miniature pin vise for drilling. Either way, bring up the tailstock and use the live center point to make a slight indent, which provides a starting point for the drill bit (*Photos 11, 12*).

Turn the body

Just as you did with the roof blank, mount the small square body blank into the chuck (*Photo 13*). After roughing in the shape, form a tenon to fit inside the recess drilled in the underside of the roof. The fit doesn't have to be overly snug, but not too loose either for a good glue joint. Turn this down slowly using a spear-point scraper, stopping the lathe frequently to test-fit the roof on the tenon (*Photo 14*).

Next, I drill three holes: one to hollow the body and then one each for the entry and perch holes. I like to drill both the entry and perch holes first (*Photo 15*) and then hollow the body last. Doing so prevents wood chips from accumulating inside the body. I use a $\frac{5}{32}$ " (4mm) brad-point bit for the perch hole, as this matches the dowel size I use for the perch. Then I use a $\frac{1}{4}$ " Forstner-style or bradpoint bit for the bird's entry hole. For hollowing the body, I use the drill chuck with a $\frac{3}{4}$ " (19mm) bit, drilled to about $1\frac{1}{2}$ " (38mm) depth. This will leave room for shaping the bottom of the body.

Shape the top portion of the body before reverse-mounting the work in the pin jaws, holding it by the tenon at the top of the body. Now shape the bottom of the body and blend it into the portion already turned (*Photo 16*). The diameter of the body should be somewhere between $1\frac{1}{2}$ " and $1\frac{3}{4}$ " (4cm) when finished.

When you have finished shaping the body, sand it to 320 grit. I like to apply a sanding sealer with a piece of paper towel (*Photo 17*). For a final finish on the body, I spray on semigloss lacquer, building up to three coats and lightly scuffing it with 400 grit before the third coat.

Decorate the roof

To decorate the texturing on the roof, I use a dry-brushing technique. Start ►

Define sections



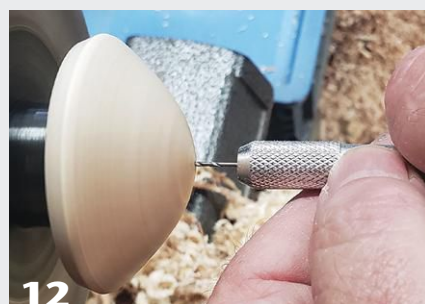
10

The author uses a point tool to add a groove separating areas of two different texture patterns.

Drill hole for screw eye



11



12

Use the tailstock live center point to make an indent as a starter hole, then drill for the screw eye.

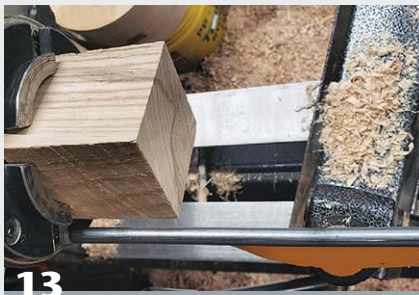
by applying black India ink to both the top and bottom of the roof (*Photo 18*). I use the Speedball brand, as it contains a little shellac and dries very quickly, helping to seal the wood. You can use an inexpensive chip brush to apply the India ink, but make sure to get the ink into every crevice so you don't see any bare wood.

It will only take a couple of minutes for the India ink to dry enough to dry-brush your topcoat color on the roof. I've used myriad colors for the topcoat—iridescent metals, various standard colors, and even reactive paints. For this ornament, I chose Golden's fluid acrylic iridescent copper, as I have found its viscosity to be the most consistent during application.

Dry-brushing is an art of its own, but for this project it's fine to use another inexpensive chip brush. The idea is to lay on a top color without completely hiding the black undercoat.

Squeeze a few drops of paint onto your palette and dip your brush into it. On a clean portion of paper, wipe the excess paint off of the brush until you are just barely getting paint when brushing it on dry paper. When applying it to the roof, you don't want any large globs of paint. Use fast, light swiping movements

Mount body blank, form tenon



13 Rough-turn the ornament body and form a tenon at the top sized to fit into the recess in the roof.



14

to get a very light coating of paint on the black textured roof (*Photo 19*). This technique requires several applications to build the color to the appropriate thickness, but the extra effort will be worth it. Using the little amount of paint left on the bristles after "drying" it on the paper allows the brush to highlight the tops of the textures, emphasizing their depth and giving the appearance of roof shingles or tiles.

I don't paint the underside, or soffit, as I think the simple black gives it a shadowed effect. Additionally, I don't use any other finish on the roof, as both the India ink and acrylic paint will suffice as a final finish.

Add the screw eye

Once the acrylic paint is dry, remount the roof back on the pin jaws in expansion mode. I first hold the screw eye with my fingers and hand-turn the chuck to screw it into the pre-drilled hole. Once it is fairly snug, I grip the screw eye with a small pair of needle-nose pliers until it has fully seated (*Photo 20*).

Glue parts together

As noted earlier, I use a simple $\frac{5}{32}$ " dowel as the perch. You could certainly turn a perch on the lathe, and I have done so in the past, but for this project a simple small dowel will work. I dip the dowel in the black India

Drill three holes in body



15 Drill three holes: one for the bird's perch, one for its entry port, and one to hollow the ornament body from the endgrain.

Reverse-mount and turn body



16 Reverse-mount the workpiece, now holding it by the tenon, so you can shape and finish the body.



17

Dry-brush roof



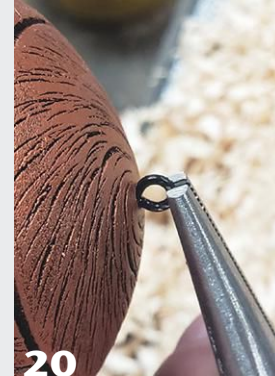
18

Decorate the roof. The author uses a dry-brushing technique to add depth to the textured surface.



19

Add screw eye



20

Thread in the screw eye at the top of the ornament.

ink and let it dry before gluing it in (Photos 21, 22). I first insert the perch slightly beyond its final position, apply medium cyanoacrylate (CA) glue from the top of the body, and then pull the perch back out a bit. This way, I avoid getting glue on the outside of the birdhouse body.

To glue the roof to the body, turn both parts upside down and apply a bead of medium CA glue to the inside edge of the roof and around the tenon on the body, then press them together and leave them upside down until the glue has dried (Photo 23).

To further decorate the roof of the birdhouse ornament, I like to use floral

picks, such as miniature pinecones and boughs, as shown in the opening photo of this article. So far, the most successful method I have found to attach them is to use hot-melt glue. You may also be able to use CA glue or other adhesives.

I purchased the little bird for the perch online and attached it with a few dots of medium CA glue. Hold it in place until the glue sets up rather than using CA activator, which could foul your lacquer finish. Patience pays off here.

Finally, add your ornament hanger of choice. I typically use small brass hangers or a length of ribbon.

Final thoughts

Birdhouse ornaments are as much fun to make as they are to give away. They make great holiday gifts for your friends and family, who will think of you each time they hang their ornament. ■

Larry Randolph has been turning for eighteen years and spent ten years as president of the Woodturners of SW Missouri. He has also demonstrated for many clubs and enjoys sharing his experience with new turners. Like most woodturners, Larry enjoys making different items but especially those focused on Christmas such as the one in this article. He lives just north of Springfield, Missouri, with Julie, his lovely wife of thirty-two years. Follow Larry on Instagram, @missouriturner1.

Glue in perch



21

A small dowel stained with India ink serves as the bird's perch. The author applies glue from inside the ornament.



22

Glue body to roof



23

A small amount of CA glue (or other type of adhesive) affixes the body to the roof.



Turn Ornaments Inside Out

Darin Dailey

The concept of an inside-out turning was described to me by an older gentleman at a country craft fair where I was displaying my rather primitive wood turnings. This occurred not long after I began my woodturning adventure. At the time, I was using a bottom-of-the-line spindle lathe that could handle only the lightest pieces of wood without violently shaking. I sat on the idea of inside-out turnings for a few years until my skills improved and I upgraded my lathe.

Through trial and error, improved technique, and developing my eye for detail, I now have a good understanding of how to make an eye-catching inside-out ornament. So let's dive into all the finer details of creating these little gems!

Prepare the blank

Choose a strong hardwood with clear, straight grain. My favorite for this purpose is hard maple. Start with a 2" × 2" × 6" (5cm × 5cm × 15cm) blank and mark one end with an arc at each corner. Draw three parallel diagonal lines on this same end. These lines are simply reference marks for reassembly, so their exact position isn't critical as long as each quarter of the blank's end has at least one line running through it (Photo 1).

Rip the blank into four pieces of equal width and thickness. All four corners on all four of these pieces should be exactly 90°. Reassemble the blank by matching up the pencil lines and returning the pieces to their original positions (Photo 2). Now, rotate

each piece 180°, moving the outside corners to the inside and vice versa (Photo 3).

Ensure the pieces are flush and tightly wrap each end of the blank with 1" (25mm-) wide monofilament strapping tape. (See sidebar: *Tips for Taping the Blank.*)

Editor's note: Monofilament strapping tape is essential for this project—do not substitute masking tape, duct tape, or other alternatives. Only strapping tape has the strength required to safely hold the blank together at lathe speeds.

Once taped, decide the location of the marble along the length of the ornament and mark two parallel lines all the way around the blank at the same distance apart as the diameter of your marble. These lines will be visible as the blank spins and are the boundaries that you must stay within when creating the space where the marble rests. Now it's time to mount the blank on your lathe.

Turn the marble's recess

Turning an inside-out recess to perfectly fit your marble can be a tricky process, but making some simple templates will set you up for

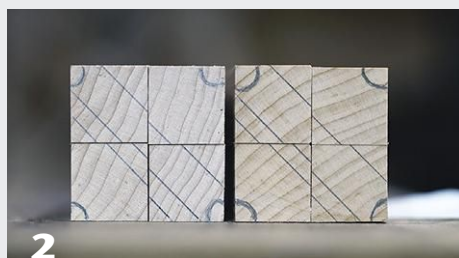
Precision Is Key

Inside-out turning requires accuracy in every step of the process—precision milling of the blank, measuring the distance between the saw blade and the fence, etc. Take your time and ensure that your milling equipment is tuned and set up for accuracy. All of the processes described throughout this article should be done with the intent of being precise. In the end your final product will be nearly perfect.

Make an inside-out blank



1 Mark one end of your blank with three diagonal lines and an arc at each corner.



2 Rip the blank into four equal, square pieces and reassemble using your pencil marks as a guide.



3 Rotate each piece of the blank so that the outside corners are toward the inside of the blank. Your penciled arcs should form a rough circle. Your blank is now ready for taping.

success. Start with two 3" × 3" × ¼" (8cm × 8cm × 6mm) pieces of wood and scribe a line down the center of each piece. With a Forstner bit sized to match your marble's diameter, drill a hole through each piece of wood, making sure to position the center point of the drill bit on the scribed line. Cut one of the pieces of wood in half, following one side of the scribed line. Individual marbles of the same stated size often vary in diameter. If the marble can easily pass through the hole of the first template, then you're ready to use the arch template in the next step.

Fit the marble

I mount a four-jaw chuck in the headstock of my lathe and replace the jaws with four rubber pins repurposed from a set of Cole jaws. These pins securely grip the sides of the blank while a live center with cup and point supports the tailstock end (*Photo 4*). To accurately center the tailstock end, I use a sharp awl to press a hole at the precise intersection of all four pieces of the blank.

Once the blank is mounted, begin removing wood to create a cove with a ½" (13mm) spindle gouge (*Photo 5*). Setting the lathe speed to a higher rpm (approximately 1800–2000 rpm)

helps in preventing chipping of the corners near the cove.

Start at the middle of the space between the two lines. Roll the gouge on its side to initiate the cut and ensure that the bevel is rubbing as you push the tool forward and swing the handle away from the cut. Alternate the direction of cut from left to right, gradually deepening the cove while also expanding the range of the cut outward towards the two boundary lines.

You'll know your cove has the right depth and shape cut out when the arch template placed on top of your cove, at the corner, allows the ▶

Mount the blank



4 The author mounts the blank between a four-jaw chuck fitted with repurposed Cole jaw rubber pins at the headstock and a live center with cup and point at the tailstock.

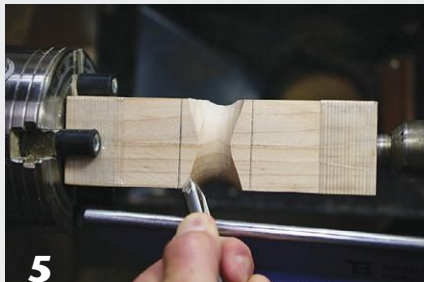
Tips for Taping the Blank

1. Pre-cut two pieces of tape approximately 20 inches (50cm) in length and fold over ½" (13mm) on one end of each piece for a tack-free handle.
2. Lay one piece of tape tacky side up on a flat surface with a fence, aligning it with the fence and pushing the edge right up to the bottom.
3. Place all four pieces with their ends butting against the fence on top of the tacky end of the tape.
4. Press the pieces firmly together while rolling the blank along the fence (*Photo a*).

5. After one revolution, pick up the blank and make any adjustments necessary so the ends are flush, then continue wrapping the tape tightly around the end of the blank. Repeat with the other piece of tape on the opposite end.



Turn a cove to fit the marble



5 With a 1/2" (13mm) spindle gouge, begin to create a cove.



6 Check your progress by placing the shop-made arch template at the corner and seeing if the marble passes through.



7 Refine the shape and depth of the cove by taking light cuts with a 3/8" (10mm) scraper and retesting the template often.

marble to pass through (*Photo 6*). There shouldn't be too many gaps visible between marble and wood. This will take practice and double or triple checking of the cove to ensure the fit is snug. I use my 3/8" (10mm) scraper, taking light cuts, to gradually refine the shape/depth until it is right (*Photo 7*).

Let in the light

Mark a pencil line in the bottom, center of the cove. This line does *not* get cut away. Turn a symmetrical bead or ridge with the pencil line at the center of the bead, then deepen and widen the cove on both sides of the bead, staying

within the width of the two original boundary lines (*Photos 8, 9*). Once satisfied with the size and shape of the cove and bead, sand up to around 400 or 600 grit and apply a coat of wax to the cove. Be careful not to get wax on any of the outer surfaces of the blank—these will become glue surfaces in the next step.

Glue up the blank

Remove the tape from both ends of the blank (*Photo 10*) and clear the surfaces of any strapping tape fibers, wood fibers, or debris. Return the pieces to their original configuration using the pencil

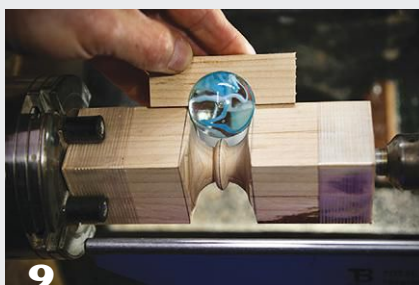
marks on the end of the blank as a guide. Working with two pieces at a time, apply a thin, even layer of glue on just the first piece. Align the pieces and press them together with your fingers. Place one clamp on each end and check to see if the faces and ends are flush. If not, reposition the pieces, re-clamp, and check again. When satisfied with the positioning, apply two more clamps (*Photo 11*). Wipe off any excess glue. Repeat this process with the other two pieces of the blank.

Allow the glue to dry and check that the final glue surfaces are smooth and flat. If you can feel

Add detail to the cove



8 Mark a pencil line at the center of the cove, then turn a symmetrical bead around it, leaving the line intact.



9 Deepen and widen the cove on both sides of the bead to create space for light to reach the marble, staying within the original boundary lines. The arch template and marble help visualize the negative space you are creating.

Disassemble the blank



10 After removing the tape, inspect the pieces for tape residue and debris in preparation for gluing.

raised portions of glue, put each piece face down on a sheet of 220-grit abrasive and move the piece back and forth with light, even pressure until smooth (*Photo 12*).

One last marble fitting

With the marble inside the cage, the two pieces of the blank should fit perfectly together with no gaps between them. If you have extra marbles, try a few to find the best fit—marbles tend not to be perfectly spherical, so one may work better than another.

If the halves do not fully make contact, first spin the marble in the cage to see if a different orientation will allow the halves to close completely. If this doesn't work, put the marble into one half of the blank and apply a good amount of pressure as you spin it back and forth. This will burnish the wood at the contact points inside the cage. Do the same with the other half. You should now be able to see the burnish marks (they will be slightly shiny) inside each half. Use a Dremel tool to lightly sand each of these burnish marks. Usually one or two rounds of sanding on all the marks will allow a snug fit with both halves of the blank making full contact.

Conversely, if all the marbles you test fit a little loosely in the cage, don't worry—a little wiggle room will not ruin the project.

Capture the marble

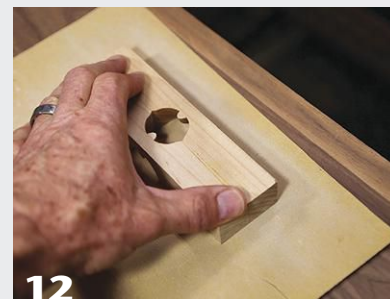
Glue and clamp the two halves together making sure to use the reference lines on the end of the blank for proper alignment (*Photos 13, 14*). Don't forget to put the marble inside—I have done this! Remove any glue squeeze-out from inside the cage. A damp cotton swab or toothpick both work well for this task.

Glue up in halves



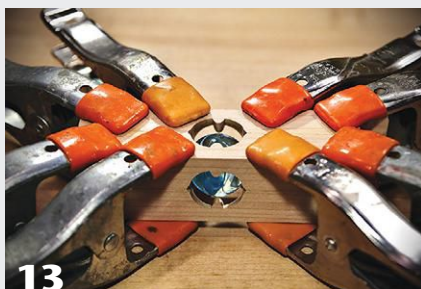
11 Glue up each half of the blank, placing clamp pressure along the full length of the glue joint and ensuring the ends and faces are flush (*See sidebar, Tips for Gluing the Blank*).

Prep the final glue surfaces

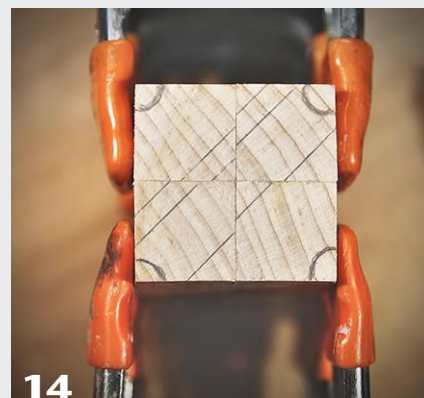


12 Remove any dried glue from the final glue surfaces by sanding each half face down on 220-grit abrasive with light, even pressure.

Glue the marble into the blank



13 Glue and clamp the two halves together around the marble, ensuring the pieces are flush at the ends and faces.



14 Use the pencil marks at the ends to confirm proper alignment—they should match their original configuration.

Shape the outside profile

For the final turning, mount a spur center in the headstock and use the same live center as before in the tailstock. With a sharp awl, press a hole in both ends where the four pieces intersect, then accurately center the blank with the top end of the ornament toward the tailstock. Apply enough pressure to the tailstock to seat the spur center into the wood. Once seated, back off the tailstock and then snug it back into the wood. This is important.

As the shaping of the ornament progresses, the blank becomes increasingly delicate and cannot withstand excess force.

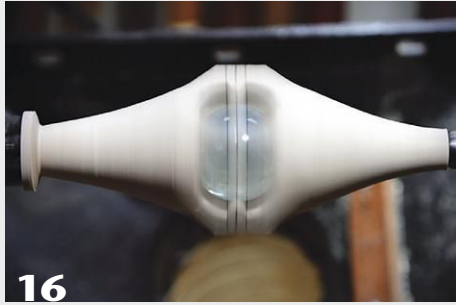
I like to mirror the bead on the inside of the marble cage with another on the outside. For accurate placement of the outside bead, mark three lines around the blank: one at the center of the inner bead and one at each outside edge (*Photo 15*).

Start removing stock with a roughing or spindle gouge on►

Begin shaping the profile



15 Mark three lines around the blank for accurate placement of the outside bead: one at the center of the inner bead and one at each outside edge.



16 Note how the interior anatomy and thickness of the marble's cage become visible at speed with proper lighting.



17 Begin shaping the exterior of the cage, making sure to leave enough mass to support the blank.

either side of the cage and work towards the ends, creating two cone shapes. Note that at speed, and with the proper lighting angles, you can see the interior anatomy and thickness of the cage (Photo 16). Leave enough mass to support the blank as you begin cutting away and shaping the exterior of the cage (Photo 17).

For the detail work, I use a ½" (13mm) spindle gouge, a ½" (13mm) skew, a ¼" (6mm) skew, and two homemade drop-nose scrapers (¼" and ⅜" [6mm and 10mm]), moving back and forth

between the cage and the ends of the ornament (Photos 18, 19, 20). Again, keep in mind that as the ornament is refined, it becomes more fragile, especially around the cage area. I add design features that provide both strength and visual interest: the beads inside and outside the cage and a thin extra layer (or sometimes two or three stair-stepping layers) at both ends of the cage leading down to the finials (Photo 20). Patience and light cuts are essential. Go easy and try to establish a balance between strength and delicate beauty.

Editor's note: Be careful to leave enough material to keep the marble in its cage. A broken cage turns the marble into a dangerous projectile.

As the ornament nears completion, the tailstock finial will narrow down to the point where the cup center pin enters the wood (Photo 21). This is where a small screw eye will eventually be attached. At the headstock end, reduce the wood to about ⅛" (3mm) diameter.

Sand and finish

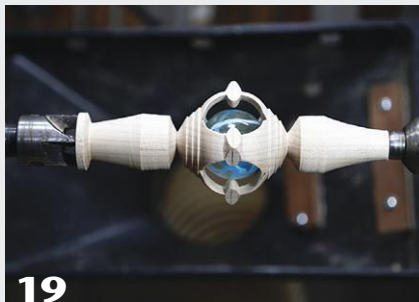
Start sanding with 220 grit and work your way up to 400 or 600. Be careful—there are corners and open spaces spinning at high speeds. Protect your fingers and knuckles by maintaining awareness of the angle with which you present the abrasive to the wood. Apply light pressure when sanding, as it's a delicate piece. If your lathe has a reversing motor, sanding in both directions is helpful.

After sanding is complete, blow any sawdust out of the marble cage and wipe sawdust from the ornament. With the lathe turned off, apply wax to the cage portion. Take

Alternate working the cage and finials



18 Continue refining both the cage and the finials, moving back and forth between detail areas.



19 Thin stair-stepping layers at the cage ends provide structural support and aesthetic detail.

Finalize the profile



20

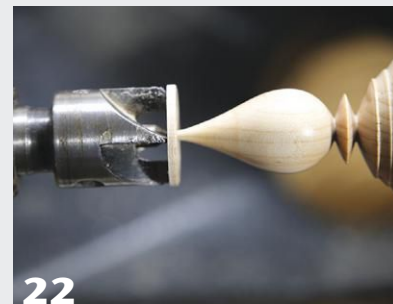
In the completed profile, the author incorporates beads and layered transitions that provide both strength and visual appeal.



21

Narrow the tailstock finial down to the point where the cup center pin enters the wood.

Part off



22

Reduce the diameter at the headstock end to $\frac{1}{16}$ " (1.5mm) or less. Lightly score the very end of the finial before removing the piece from the lathe.

care not to get wax inside. Apply wax to the finials at slow speed. Buff the wax off at higher speed with a clean cloth.

Parting and final touches

The last thing to do is part off the ornament from the headstock end. For this, I slow the speed down and use a $\frac{1}{4}$ " (6mm) skew. Being very careful and taking light cuts, reduce the diameter even further to $\frac{1}{16}$ " (1.5mm) or less (Photo 22). Put a light score mark at the very end of the finial and remove the piece from the lathe. Snap off the button on the bottom and shave away the nub left behind with a sharp knife or chisel. Hand sand the bottom and wax and buff. Check the cage openings for any areas that may need light touch-ups with abrasive. Put a small screw eye into the hole at the tailstock end. (I use 3mm screw eyes.) Sign it, date it, and hang it. Done!

In closing

Making these ornaments is an excellent opportunity for developing tool handling skills and improving your understanding of shape, proportion, and how the two interact to create a pleasing form.

My design process evolves as I go. I stop often, back away, and look at the whole piece. This lets me see where to shave off more wood, refine a curve, reduce a diameter, or remove or change an element that isn't working well with the whole. I use the mantra of "less is more" in my turning. Less wood gives more negative space for the ornament to interact with, and fewer design elements promote a simpler elegance.

It is an organic process for me. No two ornaments are the same, but I do tend to rely on several recurring themes, varying the shapes and their proportions slightly each time. I hope that you enjoy making these fun little ornaments. ■

Darin Dailey (happycamperdd@gmail.com) started turning wood on a sudden whim over thirty-three years ago. He was immediately addicted and has created thousands of items in that time. Until recently, he was a member of the Tidewater Turners in southeastern Virginia. He and his wife now reside in St. Augustine, Florida, where he hopes to tap into a new woodturning community! His work continues to evolve, morph, and improve as his skills do the same. For more, see Darin's Turning Point on Facebook.

MORE ON INSIDE-OUT TURNING

EXPLORE!

For more ideas on inside-out turning, log in at woodturner.org and use the Explore! search tool to find useful articles on the subject, including:

- "Inside-Out Turning Made Easy," by James L. Pruitt, December 2016 *AW* (vol 31, no 6)
- "Inside-Out Accent Adds Pizazz," by Abraham Tesser, October 2019 *AW* (vol 34, no 5)
- "Inside-Out Candleholder," by Richard May, June 2013 *AW* (vol 28, no 3)



TURN A WOOD SOCCER BALL



Bob Amarant

One of the great things about being in a woodturning club is that you get inspiration from other members. Recently when visiting my fellow club member Bob Steenbock in Mendham, New Jersey, I saw several full-sized wooden soccer balls he had made and was completely bewildered as to how they were constructed. Although he claimed it is a relatively simple project, I looked at him in disbelief, my head hurting just trying to understand how they could be made. But after watching a couple of YouTube videos, I had a lightbulb moment and said, “Oh, *that’s* how it’s done!”

I called Bob and asked if I could borrow the templates and special table saw fence he used to make his soccer balls. As I was picking them up, I laughed and said, “Okay, challenge accepted!” Following is what I learned about constructing and turning this interesting project.

Special items required

You’ll need two special items:

- A pair of plywood templates (*Photo 1 and Figure 1*), one in the

shape of a hexagon (six sides) and one in the shape of a pentagon (five sides)

- An L fence for your table saw (*Photo 2*)

Templates

There are various ways to make pentagons and hexagons. This article does not go into those details, but there are YouTube videos that illustrate the process, so you can easily figure out how to make the shapes on either a table saw or motorized miter box. If you (or a friend) have a CNC router, that’s another way to make them.

The templates will be used as a guide at the table saw and will run against the specialized L fence to make the hexagonal and pentagonal segments required for this project. But be aware that during cutting the blade will be slightly higher than the segments and will cut into the templates. Just be sure the blade is not set so high that you cut through the templates, which are made from $\frac{3}{4}$ "- (19mm-) thick plywood.

Drill three small holes toward the center of both templates and insert 1"

(25mm) drywall screws in a triangular shape. As shown in *Photo 3*, the tips of the screws will protrude approximately $\frac{1}{32}$ " (0.8mm).

L fence

An L fence can be made easily from $\frac{3}{4}$ " stock—either hardwood or plywood. It comprises a base piece about 4" (10cm) wide and 22" (56cm) long with a $1\frac{3}{4}$ "- (4cm-) tall strip attached along one edge (visible in *Photo 2*). The L fence is clamped to the table saw’s rip fence about 1" above the table surface; use the appropriate spacers to position the L fence when clamping it.

Cut the segments

To get the look of an actual soccer ball, use opposing colored woods, such as oak for the hexagons and walnut or mahogany for the pentagons. It is important for all of the segments to be the same thickness— $\frac{3}{4}$ ". Start by cutting squares large enough to accommodate the templates, which can then be cut into hexagons and pentagons at the table saw. It is also important for the

Make templates

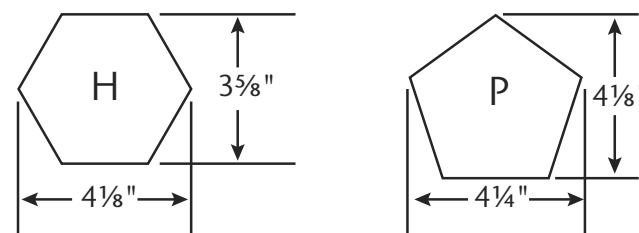
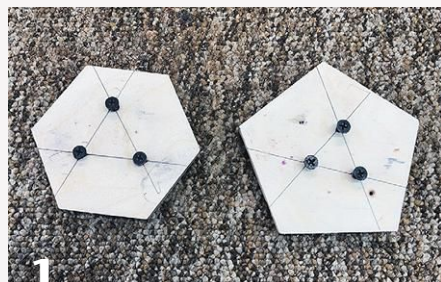


Figure 1.

Make two templates for cutting the segments on the table saw. One is a hexagon and the other, a pentagon.

Special table saw fence



2 Make an L fence for the templates to ride against. Clamp it to the table saw's rip fence about 1" above the table's surface.

Protruding screw tips grip workpiece



3 Screws just protruding through the templates help to grip the workpieces.

Exhaust hose clears off-cuts



4 A shop vacuum, operated in exhaust mode, blows away small off-cuts as they are cut.

shapes to be exactly as intended and cut at the correct angles.

When cutting the shapes on the table saw, there will be many small off-cuts that should be cleared from the blade area after each cut. Rather than trying to reach each piece with a pencil or other implement, I set up my shop vacuum in exhaust, or blowing, mode and place the hose at the far end of the L fence, pointing it so it blows under the fence and back towards me. I secure the hose by attaching it to a heavy block (Photo 4). With each cut, the vacuum blows the off-cuts safely away from the blade—much simpler and safer than clearing them manually.

My table saw blade tilts left, and the fence is placed to the left of the blade. The L fence is clamped to the right edge of the rip fence. If you have a table saw with a right-tilting blade, the configuration would be reversed, with the fence positioned on the right side of the blade.

It's a good idea to use a new or recently sharpened blade. Set the blade $\frac{1}{2}$ " away from the L fence.

Hexagons

You will need to cut twenty-two hexagons—twenty for the actual soccer ball and two as wasteblocks that you will glue to the ball for mounting it on the lathe between centers. If you wanted to make a few extras for dialing in your angles, that could only help.

Press the template with protruding screws into the segment workpiece (Photo 5). Tilt the blade to a 21.3° angle. Assuming the hexagonal template is $\frac{3}{4}$ " thick, set the blade approximately $\frac{1}{32}$ " higher than your segment piece. Again, the blade can cut into the template but not through it.

With the template on top and the protruding screw tips gripping the workpiece, slowly run the pieces through the blade, pressing the template against the L fence. Use a push block for added safety (Photo 6).

After cutting the first five hexagons, test-fit them by taping them in the configuration shown in Photo 7.

Align the edges so that the corners meet accurately. I recommend using plenty of 2"- (5cm-) wide blue tape and pressing it firmly onto the wood. If you don't do this, the pieces might come apart as you move them into position. Dry-fit the pieces to confirm that the angles and beveled surfaces fit together well.

The 21.3° bevel angle and mating surfaces should completely match, but you might have to make slight adjustments. Once you are satisfied that the first five segments come together without gaps, proceed with the next five. The first five will comprise a sub-assembly at the top of the ball, and the second five, the bottom. ►

Safety Note!

The templates and segments are small but manageable to cut at the table saw. However, you must be mentally focused, as any table saw procedure is potentially dangerous. Ensure the template/segment is held down firmly against the table surface and the template edge is pressed firmly against the L fence. If it isn't, the workpiece and/or template could ride up on the blade and produce a kick-back. In the video companion to this article (see sidebar on page 35), you'll see that I am comfortable using both my hand and a push block. Find a safe method that works for you in your shop.

Cut hexagon segments



Cut the hexagonal segments, using a push block for added safety.

Test-fit hexagon segments



Test fit five hexagon segments. This subassembly will be either the top or bottom of the ball.



Test fit ten hexagon segments in a line. This will comprise the center band between the top and bottom subassemblies.

When you are confident with the cut angles and bevels, make ten more hexagons to assemble the center band of the ball (*Photo 8*). Again, use 2"-wide tape that is pressed firmly onto the wood, and "fold up" the ten pieces into the center band as a test-fit. The goal is to achieve zero gaps in the top subassembly, bottom subassembly, and the center ring glue-ups.

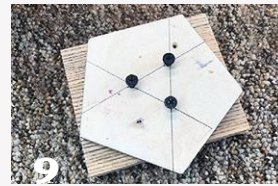
Pentagons

Once you have cut and taped the twenty hexagons, start on the pentagons. Use the same table saw process as before, pressing the pentagon template with

protruding screws into the workpiece (*Photo 9*) and running them along the L fence. However, for the pentagons, set the blade angle to 20.9°.

The pentagons may require a more trial-and-error approach to achieve the best fit. Start with some scrap pieces and keep adjusting the fence and making cuts until the pentagons fit inside the holes created by the subassemblies (*Photo 10*). This will likely take several attempts. There are twelve pentagons needed for the project, and I recommend cutting a few extras that you can use to dial in a good fit for both size and bevel angle.

Cut pentagon segments



Cut the pentagon segments using the same cutting method you used for the hexagons.

When I made this ball, I purposely cut the first pentagon larger than necessary and then cut it smaller incrementally, sneaking up on a good fit. To do this, I kept moving the L fence away from the blade. Do this until you're satisfied with the fit and the pentagons fit into the holes with their edges flush with the hexagons. If the pentagons sit a little proud or a little lower, it will still work since you will turn the joints flush. But be aware, after turning the ball, the segments will be about $\frac{3}{8}$ " (9.5mm) thick. The turning will also remove the indentations made by the protruding screws. As before, the goal is to have zero gaps in the mating pieces. If you do have some small gaps, they can be filled with a mix of glue and sawdust.

Test-fit pentagon segments



Dry-fit the hexagon subassemblies, and fill the remaining holes with the pentagons, dry-fitting everything for now.



Sand away any fuzzies from the cut bevels.

Tape and glue assembly

Lightly sand each of the cut bevels on all pieces across a flat surface with sandpaper (*Photo 11*). This is just to knock off any fuzzies in preparation for gluing a solid joint.

Start by gluing the top and bottom subassemblies. I apply a generous amount of glue using a brush. Do the top first, then the bottom, although the two are interchangeable. Then glue up the center band of ten pieces.

I used about 100 pieces of tape during this glue-up. In preparation, I cut off 3" (8cm) and 4" pieces of blue painter's tape and stuck them all over my workbench to keep them handy. You don't want to be tearing the pieces as you need them. It pays to have a helper during glue-up to hand you pieces of tape and help position everything.



Attach wasteblocks, mount on lathe

(12-13) Identify the centers of the two wasteblocks and glue them onto the ball opposite from each other.

(14) Mount the workpiece between centers.



Turn sphere

Turn the ball to a sphere shape, paring away most of the wasteblocks.

Once all the hexagons are in place, you can start gluing and taping the pentagons. When the ball is completely glued and taped, most likely 90% to 95% of the wood will be covered with blue tape. I used Titebond III glue for its longer open time. The gluing and taping process took me about twenty minutes. Allow the glue to dry thoroughly before removing the tape.

Turn the ball

With the tape removed from the ball, glue on two opposing hexagon wasteblocks, which will serve as turning points when mounting the work on the lathe between centers. Prior to gluing, mark the center of the hexagon wasteblocks (Photo 12). Then line up and glue them on opposite ends of the ball. I used tape and a weight to apply gluing pressure (Photo 13). Once the glue has dried, the ball is ready to be mounted and turned (Photo 14).

A sphere-cutting jig does a great job of turning the ball perfectly round (Photo 15), but you could also turn the ball by hand. If you are cutting the sphere by eye with a bowl gouge, you could use a compass to produce a template for confirming the ball's radius as you go.

Turn away most of the wasteblocks, leaving just enough material so you can reposition the ball between centers as needed (Photos 16, 17).

Finally, use cup centers to mount the work to cut away the wasteblocks and finalize the ball's round shape (Photo 18).

For the companion video (see sidebar for link), I turned the first two balls with a sphere-cutting jig. For the third

ball, I used a bowl gouge and found it much easier than I expected. It took me about thirty minutes to cut the sphere in both directions. When using either a jig or a bowl gouge, you can see the "shadow line" of the ball as it spins, so it is just a matter of removing the extraneous areas.

Sand and finish

Sand and apply your favorite finish. In my case, I sanded up to 220 grit and applied several coats of boiled linseed oil. Once that's completed, you might

consider making a worthy stand for the ball. Perhaps it is destined to be made into a lamp or trophy for your favorite soccer player. I'm sure they'll get a kick out of it!

Bob Amarant is president of the New Jersey Woodturners, whose clubhouse is located at the Essex County Environmental Center in Roseland, New Jersey. Bob has produced hundreds of videos on his YouTube channel, Bob's Woodshop Bob Amarant. Contact him at bobamarant@gmail.com.

Turn away wasteblocks



Rotate the ball, now mounted between cup centers, and turn away the wasteblocks.

See the video!

Bob Amarant created an instructional video to accompany this article. Check it out at tiny.cc/SoccerBall (URL is case sensitive).



MORE ON SPHERE TURNING!

EXPLORE!

For more ideas on how to turn spheres, log in at woodturner.org and use the Explore! search tool to find useful articles on the subject, including:

- "Have a Ball Turning Spheres," by Bob Rosand, Summer 2003 *AW* (vol 18, no 2)
- "Turning Spheres: A Simple Method with Ring Gauges," by Brian Simmons, Fall 2001 *AW* (vol 16, no 3)
- "Build Your Skills and Train Your Eye by Turning a Sphere," by Kip Christensen, August 2016 *AW* (vol 31, no 4)



CELTIC-INSPIRED DRINKING HORN

Michael Kehs



Shape the horn's lip



1 With the work mounted in a chuck and supported by the tailstock, the author forms a funnel shape, or lip, at the widest end of the horn.

Drill and expand opening



2 Drill with two different sized bits to loosely follow the narrowing taper yet maintain ample wall thickness.



3 The author uses a ring tool to cut into the endgrain and widen the horn's opening.

The ancient Celts were known for many aspects of their rich culture, among which the drinking horn holds a special place. A symbol of festivity and camaraderie, this vessel was often used in ceremonial and everyday drinking, bringing people together in celebration. Crafting your version of a Celtic drinking horn is not only a creative endeavor but will also have you turning, carving, and embellishing a unique and interesting piece. This article will guide you through the steps to create your own Celtic-inspired drinking horn.

Turn the horn

Start with a turning blank about 3" square (8cm) and 12" (30cm) long mounted between centers. I like to use linden (basswood), soft maple, or holly for this type of project. Turn the square blank to a cylinder with a tenon on one end to secure it in a four-jaw chuck. With the live center in the tailstock engaged, form the external part of the horn's "lip" in a funnel shape (*Photo 1*).

Using a drill chuck mounted in the tailstock, drill a 1¼" (32mm-) diameter hole to a depth of 3" (*Photo 2*), followed by a ⅝" (16mm-) diameter hole to a depth of 7" (18cm).

Turn long conical shape



4 Turn a long slender cone shape similar to a champagne flute.



5 Using the toolrest as a straightedge, draw two lines the length of the form at center height, 180 degrees apart from each other.

I use a ring tool to shape the interior of the top section into a funnel shape (*Photo 3*). Maintain a thickness of approximately ⅜" to ½" (9.5mm to 13mm) in this area, and ensure the lower portion remains sufficiently thick to allow for carving or texturing of the surface later.

Bring up the tail center with a cone attached to support the open end. Using a spindle roughing gouge and skew chisel, turn the outside shape to a long tapered and somewhat curved cone (think champagne flute). The small end should be around ⅜" diameter (*Photo 4*).

Now with the lathe off, draw two straight lines lengthwise from top

to bottom 180 degrees apart. It is helpful to use the toolrest as a guide (*Photo 5*).

Remove the piece from the lathe and cut off the tenon and any remaining waste material at the small end.

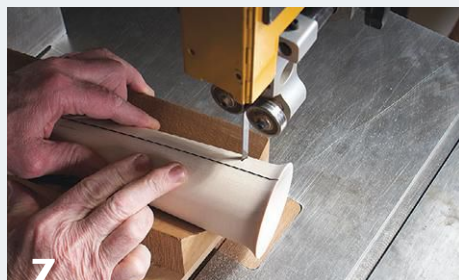
Cut and sand

To safely cut the workpiece into angled sections at the bandsaw, I made a custom V-block with 75-degree ends (*Photo 6*). *Safety Note: Never cut a round workpiece at the bandsaw without holding it safely in a sled or jig. The blade could grab and "roll" the piece out of your control, creating a safety hazard.* This sled rides along the bandsaw fence, producing consistent angles. ►

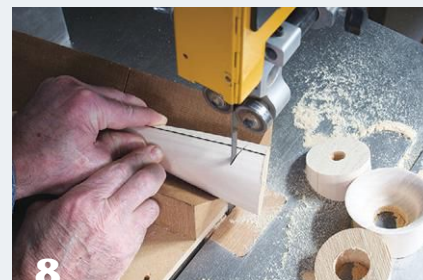
Cut angled sections



6 To safely cut the cone shape into angled sections at the bandsaw, the author made a custom V-block sled with 75-degree ends.



7 With one edge of the sled against the fence, cut the sections, alternating top to bottom with each cut and reducing the size of each section as you go.



Make the first cut with one of the pencil lines positioned at the top (*Photo 7*). For the second cut, rotate the piece 180 degrees so that the other line is now at the top (*Photo 8*). Support the small end to ensure the face remains square to the table during cutting. As you make each cut, gradually decrease the length of each section. The initial cut section should measure approximately 2½" (6cm) long. Note that the more pieces you cut, the greater the curve of the horn will be.

Sand the sawn faces with 120-grit abrasive on a disk sander, ensuring the surfaces are flat and free of saw marks (*Photo 9*).

Glue and refine as you go

Lay all of the pieces out on a length of tape with the wider sides down. Without applying glue, roll the pieces up into a horn shape, and apply register marks across each joint; I use a red pencil for clarity (*Photos 10-12*).

To seal the endgrain of each cut piece before final gluing, create a mixture of 50% wood glue and 50% water. Using a small brush, coat the cut ends of each piece with this mixture and allow it to dry completely. Sealing the endgrain helps to ensure the wedges adhere to one another securely (*Photo 13*).

Sand gluing surfaces



9 Lightly sand the surfaces that are to be glued.

Starting with the two smallest pieces, apply a layer of full-strength glue on one of the two mating surfaces and press them tightly together. Continue this process only up to the first section with a hole drilled in it. Squeeze out as much glue as possible for a stronger bond. Ensure the red register marks sync up for proper alignment, but do this quickly before the glue sets up, or you won't be able to make adjustments (*Photo 14*).

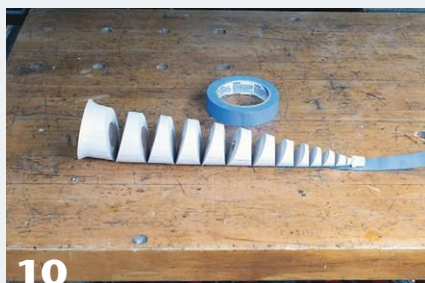
Draw a line around the cross-sectioned piece, approximately ½" from the outside edge. I use a ⅜" spherical cutter with a medium cut to begin carving the inside, ensuring it mimics the curvature of the horn (*Photo 15*). Mark a line on the next

piece to be carved. Before gluing, carve the side of that wedge nearly up to the marked line. Apply glue and carefully align the next section with the existing form, paying attention to the registration marks. I find that this type of glue sets up within a minute, allowing for almost immediate carving.

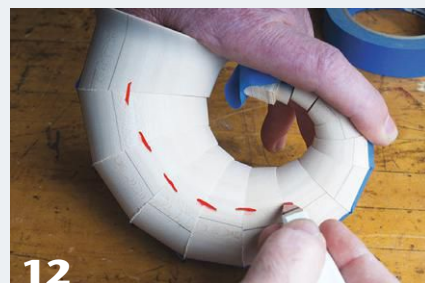
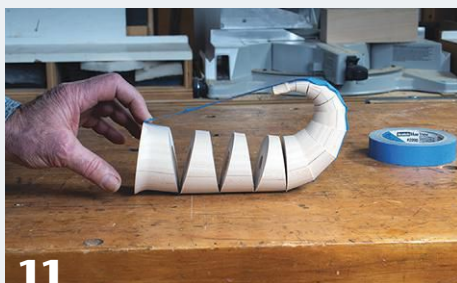
Draw another line around ½" from the edge. Once the joint has sufficiently set, sculpt the inside of this piece to match the previously carved shape, and sand the bottom of the initial piece. Continue this process until you reach the lip. I recommend working on three pieces simultaneously: sanding the smallest piece, blending the middle one, and starting on the third piece. Use your finger to gauge smoothness and the continuity of the inner curve. Ball-nosed pneumatic sanders are highly effective for working inside the horn (*Photo 16*).

Sculpting the outside of the horn is somewhat easier, though any discrepancies in shape will be noticeable. For the convex area of the horn, I use a ¾" ball-nosed cylinder with a fine cut, positioning it perpendicular to the joint, as shown in *Photo 17*. In the concave area, use the same tool but align it parallel to the joint, as shown in *Photo 18*.

Dry-fit, add reference marks



10 A strip of masking tape pulls the sections together for a dry fit prior to gluing. Draw alignment reference marks.



Once you are satisfied with the overall shape of the horn, sand it. Cylindrical pneumatic sanders are ideal for this task (*Photo 19*).

Surface treatment and embellishment

Now that the shaping is done, you can embellish your horn with textures created with rotary tools or pyrography tips. Then paint or even add metal to the surface to make it truly unique.

Choose a theme

The horns used by Celts for everyday purposes, such as drinking mead, water, or their beverage of choice, were likely plain. However, for special occasions and for the

clan leader, a drinking vessel made from an auroch bull horn was often highly decorated. It may have included silver or copper adornments, etchings into the horn, or have a leather lanyard attached.

My version celebrates the Germanic folklore story of Fáfnir, who initially was a dwarf, the son of Hreithmar and brother of Regin and Ótr. Driven by greed, Fáfnir killed his father and transformed into a dragon to guard a cursed treasure but was eventually slain by the hero Sigurd.

Begin by researching your theme and deciding on the elements you want to include. I wanted a dragon, a Viking warrior, and a raven. Then

Seal endgrain



13

Prior to gluing, the author seals the endgrain surfaces with a diluted mixture of wood glue and water.

determine where on the horn you want your chosen elements. For me, the dragon head seemed perfectly suited for the tail-end of the horn, and Fáfnir was best suited for the ►

Glue and refine as you go



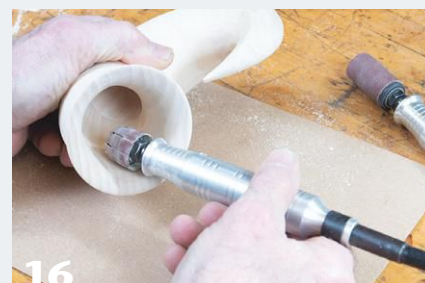
14

Glue the sections together starting at the narrow end of the horn. Rub two pieces together and hold them in proper alignment until the glue sets up.



15

When you reach the first section with a hole drilled in it, carve the interior to match the outer profile, and continue this process with each section.



16

Shape and sand the form



17

For convex areas, the author shapes the horn with a 3/4" ball-nosed cylinder held perpendicular to the glue joint. In concave areas, the tool is held parallel to the joint.



18



19

A cylindrical pneumatic sander makes quick work of final sanding.

Embellish according to your theme



20 After drawing feature elements onto the wood, the author defines edges using a straight-sided carving bur, then trims away background areas.



wide end flanked by two ravens. Assess your elements accordingly, and draw them onto the wood. If your drawing skills are not as you'd like them to be, you can search online for images and then scale them up or down, print them out, and trace them onto the wood. But keep in mind the sketches you make don't need to be perfect—they are merely guidelines for carving (*Photo 20*).

Start carving

I used an endmill (a straight-sided carving bur) to define the outside of each element, cutting to a depth of about $\frac{1}{4}$ " (6mm) (*Photo 21*). Using an egg-shaped stump cutter,

I reduced the background to the bottom of the original end mill cuts. Be sure to blend this area into the rest of the horn, trying to maintain its roundness and curvature (*Photo 22*).

Once you have lowered the background, you can start the burn-carving process. I use a spearpoint pyrography knife on its flat side to press down and "melt" the wood away and round over any sharp corners that shouldn't be sharp. For this step, you will need a couple of pyrography tips of different sizes and shapes (similar to the spearpoint) to access smaller areas, curved spaces, and other difficult places to reach. Don't try to

remove a wood chip as you would in ordinary carving; instead, use the tool like a trowel and swipe a layer of wood off until you've reached the shape you want (*Photos 23, 24*). Continue this method until all elements are shaped to your liking.

Throughout this burn-carving process, clean the piece with a soft brass brush (or a horsehair brush if the wire brush scratches the wood). I used basswood for this example, so a horsehair brush was the better option.

Now that your elements are shaped, add texture to the background. I used several different-sized cup burs to accomplish this task, but you may want to texture your horn differently. I felt the cup bur texture was appropriate for a dragon because it closely resembled the scales of a lizard (*Photo 25*).

Paint

Begin by sealing the horn with shellac or your favorite sealer and taping off any area that you don't intend to color. Following is a description of the dry-brushing technique I used on my piece.

I applied India ink on all of the burned areas and used a toothbrush to scrub it into the deepest crevices, ensuring their texture

"Burn-carving" features



23 A spearpoint pyrography knife presented on its flat side further shapes and defines elements.



would be as black as can be. This helps to highlight the texture. After the ink had thoroughly dried (a heat lamp can speed the drying), I added a small bit of Golden's titanium white paint on the tip of a 3/8"-wide, fairly stiff artist's paintbrush and rubbed the brush on a cardboard surface to get most of the paint off. If you are painting in this manner, do not skip this step and leave too much paint on the brush. With almost no white paint loaded, scrub the brush back and forth across the textured surfaces of the horn. The high points of the surface will scrape off that bit of white without filling the deeper grooves. (If you inadvertently get paint in the grooves, quickly take a clean wet brush and rinse the area, then dab the wet watery paint out with a dry paper towel. If you wait too long and the paint does not wipe out, you can use the pyrography pen to burn it out.)

I was looking for a light gray semi-solid color, which can take one or two applications. The white paint will help your colors pop quicker than putting the colors right on the black surface.

With the surface now ready for color, start with the background. I applied my colors in very thin layers. Whichever color you are using, remember that in nature nothing appears to be a single color, so you may want to use two or more shades. The background of my dragon piece comprises teal, cobalt blue, light green, forest green, and yellow. Each color can be applied in one to three or more layers, depending on the depth you want. Typically, a dry-brushed piece can have up to twenty very thin coats.

Once the background is to your satisfaction, paint the primary elements. Use the same dry-brush technique to attain a layered depth of color. At this point, you may need to apply some wet paint, such as a fluid acrylic paint, to add details like I did for the eyes on Fáfnir's face or the red on his dragon's eyes. This is typically done with a very small, pointed paintbrush.

Sometimes a horn might call for other materials to embellish it to your liking. My version of Fáfnir has two shields made of copper and nailed in place (Photo 26).

My dragon also needed a mane, which I made from copper and dry-brushed (Photo 27). After the paint has dried, spray on a coat of acrylic or lacquer with a flat or matte sheen.

Conclusion

Finally, you'll need a way to display your beautiful horn. I wanted my display stand to be subdued, not the star of the show but created with care as to be of the same quality. Your display will depend on the theme you've chosen. I used a black pyramid with blacksmith nails to evoke the early Viking era. Whatever theme you choose, creating a horn can be a satisfying experience that will challenge your carving and embellishing techniques. ■

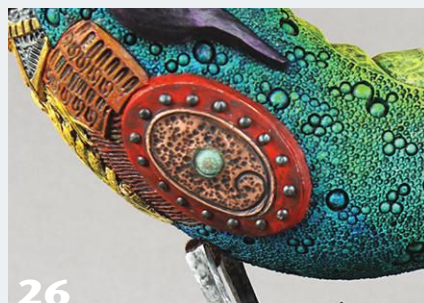
Michael Kehs, from Bucks County Pennsylvania, has been carving and turning since 1981 and has owned his wood business since 2006. He teaches and demonstrates locally and internationally. Michael also has written for Woodcraft Magazine and American Woodturner. For more, visit michaelkehswoodworks.com.

Cup bur adds dragon scales



25 The author chose to use a cup bur to mimic dragon scales.

More embellishment features



26 Fáfnir's shields and the dragon's mane are fashioned from copper.



27

STORY OF A WORKING BOWL

James Huleatt

At a recent family reunion, I was catching up with my brother-in-law John. I asked if he was still making his weekly batch of artisan bread. “Yup,” said John, then added, “You know, I really wish I could get hold of a two-gallon wooden bowl for mixing my dough.”

The next day, I looked up John’s birthday and was surprised to discover he was turning 80 in just over two weeks—a personalized mixing bowl would be perfect. The timeline ruled out roughing out a wet wood bowl, but I remembered a video on gluing up overlapping wedges tangent to a conical inside form. I cut a few wedges to see if the concept would work. I’m not a woodturner, but I have friends who are—if the blank came together well, one of them could do the turning.

After a little sketching and modeling, I determined the bowl’s dimensions and figured I’d need forty-eight wedges glued up into a conical ring, with a segmented base to close the bottom. I



chose a plank of light-colored cherry for the wedges and found a piece of dark cherry for the base segments.

At this point I realized I wouldn’t finish in time for John’s birthday, so without promising a bowl, I started sending him progress snapshots.

Wedge glue-up

I arranged the wedges around an inverted stainless steel bowl and cut a plywood ring to hold them in place at the base of the assembly. I mixed clear epoxy, brushed a heavy coat on each wedge, and, with my wife’s help, positioned them vertically within the plywood ring (*Photo 1*). Then I tipped the wall of wedges inward so they rested against the bowl form and applied clamping pressure with a 25 lb (11 kg) weight plate (*Photo 2*). The outside fit looked good with no visible gaps, so I was happy to walk away and let the epoxy cure.

What I didn’t report to John was that when I turned over the glued wedge ring, there were several large gaps showing on the inside. I filled those gaps with more clear epoxy, working it carefully into every crack with a piece of thin plastic strapping.

Bowl bottom

I cut triangular segments for the base from my dark cherry board. I tried to get ten even segments but the wood had too many defects. In the end I had to make do with nine 36° triangles plus two 18° pieces. After the segments were glued up into a disk, I flattened the bottom of the wedge ring, mixed and applied epoxy, and clamped the base in place (*Photo 3*).

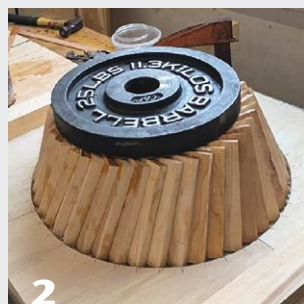
Life insurance

Since the surface of the wedge ring glued to the base was endgrain, my friend Jonathan, who would be doing the lathe work, suggested inserting dowels to reinforce the joint. I drilled sixteen angled holes around the base (*Photo 4*) and epoxied in the dowels. The blank was ready for turning, so I dropped it off at Jonathan’s shop.

Taking shape

At noon the next day I received a text with a shot of the bowl mounted on the lathe and well on its way. Jonathan had screwed a faceplate onto the inside of the bowl bottom with a spacer to keep the top edge clear of the lathe headstock (*Photo 5*).

Gluing up the wedge ring



(1) The author applies slow-curing epoxy to forty-eight cherry wedges, arranging them around a stainless steel bowl form.

(2) A plywood ring constrains the wedges at the bottom of the assembly while a weight plate provides clamping pressure.

An hour later I received the second shot—the outside was finished! Jonathan had cut a dovetail mortise in the bottom and was ready to start on the inside (*Photo 6*). I had to sit on my hands with fingers crossed to avoid rushing over. I wanted to see what was happening every inch of the way, but at the same time I didn't want to know anything until it was done.

The next morning Jonathan was at my doorway with the bowl. He had finished it with beeswax, and it was beautiful.

Capacity check

I wanted to leave a couple of surprises for John to discover when he had the bowl in his hands, so the last picture I sent showed two gallons of beans inside with only the outside surface visible (*Photo 7*).

The bowl at work

Before shipping the bowl, I took one last shot and sent it to my son. He loved the curved wedge lines (*Photo 8*) but questioned whether Uncle John would ever be able to mix flour and water in such an art piece. “Oh no, that’s clear,” I told him. “This is a working bowl. It will not just be on exhibit!”

On the “Happy birthday 2 weeks ago!” card I placed in the bowl, I included, “You owe us a shot of the bowl in service.”

I heard back as soon as my box arrived: “IT’S BEAUTIFUL!” But it would be a few more days before I received the picture I had been waiting for...



Attaching the base

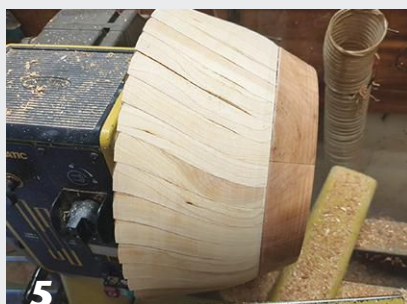


3 A segmented cherry base is epoxied to the wedge ring, and any gaps between wedges are filled with additional epoxy.



4 Angled dowel holes are drilled around the circumference of the base to strengthen the butt joint of wedge endgrain to baseplate facegrain.

Turning the exterior

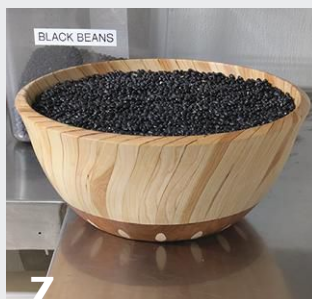


5 The complex bowl blank is mounted on the lathe with a spacer and faceplate screwed into the inside bottom of the bowl.



6 The exterior of the bowl takes shape, revealing a pattern of contrasting dowels. A dovetail mortise is cut in the bottom for mounting the blank to turn the inside.

The finished bowl



(7) The author fills the bowl with two gallons of black beans to demonstrate the bowl's capacity.

(8) The interior of the bowl reveals wavy lines where the geometry of the bowl meets the conical wedge glue-up.

By trade a design engineer, James Huleatt (jameshuleatt@ccimail.com) has often turned to crafting one-off items in natural materials as a relief from the constraints of manufacturing. He grew up in southwestern Pennsylvania but has spent years overseas in the UK and Australia. He lives in the Hudson Valley of New York, where he enjoys foraging for mushrooms near abandoned bluestone quarries and keeping an eye out for interesting, weathered tree roots while bird watching.

OPEN/CLOSED

2025 POP EXHIBITION AND AUCTION

Photos by Tib Shaw/AAW.

PEach year, the Professional Outreach Program (POP) exhibitions and auctions feature an exciting mix of original work created by a roster of national and international established and emerging artists. POP themes are chosen to provide a dynamic springboard for creative ideas and a showcase for extraordinary small-scale work.

Through boxes and other forms, the *Open/Closed* theme invited artists to explore ideas of access

and boundaries, beginnings and endings, and the spaces in between. The resulting works reflect humor, poignancy, and at times practicality—as well as extraordinary technical skill—culminating in an exhibition rich in both visual and conceptual depth. Since 2007, close to 300 artists have been featured; a visual feast of work from the last ten years of POP auctions can be viewed at **auction.woodturner.org**.

Ensuring that the POP exhibitions reflect the international scope of wood art and embrace new voices each year

is key to the success of the program. Funds raised, including \$73,000 from the 2025 auction, support the artists and the initiatives of the Professional Outreach Program, including panel discussions, instant gallery awards, exhibitions, and grants.

Next year's POP show

The theme for the 2026 POP exhibition and auction is *Holding Space*. The application period is December 1, 2025, to January 15, 2026. More information is available on the AAW website, tiny.cc/Calls. ■



Dixie Biggs (Florida), *Hinging on Leaves*, 2025, Cherry, milo, watercolor, colored pencil, 4" × 5¾" × 2½" (10cm × 15cm × 6cm)

"Much of my work literally hinges on leaves. Using magnolia leaves as my inspiration, I wanted to create a turned box that incorporated a wooden hinge. The velvet pad inside makes a perfect nesting place for that favorite piece of jewelry or other small treasure."



Heather Marusiak (Kansas),

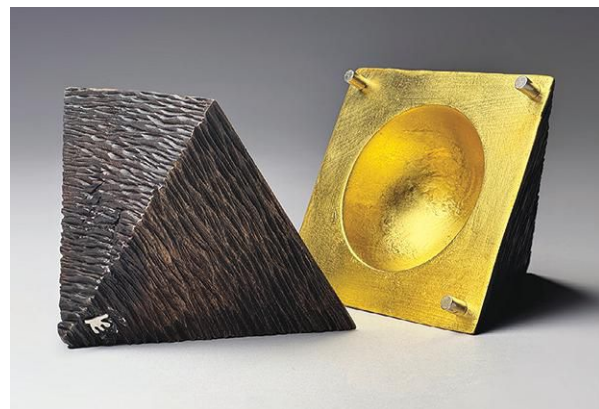
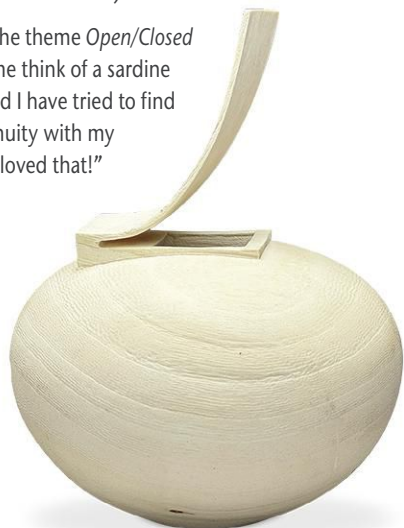
Capsule, 2025, Ash, pyrography, acrylic color, 5½" × 4" × 4¼" (14cm × 10cm × 11cm)

"A capsule covers and protects. What does it hold? A mystery, a treasure?"



Yann Marot (France), *A Sign of Openness*, 2025, Fig, 5½" × 4¾" × 3½" (14cm × 11cm × 9cm)

"First, the theme *Open/Closed* made me think of a sardine can. And I have tried to find a continuity with my work. I loved that!"



Emmet Kane (Ireland), *An Tairseach (Threshold)*, 2025, Irish elm, 23-carat goldleaf, magnets, 4½" × 6" × 4½" (11cm × 15cm × 11cm)

"This piece sits in that in-between space—a thin place, you might say—where the line blurs between what's seen and what's hidden, what's open and what's closed. It's held together by small hidden magnets. Not locked. Not exactly offering itself up either. There's a kind of hush to it. Like standing at the doorway of a room you haven't stepped into yet or catching sight of something just beyond your reach. A threshold was never just a step or a sill—it was a moment. A crossing. A place where something might come through or something else might stay behind. This piece holds that kind of pause. It doesn't draw attention to itself, but it invites you to come closer. To mind the quiet. And maybe hear what isn't being said."

Kenji Honma (Japan), *WA-RI-KI Tea Container*, 2018, Japanese bigleaf magnolia, urushi lacquer, stone powder, linen, 3¾" × 2¾" × 2" (9cm × 7cm × 5cm)

"My work begins with riving (splitting) wood along its natural grain lines with a hatchet. I strive to make the most of each tree's unique character. The hardships of snow and winds are visible on the surface, and each stroke of the hatchet reveals a new pattern—signatures in the grain from winters past. Sometimes my works reveal to me something beyond my own imagination. *WA-RI-KI Tea Container* is a small box [like those] used in Japan for hundreds of years as a tea ceremony utensil, which I have created using traditional lacquer techniques and a new sensibility."



Mark Gardner (North Carolina), *Shrink Box*, 2023, Cherry, poplar, milk paint, 4" × 5" (10cm × 13cm)

"Shrink boxes are made from green wood that changes shape after having been turned and allowed to dry. The box wall shrinks around the dry disk of wood that makes up the bottom. In this way, the box itself goes from being open to being closed. As woodworkers, we typically try to find ways to avoid wood that warps or to rework it once it has and is dry. I find this approach to working with the natural properties of wood absolutely satisfying."



Rebecca DeGroot (Texas),

Embrace, 2025, Walnut, maple, wire, resin, acrylic paint, flocking powder, 6" × 3" × 3" (15cm × 8cm × 8cm)

"In *Embrace*, I explore contrasts. The sculptural piece, crafted from wood, presents a lily, symbolizing growth and beauty, spiraling upward, cradling a small box within its leaves. Even as one lily fully opens, the other bud remains firmly closed. The small bee, tucked beneath the petals of the open flower, serves as a handle for the box. This piece invites the viewer to consider the contrasting elements of concealment and revelation, vulnerability and protection, and the disparate elements that create a harmonious whole in nature and in life."



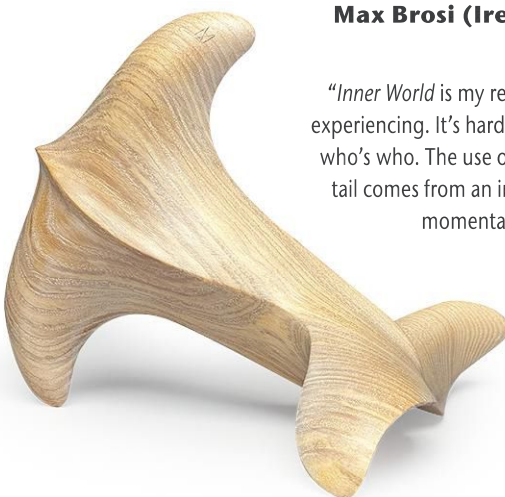
Benoît Averly (France), *Hut Box*, 2025, Oak, 6" × 5¼" (15cm × 13cm)

"What else than a box could I have done? This theme was calling for one. This year it has been twenty-one years since I met Richard Raffan, who taught me how to make these."



Max Brosi (Ireland), *Inner World*, 2025, Ash, 5¾" × 5¾" × 5¾" (15cm × 15cm × 15cm)

"*Inner World* is my response to the absolute chaos the world is currently experiencing. It's hard to make sense of it, to distinguish what's what and who's who. The use of maritime imagery like the anchor and the whale's tail comes from an inner, less complicated, child-like world that lets me momentarily escape the chaos of what we see in the media."



Tom Hale (Ohio), *Ash and Ebony Box*, 2025, Ash, bleach, stain, ebony, brass pins, lacquer, 5¾" × 8½" × 5" (15cm × 22cm × 13cm)

"As described in the call, open and closed are opposites—yet each helps define and complete the other. I reflected this duality in my choice of colors: black and white. One represents the absence of color, the other the presence of all colors."



Gerrit Van Ness (Washington),

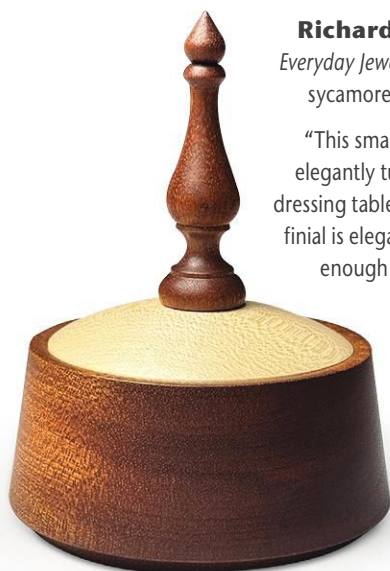
Keeping Clam, 2025, Maple, boxwood, acrylic paint, 2½" × 5½" × 4" (6cm × 14cm × 10cm)

"I'm sure everyone has wondered where decorative seashells come from. I found the answer to be oversexed mother clams who raise their offspring for future martyrdom."


Richard Findley (England),

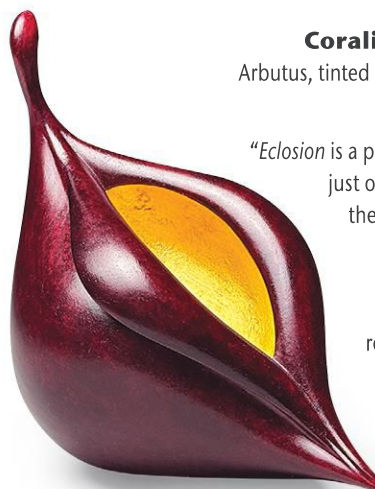
Everyday Jewelry Box, 2025, Sapele, English sycamore, 4¾" × 3½" (12cm × 9cm)

"This small lidded bowl, featuring an elegantly turned finial, is imagined as a dressing table box for everyday jewelry. The finial is elegant and decorative but robust enough to be used to lift the lid."


Coralie Saramago (France),

Eclosion, 2025, Arbutus, tinted shellac, 22-carat gold, beeswax, 3" × 5" × 2¾" (8cm × 13cm × 7cm)

"*Eclosion* is a precious seed that is between closed and open, just opening after a long winter to let the world see the treasure it holds. It is made to fit in your hand to give a closer look at the precious seed that is hatching before you, opening its heart and revealing its golden treasure. This seed is a representation of the sacred feminine, in honor of the treasure of motherhood."


Melissa Engler (North Carolina),

Returning, 2025, Maple, reed, specimen pins, waxed thread, parchment, colored pencil, gilding wax, 5½" × 6" × 3" (14cm × 15cm × 8cm)

"Before the fallow time of winter, the seed pod opens and the promise of next year's growth is scattered on the wind."

Gabriel Hoff (Ohio),

All Wrapped Up, 2024, Olivewood, 1⅞" × 2" (48mm × 5cm)

"It is always hard to find a style of turning to showcase a particularly precious piece of wood. For me, lidded boxes are the answer. For this piece, the knots and burl eyes of the olivewood are wrapped up and enclosed in the grain, almost like they are being protected by the swirling figure of the outside world."





Matthew Shewchuk (Japan), *Surreptitious Vessel*, 2025, Wood, lacquer, 4¼" × 5½" × 3¼" (11cm × 14cm × 8cm)

"Two opposing spherical masses bound together in one form representing two separate states of belonging and acceptance. The exterior is charred and shaped, the interior is raw and simple. Together, they express living in one culture and having a strong hidden connection to another. To identify with and participate in aspects of two distinct worlds whilst residing in one geographical location."

Kevin Jesequel (Oregon), *Let the Light In*, 2025, Bubinga, leopardwood, acrylic paint, 4" × 5½" (10cm × 14cm)

"A hollow form is an inherently closed object. Is there something in there, or is it just a void? And if it is a void, is it longing to be filled? Is the inside as 'perfect' as the outside suggests? It never is. But is that imperfection a flaw or a truth? How does one share the interior of such a form while still maintaining a defined boundary? A window lets the light in and offers a glimpse beyond the surface. It allows others to look, to wonder, maybe even to understand. Can they accept what they see? Can I?"



Felicia Francine Dean (Tennessee), *Enter Woven*, 2025, Ebonized cypress, 5⅝" × 4¾" × 4½" (14cm × 12cm × 11cm)

"Enter Woven depicts the buried fibrous textures beneath the screen of a historical Italian velvet pattern. The windows of the geometric design expose the core material that drapes the voids within the pattern. The Museo del Tessuto in Prato, Italy, supported the illustrated pattern work through access to its collection."

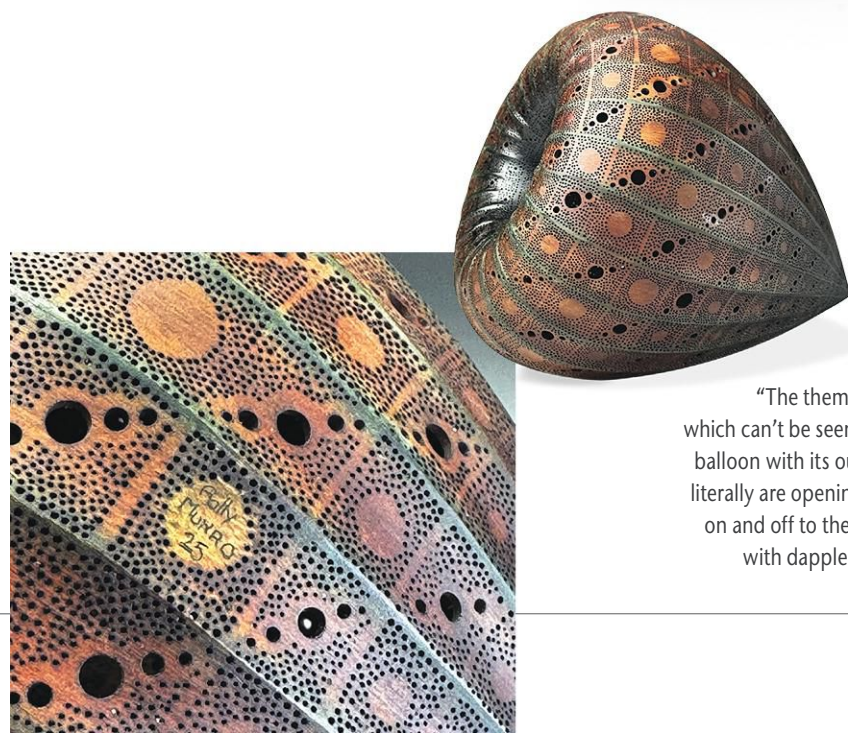


Derek Weidman and Doug Weidman (Pennsylvania), *Guardian's Keep*, 2025, Koa, cherry, holly, 7" × 6" (18cm × 15cm)

"As a child, I looked to my father for the *hows* in life—his hands fixed problems, built worlds, gave shape to ideas. He often took over my projects, until I learned to finish them myself. Now, he struggles to carve like he did, so I made the ring-turned animals, doing my best in his style. The box he turned came out a bit large, but I couldn't bring myself to alter it. Like his work in my life, the box he made is at the heart of what I do now. Unchanged, a wooden legacy, for me to add to."

Rex Kalehoff (Luxembourg), *Grazer*, 2025, Fumed oak, sapele, 6" × 5¼" × 4" (15cm × 15cm × 10cm)

"This small lidded vessel portrays a grazing sheep with an impressive set of horns. Inviting a contemporary narrative of strength, perseverance, and individuality, this piece offers a unique enclosure for personal keepsakes or even dry ingredients in the kitchen. Classic dark tones of the fumed oak evoke another time and place, while the sapele interior of the bowl offers a welcome surprise of warmth."



Rolly Munro (New Zealand), *There and Back*, 2024-25, Pohutukawa, rata, epoxy, dye, lacquer, 5½" × 5" × 5½" (14cm × 13cm × 14cm)

"The theme of the exhibition is *Open/Closed*. I imagined *closed* as being a point which can't be seen and *open* as a space which can be. *There and Back* is like an inflated balloon with its outer center pushed into its inflation point. The perforations and dots literally are opening and closing the view into the internal void, thus turning the lights on and off to the viewer. Looking into this piece is similar to walking through a forest with dappled light [or seeing] the fluid spatial effects of starling murmurations."

ERIC LOFSTROM TEACHER OF ALL AGES

Joshua Friend



At his very core, Eric Lofstrom is a teacher. By day, he is a dedicated physical education instructor, having taught P.E. at the elementary school level for twenty-three years and at the middle school level for five years. He augments his educational career with the parallel work of demonstrating and teaching woodturning. But Eric is no ordinary teacher and no ordinary demonstrator. I have had the opportunity to witness him in both settings—the elementary school gym and the woodturning demo hall. In both instances, what you see is a genuine, heartfelt act of human connection. Eric’s lathe skills are also considerable, and as an expressive wood artist, his works speak to the self-healing in all of us.

Collector and collaborator Joe Seltzer confirms, “Eric is an excellent artist who has a strong sense of design and color. But first and foremost, he is a teacher. In his demonstrations, he gives incredibly clear explanations for small but important actions, like how

one moves his/her body, setting up for sharpening to ensure a fine edge on the tool, and how to present the tool to the wood.” It comes as no surprise that both his personal approach to teaching and the themes expressed in his wood art emerge from the same source—a desire to hear and see others, to be heard and seen, and to empower and be empowered.

The benefits of play

As part of learning about teaching, Eric did his research on the value of *play*—literally the benefits of playing. “Play is *participating with*,” explains Eric. “I believe in 100% participation. If I’m going to ask [students] to do twenty pushups, I’d better be doing twenty-five and do it right next to them.” That belief extends to any adults who visit and/or observe his gym class; they are expected to participate in the activities to whatever extent possible for them. So on the day I visited his third-grade gym class, after Eric introduced me to the kids, I joined in the games, which

involved using a hula hoop as a jump rope, playing volleyball, and doing laps around the gym. As I turned the corner and jogged down the length of the gym, a girl caught up and reassured me that I am a good runner. Then she asked if I had any ponies.

Eric knows that full participation sends an important message about respect. His approach to teaching, both in the school gymnasium and in the demo room, is rooted in relationship and includes fun, positivity, and encouragement. Just as he expects participation of visitors in the gym, he gets his woodturning demo audiences on their feet, too. It is truly something to see when Eric has a room of fifty to 100 people balance on one foot while looking up, bend at the knees while keeping a straight back, and transfer weight from one leg to the other. There is laughter and maybe some embarrassment, and the audience may or may not realize in that moment they are being taught how to be present in their bodies and

how to move at the lathe in a safe and ergonomic manner.

Eric's undergraduate degree is in athletic medicine, with minors in psychology and health. He also earned a master's degree in sports pedagogy. Biomechanics was a key part of his studies and remains an area of personal interest, so his approach to teaching lathe work always involves a good stance and cohesive, full-body movement.

Professional woodturner and demonstrator Keith Gotschall notes, "So many of us as demonstrators talk about body movement, how we move at the lathe in relation to the work, but nobody else gets a whole class of woodturners to stand on one foot! It's fun and it's funny, but also super useful. I don't think anyone else could do it like Eric does." Keith continues, "Eric is really a cheerleader for the woodturning community. It is a magical thing to see."

For Eric, teaching kids how to use a jump rope is the same as teaching woodturners how to use a skew. In both cases, it is about taking something that is complex or misunderstood and making it as simple and friendly as possible. He strives to break down a process into its smaller, foundational blocks and then empower people to succeed in those blocks *before* combining them into a cohesive

and seamless whole. And as for the difference between school kids and woodturners, he notes, "It is a different audience, but they're really still the same. We are all people. [The adults] just have more life experience."

With both audiences, Eric thinks of himself as *coaching* rather than *instructing*. It is telling that when he worked in athletic medicine, sometimes helping athletes who experienced very serious, life-changing injuries, his favorite part was patient education—fixing the whole person, not just a broken arm that could no longer catch a football. He feels that merely telling someone what to do (instructing) is the opposite of empowerment because it can rob a person of the opportunity to discover. Like any good teacher, Eric knows that when a new woodturner finally *discovers* how to roll a bead with a skew—with sufficient coaching, of course—there is no turning back.

Eric explains that the typical woodturning demo, where a piece is completed before your eyes, is not his style. "A demo is a steppingstone for dialog," he says, "an opportunity for interpersonal relationship and a conversation that sparks inspiration. This is even bigger than woodturning."

A journey to awareness

Eric was first introduced to woodturning when he saw someone demonstrating

at a woodworking store. He was immediately attracted to the process, and soon his wife Lynn bought him a mini-lathe as a gift. The lathe package came with penturning accessories, and Eric embarked on a learning journey that continues to this day.

As with all turners, there were mistakes along the way that became learning experiences. Once while turning a large platter that was held by way of a recess, Eric noticed some vibration and suddenly the work came off the chuck, deflected off the toolrest, and flew over his shoulder. In another instance, he left a large skew chisel on the lathe bed while actively turning and bumped it accidentally, sending it sharp-end first into his boot and slicing all the way through the liner. He took away the obvious lessons, but more important was an understanding that he needed to have better awareness and mental presence as a way to avoid mistakes.

Thoughtful anticipation of how your body is affected by the space you occupy—and of how you are feeling—helps to preclude mistakes. This intentional presence (without a sense of hurry) puts you in a frame of mind where you are more likely to remember to check the tightness of the chuck, put a sharp tool back in its place, or ensure the tailstock pressure remains at the appropriate level. Eric would argue this kind of awareness is the best safety measure. ►

A teacher of all ages



Eric applies the same principles, whether he is teaching school children or adults: respect, relationship, empowerment, participation.

Collaboration with glass artist Annemarie Hoffman, *Latte 'Da*, 2017, Hawaiian koa (cup), figured bigleaf maple (foam), sandblasted borosilicate glass (steam), ebonized koa (saucer), oil, 6" x 6" (15cm x 15cm)



Another thing that led Eric to seek greater presence is his experience with anxiety, which caused an inability to focus, among other things. Over time, he found ways to cope. One way was to name the physical things he observed around him—street sign, curb, cars, steering wheel. Another was to adopt the practice of barefoot running, an experience he says forces you to be mentally present.

Eric adapted these coping methods to improve the time he spends in his woodturning studio. Prior to a move to a larger workspace in 2022, Eric worked in a very small space that he kept uncluttered, clean, and always in top working order. There, he learned to set the environment to encourage good focus on the task at hand. He also decided that mental awareness and presence, paired with good body mechanics, would bring the safest, most effective working conditions.

When he and Lynn moved to the Kitsap Peninsula of Washington State in 2022, he shifted to a spacious out-building that houses his well-equipped studio and a living space for visiting students. But even in this larger space, he continues to “set the environment” as well as an intention for the day’s work, which he pursues thoughtfully. This intentionality brings order and

some level of peace, allowing Eric’s creative urges to take shape successfully and safely. Prior to the move, he told me, “The only reason I would want a bigger studio space is to have a bigger *teaching* space, where I’d have multiple stations. And that would be partitioned off from the rest of the shop.” That vision has come to fruition, and now he and Lynn enjoy hosting inquisitive students of the craft.

Questioning assumptions

Eric’s parents were always involved in craft in some way—his father, a musician, and his mother, a basket maker, weaver, and quilter. They always encouraged him to question why things are as they are and not to blindly assume the nature of things, even if they are longstanding and generally accepted “truths.”

One example in woodturning is the grain direction in bowls. In my own woodturning education, I was taught that facegrain orientation is *always* better, as endgrain bowls are perceived to have weaker walls. But Eric pointed out that applying this conclusion to *all* bowls has become automatic for many and is perpetuated by not asking *why*. He explains that if you have an endgrain bowl of even wall thickness and consistent grain structure, it may actually be

more resilient: “If you drop it or hit the rim, it’s the same grain orientation all the way around, so it flexes the same. It can absorb a resonance or an impact and disperse it because it is uniform. If you look at facegrain, ninety degrees from wherever it hit is the opposite grain orientation. It can’t resonate uniformly and will crack.” So Eric will opt for endgrain orientation for small- to medium-sized decorative bowls, where consistent interior and exterior grain orientation is useful for embellishment.

Artistic work

During his first few years as a woodturner, Eric made functional items, such as bowls, platters, tops, pens, etc., honing his skills at the lathe. But before long, his turned work showed more and more emotional expression. His artistic work today is highly intentional—Eric is not one to let the wood dictate form: he will seek out materials that allow him to achieve the goal he has in mind. Yet, his work derives from a complex mix of forces: it is conceptually informed by the momentum of self-healing and being human—with themes like *Namaste*, *Resilience*, and *Resonance*—and shaped by the remarkable precision available only to those aligned with their own physicality.

For three years in a row, Eric attended the Frogwood collaborative event (frogwoodcollab.com), which draws artists from various disciplines. Then, after not attending in 2017, he came to realize the event’s importance in keeping his creativity active. Between teaching P.E. in school full time and demonstrating woodturning at symposia and local chapters, creative studio time is often put on hold. The open, sharing spirit at events like Frogwood teaches and enriches, according to Eric, who has now attended six times and has presented as part of a panel about collaboration at an AAW Symposium. Sometimes



Assorted bowls from the *Namaste* series, 2017-2019, Bigleaf maple, sugar maple, madrone, acrylic pigment, clear finishes, Largest: 3" x 4½" (8cm x 11cm)



Namaste Bowl, 2016, Sugar maple, bleach, acrylic pigment, 2¼" x 2½" (6cm x 6cm)



A small but precise bowl in Eric's *Namaste* series, receiving its signature spiral from bottom to rim.

you find specific answers to questions you've been seeking or solutions to creative challenges. One example is found in Eric's *Latte Da* series of coffee-cup motifs. He searched for just the right material to make the wisp of steam but didn't find it until he came across glass artist Annemarie Hoffman, who was able to bend borosilicate glass with an internal core to mimic the elusiveness of steam.

"I crave the chance to be creative. It offers me the opportunity to play within the constraints of a material, a tool, or a technique to express who I am or a thought that I have," explains Eric.

Eric's *Namaste* series of bowls, typically no bigger than 5" (13cm) in diameter, are almost always in endgrain orientation. He explains, "Endgrain is my favorite because I can get pieces that are of consistent grain structure in my favorite woods, which for the *Namaste Bowls* are sugar maple and pacific madrone." With a scraper, he is able to employ good biomechanics to create an uninterrupted curve without ►

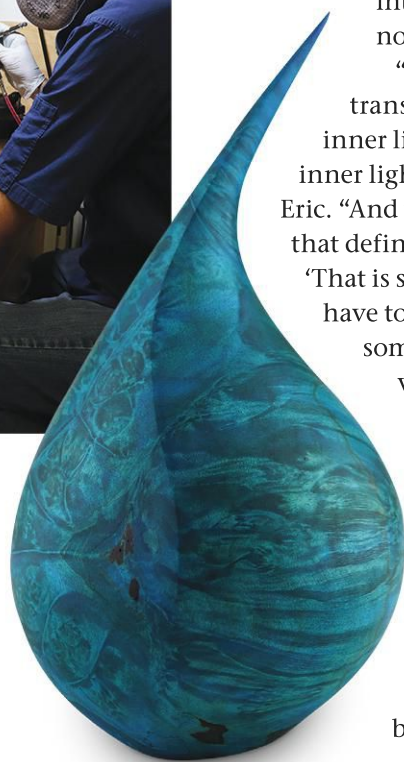


Namaste Bowl, 2015, Solid acrylic, acrylic pigment, 2¼" x 2¼" (6cm x 6cm)

Radiance series, 2020,
Sugar maple, acrylic
pigment, patinaed copper
(stand), 5½" × 5½" × 1"
(14cm × 14cm × 25mm)



Eric airbrushes a raindrop
in his *Resilience* series, 2018,
Bigleaf maple burl, dye,
matte lacquer, 7" × 3½"
(18cm × 9cm)



transitions. This approach impacts the whole effect of the piece: after shaping and prepping the surface, Eric uses those same biomechan-

ics to apply the spiraling paint from bottom to rim. It is

a motion of the body, intentionally applied, not just of the hands.

"*Namaste*, loosely translated, means, 'The inner light in me honors the inner light in you,'" explains Eric. "And when I first heard that definition, I thought, 'That is so beautiful—I have to represent that somehow.'" Eric uses a

variety of embellishments to convey the respect inherent in *namaste*. Some of the bowls have iridescent paint or metal gilding on the interior, some have a rough exterior (wire brushed), some are

sandblasted, some are multifaceted like a gemstone.

On the smaller size of his *Namaste Bowls*, Eric says, "Most people think the smaller the curve or the smaller the form, the easier it is to get it perfect. But it's actually the opposite because it happens faster. Because you have less material to remove, you have to be that much more in tune with the process. In a large form, you might have ½" (13mm) of material to remove, but in a small form, you might have less than ⅛" (1.5mm) to work with." It requires a micro-focused attention to detail.

And that meticulous care and sensitivity is what helps define Eric's artistic work. Precise technique and defined intention result in objects that speak of what's inside. He explains, "As an artist, I want my work to represent me as a body in and of itself, through a few series of works. I want it to be narrow enough so when people see my artwork, they say, 'Oh yeah, that's Eric!' I no longer display pens or face-grain bowls or platters, even though I have made a lot of them." Eric started to adopt names for his series and had to consider, "How do I want my art to represent who I am as a person, even if I'm not standing there to explain it?"

The ripples you see in *Harmonic Introspection* are a defining feature of Eric's *Resonance* series. Like ripples on a pond after a stone is tossed in, the undulations in these pieces hint at expanding outward and the inter-relatedness of all things and people. And in a parallel way, this concept is carried out every time Eric engages in teaching—an endeavor that, for Eric, is always based in relationship.

The unpolished tool marks of the ripples act as a recording of Eric's thoughts and emotions as he was making the piece, telegraphed through his body movements. They remain raw and exposed, an honest reverberation from within. This is especially true for Eric since he uses his whole body at the

lathe. Whether he is nervous or calm, the work will show it.

Around 2019, Eric began exploring acrylic as a turning material and soon discovered that a rippled piece in this clear medium carries the extra literal and figurative significance of transparency. A piece like *An Honest Conversation with Myself* (Introspection series), with two surfaces turned on different axes, has a different appearance when viewed from the front, back, and sides. If this piece represents Eric, its making is a remarkable act of vulnerability, as the viewer is invited to see right through. Eric confirms that working with acrylic was an artistic exploration in openness, as he wonders, “Does the observer take time to see beyond the surface?”

With a *Namaste*-style bowl hollowed and colored in the front surface, the viewer is met with an unexpected and revealing side view. This is a stunning piece in which the creative combination of method and material convey vulnerability, motion, and peace. And yet, despite the artistic potential of acrylic, Eric ultimately grapples with the environmental



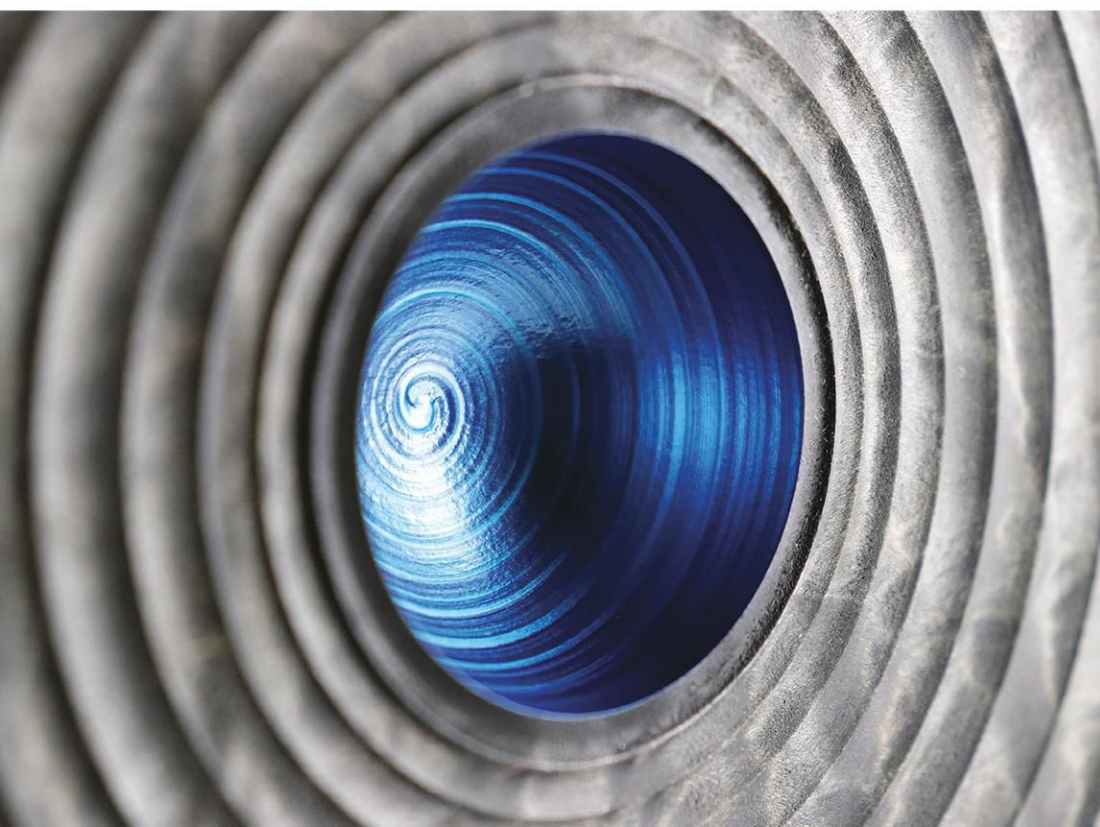
Harmonic Introspection: Past, Present, Future, 2018, Sugar maple, bigleaf maple, dye, matte lacquer, acrylic pigment, With base: 21" × 14" × 5" (53cm × 36cm × 13cm)

concerns of the toxicity of its shavings. Because of this dilemma, his use of acrylic is currently on hold, as he continues to wonder about alternative materials, such as molded glass, when something other than wood is called for.

For his *Resilience* series, Eric turns forms that resemble raindrops, for what is more resilient than water? Turned on three axes, the raindrops ▶



Resonance series, 2019, Figured bigleaf maple, dye, matte lacquer, acrylic pigment, 18" × 9" × 2" (46cm × 23cm × 5cm)





An Honest Conversation with Myself (Introspection series), 2019, Polycarbonate, acrylic pigment, 9" × 5" × 2" (23cm × 13cm × 5cm)

feature a balance of three facets in one piece, suggesting both support and movement. The work conveys the resilience of water itself—an element that changes form in the water cycle but ultimately never goes away.

Stargazing is Eric's most recent expressive work. It depicts a clear night sky viewed past tall conifers to the darkness of outer space brilliantly

punctuated by the moon and stars. The moon is essentially a *Namaste*-style bowl, which puts that prior creative discovery to yet another new use. *Stargazing* was inspired by the healing process of accepting darkness in an emotionally challenging season of life and awakening to inspiration found in shared light. Hinting at our own inner dialog during difficult

times, the piece highlights the idea that sometimes the darkest conditions are necessary to even notice that light exists. A recurring thought for Eric while making this piece was, "I see you and feel your presence."

Eric seeks to empower others. He does this equally with his school-age students and with adults pursuing the art and craft of woodturning. When you meet Eric, you'll find him a relentlessly empathetic, accepting soul who only wants good things for you. In his role as a teacher of all ages, this translates to patience, inquiry about his students, and authentic presence. In his wood art, it translates to deeply thoughtful, expressive objects carefully wrought. ■

For more, visit ericlofstrom.com.

Stargazing, 2025, Figured bigleaf maple, dye, silver wire, matte lacquer, 22k goldleaf, flame-patinaed brass (stand), 5½" × 9" × 1" (14cm × 23cm × 25mm)

"Sometimes experiencing the darkest ambient conditions is the only way to see the light that is there."



Joshua Friend is editor of American Woodturner.

MEMBERS' GALLERY

John Dillon, Illinois

Sometimes things “just happen” in life, and I have always been fortunate to have been in the right place at the right time. Such was the case in 2019. I had finished a few years of furniture-building classes at the Chicago School of Woodworking, where I routinely walked through the school’s lathe area. I hadn’t turned on a lathe since I made a baseball bat in the seventh grade almost fifty years earlier (yes, I still have the bat). I decided to take a woodturning class and became absolutely hooked.

Since then, I’ve become obsessed with finding and turning beautiful local woods—especially walnut, cherry, and maple—into functional items like bowls and platters. I’m also evolving into more embellishing techniques and creating sculptural turnings.

Probably the greatest thing of all, however, is the new friends I’ve made in the turning community. Almost everywhere I turn, I meet someone willing to share their talent and

knowledge about woodturning. If someone is keeping the secrets to their success, I haven’t met that person yet. More recently, I’ve started mentoring and teaching and feel like I have come full circle and am now doing my part to help carry on the tradition of woodturning.

For more, follow John on Instagram, @prairievalleywoodturning.



Madrone Burl Lidded Vessel, 2024, Madrone burl, walnut oil, 7½" × 6½" (19cm × 17cm)



Cherry Burl Bowl, 2025, Cherry burl, walnut oil, 6" × 8" (15cm × 20cm)



White Oak Bowl, 2025, White oak, milk paint, walnut oil, 4½" × 5½" (11cm × 14cm)



Maple Vase, 2024, Maple (textured and dry-brushed with acrylic paint), 11" × 5" (28cm × 13cm)

Rick Tucker, Missouri

After retiring from a career in quality manufacturing, I took up woodturning to continue creating, something I’ve done all my adult life. Wood captivates me with its grain, figure, color, texture, and the simple beauty of it growing freely in nature. I’m self-taught, having begun on a Shopsmith I inherited from my father. It wasn’t long before I realized a large log would make that machine “walk” across the shop floor, so I invested in a dedicated lathe.

I started by turning the usual bowls (lots of them), boxes, goblets, and plates. My interest in resin led me to get a pressure pot and dive into combining resin with wood, especially root balls, which showcase stunning figure. Eventually, metal spinning caught my eye, and I made aluminum bowls with hemmed edges on the lathe. If something new sparks my curiosity, I have to try it. Unusual, unique items inspire creativity. ►



Oak Platter, 2025, White oak (quartersawn), cutting board oil, 1" × 10½" (25mm × 27cm)



Elm Box (right in photo), 2025, Elm, shellac, wax, 6" × 2¾" × 2¾" (15cm × 7cm × 7cm)

Walnut Box (left in photo), 2025, Walnut, shellac, wax, 4¼" × 2¾" × 2¾" (11cm × 6cm × 6cm)

Terry Martin’s book, *The Creative Woodturner*, inspired me to make these boxes, whose bases contrast dramatically with their spherical lids—both in texture and in shape. In the book, Terry explains how to make the rough cuts with a bandsaw.

Mark Holden, Massachusetts

My formal art education began at a vocational high school, where I studied technical illustration and commercial art. I began my career as a graphic paste-up artist, then worked for thirty years as an advertising production artist until retiring in 2023. I started woodturning in 2009, making bowls, boxes, and ornaments that mainly highlighted the beauty of the wood. As my turning skills progressed, I began

looking for ways to incorporate my own personal style.

From the beginning, I have been involved with local chapters, served as secretary for one, and am currently the external vice president for two clubs. In 2019, I brought in a well-known turner who demonstrated techniques for embellishment, and that demo was the catalyst for incorporating different finishing techniques into my own work.

In 2024, I received an AAW educational grant, which I used to attend a five-day class on thin-wall turning, piercing, texturing, and airbrushing.

My creative journey continually evolves from lessons learned at both regional and national symposium demos. I am not locked into one style but enjoy using many techniques to express myself, and attending symposia feeds my repertoire of options.



Love Box, 2025, Boxelder, pyrography, rotary carving, acrylic paint, fixative 6" x 4" (15cm x 10cm)



Celtic Horn, 2020, Poplar, pyrography, acrylic paint, fixative, 6" x 7" x 5" (15cm x 18cm x 13cm)

African Grey Box, 2021, Silver maple (from Arnold Arboretum), pyrography, acrylic paint, fixative, 4" x 5" (10cm x 13cm)



Zen Tangle Box, 2025, Boxelder, pyrography, acrylic paint, lacquer, 6" x 4" (15cm x 10cm)



Leaf Bowl, 2024, Yellow wood, pyrography, piercing, acrylic airbrush, lacquer, 2" x 8" (5cm x 20cm)



Trees of Life Bowl, 2025, Maple, pyrography, piercing, lacquer, 4¼" x 8" (11cm x 20cm)



Box Elder Vase, 2023, Spalted boxelder, polyurethane, 6½" x 8" (17cm x 20cm)

Thomas Scurto-Davis, Pennsylvania

I began turning in 2019 after joining a local “wood gym.” A member of multiple woodturning clubs and a past president of Keystone Woodturners, I value not just the craft but also its practitioners—the many friends, mentors, and critics who have been invaluable to my artistic development. As a former opera singer, I never considered becoming a visual artist. However, while leading a community art center outside of Philadelphia, I caught the turning bug and haven’t looked back.

I am currently a nonprofit financial consultant and find that turning allows me to marry the right *and* left sides of my brain: problem-solving and creating in the studio setting.

As a former musician, I am as interested in the impact of voids (in music called “rests”), as I am in what remains. Much of my work is improvised, controlled hands guiding a subconscious process. My pieces most often test the boundaries of the material through extensive elimination. My latest work is intended to provide opportunities to closely observe and deeply contemplate negative space. In this way, I hope my work can be a catalyst for reversing perception and embracing *duality*...virtues that seem in short supply of late. ■

Oval Tower Group, 2022, Walnut, Waterlox,
tallest: 13" × 2¼" (33cm × 6cm)



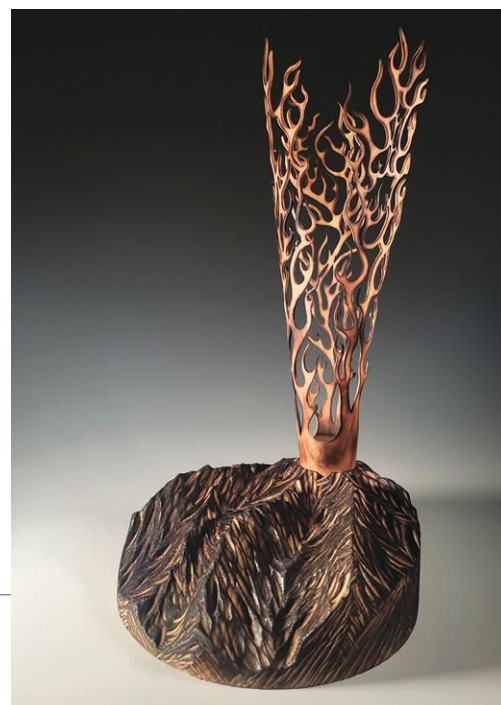
Now You See It, 2023,
Walnut, Waterlox, 9" × 2¼"
(23cm × 6cm)



Circuitous Tool, 2024,
Cherry, mineral oil,
beeswax, 13½" × 2¼"
(34cm × 6cm)

No Where to Run,
2025, Cherry, silver maple,
fire-sanded, lacquer,
15½" × 9" × 9"
(39cm × 23cm × 23cm)

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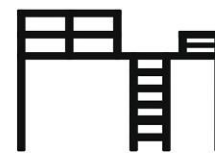
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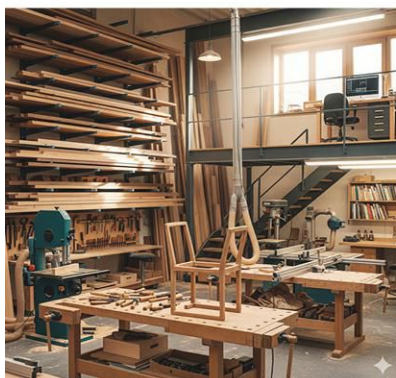
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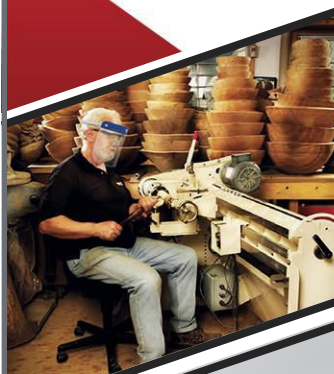
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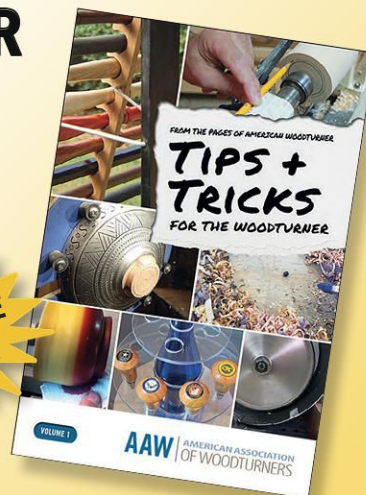
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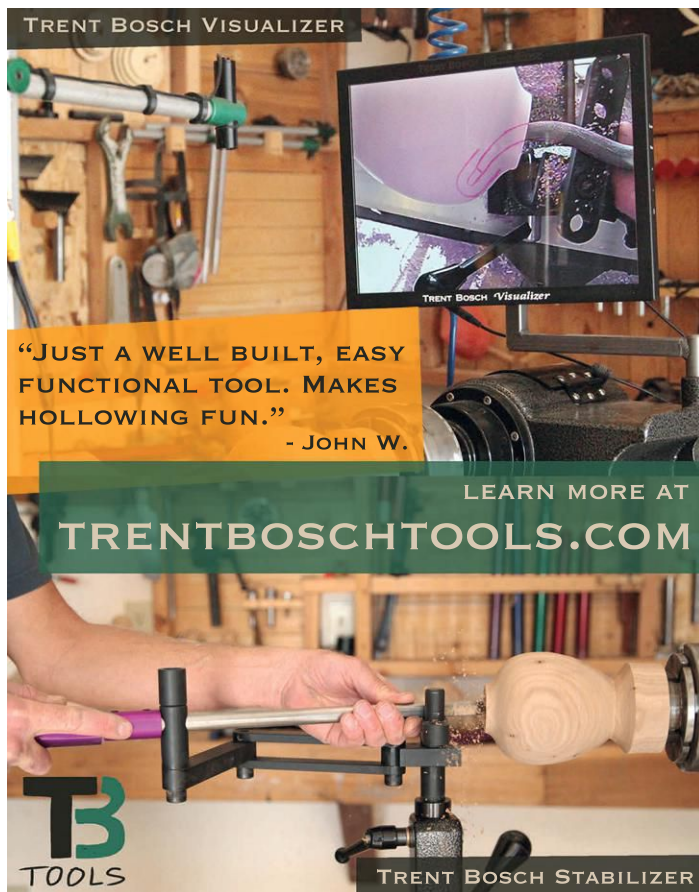
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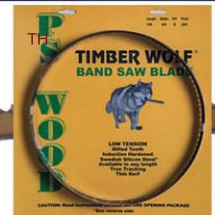
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MICHAEL KEHS PENNSYLVANIA

Fáfnir, 2025, Basswood, copper, steel gimp tacks, acrylic paint, poplar, iron nails, satin polyurethane, 10" x 8" x 3½" (25cm x 20cm x 9cm)



The ancient Celts were known for many aspects of their rich culture, among which the drinking horn holds a special place. A symbol of festivity and camaraderie, this vessel was often used in ceremonial and everyday drinking, bringing people together in celebration. My version celebrates the Germanic folklore story of Fáfnir, who initially was a dwarf, the son of Hreithmar and brother of Regin and Ótr. Driven by greed, Fáfnir killed his father and transformed into a dragon to guard a cursed treasure but was eventually slain by the hero Sigurd.

For more, visit michaelkehswoodworks.com.

Turned, cut, reassembled



A turned conical form is cut into angled pieces that, when reassembled, comprise a horn-shaped form.



Inside This Issue!

Learn how to turn, build, and embellish a Celtic-inspired drinking horn in Michael Kehn's how-to article on page 36.