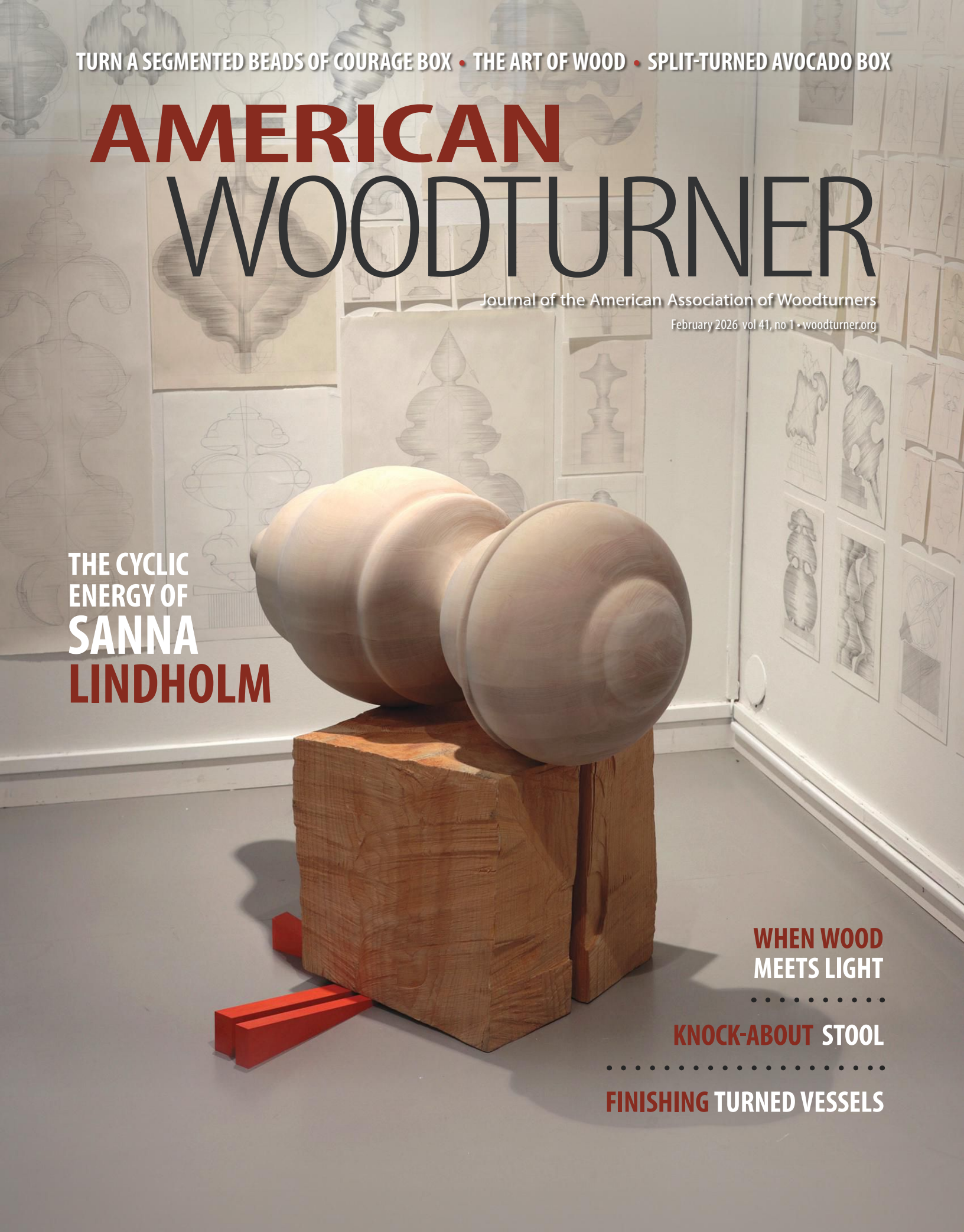
TURN A SEGMENTED BEADS OF COURAGE BOX • THE ART OF WOOD • SPLIT-TURNED AVOCADO BOX

AMERICAN WOODTURNER

Journal of the American Association of Woodturners
February 2026 vol 41, no 1 • woodturner.org



THE CYCLIC ENERGY OF SANNA LINDHOLM

WHEN WOOD MEETS LIGHT

KNOCK-ABOUT STOOL

FINISHING TURNED VESSELS

Giorgio Romani Italy

My work begins where form, material, and intention meet. As a woodturner, I am drawn to the quiet discipline of the lathe, the rhythm, the resistance, and the subtle dialogue with each piece of wood. I approach turning not just as a technique, but as a language. It allows me to explore the space between control and surrender, precision and intuition.

I'm fascinated by the evolution of shape, especially vessels and hollow forms, where interior and exterior must cohere. Proportion, weight, and line are central, but so is the tactile memory of the tool moving through grain. I teach woodturning to share this process with others: not just how to make a form, but how to see, to listen, and to respond to material honestly.

Living and working in the Italian countryside, I find inspiration in slowness and repetition, conditions that allow depth and awareness to grow. My studio is both a place of making and a space for others to learn, reflect, and create. ■

For more, visit giorgioromaniwoodturning.it or follow Giorgio on Instagram, @grwoodturning.

Burnt Offerings I, 2025, Scorched olive wood, 10½" × 16" (27cm × 41cm)

Albastron I, 2020, Olive wood, 10½" × 13" (27cm × 34cm)

Volver XI, 2020, Olive wood, 6¼" × 8" (16cm × 20cm)

Respiro, 2023, European Oak, 5½" × 16¾" × 18" (14cm × 43cm × 46cm)

The author at the lathe.

Shape n.23, 2022, European Oak, 10½" × 23" × 23⅝" (27cm × 58cm × 60cm)

Shape n.3, 2021, European Oak, 3" × 13" (8cm × 33cm)

Dinos I, 2022, Olive root, 8¼" × 13" (21cm × 33cm)

AAW | AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF WOODTURNERS

Mission: Strengthen and empower the global woodturning community

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

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FEATURES

AMERICAN WOODTURNER

Journal of the American Association of Woodturners

ASSOCIATIONNEWS

WOODTURNERSCHATTER

GALLERY

COVER

Cover: Sanna Lindholm, *Scene One*, 2022, Birch, 15¾" × 39¼" × 15¾" (40cm × 100cm × 40cm)

Photo: John Salquist

Back cover: Gabriel Hoff and Ethan Hoff

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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/AAWDiversity*

A NOTE ABOUT SAFETY

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

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

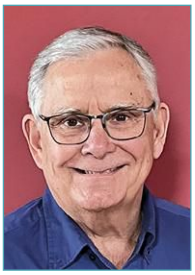
*Web address is case sensitive.

Editor's Note

When I set out to make furniture twenty-seven years ago, I turned to publications like *American Woodturner*—their articles, photographs, and advertisements guided my start. Now I'm honored to steward this journal into its fifth decade. At its best, a journal like ours makes craft knowledge accessible while documenting the work being done at every level of the field. All of our stories revolve around the lathe—the objects we make, the knowledge we share, the community we build. From Gabriel and Ethan Hoff's Beads of Courage boxes (*p. 32*) to Sanna Lindholm's sculptures that alter our sense of space and movement (*p. 52*), turning is what connects us. What other connections do you see? Connections are what I hope to foster as I follow Joshua Friend's eleven years of editorship. His dedication has strengthened both this journal and our field. Welcome to this 40th anniversary year. Let's write the future together.

—Sarah Marriage

From the President



A Milestone Year: AAW Turns 40 in 2026

I hope everyone enjoyed a very nice holiday season with time spent with friends and in the workshop turning.

Thank you to those who joined us for our December membership meeting. For those who couldn't attend, a recording is available online at tiny.cc/Annual. We shared updates on our Board and Staff as well as our exciting outlook for 2026, which centers on celebrating our 40th anniversary. We have wonderful plans in store for the year, including special programming at our International Symposium in Raleigh. Stay tuned as we share more details in the coming months.

Board transitions and volunteer opportunities

In 2026, three AAW Board members will complete their second terms on the Board. We greatly appreciate their hard work and service for six years. We will be able to welcome three brand new Board members in 2027.

Volunteers are the lifeblood of the AAW at all levels. We are fortunate to have over 50 members serving on 13 different committees. Joining a committee is a great way to support our association and to learn how we get things done. I want to emphasize both the opportunity and the need for members to step up and participate in the management and operation of our AAW, at both the board and committee level.

Please reach out to any of us on the Board or to Gretchen Wilbrandt if you are interested in being considered for a role on one of our committees, and to Linda Britt, if you are interested in a future board position.

New staff members

We had quite an influx of new staff members joining us in 2025 and early this year, which will ensure stability and continuity for the organization. Glenn Hansen joined as our marketing and communications director, and Tamecka Johnson joined as our finance and operations director. We planned to hire a web development person in January 2026. As I am writing this letter in late December, you may have received news of this hire by now.

Membership update

Looking at our 2025 membership numbers, we have just over 12,000 active members worldwide. This includes 884 international members and just over 11,000 members in the United States. Additionally, our chapter network remains strong with 363 chapters. We will be working hard to build both our membership and chapter engagement in 2026.

Please encourage your friends to join the AAW. They can get an idea of what we're all about by taking advantage of a free 90-day Affiliate Membership. Visit woodturner.org/membership to learn more—highlights include online access to our journal, *American Woodturner*, over 2,000 archived articles, curated videos, regular newsletters, and more.

Symposium Registration

Registration is live for our International Symposium in Raleigh, NC, June 4–7. I hope that many of you will join us for a great lineup of demonstrations, exhibits, the trade show, and much, much more.

Grant opportunities

We have special funding available through grants to individuals and chapters to support professional development, chapter development, and acquiring supplies or equipment. This includes an additional round of one-time grants for individuals for equipment and tools, provided through the Maxwell/Hanrahan Foundation. Visit tiny.cc/aawgrants for more information on these grants.

As always, your thoughts, comments and suggestions are welcome. Please get in touch at any time.

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 blind 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/callsforentry, or email Tib Shaw at gallery@woodturner.org. ■

AAW Chapter Awards

Application deadline: March 20, 2026

The AAW Community Impact Award

Woodturning is more than just a hobby. Many individuals and local chapters have used their talents to make significant contributions to their communities. This award recognizes chapters that have demonstrated a strong commitment to community service, outreach, and positive societal impact. The objective of this award is to acknowledge the chapters that have used their skills and passion for woodturning to make a meaningful difference in the lives of others, whether through charitable projects, educational initiatives, environmental stewardship, or other community-oriented activities.

The AAW Communications Excellence Award

Communication is essential to the growth and engagement of local woodturning chapters. This award honors chapters that demonstrate effective, creative, and innovative communications through email newsletters, websites, social media, or video content. The objective is to recognize chapters that have excelled in disseminating information, educating and entertaining their members and non-members, as well as promoting the art and craft of woodturning through compelling and creative communication methods.

Announcement of Winners

One chapter will be selected for each award and the winners will be announced during the 2026 AAW International Woodturning Symposium in Raleigh, North Carolina. Each winning chapter will be awarded one complimentary registration for the AAW Symposium so they may attend and be recognized in person. The winners will also be featured in an issue of *American Woodturner* and on the AAW website, woodturner.org.

How to apply

Applications will be accepted until March 20, 2026. To learn more about the award submission requirements, evaluation process, and to apply, visit woodturner.org/awards. ■

Call for Videographers and Streaming Technicians AAW Symposium 2026

Application period: December 15, 2025, to February 15, 2026

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

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

IS THIS YOUR FIRST SYMPOSIUM?

Don't worry—you'll fit right in. Our volunteers work hard to make everyone feel welcome. Nearly half of our attendees are first-timers, and many are novice turners. We're so glad you're coming!

Register by February 28, 2026 to take advantage of the lowest registration cost

INSTANT GALLERY – ALL ARE WELCOME!

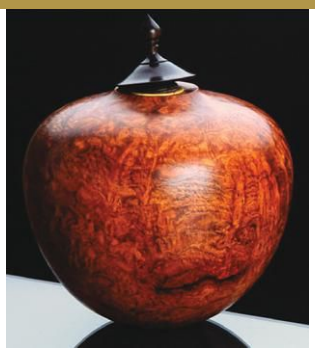
For many, the Instant Gallery is the heart of the Symposium. Hundreds—even thousands—of pieces fill tens of thousands of square feet. Featuring work by youth turners discovering their craft to internationally recognized artists—it is the world's largest display of turned wood, a collection where every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

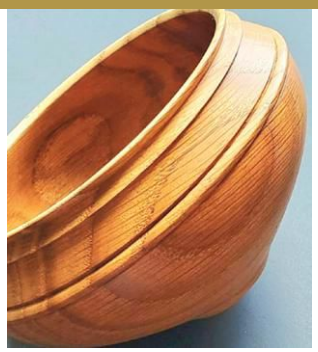
For those wondering, "Is my work good enough to display?" The answer is, YES! The Instant Gallery is for everyone. We envision a Symposium where *every* registered attendee brings up to three pieces to share with the woodturning community. Remember, it's not about perfection: it's about participation,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

2026 AAW SYMPOSIUM WOODTURNING DEMONSTRATIONS




FEATURING RENOWNED WOODTURNERS FROM AROUND THE WORLD


Yann Marot,
France

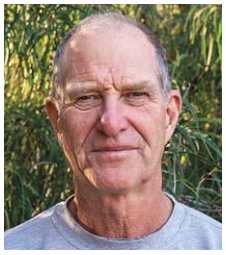

Mike Mahoney,
California


Matt Monaco,
Missouri


Seri Robinson,
Oregon


Troy Grimwood,
New Zealand


Molly Winton,
Washington


Neil Turner,
Australia

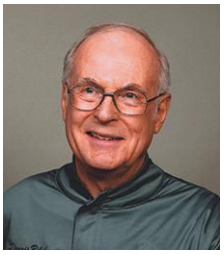

Mark Gardner,
North Carolina

POP SHOWCASE ARTISTS


Janine Wang
(USA)


Matthew
Shewchuk
(Japan)


Michael Anderson,
Tennessee


Dennis Belcher,
North Carolina

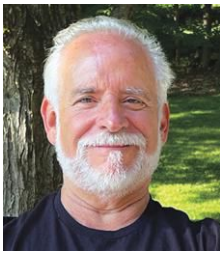

Tyler David,
Illinois


Claude Dupuis,
New Hampshire

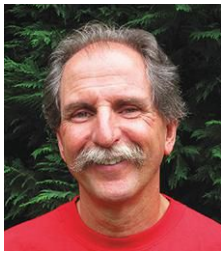

Diana Friend,
Washington


Carol Hall,
Pennsylvania


Mark Kielpinski,
North Dakota


Joe Larese,
New York


Sammy Long,
Mississippi


Robert Lyon,
South Carolina


Peggy Schmid,
Georgia

Chad Schimmel,
Arizona

AAW Symposium Chapter Group Discount!

Bring your chapter to Raleigh and save!

When five or more members of your local chapter who are also AAW members attend the Symposium, each registrant receives $40 off their Symposium registration.

As we celebrate the 40th Anniversary AAW International Woodturning Symposium in Raleigh, North Carolina, we want to see as many dedicated AAW and chapter members as possible. This chapter discount is our way of recognizing the strength of local chapters and encouraging members to experience the Symposium together.

How it works:

- Your chapter must have five or more AAW members attending.
- Email memberservices@woodturner.org to request your chapter discount code.
- Discount codes must be requested no later than April 30, 2026.
- To combine the chapter discount with the best registration pricing, request your code ASAP and tell folks to register by February 28, 2026.
- Share the code with eligible chapter members to enter during online registration.

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

The AAW International Woodturning Symposium is an exceptional opportunity for chapter members to learn together, connect with leading vendors, make group purchases, and showcase their work in the largest Instant Gallery!

It's also a fantastic experience for newer woodturners to attend alongside experienced members, gaining inspiration and insight from artists and educators from around the world. So come together to network, share ideas, and gather practical insights to help strengthen and grow chapters back home.

To learn more about the Symposium, visit aawsymposium.org.

Photo: Andi Wolfe

Apply for an AAW Grant

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

Regular AAW Grants are awarded on a biannual basis. To be eligible, applications must be received by December 31 for grants given January through May, and by May 31 for June through December. However, Women in Turning (WIT) grants and others for under-represented populations, events, and exhibitions are awarded at varying frequencies.

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

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.

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

Photos: Andi Wolfe

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.

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. ■

Call for Nominees: 2026 AAW Board of Directors

Application due date: April 1, 2026

Are you interesting in working with the AAW to help shape our future? We are looking for a few good members who share our vision and passion for woodturning. The AAW has a volunteer nine-member board that represents the membership. If you have been a member in good standing for the past three years, you are eligible to apply.

Candidate statements, along with a photograph, will be published in the August 2026 issue of *American Woodturner*, and on the AAW website. Online voting takes place from August 1-31, 2026. Election results are announced by mid-September, and the new Board term will begin on January 2, 2027.

Interested, but still have questions? For information on the application process and duties of Board members, email Nominating Chair Linda Britt (*lbbritt@comcast.net*) or call her at 678-642-1700. Application requirements, as well as contact information for all Board members can be found at tiny.cc/BODNominee. All application documents must be received by the AAW Executive Director no later than **April 1, 2026**. ■

40 Years of Growth: Join Us In Shaping the Future

Cheers to you as we prepare to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the American Association of Woodturners in 2026! It's a moment to reflect on how this grassroots organization has grown tremendously from its founding by talented, generous, and eager woodturners and to reflect on the exciting future of our global woodturning community.

We're fully staffed, well-rested after the holidays, and ready to roll up our sleeves and get to work...and we'd love you to join us as we *turn it up* for the future.

As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, the AAW has spent four decades examining all things woodturning: creativity, practicality, utility, safety, and community among woodturners of all skill levels. And here we are today asking (and collaboratively answering), "What's next?"

Like any starting point, this one is exciting as well as noisy and dirty and full of opportunity. In 2026 we are listening to what you've shared and making new plans for the long term.

All of this work takes the support of members beyond membership dues. This year we are laying the groundwork for the future, looking forward to growth, and asking for the financial support of our community.

By giving to the 40th Anniversary Fundraising Campaign, you play a direct role in shaping the future of woodturning. It is an investment in education, community, and the enduring power of making by hand.

- **Strengthening our core programs:** We are building stronger connections and pathways through our Professional Outreach Program, Women in Turning, Turners Without Borders, the AAW International Symposium, and Educational Outreach Grants.

- **Supporting our chapters:** We are deepening relationships with our chapters to not only support the structure of chapters, but to build greater value with chapter members and the AAW.

- ***AAW Presents:*** We're bringing back our popular series of virtual presentations and gatherings covering a variety of topics.

- ***American Woodturner:*** We are continuing to balance how-to stories and inspirational articles while brainstorming how to better connect members with additional resources to further support the learning journey.

- ***Woodturning Fundamentals:*** We're rethinking how we deliver this valued educational resource to reach and engage with members in a more meaningful way.

- **Getting nerdy:** We're upgrading technology internally and externally, including giving our website some much-needed TLC before we launch into a full redesign.

Supporting the AAW's 40th Anniversary Fundraising Campaign is an opportunity to meet our mission and support our vision.

Mission:
To strengthen and empower the global woodturning community.

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

Your support is about more than preserving a craft—it's about fostering creativity, mentorship, and lifelong learning. As experienced woodturners pass on their skills and new makers discover the joy of the lathe, the AAW provides the structure and vision that connects individuals to a community.

SCAN HERE
to donate today!

Donate online today at tiny.cc/Donate2AAW or mail a check payable to "AAW General Fund" to 220 Landmark Center, 75 5th St. W., Saint Paul, MN 55102.

Whether you give $4, $40, $400, or $4,000, you're participating in this celebratory campaign with the AAW—for today and the next 40 years.

FROM THE EDITOR'S INBOX

Send emails to editor@woodturner.org

The technology program at C.W. Baker High School in Baldwinsville, New York recently participated in the Turn for Troops initiative, a national program started by Woodcraft in 2004 to honor active duty and rehabilitating United States military service members. I am a shop teacher at Baker High School, and three students in my Materials Processing class—Cierra Hayes, Kathryn Sciarrino, and Kyle Warga—volunteered their class time to create a total of thirty-five pens for the initiative. All three students were very excited to get to class and start turning, not only for the excitement of making pens, but even more for the opportunity to give back to our military service members. Since Baker High School still offers many hands-on project-based classes for students, the district has partnered with Onondaga Community College to allow interested students to receive college credit across multiple disciplines and courses. Two of the three students in my technology class will be receiving college credit for ELM 106: Introduction to Industrial Tools through the community college due to the extensive tool and machine use implemented in my Material Processing technology class.

—Michael Malecki, C.W. Baker High School, Baldwinsville, New York

from left to right: Kyle Warga, Kathryn Sciarrino, Cierra Hayes

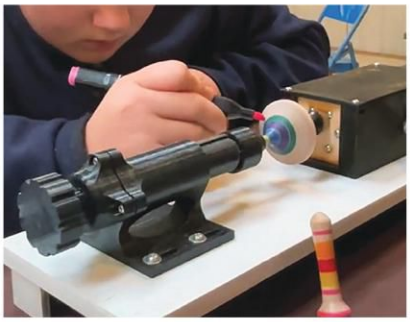
The New Jersey Woodturners are based at the Essex County Environmental Center (ECEC) in Roseland, New Jersey. Like most clubs, we are a charitable and educational organization. We've been turning tops for charity for many years, with our main recipient being the Children's Specialized Hospital of New Jersey in Mountainside.

The ECEC hosts two public events each year: Earth Day and the Fall Festival. During these events, we demonstrate how to turn tops, then sell them for donations. Last year, one of our members, Bill Schaller, designed, 3D printed, and assembled minilathes to add an interactive element to these events. We invite children from the crowd to color pre-turned tops on the minilathes. The kids have a wonderful time, and the intensity on their faces as they carefully use various colored markers to design their own patterns is lots of fun to watch. Parents also love seeing their children engage in this activity.

We recently set up our booth for the second time at a school fundraiser at the Sussex County Fairgrounds. It was an enjoyable day watching parents and children color tops together.

If your club is interested in duplicating this activity with 3D printed minilathes, visit printables.com/model/847738 for free access to the 3D printing files, assembly instructions, and additional parts list. Alternatively, low-cost minilathes are available online, but may require modification.

—Bob Amarant, New Jersey Woodturners



Women of Woodworking Showcase

Seattle Woodturners' Women in Turning sponsored a free community event celebrating past and present women woodworkers at Seattle's Pratt Fine Arts Center in October. The event marked the first in an annual series designed to promote greater participation by women and other minorities in the field of turning. Over twenty participants attended, ranging in age from their early 20s to 70s. A generous donation from a local turner has secured funding to hold this event for the next several years.

The day featured demonstrations by local artists Diana Friend, Elizabeth Weber, and Kim McIntyre, a talk by Dr. Craig Edelbrock, and the presentation of the Pacific Northwest Women In Turning Scholarship.

Pacific Northwest WIT Scholarship

The inaugural PNW WIT Scholarship was awarded to Lacey Spray, a woodworker and teaching artist from Hood River, Oregon. The scholarship is a $500 prize awarded annually to an outstanding emerging woodturner for use towards professional development opportunities. Lacey specializes in working with salvaged local hardwoods. Over the past two years, woodturning has become a central focus of her practice. Her work reflects a commitment to originality, sustainability, and the lifelong pursuit of craftsmanship as a tool for connection and creativity.

Honoring Joyce Anderson

Dr. Edelbrock, an author and retired academic, gave a talk on the work of pioneering woodworker Joyce Anderson (1923-2017). Anderson was a furniture designer, woodworker, and woodturner who, along with her husband Edgar, purchased land outside Morristown, New Jersey in the early 1950s. To generate income, Joyce mastered turning household items like egg holders, plates, bowls, and candlesticks, creating a thriving business selling her work at craft fairs. She advanced her skills through furniture design, transforming functional objects into treasured works of art. By the late 1950s, her work was displayed at the Museum of Contemporary Craft. Joyce's journey remains an inspiration for women woodworkers.

Diana Friend: Delicate Florets

Diana Friend is a renowned artist who has taught at John C. Campbell Folk School and Pratt Fine Arts Center. She shared her mastery of transforming wood into delicate florets, beginning with detailed sketches of the floret design before explaining the turning process. She patiently covered both the conceptual approach and critical technical points: preparation, chucking, tool positioning, measuring, and most importantly, where care should be taken to avoid breakage. She expertly demonstrated the progression to the very thin dimensions of the stem and cup of the floret.

Elizabeth Weber: Acorn Boxes

Elizabeth Weber actively teaches and demonstrates across the country at venues like the Port Townsend School of Woodworking and John C. Campbell Folk School. She specializes in texturing, coloring, and turning boxes. Inspired by nature and fall, Elizabeth demonstrated turning an acorn-shaped box featuring two colors: a light body with a dark acorn-style top. Her demonstration covered chuck positioning, shaping the acorn body and top, and the critical matching of the two parts with special attention to the aesthetics required for lifelike representation. She also shared valuable lessons on achieving the perfect fit between the top and bottom pieces.

Kim McIntyre: Bent Wood Art

Kim McIntyre is a professional furniture maker who teaches beginning woodworking and special classes like spoon carving workshops at Pratt Fine Arts Center. One of her areas of expertise is bent wood art. Starting with an example of the finished product, Kim explained the process from wood selection through marrying parts, gluing, and fitting them into the form. She demonstrated critical points of wrapping and clamping, explaining how to recognize when crucial details have been missed. Kim's work can be found on Instagram at @mcintyrefurniture. ■

—Hope Mathews, Seattle Woodturners' Women in Turning

Joyce Anderson, 1953. Photo by A. John Geraci, courtesy of the Anderson Archives.

Diana Friend demonstrated techniques to create delicate florets.

Elizabeth Weber with acorn boxes.

Kim McIntyre discusses bending wood.

Turners Without Borders in Argentina

As a way of giving back to the AAW, I volunteer on the POP committee and the Turners Without Borders committee. For the last nine years, I have been proud of the support the AAW, several private individuals, and my sponsors Doug Thompson and Mike Hunter have provided for our woodturning efforts in Argentina.

There is genuinely a woodturning explosion happening in Argentina and Brazil, and I'm grateful to have been in the right place at the right time. I recently had the opportunity to spend about two weeks working alongside Thomas Lynch, an apprentice from the Argentine woodturning school, "La Casa del Tornero" (The Woodturners' House), in my shop here on Maui.

Thomas knows the school in Lanús, Buenos Aires, Argentina, well, so I asked him to share a report on it and its founder, Matias Castro and his family. Matias has announced the date for the largest national symposium, which is scheduled for August 2026. Mike Hunter has expressed interest in joining me in Buenos Aires. If anyone else wants to go at that time or another, please let me know, and I will connect you with the turning school.

Matias could teach you how to turn a quebracho box with hand-chased threads, or you could create your own *mate* cup. Plus, there's always an incredible BBQ for lunch! In exchange, I would ask you to take a few tools to the school.

When I first met Matias, he was working in a tiny room that doubled as a cupboard. Now, he is the proud owner of the best woodturning school in South America, a success that wouldn't have been possible without the support of the AAW.

—Emiliano Achaval, Turners Without Borders

A Woodturner at the end of the Earth

Woodturning isn't a trade you stumble across every day in Argentina. My first experience was during the pandemic. My dad was stressed out and overwhelmed with work, so I thought a wood lathe would help ease some of that stress and give him a sense of accomplishment. I had done some metal turning while studying Industrial Design and fell in love with it, so I knew how therapeutic turning could be. There is something paradoxical about it; working on such fine tolerances demanded extreme focus, yet somehow my mind would clear, time would stop, and all problems would fade.

I live on a small farm at the southernmost tip of the world, called Estancia Harberton, about 90 km from Ushuaia. Working here comes with challenges that turners in other parts of the world might never imagine. Lathes, gouges and sharpening systems are difficult to import; shipping costs and taxes can double or triple the price of even basic equipment; replacement parts may take months to arrive, if they arrive at all. With no access to well-known brands, we bought a no-name lathe (the only cast-iron one we could find) and a set of thin high-carbon steel tools that looked more like carving chisels, and that was it: I was hooked for good! Little did I know, my life was about to change forever.

With no established school, club or local woodturners nearby, my early education was pieced together from online articles and video tutorials. I'm fortunate to speak English, which opened up a world of content from remarkable woodturners like Richard Raffan, Tomislav Tomasic, Richard Findley, Mike Peace and Kent Weakley, among others.

I began improvising tools with whatever I could find; old files, table saw blades, broken drill bits. One of my favorite tools, which I use to this day, is a spindle roughing gouge made from a piston pin. That improvisation became a skill in itself, and in time, it opened an unexpected door: an invitation to teach at the first dedicated woodturning school in Argentina, La Casa del Tornero. The timing was perfect. I had just moved to Buenos Aires aiming to delve into the world of industrial design and didn't want to give up my new passion. I spent the next 3 years teaching alongside the school's founder, Matias Castro, his wife Lili, and his son Franco, who welcomed me as a new member of their family.

The author at home in Estancia Harberton, holding one of his very first natural edge bowls, and one of his favorites to this day.

The idea still amazes me: a place where students of all ages and backgrounds step up to the lathe for the ▸

(*Left*) Bowl gouge and spindle roughing gouge the author fashioned from piston pins when he was starting out in woodturning. He still uses the spindle roughing gouge today.

(*Middle*) Franco Castro, Thomas Lynch, Matias Castro and Lili Castro: the family that built La Casa del Tornero.

(*Right*) Students of La Casa del Tornero holding their pieces after a one-day seminar.

first time. Some arrive with woodworking experience, others with nothing but curiosity. There's a special kind of joy in watching a student's expression shift from uncertainty to pride as they hold their first finished piece.

The school is small but carries a big responsibility: to plant the seeds of a trade in soil where it's barely taken root.

My journey through La Casa del Tornero

The first time I visited La Casa del Tornero, I was greeted by Matias, Lili and Franco Castro with the warmest of hugs. They are the most generous and selfless people I have met, with only one mission in mind: sharing their knowledge with as many people as possible.

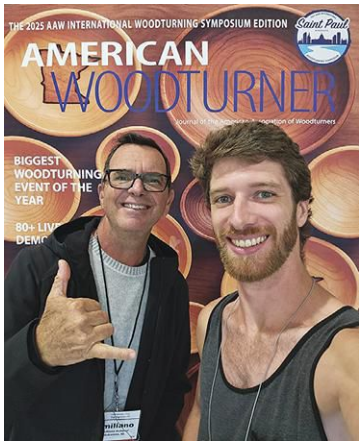
The school was small, with five old lathes scattered throughout different rooms: some with wooden ways, others handmade or adapted to be used as wood lathes. But there was something special about this place; it was home to one of the most nurturing communities I've seen. People came for the woodturning and left as part of a new family.

When they asked me to join the team as an instructor, I was flabbergasted: I had intended to take classes myself! Back home, I had mainly focused on spindle work, so my bowl turning wasn't as strong. They taught me everything I needed to know to get started as an instructor, and off I went!

Teaching has sharpened my own skills in ways solitary turning never could. Demonstrating a cut forces you to think about why you do it that way, and explaining tool control to a nervous beginner makes you aware of even the slightest movement in your hands or hips.

The name 'La Casa del Tornero' (The Woodturner's House) reflects its humble beginning: a single lathe in a room of Matias's home. In its early days, internationally recognized woodturner and writer Emiliano Achaval reached out to Matias. He envisioned something big and encouraged Matias to start a school. Emiliano's help is invaluable to us. Through him, the school received donations from Doug Thompson, Mike Hunter, and Dale Larson, that allowed people in Argentina to use high quality tools for the very first time.

Since then, the school has grown nonstop. We moved to a new location, now with 8 lathes and over 500 students who have passed through its doors. The word continued to spread, even beyond borders. As a result, in 2024 Matias and Franco were invited to represent Argentina at the woodturning symposium in Pomerode, Brazil. Matias



(*Left*) The author and Emiliano Achaval at the International Woodturning Symposium in Saint Paul.

(*Middle*) The author meeting Doug Thompson and his wife Tari, supporters of the school in Buenos Aires.

(*Right*) Matias and Franco receiving the tools that were donated to the school at the symposium in Saint Paul.

www.xsava.xyz

(*Left*) The author turning a kou calabash bowl at Emiliano's workshop during his stay in Maui.

Photo by Trevor Camp, @camp.woodworks.

(*Right*) The author explaining the process of roughing out a bowl at the first woodturning demonstration of Tierra del Fuego.

(*Below*) Attendees of the first woodturning demonstration of Tierra del Fuego.

demonstrated Stuart Batty's 40/40 technique, new to that community, and Franco demonstrated thread chasing. It was such a success that this year they were invited to demonstrate at the Megaferia in São Paulo, where Matias had previously founded the first woodturning club in Brazil.

At the same time, I went through a life-changing experience. Emiliano generously gave me the opportunity to stay with him in Maui for a few weeks, where I honed my turning techniques and learned to use tools I had only seen in videos or catalogs. We focused mainly on the 40/40 grind and experimented with some hollow forms inspired by his friend, Kevin Jesequel. But before that, we attended the woodturning symposium in St. Paul, where Emiliano introduced me to some of the best woodturners and toolmakers in the world. I suddenly found myself having one-on-one conversations with people I could have only dreamed of meeting and was able to personally thank those who had so kindly donated to our school. It was a dream come true!

At the symposium's Turners Without Borders meeting, everyone was delighted and stunned to hear about the school's evolution and the challenges we've faced. The response was breathtaking. Everyone approached me expressing their willingness to help. We received some tool donations straight away, the Georgia Association of Woodturners decided to make us international members of their club, and the idea for this article came up.

What's next?

With an ever-growing community, the next step is securing a permanent home for La Casa del Tornero. We found a promising site and are working hard to raise funds for an early 2026 move. With a place of our own, opportunities for improvement are endless.

As for myself, I moved back to Tierra del Fuego with one objective in mind: Starting a woodturning community at the end of the world.

By the end of November, I gave the first woodturning demonstration in Tierra del Fuego. It exceeded all my expectations, and those of the attendees as well! I was pleased to welcome 14 eager participants. They paid close attention to every little piece of information and asked so many interesting questions that the event ran a full extra hour.

Since then, I've created a WhatsApp community to keep everyone connected, sharing tips and resources, and it has been surprisingly active. I've also begun visiting participants in their own workshops, helping them refine their setups and guiding them toward safe and efficient practices. *I can already sense a woodturning club taking shape at the southernmost edge of the world!*

To anyone planning a trip to Argentina, we would love to welcome you at the school in Buenos Aires or my workshop in Tierra del Fuego; and if you'd like to support our woodturning community, bringing along any tool you no longer use is a great way to do so. Even a single gouge can open possibilities for dozens of eager hands. ■

—Thomas Lynch, Tierra del Fuego, Argentina

TIPS

Tips

Share your turning ideas!

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

Enclosed lathe storage adds stability

While setting up my new lathe, I noticed the stand legs had brackets designed to support boards for a lower shelf. After installing boards across the span, I realized the shelf created excellent storage space for heavy accessories—but it would also collect unwanted shavings.

The solution was to build a box with a sloped lid. The slope allows shavings to slide off onto the floor while providing enclosed storage underneath. This lidded box is ideal for storing infrequently used, heavy lathe accessories such as coring systems, hollowing tools, steel plates, and sandbags.

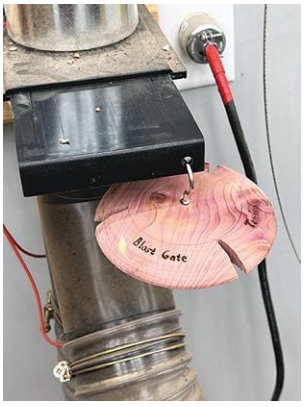
As an added benefit, the weight of these stored items helps stabilize the lathe and prevents it from "walking" during use.

—Dennis Belcher, North Carolina, AAW member since 2003

Leave yourself helpful reminders

When a forgetful person like me reaches a certain age, special considerations can be taken to create the appearance of normalcy. Never mind driving down the road with turn signals flashing—I can never remember to open the dust collector blast gate that keeps my band saw tires clean. To help me remember, I set a "trap" that makes it nearly impossible to forget. It's easy to make out of the next tenon to be thrown away, and so far has a 100% success rate. The pictures illustrate its creation and use. I hang the reminder on the blast gate so when I close it, I must remove it and place it on the saw table. I can't use the band saw until I remove the reminder, which has the tasks written on it: "Blast Gate" and "Tension." It's a simple method that has been helpful to me.

—John Lovelady, Texas, AAW member since 2010

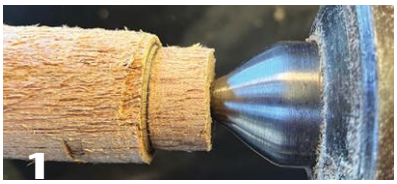


Mount small pieces in headstock spindle

If you prize tiny offcuts but don't have small jaws on your chuck, you can mount them directly in the Morse tapered headstock spindle opening. For a No. 2 Morse taper, start by turning a tenon about ⅜" (10mm) long and about 45⁄64" (18mm) in diameter. Draw a pencil line at the shoulder (*Photo 1*). Then part down an equal distance on the other side of the line, and taper the tenon to mimic an established No. 2 Morse taper (*Photo 2*).

To mount the workpiece, tap the taper into the headstock spindle using a mallet or hammer. The Monterey pine mini-goblet shown in *Photo 3* was turned with this type of mounting. The next piece is mounted and ready for turning.

—Ernie Newman, NSW, Australia, AAW member since 1997



Next-generation tool stand


1


2


3

For more than fifteen years, I knew I needed a better way to store my lathe tools. Eventually, I'd had enough of fumbling around trying to find the right gouge or worrying about slicing my hand on an exposed edge. I decided my tool storage should include the ability to:

- See the tip of each tool
- Grab any handle without wrestling past other tools
- Roll my tools between my two lathes
- Stop cutting myself on sharp edges
- Keep tools from flopping over like dominoes

The main structure comprises two plywood rings sitting 45" (114cm) off the floor—right at that sweet spot where I can reach up and grab a handle while still seeing which tool is which (*Photo 1*). But here's the real game-changer: I mounted the upper rings on a lazy Susan. Now I just give it a spin and the tool I want comes right to me.

The double-ring setup, spaced 1¼" (32mm) apart, keeps everything standing straight (*Photo 2*). I put the two rings together and drilled through both at the same time so that the holes lined up perfectly. Then I put the spacers between the rings and screwed everything together. I also included an upper ring for drive and live centers and other odds and ends.

The stand rolls on four heavy-duty casters, but I needed weight to keep it stable. The base comprises three layers of ¾"- (19mm-) thick plywood, and I added PVC pipes to hold a large scraper, two spindle roughing gouges, and a multi-tool. I then added more PVC pipes at the base for unhandled bowl gouges. The hollow center column is perfect for storing a tool with a very long handle (*Photo 3*).

The tool stand works well. Everything is in one place, nothing tips over, I can reach whatever I need, and I can roll it to wherever I'm working. After a decade of making do with less-than-ideal setups, this stand is exactly what I needed.

—Dennis Belcher, North Carolina, AAW member since 2003

Tune in

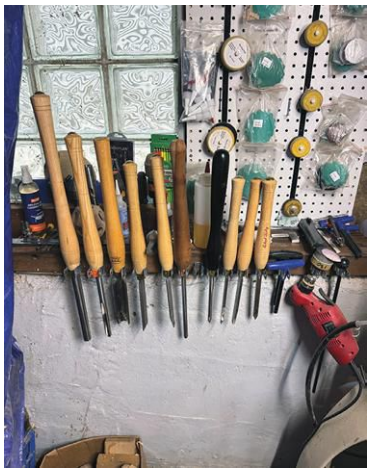
I have noticed that many turners, when faced with an issue, crank up the lathe speed, grip their tool firmly, grit their teeth and (try to) muscle their way through a problem. Although it might sound a little new age or hippy-dippy, I encourage people to try to *tune in* to what is happening—listen to the sounds of the lathe, the wood, and the tool. Take feedback from the tool—in terms of vibrations, smoothness of cut, and/or resistance to the cut. Use all of your senses and connect to what is happening. You shouldn't need to bully your way through the wood, and you certainly don't need to be a big strong man to do woodturning. A light touch, a good understanding, and a deeper connection with what is going on is the recipe for success.

—Richard Findley, England, AAW member since 2013

Conduit hanger as tool keeper

My woodturning journey started—as I'm sure many of yours did—as a tool collector. By the time I acquired my second lathe, I had added more than twenty turning tools to my already substantial collection. To attempt to keep my cluttered studio in some order, I use conduit hangers to fashion tool racks throughout my workspace. They are inexpensive, easy to find at the hardware store, and come in a variety of sizes to accommodate various tool handles and ferrules. ▸

—Pat Cogdal, Illinois, AAW member since 2021



TIPS

Tenon cone removal

After trimming and forming the base of a bowl that has been jam chucked, a connecting cone remains on the workpiece where it was held by the tailstock live center. I have observed many demonstrations where the turner uses a knife, skew, wood chisel, or Japanese pull saw to remove this nub. Or, to show their skill, some turners make the cone very small so they can simply break it off.

I do not try to see how small I can make the cone because a failure could be unsafe or damage the piece I am working on. For as long as I can remember, I have used an oscillating multi-tool, as shown in the photo. This method has never failed me and generates zero stress.

—Larry Sefton, Tennessee, AAW member since 2005

Shopmade dust collection nozzle

A repurposed plastic shop vacuum extension tube makes a great dust collection nozzle for sanding at the lathe. Start with a standard shop vacuum extension tube that fits your vacuum. Trim it to 8" (20cm) in length, keeping the vacuum connection end intact, and turn a wooden plug to seal the cut end. Near the sealed end, drill a 1¾" (4cm) hole in the side of the tube for dust collection, as shown at the top of *Photo 1*.

Now turn a wood collar to fit snugly over the extension, with a screw insert at the top that allows you to rotate and lock the opening in any direction. At the bottom of the collar, drill a hole to insert a ⅝" (16mm) dowel about 10" (25cm) long.

To use this setup, insert the dowel into your lathe's banjo and connect your shop vacuum (*Photos 2, 3*). This simple setup lets you position the dust port exactly where you need it while sanding, and you can easily adjust the height and direction.

—Dustin Davis, Maryland, AAW member since 2009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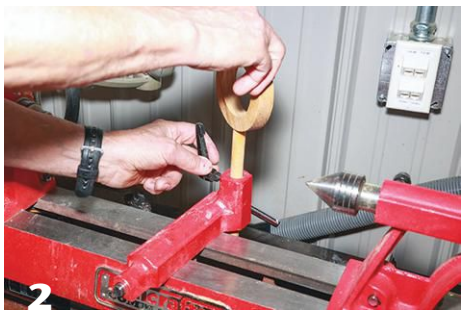
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Turning duplicates by eye

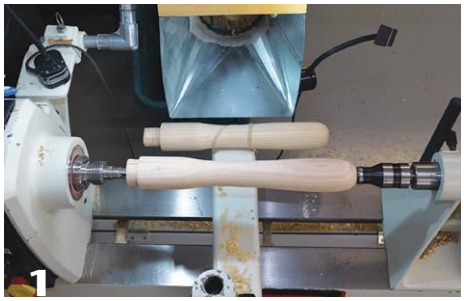
When turning duplicate legs or spindles by eye, positioning a sample piece directly in your sight line makes matching the parts much easier. One approach is to secure the sample leg on the end of the banjo using two rubber bands (*Photo 1*). This placement allows you to glance at the sample while turning without interrupting your workflow.

An even better solution is to mount the sample behind the lathe, positioned above the centerline. With bifocal safety glasses, this higher placement sharpens the outline of the sample, making it easier to duplicate the profile accurately (*Photo 2*).

Regardless of method, always turn more pieces than needed so you can select the closest matches for your final project.

To learn more, read the author's article, Knock-About Stool, p. 20.

—Dennis Belcher, North Carolina, AAW member since 2003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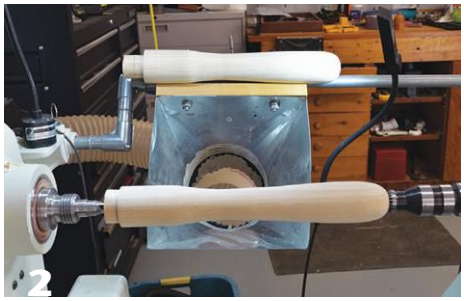
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Calendar of Events

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

Canada

May 23, 24, 2026, Ottawa Turnfest, Confederation Education Center, Ottawa. Featuring Art Liestman, Dale Larson and Elizabeth Weber. Hosted by the Ottawa Valley Woodturners. For more, visit valleywoodturners.com/turnfest.html.

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.

Alaska

May 2, 3, 2026, Alaska Woodturners Symposium, Glass Sash and Door Supply, Anchorage. Annual gathering featuring demonstrations and classes. Demonstrators to include Elizabeth Weber and Eric Lofstrum. For more, visit akwoodturners.org/symposium.

Colorado

September 18–20, 2026, Rocky Mountain Woodturning Symposium, The Ranch Events Complex, Loveland. Long-running symposium (since 1998) featuring 45 demonstrations, hands-on turning area, gallery display, and longest shaving contest. Demonstrators include Max Brosi, Beth Ireland, Kip Christensen, and more to come. For more, visit rmwoodturningsymposium.com.

Florida

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.

Idaho

March 21, 22, 2026, *The Idaho Artistry in Wood Show*, JUMP (Jack's Urban Meeting Place), Boise. Annual wood art show made possible by the Ada County Woodworkers Association, Idaho Woodcarvers Guild, Treasure Valley Scrollers, and Southwest Idaho Woodturners Association. For more, visit idahoartistryinwood.org.

Illinois

April 17, 18, 2026, The Midwest Pen Turners Gathering (PenMakers International Annual Symposium), Chicago Marriott Northwest, Hoffman Estates. Two full days of pen making—from beginner to advanced. Numerous social activities, chance to win a lathe, door prizes, vendor area. For more, visit midwestpenturnersgathering.com.

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 Northbrook Hotel. 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 tradeshow, instant gallery, banquet with awards and entertainment, and a 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*; vintage and historic lathes and turned items

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

New York

March 28, 29, 2026, Totally Turning Symposium, hosted by the Adirondack Woodturners Association, Saratoga Springs City Center, Saratoga Springs. For more, visit woodworker.org/about-totally-turning.

Texas

April 17–19, 2026, Gulf Coast Woodturners' Annual Hands-On Retreat, Cy-Fair Exposition Center, Cypress. Members teach a variety of courses for all skill levels, with a total of four rotations and thirty classes. Fee of $110 includes two lunches. Club membership of $35 required due to insurance. For more, visit gulfcoastwoodturners.org.

Virginia

October 24, 25, 2026, Virginia Woodturners, Inc., biennial symposium, Augusta Expo Center, Fishersville. Demonstrators include Dennis Belcher, Clifton Chisum, Dennis Fuge, Graeme Priddle, Melissa Engler, Mark Gardner, Cliff Guard, Rudy Lopez, John C. Lucas, Annie Ogg, and Scarlette Rouse. For more, visit virginiawoodturners.com. ■

SKILL-BUILDING PROJECT

KNOCK-ABOUT STOOL

Dennis Belcher

If you find it easy to get down but hard to get back up, a stool like this is a must-have. I find myself reaching for it to tie my shoes, check the pressure on tires, or for any movement that requires me to bend or squat. Plus, grandchildren love them for watching cartoons.

My version of this project draws from memories of a three-legged stool in my grandfather's milking parlor. That stool saw frequent use and had more than a few encounters with cow hooves and being tossed into a corner—hence my name for it, Knock-About Stool. It had to be stout and able to handle rough, uneven floors.

Three-legged stools have a unique ability to remain stable regardless of how uneven the floor, unlike the graceful, delicate four-legged stool with an embroidered cover that graced Grandma's front room. But **a word of caution**: three-legged stools are wonderfully stable when you sit on them because your weight is within the triangle of the three legs. The three points of ground contact remove the wobble from uneven surfaces. But they are dangerous if you stand on them and your weight goes outside the triangle. The physics works against you, and the consequences can be serious. ***Do not stand on a three-legged stool!***

This project requires only basic woodturning tools and can be accomplished by turners of all skill levels. You can keep it simple or challenge yourself with complex turnings on the legs and artistic decoration on the seat. The functionality remains the same.

Material selection

To withstand the rigors of being knocked about, this stool should be made from wood that won't break under stress. Maple, white oak, hickory, yellow poplar, and river birch are all good choices.

Seat specifications

The seat thickness is a crucial dimension—it determines how deep the leg holes can be drilled, which impacts the gluing surface of the leg tenons. Reducing seat thickness reduces gluing surface area, which lessens strength. Edge-gluing stock to reach the target diameter is practical and cost-effective, as opposed to using a single piece of wood. Consider mixing wood species for visual interest.

- Finished seat thickness: 1⅛" to 2" (28.5mm to 5cm); my preference is 1⅜" (35mm). Start with material thick enough to plane to final dimension after glue-up.
- Finished seat diameter: 8" to 12" (20cm to 30cm); my preference is 10" (25cm).
- Glue-up: Edge-glue three boards 4" wide by 12" long and 1½" thick (10cm × 30cm × 38mm) to make a 12"-square blank. Using 4" widths precludes problems with leg locations—it's best to position the legs in solid wood and not across glue lines.

Leg specifications

- Finished length: 8" to 12"; my preference is 12".
- Finished diameter: 1½" to 2".
- Notes: Keep legs under 12" and stout to avoid breakage. As leg height increases, the risk of breaking increases. Leg stretchers are the normal solution, but they add complexity and create potential glue failure points. Keeping legs shorter and stouter resolves these issues.

Design factors

Following are some key design factors to consider:

- Likely failure points: Leg glue-up fails and/or leg breaks at its thinnest point (*Photo 1*).
- Seat thickness: As noted, determines hole depth and tenon gluing surface area.
- Seat diameter: Larger diameter increases stability and comfort.

- Leg strength: Function of leg thickness and wood selection.
- Tenon diameter: Impacts gluing surface area and strength.
- Forstner bit availability: Do not use spade bits! (More on that below.)
- Weight: Lighter is better, but not if strength is comprised.
- Aesthetics: When leg and seat thickness are equal, the aesthetics are better.
- Leg angle/splay: Determines stability, aesthetics, and abuse resistance.
- Leg placement: The legs need to be close to the seat edge for stability, but not so close that they become a weak point. The edge of the leg holes should be about ½" from the outer edge of the seat.
- Height considerations: Taller stools require leg stretchers; this adds complexity and is not covered in this article.

Layout

Before edge-gluing the seat, true up the board edges and arrange the boards in your desired orientation, considering grain patterns and colors. Dry-clamp them together for preliminary layout. Find the center by drawing diagonal lines from each corner, then use a compass to draw a 10" circle.

Use a compass adjusted to the 5" (13cm) radius to mark the three leg hole positions, as shown in *Photo 2*. Place the compass point at the circle's center and score a line at one point on the circle; this locates the first leg hole, or intersection point 1. Then swing 5" arcs from that first location to both sides to mark intersection points 2 and 5. Now swing additional 5" arcs from points 2 and 5. The points where these final arcs intersect the circle (intersection points 3 and 4) represent the circle's equal thirds. Finally, draw a line from the center of the circle to intersection points 1, 3, and 4. The holes for the legs will be centered on these three lines.

I use biscuits when edge-gluing, and one reason for doing the pre-glue layout is to mark the biscuit locations. This way, you can ensure they won't interfere with the leg holes and the outside edge of the seat. I position the biscuits near the top of the seat thickness, as the bottom will be recessed and could expose the biscuits if they are positioned too low. Dowels work equally well for strengthening glue-ups.

Glue-up the seat

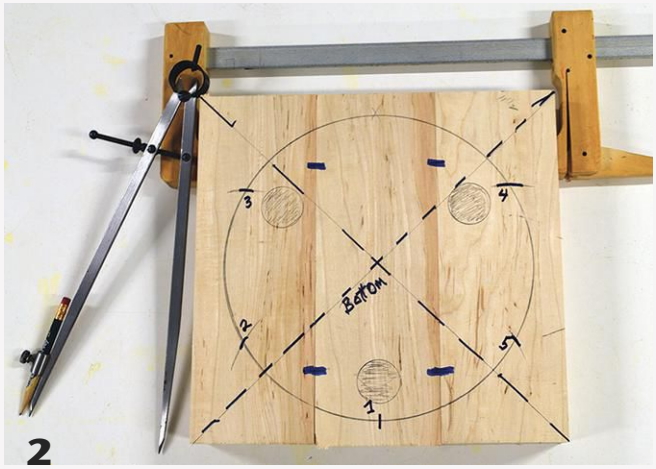
Apply wood glue liberally to avoid the mistake of starving the joint. Tighten the clamps only until glue squeezes out from all glue lines on both sides (*Photo 3*). Allow the glue to cure before proceeding.

Remove the clamps and scrape off the dried glue. I flatten the faces with a ▸

1

Likely failure points

Note two common reasons for failure—a poor glue joint and a broken leg tenon—on this stool made a decade ago. Ensure your tenons are of sufficient thickness and length and that they fit snugly in the seat holes.

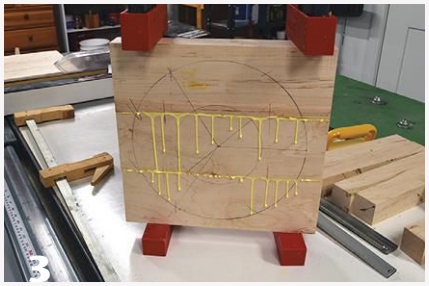


2

Pre-glue layout

Clamp but do not glue the three seat boards and lay out the center point, seat diameter, location of the leg holes, and position of the biscuits. Ensure the biscuits are located such that they won't be exposed by turning or drilling.

Glue and plane seat blank



3

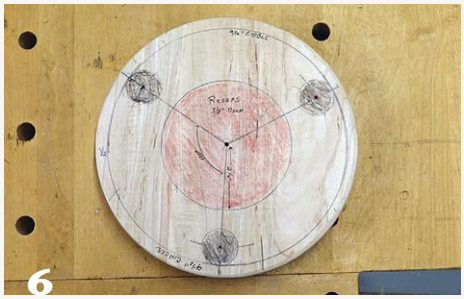
Glue the seat boards together. Apply glue liberally and tighten the clamps until you see squeeze-out. Over-tightening will starve the joints.

4

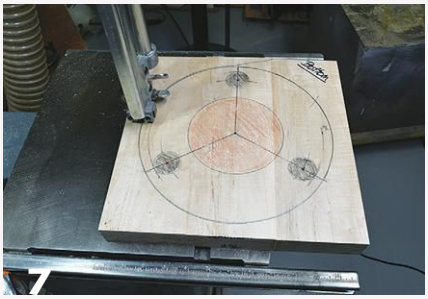
Use a scraper or chisel to remove the dried glue and then dimension to final thickness with a planer or belt sander. Keep track of which side is the top to avoid removing too much material and exposing the biscuits.

Re-establish layout

Position a 1⅜" Forstner-style bit at the intersection of the 9½" layout circle and the 120-degree line and create an indent. This marks where the drill bit should be placed for the leg holes to be ½" inside of the edge of the seat.



The seat bottom with all of the layout lines shown.



Use either a bandsaw or jigsaw to cut out the blank. A tight-to-the-line cut makes it easier to true up the seat at the lathe.

thickness planer, taking the seat to its final thickness (*Photo 4*). An alternative is to remove the excess glue with a scraper and flatten the faces with a hand-held belt sander or stationary drum sander.

Final layout

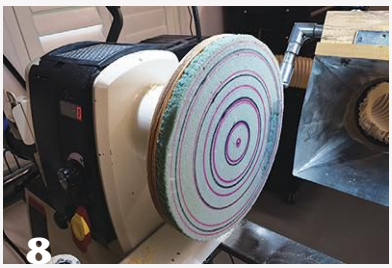
Re-establish the center point of the seat and redraw the 10" circle. Note that the layout is drawn on the bottom of the seat, not the top.

As noted, the edge of the leg holes should be about ½" from the outer edge of the seat. Draw a 9½" (24cm) circle to establish this boundary. Re-establish the location of the three legs on the 9½" circle and position a 1⅜" Forstner-style drill bit with its outer edge just touching the inside of this circle (*Photo 5*). Press the center spur to leave an indent.

The final layout step on the seat bottom is to mark an area in the center to be recessed (*Photo 6*). I turn a concave area in the center to remove the mark that will be left by the tailstock live center. Removing a small amount of material from this area does not weaken the stool but does lessen the weight. The recess could be adorned with beads and coves if desired, but consider that you might sign the stool in this area.

With the layout completed, cut the 10" circle out of the blank using either a bandsaw or jigsaw (*Photo 7*).

Workholding



The author uses a jam chuck to mount the seat blank on the lathe. Cover a circle of plywood with carpet underlayment and mount on a faceplate as the drive portion of the jam chuck. The work is held in place with tailstock pressure.

Turn the seat edges

True the outside surface and relieve both edges of the seat.

Turn the seat

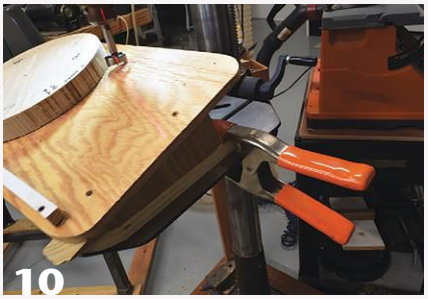
I considered several methods for mounting the seat on the lathe. A key consideration for me is to avoid leaving marks from the drive and live centers in the final product.

I prefer to mount the seat on the lathe using a jam chuck—in this case, a 9"- (23cm-) diameter foam-covered plywood disk (*Photo 8*), which is just smaller than the seat's diameter. The workpiece is held against this disk with tailstock pressure. I find it easier to use a jam chuck than to set up my vacuum chuck. The vacuum chuck offers the advantage of not leaving a live center mark, but removing a bit of weight from the stool is an added benefit. A second benefit is that the recess makes it easier to pick up the stool. So I don't mind using a jam chuck in this case. If you choose not to turn a recess in the bottom, an alternative for hiding the live center mark is to embellish it as though it were a maker's mark.

True up the outside surface of the seat, and then relieve both the top and bottom edges (*Photo 9*).

Reduce the lathe speed to sand the outer surface and newly turned edges. I like to reverse the direction

Drill leg holes


10
Make a hinged platform and use wedges to set the angle to 15 degrees. Securely clamp the platform to the drill press table.


11
Set the depth stop on the drill press to leave ¼" of wood. The leg hole should not extend through the top of the seat.


12
Carefully position the drill bit on the 120-degree line and just touching the inner circle, ensuring the hole will be ½" from the seat's edge.

of rotation with each sanding grit, starting with 180, followed by 220 and 400.

Drill leg holes

Drill the leg holes first, then turn the legs to fit. This is much easier than trying to drill perfectly sized holes to match already-turned tenons. A test-fitting approach lets you "dial in" a tight joint, which is critical for strength.

For 12"-long legs, a 15-degree splay angle is optimal. Taller stools require less splay, shorter ones, more. To hold the workpiece at the appropriate angle, make an adjustable "ramp" jig for your drill press. This is made from two hinged plywood pieces with wedges of different pitches for setting various angles, as shown in *Photo 10*.

Securely clamp both the angle jig and the seat when drilling. Due to the angle of the seat and the geometry of a large Forstner-style bit, the bit will tend to rotate the seat as it contacts the wood. So secure clamping is imperative. Set the depth stop to leave ¼" (6mm) of wood between the leg hole and the top of the seat (*Photo 11*).

Note: Spade-type bits are unsuitable for this operation due to the length of their center spur. To accommodate the long center spur, the leg hole must be shallower, reducing the glue area for the stool legs. I suggest using a Forstner-style bit to maximize this glue area. Sharpening the bit prior to drilling is important. A sharp tool is safer and easier to use. Clamp your work securely before drilling to counteract the rotational force when the bit first contacts the wood.

I find it easiest to clamp the seat blank to the angled table and then move them as one to position the work for drilling (*Photo 12*).

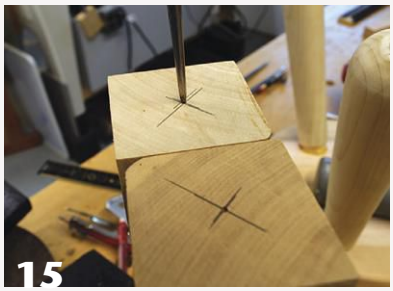
After the leg holes are drilled, return the seat to the lathe to create a slight recess in the center. Remove the remaining center stub with a ▸

Turn recess in seat bottom

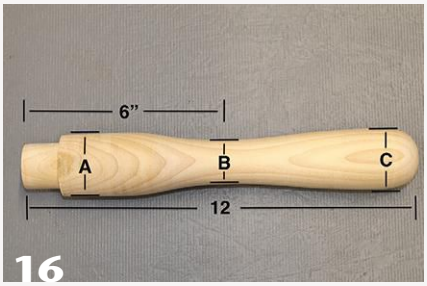

13
The author forms a ⅜"-deep recess in the center of the seat bottom. This allows for the removal of the live center indent and makes the stool easier to hold.


14
Use a chisel to remove the remaining stub. Then erase the pencil lines and sand the piece.

Mount the legs


15
Mark the centers on both ends of the legs and create a dimple to aid in mounting between centers.

Establish leg profile



16
A suggested leg profile. A=1⅞"; B=1⅝"; C=1¾"; tenon measures 1⅛" long by 1⅜" diameter.


17
Use a story stick to transfer measurements to each leg.


18
The author uses a parting tool and caliper to set key diameters on a leg. He then uses a gouge to shape the leg between the set points.

chisel (*Photos 13, 14*), then remove the layout lines and sand the piece. I like to erase the pencil lines before sanding because graphite tends to get into the wood pores and is easier to remove with a pink eraser than with sandpaper.

Turn the legs

Start with leg blanks 2" square by 12" long. The leg stock does not necessarily have to match the wood used in the seat. Mark the centers of each leg end and use a center punch to create dimples to aid in mounting the legs between centers (*Photo 15*).

It is important to leave full leg diameter at the top of the legs, near the seat, for maximum strength. I also like to round the ends at the bottom of the legs for stability on uneven surfaces. A flowing profile that narrows and then returns to full thickness at the top removes weight without sacrificing strength and adds a graceful touch. *Photo 16* offers a suggested leg profile. As you exercise your own creativity, just remember the likely points of failure shown in *Photo 1*.

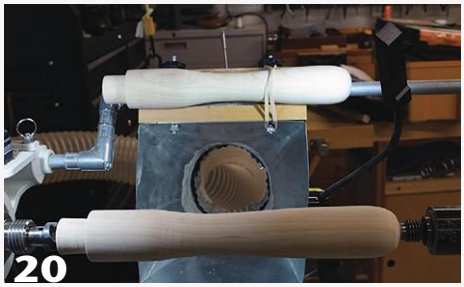
Turn the legs to a cylinder with a spindle-roughing gouge, leaving a full 1¾" diameter for shaping. I use a story stick to indicate key points on the legs and then a parting tool and caliper to establish diameters (*Photos 17, 18*). Shape the leg profile between the key diameters with a gouge. The thickness of the leg provides sufficient stability, so you shouldn't experience flex, or whipping.

A profile gauge helps to match the curves from one leg to another (*Photo 19*). An alternative for replicating shapes is to position a completed leg just above the leg being turned as a visual aid (*Photo 20*). It is also a good practice to turn five legs and then choose the three that look best together (*Photo 21*).

When turning the tenons, sneak up on the final diameter. Slightly taper the tenon and test-fit it in the leg hole in the seat. Rotating the leg will slightly bruise, or mark, the wood, indicating the exact

Replicating the profile


19
A finger, or profile, gauge is helpful in replicating leg shapes.


20
A completed leg positioned just above the leg being turned is an excellent visual aid.


21
Make five legs and pick the three that look best together.

diameter of the leg hole (*Photo 22*). Just barely turn away the bruise mark for the final fit. Glue joints will fail if the tenon doesn't fit tightly. If you have a loose fit, mix wood dust into epoxy as a glue rather than using wood glue. A mixture of epoxy and wood dust is excellent for filling gaps.

Assemble and finish

Before gluing, create an "escape channel" on the tenon using a V-shaped carving chisel or sharp knife (*Photo 23*). Because of the 15-degree angle of the leg holes, there will be a void between the end of the tenon and the bottom of the leg hole. Air gets trapped in this void and is compressed during assembly. If the air is not allowed to escape, it will push against the end of the leg and lift it out of the hole as the glue sets. Allowing this air to escape resolves the issue.

Liberally coat each tenon and hole with glue. Glue should ooze from the escape channel—wipe away the excess with a damp rag. It is important that the legs be splayed out to their natural position as the glue sets. Turn the stool upside down, position a piece of plywood across all three legs, and apply weight until the glue has fully set (*Photo 24*). This positioning splays the legs and keeps the glue squeeze-out from running down the legs.

A variety of finishes would be appropriate for this project. While you could paint, carve, burn, or otherwise decorate the seat, I prefer a simple shop-mixed finish of equal parts pure tung oil, naphtha, and semi-gloss spar varnish. The tung oil enhances wood's natural beauty, the naphtha allows the oil to penetrate into the wood, and the spar varnish provides protection from ultraviolet rays and moisture.

Conclusion

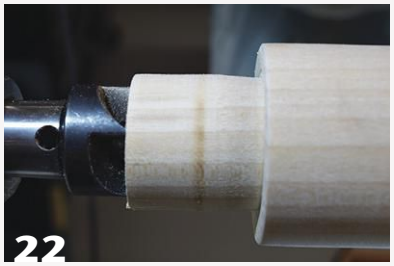
Plan on making several of these stools. With the first one completed, you'll find numerous places where you need one: the master bedroom for putting on shoes, the garage for checking tire pressure, your shop for floor-level work. These stools also make great Christmas presents for children. Of all my turning projects, this simple stool has seen the most use. ■

Dennis Belcher retired from a 30+ year career in the investment world to pursue his lifelong passion of working with wood. A member of the Wilmington Area Woodturners Association (North Carolina), Dennis demonstrates both in person and remotely. Contact Dennis at Dennis.M.Belcher@gmail.com or visit his website, DennisBelcher.com for more information on his current demonstrations.

See the Video!

Dennis Belcher has created a video to accompany this article and show the steps in action. You can view it at tiny.cc/BelcherStool (URL is case-sensitive) or by scanning the QR code. Also check out Dennis's YouTube channel, @Dennis Belcher Woodturner.

Fine-tune your tenons



22

Slightly taper the tenon and then test fit it in the leg hole in the seat. Press the leg into hole and rotate it. The bruise mark indicates the amount of wood that needs to be removed for a tight fit.

23

Cut a small channel in each tenon for air and excess glue to escape.

Glue legs to seat

24

Applying weight to the legs during glue-up ensures the legs are splayed to the proper angle. Here, heavy sandbags are used to keep the legs in the proper position while the glue cures.

SPLIT-TURNED AVOCADO BOX

Simon Begg

One day a few years ago, I was getting some food from the fridge and saw my housemate's half-eaten avocado sitting on the edge of the shelf. I thought, *An avocado is round, and I can make anything that's round on the lathe*. It's an interesting way of thinking as a woodturner, trying to find new and interesting projects. That night, I thought it over and considered what it would look like if the avocado seed (also called the pit, or stone) was actually a lid for a box. Before I was asleep that night, I figured out the process and a design for a special holding jig for hollowing the avocado.

Prepare avocado blank

The timber I chose for this project was camphor laurel. There can be a lot of color variation in this species, but I picked a piece with very little figure and color, as I wanted the form to be the main attraction, rather than the wood. I selected a block that was 4" square and 6¾" long (10cm square by 17cm long).

I cut the block of wood in half in preparation for a paper glue joint, as I had decided the avocado, having two identical halves, would best be made from a split-turned form. Split-turning is often used for making columns and decorative features for cabinets when only part of a cylinder, such as half of it, is needed. Cutting a turned object in half lengthwise after turning can be dangerous, plus you lose material to the blade thickness, or kerf. A split-turning with a paper glue joint maintains the true half size.

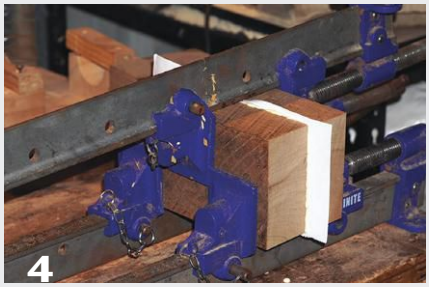
Despite my table saw not having the blade height to cut all the way through the block (*Photo 1*), I still prefer this method to a bandsaw because, for me, it creates a straighter cut. The work can then be flipped for a second, finishing cut. I then lightly touch up the cut surfaces on my belt sander.

I have been told that brown paper is perfect for a split-turning glue

Cut block in half

The author uses a table saw to cut the workpiece in half. This could also be accomplished at the bandsaw.

Make a paper glue joint



Spread wood glue evenly and clamp the two halves together with paper between them.

joint, but I have had success with a regular sheet of printer paper. I have also tried thinner paper, but the glue penetrated through the paper too much, so the two halves couldn't be split apart after turning.

I cut a piece of paper slightly larger than the gluing surfaces (*Photo 2*). Using wood glue, I glued the two blocks together with the paper in between. To ensure the glue covers the surfaces completely, use a glue spreader, as shown in *Photo 3*. I made a glue spreader from a scrap of wood by making a line of shallow cuts, or "teeth," along one edge. This allows for a more even spread than using your finger, and it keeps the process cleaner. Clamp the blocks together (*Photo 4*). I use sash clamps, which might seem like overkill, but they keep the blocks aligned and apply ample pressure to squeeze out excess glue.

Make a story stick

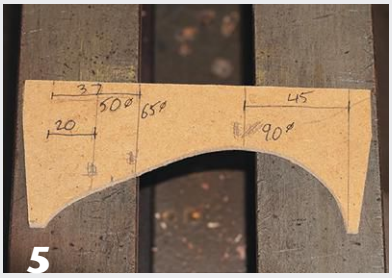
I use a story stick as a guide for sizing avocado forms (*Photo 5*). This is a common aid for reproduction in spindle turning, but I find it useful even for projects that don't have to be made in large quantities. I simply drew my desired avocado shape on a thin piece of medium-density fiberboard (MDF) and cut it out. From there, I transferred key measurements to the edge of the story stick, where I noted target diameters. Cutting out the negative profile allows you to test it against your turned form as you go.

Turn the avocado

Start by turning the avocado blank between centers. But beware: Paper joints are separated with a wedge, and a spur center hammered into the endgrain could split the joint apart even before turning. To prevent this from happening, I drill a shallow hole centered in the endgrain before mounting the work between centers (*Photos 6, 7*). This step may be overkill, but it is a good preventative measure.

Roughing down the blank is no different than turning any other spindle form. I like to set my toolrest parallel to the bed of the lathe and ▸

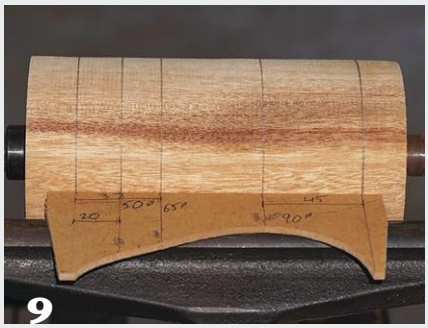
Make a story stick



A story stick is useful for achieving your desired shape.

Mount between centers

The author pre-drills the center points to avoid accidentally splitting the blank while mounting it between centers.

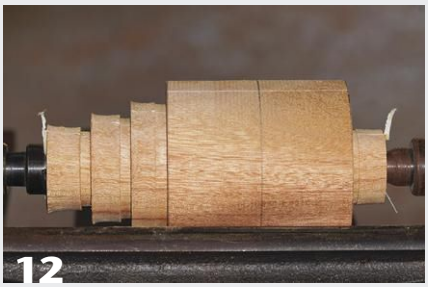


Rough-turn, transfer key points

(*8*) Rough-turn the blank to a cylinder.

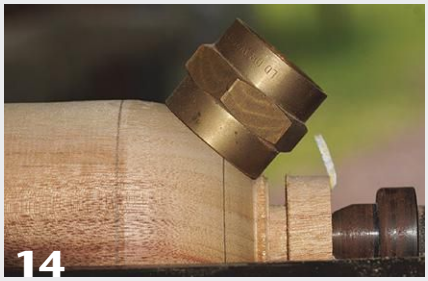
(*9*) Use the story stick to transfer key transition points to the workpiece.

Part to key diameters



Use a parting tool and caliper to achieve key diameters.

Turn avocado shape



Use the precut diameters as a guide for shaping the avocado's curves. The large rounded end is a hemisphere, and the author uses a circular plumbing fitting to confirm roundness.

The spindle gouge grind shown at the top has a blunter, wider curve at its tip, making it easier to handle on gradual curves than the pointier grind shown below.

use my finger as a guide along the rest to keep the cuts even (*Photo 8*). A smooth surface on the turned form makes it easier to transfer measurements from the story stick (*Photo 9*).

After marking out the key diameters, take care to make the depth cuts on the correct side of the lines (*Photos 10-12*). This sounds simple, but it can alter your intended shape if done incorrectly. I use a caliper to confirm achieved diameters.

With the key diameters achieved, you can more easily form the curves of the avocado shape (*Photo 13*). The wider end of the avocado is essentially a hemisphere. Any time I aim for a spherical shape, I use a plumbing fitting to check for accuracy (*Photo 14*). A cross-section of a sphere at any point will always be a perfect circle. So a plumbing fitting with a machined circle should sit completely flat on a

hemispherical surface. If it rocks from the middle, that is where more timber should be removed. If it rocks from the edges, those are the high points.

I use two different grinds on my spindle gouges, as shown in *Photo 15*. One has more of a fingernail shape, and the other, a thumbnail. The blunter thumbnail is great for a form like this, as its wider tip gives more control for gradual profiles. The finer point is the tool of choice for the beads and coves seen in traditional spindle turning. This shows the effect of a grind on the usage of a tool.

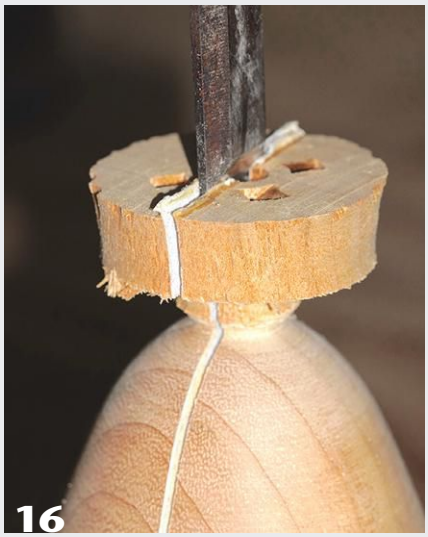
Split the avocado

When turning small projects, I find it impressive how narrow the remaining waste wood can be without breaking away. But in this case, it is best not to turn it too small. When splitting the turned form, you don't want the chisel to mark the good section of the project or to tear out grain fibers. So for this project, I left the waste area about ½" (13mm) wide.

With the avocado off the lathe, use a chisel and mallet to split the workpiece in half (*Photos 16, 17*). Be sure to align the chisel with the paper glue joint. The paper should be the weakest point and separate down the middle.

The waste wood at the ends can be trimmed off with a saw. Then sand the areas to refine the end curves (*Photo 18*).

Split the turning



(*16-17*) The author uses a chisel to split the workpiece along the paper glue joint.

(*18*) Cut away the waste wood and sand the ends.

Make a holding jig

As I have done quite a few of these boxes now, my holding jig was already made (*Photo 19*). Securely mounting the odd avocado shape on the lathe is the most challenging part of this project. Consider how the avocado shape will be attached to the jig. Is there room for adjustment? Is it a one off, or will you use it again? How well balanced is it?

The first thing I wanted to address when making the jig is cradling the uneven shape. The larger section of the avocado is a hemisphere, so I turned a cradle that is its inverse. You can use half of the avocado to check your shape as you turn the cradle. For the smaller end, I made a shape that was similar but a bit more elongated than a hemisphere-shaped bowl (*Photo 20*). ▸

Make a holding jig

A custom holding jig opens up possibilities for mounting non-round objects on the lathe. Ensure the work is held securely and is centered and balanced. Larger odd-shaped pieces might require counter weights, but not this small avocado box.

It is important that the cradles hold the avocado's flat surface parallel to the holding jig so that the box portion will be hollowed square to the surface. Also, ensure that when the pressure blocks are added, they press on the avocado form rather than the jig (*Photo 21*).

When attaching the cradles to the carrier board, ensure that the middle of the avocado will be centered on the board. Using a faceplate ring to mount the carrier board on the lathe, adjustments can be made to center the jig (*Photos 22, 23*). As this is a small project, it is fairly well balanced and shouldn't require counterweights.

When you mount the jig on the lathe, check to see that the avocado is centered and that its flat surface is perpendicular to the lathe axis. Using a screwdriver, you can adjust the pressure of the clamping blocks to realign the workpiece. To test the accuracy of the mounting, hold a pencil to the wood lightly and rotate the lathe by hand; if the pencil does not touch the wood in a continuous circle, the surface is not square to the lathe axis. Adjust as needed.

Hollow the box

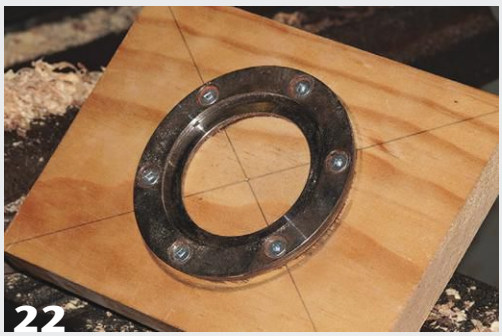
Hollowing the bowl portion of the avocado box is just like turning any other bowl (*Photos 24, 25*). The goal is to shape the bowl as close to a hemisphere as possible. Before turning the lathe on, rotate the spindle by hand to ensure any part of the jig won't hit the toolrest. I like to keep the avocado in the jig after hollowing in case there are any adjustments needed after turning the seed.

Turn the box lid

For the seed, or box lid, I chose American walnut for its contrasting color. Start with an oversized blank so you'll have enough material to make a good fit on the hollowed box.

I started with the blank mounted in a chuck and roughed it round (*Photo 26*). Then I formed a small tenon sized to fit into the avocado box section and hollowed the lid (*Photo 27*). As with the hollowed section in the avocado body, this hollowing can be done with a regular

Mount jig on lathe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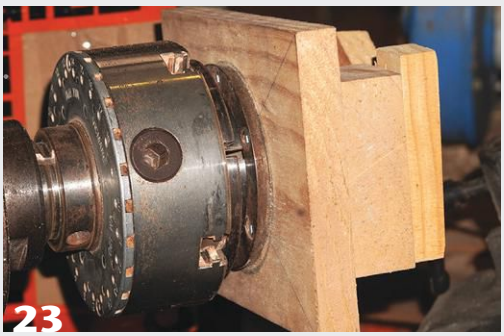
23

The author uses a faceplate ring to mount the carrier board on the lathe. The chuck jaws expand into a recess in the ring to hold it securely.

Hollow the box


24


25

Use a bowl gouge to hollow the box portion in the avocado body.

bowl gouge. With small bowls, there has to be a lot of movement of the tool handle over a short distance to keep the bevel rubbing and the tool cutting in a controlled manner.

Before reverse-mounting the work to shape the top of the lid, shape just the beginning of the top curve so you won't have to turn right up to the jaws (*Photo 28*). Now reverse-mount the lid to shape its top to a hemisphere. You can gently grip the small tenon in the chuck jaws. I turned this shape by eye but then used the circular plumbing fitting to check for hemispherical accuracy (*Photos 29, 30*).

Sand and finish

Now that the turning is complete, the avocado can be taken out of the holding jig and its flat surface sanded. For an even application of finish, it is important to sand through any remaining paper and glue. I also like to ease the sharp edge of the avocado for more comfortable handling. For boxes, my preference is to use an oil-based product such as Osmo® Oil.

Although I don't actually like the taste of avocados, I have really enjoyed making this project over the last few years. It calls upon a range of skills that I don't use frequently. A good jig can open the door to turning odd shapes, and the problem-solving can be the most satisfying part. If you see a shape that has round components, consider how you could make it on the lathe and see what creative ideas you come up with. ■

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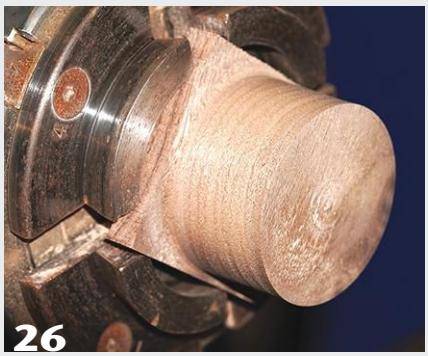
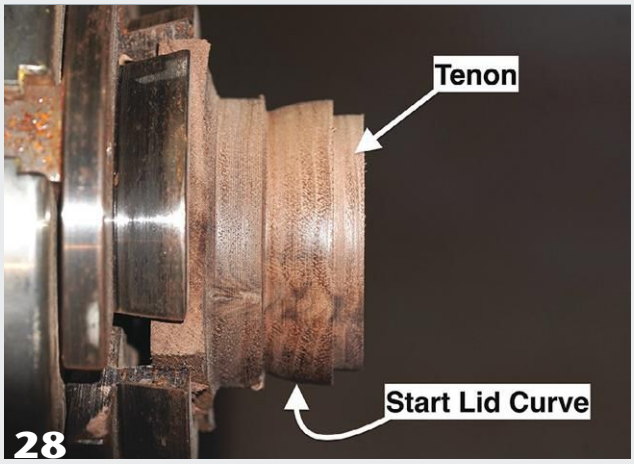
Hollow box lid



The lid blank is mounted in a chuck and turned round.

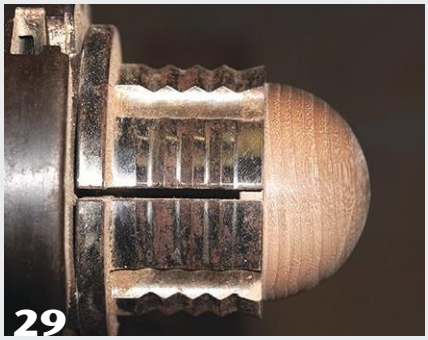
Form a short tenon to fit the hollowed box section, then hollow the lid.

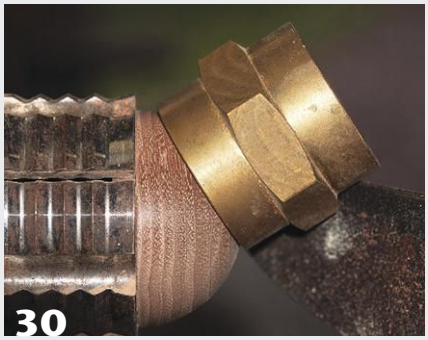


Start the top curve

Before reverse-mounting the lid, turn just the start of the curve so you won't have to cut right up to the jaws.

Shape top of lid





After reverse-mounting the lid, turn its top to a hemispherical shape. The author once again uses a plumbing fitting to confirm true roundness.

TURN A SEGMENTED BEADS OF COURAGE BOX

Gabriel Hoff and Ethan Hoff

Making and donating Beads of Courage (BoC) boxes has long been a meaningful and charitable way for woodturners to give back and support the broader community. In the BoC program (beadsofcourage.org), children are given a bead for each medical treatment or milestone in their care. Different bead colors and designs represent different stages of treatment, so the beads gain powerful meaning along a child's treatment journey.

Many woodturning chapters cherish the opportunity to contribute to this important cause by creating special boxes in which the children's beads can be safely stored.

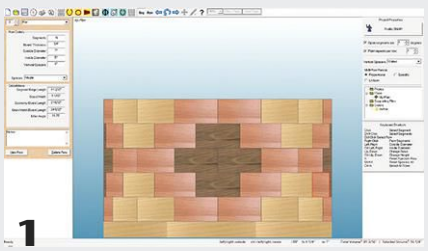
In this article, we will show how to design and turn a segmented Beads of Courage box.

Why a segmented box?

Why did we decide to make segmented boxes? When we set out to create our first box, it came with some challenges. Meeting BoC's size requirement of 5" high by 6" in diameter (13cm × 15cm) is challenging when using dimensional lumber, such as 2"- or 3"- (5cm- or 8cm-) thick boards. A glue-up of multiple boards means there is a lot of wood to hollow, creating unnecessary waste and extra effort. There are also cost considerations, since lumber prices increase with board size—not to mention this approach limits your choice of wood species in a single box.

Learn More About Beads of Courage

Do you want to make and donate boxes to this worthy cause? First, take the time to learn more about the BoC program. There is a special webpage especially for woodturners, **beadsofcourage.org/bead-bowls,** where you can register with BoC, learn different ways to donate, order logo beads for your boxes, and get up to speed on required dimensions, design considerations, and acceptable finishes.



1

With the help of software

Segmenting software programs, such as Lloyd Johnson's Woodturner Pro, can easily display designs and cut sheets.

Cutting Summary - BoC Article Box 2025

R#	Row Type	Species (Default)	Segs	Board Thickness	Outside Diameter	Inside Diameter	Edge Length	Vertical Spacer	Board Width	Econ. Bd. Length	Grain Match	Miter Angle
6	Flat	Maple	16	3/4"	7"	5-1/4"	1-13/32"		15/16"	21-17/32"	24-9/32"	11.25°
5	Flat	Maple	16	3/4"	7"	5-1/4"	1-13/32"		15/16"	21-17/32"	24-9/32"	11.25°
4	Flat	Maple	16	3/4"	7"	5-1/4"	1-13/32"		15/16"	21-17/32"	24-9/32"	11.25°
3	Flat	Maple	16	3/4"	7"	5"	1-13/32"		1-1/16"	21-5/32"	24-9/32"	11.25°
2	Flat	Maple	16	3/4"	7"	5-1/4"	1-13/32"		15/16"	21-17/32"	24-9/32"	11.25°
1	Disk	Maple	1	1/2"	7"							

2

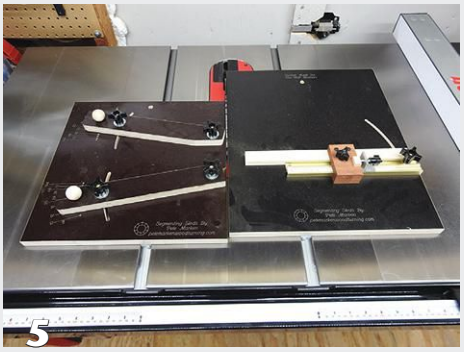
Cut strips

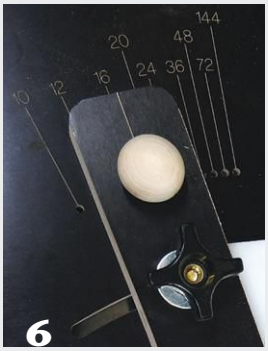
3

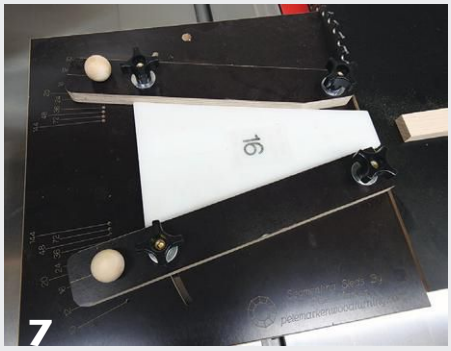
4

Cut strips on the table saw.

Segment-cutting sled







The authors use a special table saw sled for cutting segments accurately.

Segmenting does require more time and planning up front, but the results can yield creative designs and make the turning part of the process easier. The potential for segmented designs is endless—you can rearrange segments, patterns, shapes, or even the wood species to change the look and style of any box. Software programs for designing segmented patterns can easily generate a cutsheet showing the number of segments of each type of wood you'll need. They can also display the resulting design, which is extremely helpful for confirming your choices. For the box shown in this article, we used Woodturner Pro software by Lloyd Johnson (woodturnerpro.com); *Photos 1 and 2* show two screenshots—our intended design and a cut sheet.

Cut the segments

When starting a segmented BoC box, there are a few crucial steps to follow. First, the wood you use must be dry, 8% to 10% moisture, and the thickness must be 4/4 or 1" (25mm) in actual dimension. This is important because the additional thickness over nominal lumber dimensions will allow for sanding of the rings later. The extra thickness ensures that any residual glue can be completely removed.

Cutting small sections of a larger board allows for easy ripping on the table saw (*Photo 3*). Each segment is cut from a narrow board, or strip. Mark the number of strips needed on each board prior to cutting. This box includes cherry, maple, and walnut, and the number of strips has been marked using a pencil. To figure out the strip count, calculate the edge length of each segment plus the kerf of the blade multiplied by the number of segments. This number will roughly equal how many inches of wood are needed to create the correct number of segments. It is important to include extra length in the measurements to account for waste. The strips need to be cut slightly wider than they are tall (or thick), as this will help distinguish the correct grain orientation as the strip is cut on the segmenting sled. Cut the strips, making sure to use a push block for safety (*Photo 4*).

Set stop distance from blade

Use a caliper to set the stop for consistent segment lengths.

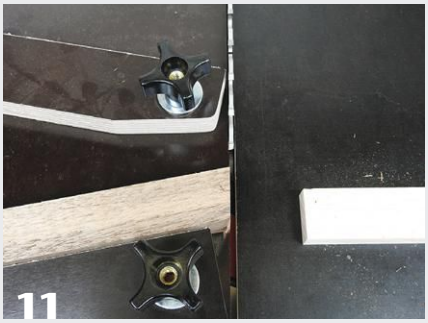
Cutting the segments can be accomplished by several different methods. A bandsaw, miter saw, or table saw with a miter gauge are all options. We found the easiest and quickest method is to use a table saw sled dedicated to segmenting (*Photo 5*). We purchased our sled, but you could also make one yourself. Our sled has predrilled holes that correspond to the number of segments you want in a glued-up ring, and a wood knob that locks into these holes. To set the sled, move the wooden knobs to the hole that matches your desired number of ring segments, then tighten the thumbscrews (*Photo 6*). The box shown in this article has sixteen segments per ring. This means each segment must have an angle of 22.5 degrees. Having the predrilled holes makes this process extremely accurate and almost foolproof.

Another method for setting up the sled is to use a Wedgie, created by Jerry Bennett (segeasy.com). To use the Wedgie, simply align its two long edges with the two fences on the sled and lock down the thumbscrews (*Photo 7*). We chose the sixteen-segment Wedgie, but there are many more available options ranging from twelve to 144 segments per ring.

Next, set the edge length of each segment. This is critical, as the length of each segment adds up over the sixteen segments to create a ring with no gaps. If this measurement is off, ▸

Cut segments

Without contacting the stop, first establish a cut angle on the end of a strip.



Now set the long point of the angle against the stop and cut a segment. Flip the strip so the long point is once again at the bottom, push it against the stop, and cut another segment. Continue this process until all segments are cut.

The cut segments

All the cut segments, ready for gluing.

Glue up rings

Glue the segments into rings—in this case, sixteen segments per ring. Band clamps apply gluing pressure.

Sand/flatten rings

The authors use a drum sander to flatten and smooth the rings, essential for a good glue-up with no gaps.

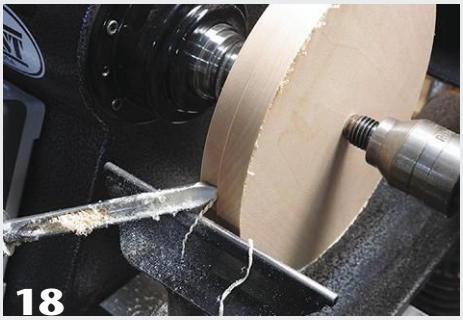
then the resulting ring will have gaps between each segment, preventing a good glue up and effectively ruining the box. This box's edge length is 1 13/32" (35.7mm). Using a digital caliper, set the distance between the saw blade and the stop on the cutoff sled to 1 13/32" (*Photo 8*). Then make a few test cuts and measure again with the caliper. Once the segment length is set, tighten the thumbscrew on the cutoff sled's stop.

To cut the segments, take the strip of wood and position it securely against the sled's fence. Pass the end of the strip over the blade just enough to cut the square end to the 22.5-degree angle. This will be the first angled cut on the piece (*Photo 9*). Once that starting angle is cut, flip the strip over and push the long-edged point up to the stop on the cutoff sled. The long-edged point should be at the bottom of the strip, as shown in *Photo 10*. Turn on the saw and make the cut, creating a segment with two angled sides.

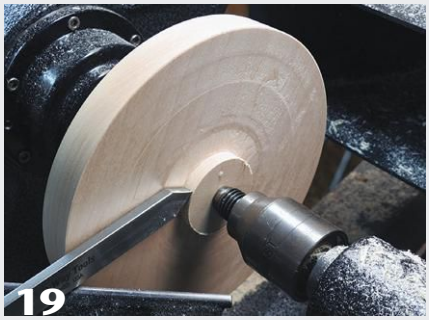
After the first segment is cut, the long edge of the strip will be at the top (*Photo 11*). Before cutting the next segment, flip the strip over so the long point is once again at the bottom. When the strip becomes too short to cut safely, begin cutting the next strip. Repeat this process

Prepare box bottom

A disk is prepared at the bandsaw.



The disk is mounted on the lathe and trued. Form a tenon for remounting in a chuck.



until all the segments are cut (*Photo 12*). The cutsheet will tell how many segments in each type of wood are needed to match the design.

Glue the segments

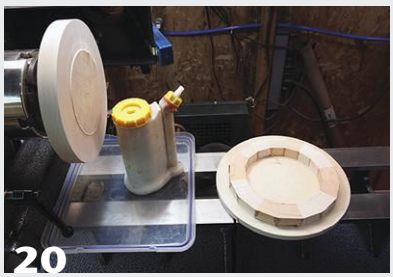
With the table saw work complete, it is time to glue the segments together to create a ring. The first step is to organize the supplies needed: the segments, a paper bowl with wood glue (we use Titebond III), and hose clamps. Start by dipping the edge of one segment into the wood glue and press it against the next segment in the pattern. Repeat this process until all the segments form a ring. Gently tap the segments with a mallet so they sit flat, then tighten a hose clamp around the glued ring. Repeat until all five rings have been glued together (*Photo 13, 14*).

After the glue has dried for at least twenty-four hours, sand them flat. Our method of accomplishing this is to use a drum sander. Feed all the rings through the machine, taking very light passes. Flip the rings over after each pass to evenly sand both sides. Continue until all the rings are the same thickness, ideally ¾", or 19mm (*Photos 15, 16*).

Now it is time to glue the rings into a stacked pattern. But first make a base, or bottom, by cutting a flat 1"-thick board round at the bandsaw (*Photo 17*). Center and mount the base on the lathe using a drive and live center, then true the board up with a bowl gouge (*Photo 18*). Form a tenon for holding the base in a chuck, sized to fit the chuck jaws you are using (*Photo 19*). Remount the workpiece in the chuck, and true up the face of the board so it is completely flat. This step is essential, as the first ring must be glued with no gaps or weak points.

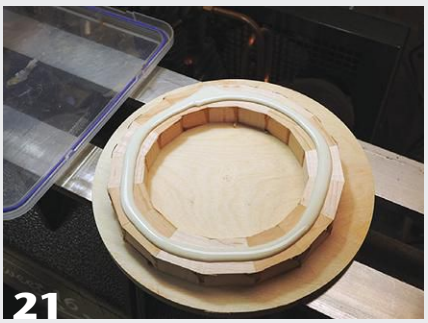
It is a good idea to cover the lathe bed to prevent getting glue on it. Gather the gluing supplies, a scrap board to use ▸

Prepare for gluing

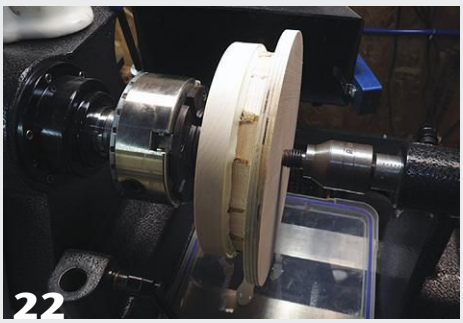


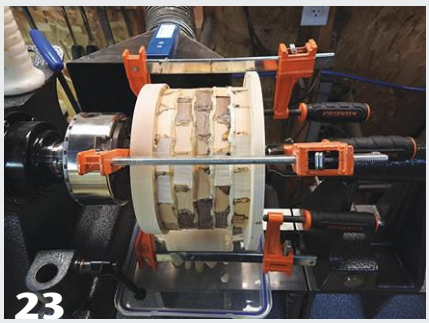
Gather your gluing materials, and cover the lathe bed to keep the glue off.

Glue rings together



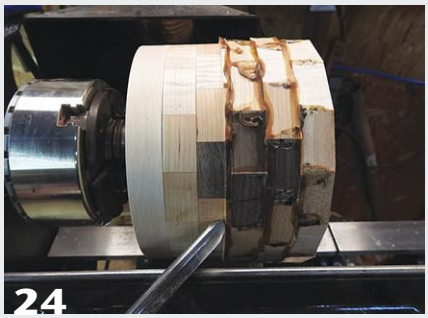
Glue the first ring to the box bottom, pressing it in place with a scrap pressure plate.

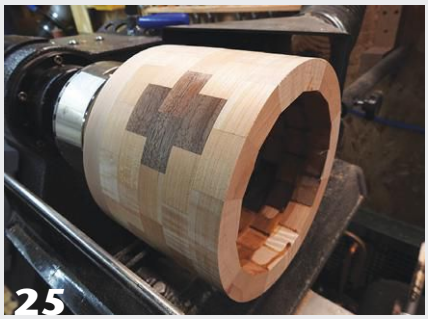




Glue the rest of the rings, applying pressure with clamps.

Turn outside of box





The authors use a bowl gouge to turn the outside of the box.

as a pressure plate, and the first ring in the pattern (*Photo 20*). Spread an even amount of glue onto the ring, then press the ring onto the base and clamp it using the pressure plate and tailstock (*Photos 21, 22*). Repeat this process for all the rings in the pattern. We use F-style clamps to securely press the rings together once all the rings have been assembled (*Photo 23*). Wipe away the excess glue and let the glue dry for at least twenty-four hours.

Turn the box

The next step is to turn the box. Using a bowl gouge with the lathe speed around 1200 rpm, turn away the corners of the rings and true up the outside of the box (*Photo 24*). Once the box is balanced, increase the speed to around 1800 rpm and finish turning the exterior of the box. Try to make the sides of the box as flat and smooth as possible so there are minimal undulations and tearout (*Photo 25*).

Now true and finish-turn the interior of the box. We use a bowl gouge on the interior walls and switch to a bottom feeder bowl gouge to remove the bulk of the base (*Photos 26, 27*). Clean up the inside corner and smooth the base using a sharp-pointed negative-rake scraper (*Photo 28*).

Sand the box. We start on the exterior, power-sanding with a 2" (5cm) disk, beginning with 180 grit and work up to 400 grit. Keep the sander level and apply even pressure to avoid creating lines or undulations (*Photo 29*). Repeat the process with the power sander on the interior bottom, but not the interior sides (*Photo 30*). To sand the inside walls, we use a soft sanding block, again working from 180 to 400 grit (*Photo 31*). Finally, we polish the box with 0000 steel wool and apply a slightly abrasive wax sealer. Be sure to follow the guidelines set by Beads of Courage (*see sidebar, Learn More About Beads of Courage, p. 22*): use a non-toxic finish and avoid lacquers and oil-based finishes.

MORE ON SEGMENTED TURNING

EXPLORE!

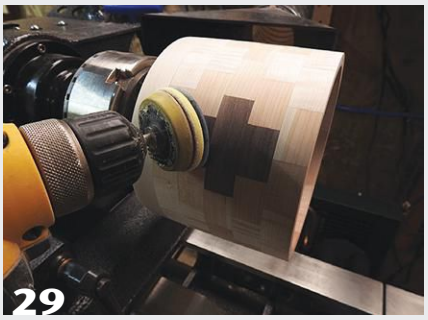
To get started in segmented woodturning, log in at woodturner.org and use the Explore! search tool to find useful articles on the subject. Another great resource is segmentedwoodturners.org, home of the AAW's online chapter, Segmented Woodturners.

- "Turning Your First Segmented Bowl," by Jim Rodgers, October 2015 *AW* (vol 30, no 5)
- "Keeping it Together: Glue, Grain, and Joints," by Jim Rodgers, Fall 2008 *AW* (vol 23, no 3)
- "Segmented Turning Today: A Remarkable Evolution," by Al Miotke, June 2022 *AW* (vol 37, no 3)

Turn inside of box

A variety of tools is used on the box's interior—a bowl gouge, a bottom feeder bowl gouge, and a negative-rake scraper.

Sand the box


29


30

Power-sand the outside walls of the box and the interior bottom.


31

The authors use a soft sanding pad on the interior walls.

Removing the tenon from the base is the last step before creating the box lid. Using a jam chuck or Cole jaws with tailstock pressure, reverse-mount the box and use the live center indentation on the base to align and balance the box in this new orientation. Protect the workpiece using a cloth if you are using Cole jaws (*Photo 32*). Turn away the tenon using a bowl gouge, applying pressure *toward* the headstock when making the cuts. Doing so reduces the risk of "pulling" the piece from the chuck. Remove the tailstock and gently sand the bottom. A couple of decorative lines enhance the bottom and make it look like care was taken on all aspects of the box (*Photo 33*). As before, polish the bottom with 0000 steel wool and abrasive wax.

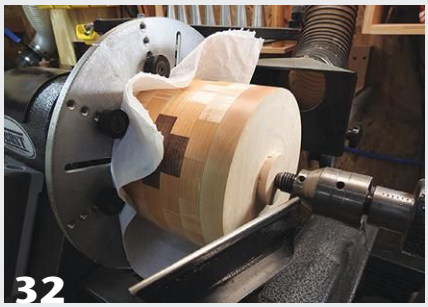
Turn a lid

When making the lid, select a piece of 1" thick material, in either a contrasting wood or the same as the base. The lid shown here is made from hard maple (same as the base).

Cut the piece on the bandsaw to a square, oversized just a bit from the box diameter, and mark the centers. To mount the lid in a way that provides access to its underside, we use a woodworm screw mounted in a chuck. Most woodworm screws are slightly larger than ⅜" (9.5mm) in diameter, so use a ⅜" bradpoint bit to drill a pilot hole. The hole needs to be smaller than the woodworm screw so it can "bite" into the wood. Drill this hole all the way through the lid.

Thread the lid piece onto the screw until it bottoms out on the chuck jaws. True up the disk and form a tenon sized to fit into the rim of the box, creating a slightly loose fit (*Photo 34*). It is important ▸

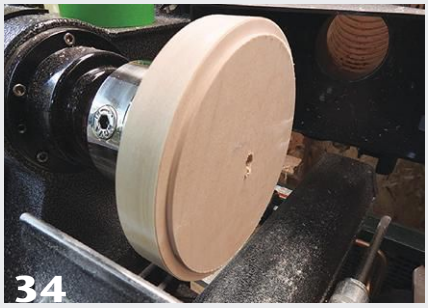
Complete the bottom


32


33

The box is reverse-mounted so the bottom tenon can be removed and decorative lines added to the base.

Turn and fit lid


34


35

Material for the lid is mounted on a screw chuck (woodworm screw) and fitted to the box rim.

that the lid fit is not too tight or too loose, so take great care in sneaking up on the right fit. Once a satisfactory fit has been achieved, turn away some of the wood in the middle of the underside of the lid to reduce its weight, sand, and add decorative lines. Confirm the fit and diameter of the lid to make sure it matches the diameter of the box (*Photo 35*).

To finish the lid, create a curve on the top and gently flatten/slope the lid towards the center hole (*Photo 36*).

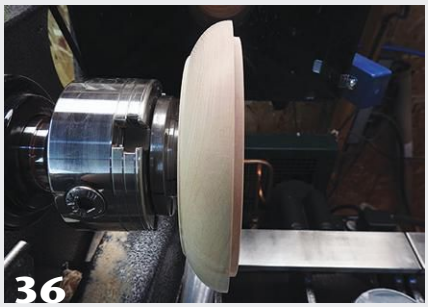
With the lid reverse-mounted on the woodworm screw, sand through the grits, and polish with 0000 steel wood and abrasive wax (*Photo 37*).

For this lid, we made the handle from a small piece of contrasting wood, walnut. Turn a knob-like shape (*Photo 38*). Measure the logo bead (*see sidebar, Learn More About Beads of Courage, p. 22*), and drill a hole in the knob sized to accept the bead. Use a Forstner-style bit close to the size of the logo bead (*Photo 39*). Use a parting tool to widen the opening just enough so the logo bead fits snugly (*Photo 40*), but do not glue the bead in yet. On the bottom of the roughed-out knob, form a tenon that matches the diameter of the hole in the top of the lid. Slightly undercut the bottom of the knob so it will sit flat against the lid. Sand and finish the knob with 0000 steel wool and abrasive wax.

We cover the hole on the inside of the lid with a turned medallion—essentially a small disk with a tenon—made from the same piece of walnut used for the knob. Form a disk about ¼", or 6mm, thick, and decorate it with concentric lines. Form a tenon to fit in the hole in the underside of the lid. Slightly undercut the bottom of the disk so it will sit flat.

Now glue the parts in place, including the knob to the top of the lid and the medallion to the underside of the lid. Quite often, the lengths of the two tenons combined exceed the thickness of the lid. If this happens, sand the tenons a bit shorter until both parts sit properly against the lid. Finally, glue the BoC logo bead into the hole on the top of the knob. ■

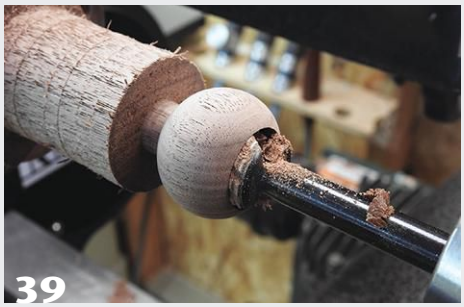
Shape and sand lid



Complete the shaping of the lid, reverse-mounting it on the woodworm screw to gain full access to the top.

Gabriel and Ethan Hoff, brothers from Beavercreek, Ohio, are members of the Ohio Valley Woodturners Guild (OVWG). They are very active in the woodturning community and work together on making Beads of Courage boxes. Aside from making these boxes, Ethan enjoys making basket illusions and Gabriel specializes in small, lidded boxes. Examples of their work can be found on the AAW Forum and the OVWG website, ovwg.org.

Turn knob



Shape the knob, then drill a recess to accept the BoC logo bead.

FINISHING TURNED VESSELS

Dr. Seri Robinson

Whether or not you follow all the hot new developments in wood science, at this point you've likely heard a bit about finishes for wood meant for food contact. Despite seemingly every cutting board maker on the planet having their own blend of 'conditioner' meant to keep the wood 'hydrated,' scientific testing has shown that *any* finish on food-contact wood (cutting boards, cooking spoons, etc.) will not only inhibit the wood's ability to self clean, but can actually harbor and grow more bacteria.

SYMPOSIUM DEMONSTRATOR IN RALEIGH

Dr. Seri Robinson will be a demonstrator at AAW's International Woodturning Symposium in Raleigh, North Carolina, June 4-7, 2026, where they will share their wealth of experience with the attendees. Don't miss this chance to learn from Seri, live and in person! For the latest details, visit aawsymposium.org.

Easy enough, you might say—how many of us actually remember to condition our cutting boards, anyway? And there isn't a finish on the planet that can withstand repeated exposure to the boiling water, tomato sauce, and soup that cooking spoons endure. Forgoing a finish on kitchen wood is less work for the chef and safer for the family.

But cutting boards and cooking spoons aren't meant to *hold liquids*.

Enter the round object: tea cups, salad bowls, soup bowls, pasta bowls, egg cups... the list goes on and on. Most are no longer made ▸

Containing non-liquids

Anything cooked in oil can deposit said oil onto your unfinished bowls. Washing well with soap and water can remove the oil, if desired. The amount of oil deposited by popcorn is negligible, however, compared to a purposeful application of mineral oil.

Serving bowls for salad do very well unfinished, especially if you leave the dressing up to each individual. This means that the individual salad bowls might need a finish, especially if oil dressings are frequently used.

from wood, but there are everyday wooden vessels that persist in the modern North American kitchen—particularly salad bowls. And as one ventures into subcultures, like Renaissance Fairs and historical reenactments, items like wooden mugs, bowls, plates, and even champagne flutes become more common.

Finish plays a dual role in these types of objects: protecting the wood and plugging it up to keep liquids in. No one wants champagne leaking from their handcrafted flute or pasta sauce staining their lap through a pasta bowl. But if finishes on wood can harbor and breed bacteria, what is the path forward? Should wood just...never be used?

Let's have a nuanced discussion of wood finishes as they relate specifically to the turned vessel, on a case-by-case basis. Be warned—there's science ahead!

What is the deal with wood finishes and bacteria?

Dozens of scientific papers have repeatedly confirmed that due to wood's hygroscopic nature, wetness on the surface of wood, and any bacteria in said wetness, are pulled down into the wood, where the bacteria are trapped and eventually die. A recent study confirmed what common sense already dictates, which is that if you put a coating on your wood, it significantly impairs the movement of water, and bacteria. This is, of course, the entire purpose of an indoor wood finish—to limit moisture cycling.

Studies also found that on finished wood the bacterial load can *increase* above the original concentration (the bacteria multiply). Obviously this could be remedied by washing the item in question with soapy water, but there's a simple joy in being able to prepare a steak and sit down to your meal without immediately washing your cutting board. Unfinished wood gives you time by drawing the bacteria down into the wood instead of keeping it on the surface to flourish. Time is often an issue at play here—whether used for prep or for serving, wooden kitchen items frequently have prolonged food contact. You let your salad sit in the salad bowl during dinner, you don't toss the lettuce in and then dump it out and wash the bowl.

Vessels for non-liquid foods

At first glance, salad bowls should be an easy no-finish option. They don't

How Is Wood Antimicrobial?

When people hear the word "antimicrobial" they tend to think that there is some compound in the wood that is killing bacteria. And while some wood species do have these compounds, generally when we talk about the antimicrobial nature of wood we are talking about the movement of water and microbes from the surface to deep into the wood as the wood dries.

How does this happen?

Wood is *hygroscopic*, meaning it is constantly equilibrating the inner moisture content with the relative humidity of the air (or with liquid water on the surface). As every woodworker knows, water does not stay on the surface of wood but is absorbed by the wood. As water is absorbed it takes microbes from the surface down into the wood. The water eventually evaporates, leaving the microbes trapped inside the wood where they eventually die. There are dozens of scientific papers documenting this, as well as studies attempting to reculture bacteria from the inside of wooden cutting boards—and failing to find anything living to culture. Bottom line—every wood species is self-cleaning, but how *fast* the wood self cleans is an effect of its anatomy and the amount of extractives present. (*Read more about extractives on p.42*)

Wood choice matters

There are plenty of woods that leach extractives even in room temperature water. This rosewood spoon has discolored a cup of tap water in just ten minutes at room temperature. Extractives can affect mammalian bodies, so be purposeful when selecting wood for use in the kitchen. Not all wood should be left unfinished!

Unfinished wood can leak

Vessels meant for liquid have their own challenges when left unfinished. Walnut, a semi-ring porous wood, is slow to leach water, but alcohols move through its pores quickly. Here, you can see the beading of tequila after one minute of exposure. The cup is treated with olive oil, a non-hardening oil, which slows but does not stop alcohol movement. Walnut goblet by Cole Pender.

hold liquids directly, just lettuce and other vegetables, and may occasionally double as the family popcorn bowl. There is a great deal of bacteria on vegetables, especially leafy greens, and having a self-cleaning bowl makes a lot of sense.

The trouble comes in when salad dressing is in the mix. Many dressings have an oil base, and while these oils are non-hardening, they still enter the wood and retard moisture movement. One scientific study on wood finishes and bacteria found no significant difference in outcomes between hardening oils (linseed oil) and non-hardening oils (mineral oil). Salad dressing would act like mineral oil on a cutting board and keep bacteria on the surface of the wood, and on your salad. The dressing becomes your finish.

Over time the dressing will wash out, but only if more is never added. This is unlikely for a salad bowl and thus requires greater thought. The same issue arises with buttered popcorn, or popcorn popped in oil—the oil and/or butter, left to sit in the bowl, will act like a finish.

There are two things to consider here: 1) bacterial load and 2) exposure mitigation.

For salad—we know greens can carry a large bacterial load, but washing them can go a long way to removing harmful bacteria. With less bacteria present, a finished bowl becomes less risky. Another easy option is to not put the dressing on in the bowl, but rather let those at the table apply their own dressing once the vegetables are on their plate.

Popcorn is not a major vector of bacteria once popped, so if your large bowl is just a popcorn bowl, there's no reason to not finish it however you like. Most finishes you have on hand will be better than a butter finish. Foods that aren't known to transport problematic bacteria have no reason to be on unfinished wood—unless you are fundamentally against finishes.

Suggested finish for salad bowls: if you want to let people apply their own dressing to individual plates, leave the serving bowl unfinished. If dressing must be applied in-bowl, you'll want a finish already on the wood. Mineral oil doesn't harden and may not stay on the surface, which would allow salad dressing to absorb into the wood. Instead, consider a penetrative hardening oil like Danish oil or linseed oil, making sure the finish contains driers so it can cure properly. Avoid 'raw' oils, as they can take months or even years to fully cure. There is nothing wrong with top-coat type finishes, like waterborne polycrylics, but any finish that forms a film may get chipped with repeated bashing of the salad tongs.

Suggested finish for popcorn bowls: Use a hardening, penetrative finish such as a Danish oil, or anything with a linseed base that also contains driers. Because popcorn bowls don't generally have utensils being banged around in them, you could also consider a nitrocellulose lacquer.

Vessels for cold non-alcoholic liquids

For any wooden vessel meant to hold liquids you need a very thorough finish for three main reasons: first, without a finish your beverage could leak right out of your cup depending on wood species used. Second, water is the easiest liquid to protect against, but the caustic nature of sodas and acids of fruit juices can wear at finishes over time. Third, liquids on wood can move extractives from the wood—the parts of wood that give it weight, or color, or smell—and wood extractives are not always healthy for human ingestion.

Wood choice matters here, but it's complicated. The denser the wood ▸

the less likely it will be for liquid to leak out, but the more likely it is to have a high, potentially problematic, extractive load. Tropical and high density woods tend to have higher extractive loads, and often times it is those extractives that 'gum up' the wood and help prevent liquid leakage. Many of the woods considered 'food-safe' are medium and light density pale temperate hardwoods which lack significant extractive loads. Even if you have a dense wood that holds water without being finished, it is best practice to put a finish on your cup to protect you from the wood.

As bacteria tend to not be a concern in modern tap water, fruit juices, and grocery-store soda, your wooden cups and mugs are best finished. The finish should be applied thoroughly, with the finish consistently checked and reapplied as needed.

Suggested finish for vessels containing cold, non-alcoholic liquids: The path of least work would be a nitrocellulose lacquer, which both mildly penetrates and quickly builds a film finish. Three or more coats may be needed, and the finish should be checked regularly for maintenance. Alternatively, you could apply numerous coats of an oil-based finish until no more absorbs. If you'd like to refrain from a finish, make your cup from white oak, which is naturally non-porous due to tyloses in the wood's vessels. White oak also has a long track record of use in food and beverage contact and is generally considered 'safe.'

Vessels for alcoholic beverages

As with cups and mugs for water and juice, the concerns about bacteria here are functionally nonexistent. Additional issues come into play when alcohol is involved, however. Alcohols are much better solvents than water or juice, and can move many more extractives from the wood. Alcohol also moves more readily through wood, so a cup that holds water may still leak alcohol. Hence, although bacteria are not an issue, leakage and potential wood toxicity are.

You also must consider the solubility of your finish. Numerous wood finishes are soluble in alcohol, so pick the wrong one and you'll be drinking not just whiskey, but your finish as well. Shellac should not be used, and most lacquers should be avoided. There are some polyurethane varnishes that purport to be 'generally' durable to alcohol, and modern polycrylics are doing better with every generation. They're meant for short-term exposure, however, and not necessarily for, say, half a glass of wine being left in a wooden wine glass overnight. Long-term exposure to concentrated alcohol, especially spirits, will challenge even the best finish.

Suggested finish for vessels containing alcohol: Most wooden bartops these days are finished with epoxy resin, which crosslinks and has moderate durability when in contact with alcohol. With increasing interest in microplastics and plastic leaching, however, epoxy may not be the best solution. Instead, consider a glass insert into your cup or champagne flute, or make just the stem of the goblet from wood. In this case the best finish may be to not have the alcohol come in contact with the wood at all.

A second option, and perhaps the easiest one, is to use unfinished white oak. While not completely impermeable, there is a reason that whiskey barrels, wine casks, etc., are made from white oak. The tyloses produced by the tree block up many of the vessels in the wood, effectively cutting off the 'highway' that liquids frequently travel. Your cup will swell initially, and you'll lose some of your alcohol, but white oak is far less likely to leak than many other species, even without a finish.

Vessels for hot liquids

Hot liquids present similar challenges to alcohol: the hotter a liquid is, the more likely it is to move extractives from the wood into the liquid. An additional problem is that when wood gets hot and wet, hydrogen bonds loosen and can slip past each other causing deformation—otherwise known as steam bending. Consistently cycling wood through dry and wet cycles, especially with heat, will cause those hydrogen bonds to slip even without pressure, leading to cracking and deformation.

Hot liquids penetrate wood more quickly than cold liquids and wear down even the most durable finish

What Is a Wood Extractive?

At the most basic level, a wood extractive is a compound that a tree produces to help with defense. We use the word "extractive" because these compounds are extractable—some are volatile (think scents in cedar), some are water-soluble, some are alcohol-soluble, and some transfer on skin contact. Extractive levels tend to be highest at the sapwood/heartwood boundary, where the tree is busy converting its extra sugar to secondary metabolites (extractives) before the wood converts to heartwood. By taking leftover food and converting it to protective extractives, the heartwood becomes more decay resistant.

Because extractives are meant for defense, some can affect humans in negative and/or positive ways. Match your wood to your use, and remember that pale, lightweight woods tend to be the lowest in extractives.

Choose a 'naturally sealed' wood



If you want to stay finish-free, choose woods that have natural blockage in their vessels. White oak is a great choice, as it routinely has tyloses blocking its vessels. This photo shows a cup made of white oak holding whiskey, without leaking, over the course of an hour.

over time. This is certainly not to say that there aren't finishes that could withstand a hot soup—especially once or twice. Issues arise more from repeated exposure. Much like with alcohol, there's a layer of complication here that could most easily be resolved by adding another material to the equation.

Suggested finish for hot-liquid vessels: Alas, a wooden hot cocoa mug probably isn't in the cards regardless of finish, but you have two options: either go medieval and treat wood bowls as semi-disposable objects, leaving them unfinished and using them until they crack apart (a completely valid choice), or use the wood bowl as a sleeve for an interior bowl of different material—glass, ceramic, or stainless steel. If you do go for the first option, make sure you are using a food-safe wood!

There are a few wood species that can handle hot liquids without a finish, but many of these are tropical woods, like teak, and aren't necessarily food-safe. White oak is another option here, although again note that repeated exposure to hot liquids will eventually deform your wood.

In conclusion

Wood science is unfortunately not black and white, and neither is how to treat wood-in-service. The kind of finish one uses for a coffee table versus a cutting board versus a salad bowl, are all very different conversations and depend on a host of factors including what food the item will be exposed to, what wood the item is made from, and how much care is taken of the item over the long term—families with kids have very different outcomes for their woodware than a single person living alone.

Generally speaking, wood objects meant for food contact that *hold* liquid or viscous items over a duration of time need to be looked at differently than those used in the short-term (cutting boards) or those meant to hold solid items (charcuterie boards). While there are very few arguments for ever finishing a wood cutting board or cooking spoon, there are numerous reasons to finish a wooden cup or salad bowl, especially if dressings, butters, oils, and fats will be sitting on the surface and absorbing. Alternatively, consider a wood that is naturally sealed, like white oak. Just make sure the wood is food-safe!

There is no 'right' or 'wrong' finish. Choose a finish that is accessible for you and that you can reapply and repair if needed. Take the potential food exposure into consideration, as well as wood species. And remember that sometimes the best wood for the job is not wood at all—a nice insert into your wooden vessel can save a headache down the line for you and whoever cleans up after dinner. ■

Dr. Seri Robinson, a professor of wood anatomy at Oregon State University, has been turning for over thirty years and works primarily with spalted and figured woods, which they also research. Learn more about Dr. Robinson's work at northernspalting.com, or help support spalting research at patreon.com/spalting.

Safety note

Apply any solvent-based finish with gloves to keep the contents away from your skin. And be sure to wear a solvent-specific respirator when applying, even when outside. Salad bowl by Hayden Houck.

When Wood Meets Light:
A Cross-Disciplinary Collaboration

Ladd

In the world of craft, few collaborations feel as surprising or as visually arresting as that of a woodturner and a stained glass artist. One medium speaks in the tactile language of earth and grain; the other, in the ephemeral tones of color and light. Brought together, they form a rare dialogue: nature's warmth meeting luminous geometry, tradition entwined with innovation.

This is more than a partnership between two materials. It's a conversation between disciplines, a union of distinct sensibilities that challenges convention and expands the language of both crafts.

Triangle Bowl, 2025, White oak (bowl), textured boxelder (lid), India ink, Mahoney's walnut oil, Mahoney's walnut paste, glass, copper foil, 9" × 8½" (23cm × 22cm)

Crafting the conversation

My collaboration with glass artist Carol Crosset began as all good ones do: with curiosity, open dialogue, and a willingness to surrender some control. Each of us arrived with ample expertise in our respective crafts, yet quickly found ourselves learning each other's language.

I am drawn to the expressive potential of grain and form, the way wood's natural variation could either soften or heighten the glass's bold presence. For Carol, the wood offered an entirely new canvas: alive with texture, unpredictability, and warmth that no leaded frame could match.

In our early experiments, we selected hardwoods like maple, walnut, oak, and ash—not just for their durability, but for their character. The flame-like figure of maple, the deep richness of walnut, the quiet elegance of ash—each choice contributed more than structure. It became part of the story.

Instead of working around imperfections like knots or spalting, we embraced them. Burls, cracks, and sapwood were highlighted as visual counterpoints to the saturated brilliance of stained glass. These choices didn't just add contrast, they created a rhythm between materials.

Each vessel or box became an interplay of color and form. A pale ash bowl might be fitted with a glowing insert of orange and red glass, evoking the flicker of firelight. Grain patterns were chosen as carefully as glass hues. The two materials began to inform each other, resulting not in contrast, but harmony.

A meeting of media

The harmony didn't come easily. Woodturning is typically a solitary, intuitive act—fast, fluid, guided by the hand. Stained glass, by contrast, demands precision, geometry, and planning. Bringing the two together required mutual adaptation.

One of our earliest collaborative works was a three-sided lidded bowl from white oak featuring a stained glass flame inset in the lid. The oak, chosen for its rich texture and structural stability, had a natural crack, which I filled with orange resin to echo the glass insert. Rather than a flaw to be hidden, the crack became a feature, drawing the eye and connecting the materials.

As sunlight passed through the lid, color spilled across the wood's surface, casting changing shadows throughout the day. The result was part sculpture, part lantern—an object that shifted with its environment, constantly alive.

Material challenges

Blending stained glass and turned wood brought structural and technical

challenges that couldn't be ignored. Wood is a living material, prone to expand and contract with humidity and temperature. Glass is the opposite—rigid, unyielding, and prone to fracture under pressure.

This contrast required not only creative vision, but problem-solving. Carol and I experimented with flexible adhesives that could absorb movement without compromising the integrity of the glass. The openings in the lids had to be turned with extreme precision, tight enough to hold the glass securely but forgiving enough to allow for seasonal shifts.

Templates, dry-fits, and test runs became a regular part of our process. Each piece was not just crafted, but engineered. The work demanded foresight, patience, and, above all, trust in each other and in the materials.

A unified aesthetic

Despite the technical challenges, the resulting works speak for themselves. They possess a rare balance between solid and delicate, natural and engineered, light and shadow.

Color plays a central role. Drawing inspiration from nature, we often select stained glass that reflects the fiery tones of autumn. The wood grain becomes a counterpoint, grounding the piece in organic movement. At times, glass steals the focus, glowing with jewel-like intensity. At others, the wood leads, its warm textures framed by luminous color.

Color plays a central role. Drawing inspiration from nature, we often select stained glass that reflects the fiery tones of autumn. The wood grain becomes a counterpoint, grounding the piece in organic movement.

Each piece is more than the sum of its parts. It is a meditation on contrast and connection, a sculptural form that invites viewers to slow down and look closer.

Final thoughts

In a world where craft disciplines often remain siloed, this partnership between woodturner and stained glass artist stands out. It challenges the notion that materials must remain within our traditional lanes and offers a living example of what can happen when artists open their processes to each other.

Our work isn't just a combination of wood and glass. It's a shared language spoken through curve, color, shadow, and grain. As the lathe spins and sunlight catches the glass, something new is created—not just an object, but a radiant expression of collaboration.

For those interested in exploring collaborative work, consider reaching out to local artisans outside your own medium. Cross-pollination can lead to unexpected and transformative results. ■

Ladd, a passionate woodturner with nine years' experience, transforms locally sourced wood into unique, handcrafted pieces inspired by nature. For more, visit laddslathe.com.

Carol Crosset learned stained glass techniques after retirement. She enjoys the process of combining various glass colors and textures to create unique works.

Mystery Wood Bowl, 2025, Wood, boxelder (lid), friction polish, glass, copper foil, 9" × 7½" (23cm × 19cm)

Walnut Bowl with Lid, 2025, Walnut (bowl), boxelder (lid), Mahoney's walnut oil, Mahoney's walnut paste, glass, copper foil, 7" × 5½" (18cm × 14cm)

Walnut Bowl, 2025, Walnut, Mahoney's walnut oil, Mahoney's walnut paste, glass, copper foil, 6½" × 5" (17cm × 13cm)

- THE WONDER OF -

Natural-Edge Spheres

Ernie Newman

Safety First!

When turning natural-edge spheres, you'll likely use wood that contains voids and is possibly unsound. Loose bark or chunks of wood, if not the whole piece, can fly off the lathe. Therefore, safety considerations are especially important. Bear in mind the following:

- Excessive lathe speeds and inadequate work mounting could be real hazards. Start at the slowest possible speed and increase it slowly.
- It is risky to turn any wood with a split or with decayed, punky sections. Choose wood that you can't break apart by hand. Log or branch sections with cracks all the way to the center on both sides will not remain stable and should be avoided.
- Stop the lathe often to inspect the status of the wood.
- Stay out of the "line of fire" (the likely flight path of a piece ejected from the lathe).
- Wear a faceshield.
- Choose small workpieces until you have lots of experience. If there is a problem, a small blank is safer.

Use cup centers

I prefer ring, or cup, centers (shown here) over multipronged spur and cone centers for mounting natural-edge blanks, as the former are less likely to split the wood apart. The retractable (and in some cases spring-loaded) pin in a cup center won't dig into the wood as deeply as a fixed pin or prong drive.

Left to right: West Australian banksia cone, cissus vine, and mistletoe (a hemiparasite on a host of a pale eucalypt).

After an old friend was traumatized by a serious incident a couple of years ago, I tried to console her by giving her a small bowl of natural-edge spheres. I didn't explain that spheres are symbols of perfection and that spheres with irregular surfaces and bits missing could symbolize hope in an imperfect world. But she got it and the gift meant a lot. Often, what is missing can be as valuable as what is present. In any case, the striking contrast between rough and smooth invests a simple shape with force.

During Covid, I turned a lot of natural-edge pieces and donated several small bowls with five or six spheres or eggs in each to charity fundraisers. They garnered a surprising amount of money. Adding a solid egg or sphere to go along with the natural-edge versions was a plus.

I hope that the following images and tips will encourage you to have a go. The raw material is free. Just scan a firewood stack, stroll through a forest, or cast your eye over driftwood on a beach. ■

Ernie Newman is a fifth-generation professional woodworker who lives in the Blue Mountains west of Sydney, Australia. Back in the 1990s, he taught a three-year trade woodturning course for apprentice woodturners and has taught wood art in nine countries. His work has been featured in numerous books and magazines.

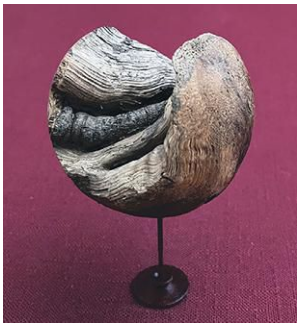
PROCESS

An unturned blank mounted between centers. Cissus hanging vine is commonly found in rainforests on the east coast of Australia. Keep a sharp tool edge by washing or brushing out any dirt or sand before turning.

Check the diagonal diameter as you shape the sphere. Check diameters in other positions, too. People with a keen eye can spot a variation of 1/16" (1.5mm) on a small sphere. It is more difficult to see variations on a natural-edge sphere, but I aim to keep them to less than 1/32" (0.8mm).

The point of the skew chisel marks the right-hand end of the sphere. Use a dark board below the work when turning pale wood (and vice versa when turning dark wood) to make it easier to see shapes. Once the cutting starts, it helps to look at the emerging curve, not the tip of the tool.

THE COMPLETED SPHERE



The completed sphere. Elevating the piece on a thin stand is akin to framing a painting and adds import. I generally apply Danish oil to natural-edge spheres. In this case, I left the natural edges untouched and oiled only the turned surface. The sphere measures 2½" (6cm) diameter.

LOCAL (AUSTRALIAN) EUCALYPTS

Incorporating natural elements adds wonder to turned forms.

MORE INTRIGUING SPHERES

Left to right: A strangler vine, a melaleuca (paperbark) root section, and a cissus vine.

NATURAL-EDGE EGG FORMS

Left to right: Mistletoe, a eucalypt, banksia integrifolia cone, and unknown wood.

FREEFORM

Melaleuca (paperbark) root sections.

The Art of Wood 2025
An Online Exhibition of New Zealand Wood Art

Another year brings another fantastic Art of Wood Exhibition presented by the National Association of Woodworkers whose purpose is to promote, foster, and encourage the art and craft of woodworking in New Zealand. After five years the event has quite a following with more than 200 entries submitted by woodcrafters throughout New Zealand, all vying for a piece of the $9,500 prize pot.

The competition categories included Plain Bowls and Platters, Embellished Bowls and Platters, Boxes, Domestic Ware, Hollow Forms and Vases, Natural, Ornamental, Wall Art, Sculpture, and Best Item by a New Woodcrafter (those involved in the craft for not more than three years).

This event could not operate without our generous sponsors. As in the past, Carbatec NZ was our main sponsor, supporting three categories, as well as the Supreme Award. Other sponsors included Timberly Woodturning, Valley Print, Woodcut Tools, The Masters, South Auckland Woodturners Guild, North Shore Woodturners Guild, and Joiners Magazine.

Exhibition judges

All submitted artwork was judged online by internationally renowned woodworkers/woodturners: Kelly Dunn (United States), Melissa Engler (United States), Graeme Priddle (United States), Carl Burn (United Kingdom), Sally Burnett (United Kingdom), Ruby Cler (Canada), Mike Mahoney (United States), Richard Raffan (Australia), and Andi Wolf (United States).

There was a fantastic array of new winners, with the Supreme Award going to Ian Lawson for his stunning *Alder and Urushi Jug*. Following are the winning pieces from a selection of the categories.

On view online

All the works in this exhibition are displayed online at exhibition.naw.org.nz. You can also visit NAW's Facebook page at facebook.com/NationalAssociationofWoodworkersNZ, the Art of Wood Facebook page at facebook.com/Artof WoodNZ, and follow on Instagram @artofwoodnz. ■

—Trefor Roberts, President, National Association of Woodworkers, New Zealand

BOXES

1st Place

Terry Scott, *Ngā heke o Aotearoa (the great migration)*, 2025, Kauri, tawa and ebony, lacquer, 2¾" × 17" × 3¼" (7cm × 43cm × 8cm)

2nd Place

Richard Neighbour, *Dream Weaver 4 - No More Tears*, 2025, Spotted gum and macrocarpa, feather quills, acrylic paint, gloss lacquer, 7" × 2½" (18cm × 7cm)

3rd Place

Mark Wilkins, *Keepsake Box*, 2025, Rimu, walnut, leather, lacquer, 3½" × 12" × 8¾" (9cm × 32cm × 22cm)

DOMESTIC WARE

1st Place (and Supreme Exhibit Award)

Ian Lawson, *Alder and Urushi Jug*, 2025, Alder, neri bengara urushi lacquer, Danish oil, carnauba wax, 6" × 5" (15cm × 13cm)

2nd Place

Michael Ginty, *Emerging Seed Bowls*, 2025, Beech, laser engraving, 3¾" × 9¾" × 9¾" (10cm × 25cm × 25cm)

3rd Place

Mark Wilkins, *Bushnell's Turtle Pepper Mill*, 2025, Oak, matai, brass, grinding mechanism, acrylic, lacquer, 8" × 4¼" × 3¼" (20cm × 11cm × 8cm)

EMBELLISHED BOWLS/PLATTERS

1st Place

Neil Clayton, *Black Tiger*, 2025, Japanese cedar, yakisugi, boiled linseed, satin lacquer, 10" × 11½" (25cm × 29cm)

2nd Place

Neil Clayton, *Jade Dragon*, 2025, Japanese cedar, yakisugi, dye, lacquer, 15" × 8¾" (38cm × 22cm)

3rd Place

Stephen Petterson, *Suspended*, 2025, Spalted oak, African blackwood, lacquer, 8¾" × 6" × 4¾" (22cm × 15cm × 12cm)

HOLLOW FORMS/VASES

1st Place

Neil Clayton, *Caged*, 2025, Cypress, pigmented lacquer, linseed oil, satin lacquer, 10" × 8" (25cm × 20cm)

2nd Place

Terry Scott, *Fantail/Pīwakawaka*, 2025, Puriri, 10" × 6" (25cm × 15cm)

3rd Place

Neil Clayton, *Green Hornet*, 2025, Japanese cedar, dye, lacquer, 13½" × 8¼" (34cm × 21cm)

NATURAL

1st Place

Terry Scott, *Three in One*, 2025, Red mallee, lacquer, 2¾" × 8¾" × 5¾" (7cm × 22cm × 15cm)

3rd Place

Terry Scott, *Leaves on a Burl 3*, 2025, Mallee, carving, gilders paste, lacquer, 2¾" × 10" × 7¼" (7cm × 25cm × 18cm)

2nd Place

Connie van der Walt, *Ancient Kauri Natural Edge Vase*, 2025, Kauri, 12" × 5½" (30cm × 14cm)

ORNAMENTAL

1st Place

Neil Clayton, *Devils Seed*, 2025, Japanese cedar, yakisugi, linseed oil, lacquer, 10¾" × 6¾" (27cm × 17cm)

2nd Place

Ian Lawson, *Piggete - Aotearoa*, 2025, Cherry laurel, smoke bush, Indian ink, acrylic paint, acrylic, oil, 15¾" × 17½" × 11½" (40cm × 44cm × 29cm)

3rd Place

Jim Lowe, *Serengeti Sunset*, 2025, Kauri, resin, airbrush, sealer, carnauba wax, 4" × 12¼" (7cm × 31cm)

PLAIN BOWLS/PLATTERS

1st Place

Neil Clayton, *Burlesque*, 2025, Cypress, linseed oil, carnauba wax, 4" × 10" (10cm × 25cm)

2nd Place

Peter Penhall, *Black Maire Bowl*, 2025, Black maire, Danish oil, 3" × 5¾" (8cm × 15cm)

3rd Place

Peter Penhall, *Black Maire Japanese Serving Bowl*, 2025, Black maire, Danish oil, 2¾" × 5" (7cm × 13cm)

COURAGEOUS EXPLORATIONS: THE CYCLIC ENERGY OF SANNA LINDHOLM

Steve Loar

The sloyd system

Americans might know Sweden as one of the cold northern countries but little else. Notably, Swedish, Finnish, Danish, and Norwegian schools maintain broad educational programs, while the U.S. has committed itself to a curriculum constrained by science, math, and technology. Even though there are some voices demanding it be "modernized," Sweden remains committed to including the sloyd system of handcraft-based education as part of its curriculum. In fact, sloyd is introduced to every child in Sweden by the third grade via woodwork and hand-sewing. Importantly, woodturning is part of that foundation. Imagine a nation where children—of all genders—know how to turn wood!

Sloyd aims to develop students' practical knowledge and their ability to solve problems using an understanding of various working processes. It also teaches students how to evaluate the results of their own work. Woodwork and sewing are required of all students through the ninth grade, bringing a continuity that fosters growth in complexity and expectations.

Sanna Lindholm of Gothenburg, Sweden, is a wood sculptor who uses the lathe as her principal means of expression. Over the years, she found that the practical nature of sloyd brought her happiness, while her academic subjects did not. She explains, "I have always liked crafts, and for me it was something I could understand when I was younger. I

like the practical and physical work. I don't know how or when the shift to sculpture actually happened, but I think crafts and craftsmanship are often about something functional and can be quite burdened by different conventions and rules about how things should be done. I have a greater interest in being process-oriented and exploratory, where the goal may not always be completely clear."

The "wobbly road"

When selecting a major for high school, Sanna made the commitment to pursue textiles at a government school several hours from home. This was the beginning of what she describes as her "wobbly road," a life that appears straight but is actually a series of changes in direction as she experienced situations that did not resonate. One thing that separates Sanna and her work from mainstream contemporary woodturning is her search for personal resonance. A government grant allowed her to apprentice to a practicing artist in Stockholm. Another provided a year to develop her own work. But there was also a year of working as an assistant in a home for the elderly, which allowed her to work in Australia for a year.

During her journey down this wobbly road, Sanna realized that wood kept returning to her as significant. She reminisced about long walks in the forests, working with her grandfather on projects, and how one can find this material everywhere—in the woods, on a walk to school, or in the overflowing scrap bins of the school shop. Because wood is so plentiful and common in Sweden, it is seen as a humble and modest material. Initially, she saw it simply as economical; it was cheap, readily available, and good for building things.

Ironically, Sanna has not had any formal training in woodworking. She credits the generous shop technicians at her schools for their problem-solving abilities and guidance. Otherwise, she learned what she needed as she moved along. Sanna's first sculptures were rather small and literally made from scraps. At one school during this early stage, she inquired about a large dusty lathe that sat in the corner. She received some rudimentary instruction, and her current direction commenced.

> "I have a greater interest in being process-oriented and exploratory, where the goal may not always be completely clear."
> — Sanna Lindholm

A career in artistic woodturning

As she entered the world of woodturning, her only reference was Maria van Kesteren, the influential late Dutch artist who mentored contemporary turner Ruben van der Scheer. (For articles on both van Kesteren and van der Scheer, see the June 2024 issue of *American Woodturner*—vol 39, no 3.) Even though Maria's work was largely in faceplate orientation and thus typically referenced the bowl or vessel, her commitment to exploring sculptural form versus utility was what Sanna responded to most. Ultimately, it was the spindle form that caught Sanna's attention and where she chose to begin her own investigations. Consequently, bowls and vessels have never been part of her vocabulary.

Her early forms were rather bulky, reminiscent of stools, but she also experimented with composing multiple smaller objects. In time, Sanna began to develop her own language of carving, finishes, and relationships of mass and scale. Over the past six years, her lathe-based work rapidly evolved ▸

Master's degree project, *Conversations in Wood*, 2018

into much longer and more open compositions. Sanna's work is grounded in her physical and emotional responses to her oversized spindles, which she sees as "bodies." And these responses—physical, psychic, and intuitive—convey what is at the heart of Sanna Lindholm's inquiries.

Before Sanna completed her studies at university, a mentor commented, "You'll come out in a reality of little money and great pressure. It's easy to get lost as you try to sell work and make a name for yourself. So the least you can do is to find joy in what you do." It is remarkable, then, that Sanna supports herself via competitive commissions, though she wryly comments that they certainly don't support a high life.

Exhibiting her work

The installation of her frequent exhibitions allows for a "conversation"—between the pieces but also between herself and her work. Gothenburg is Sweden's second-largest city, so it offers a variety of opportunities ranging from regional and artist-run spaces to more commercial galleries. Importantly, all of them offer generous white spaces, which are quite apart from the constraints of her studio. Typically, groupings include fresh works mixed with older pieces, so the "conversations" change with each show. Sanna enjoys the sense of her work evolving, continuously changing their relationship to her and to one another. In addition to gaining space, the personality of each piece is clarified.

The Bud Is Tense/Taking Its Time, 2020, Birch, wax, 6¾" × 17¾" × 6¾" (17cm × 45cm × 17cm)

Sanna's exhibitions often include large presentations of her drawings, which while rare bring a dynamic aspect. The drawings are intriguing because they aren't profiles like we're used to seeing, but rather explorations of the possibilities that curves offer one another. They are suggestive of turnings but are very much their own investigations—more about the potential held within a block of space.

As your eyes move through an exhibition space and perceive Sanna's arrangements, it's almost as if you're viewing an animation. She sees the lathe as producing "cyclic energy," which the drawings embody, offering a definite liveliness. While Sanna does use drawings as guides for shaping large spindles, her familiarity with possibilities brings the confidence to adapt as she responds to the inherent tension of turning and is faced with the physicality of the huge forms—a living translation from 2D concepts to 3D expression.

Created with intent

Typically, Sanna's spindles are made from dry linden (basswood), pine, and birch. These woods may seem bland, but Sanna enjoys exposing their grain, which to her have their

Exhibiting in generous spaces

Posing Nature (at Not Quite Gallery, Fengersfors, Sweden), 2023

Photo: David Eng

Tethered Transformation, 2024, Alder, pine, rouge, 20½" × 33½" × 16½" (52cm × 85cm × 42cm)

Photo: Alexander Beveridge

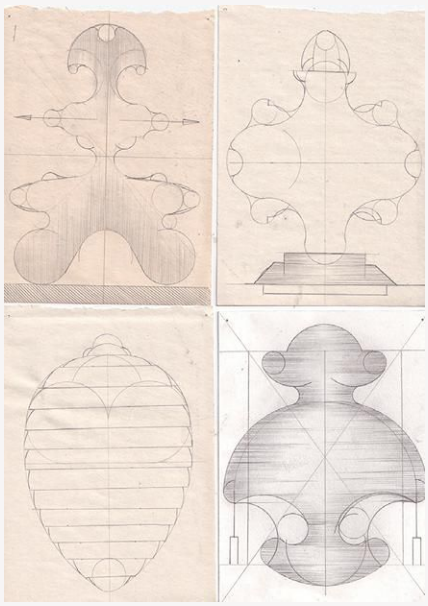
own stories. One of many ways her work diverges from the "conventions and rules about how things should be done" is that it's not obsessed with the perfect cut or the best possible surface, and this is compounded by the fact that most of her pieces get no finish at all. A few pieces along the way received bold dye/stain colors, and some of her outdoor works are coated in blackened linseed oil to slow their decay, but they still have surfaces that read as wood. That the viewer understands the object is of wood is an unwavering attitude.

Sanna is also committed to creating contrast and expressing a sense of the temporary. She has no interest in creating flats or bottoms that would elicit a predetermined situation. It is here that we encounter forms wedged in a particular position and occasionally highlighted with a bold color like red. She wants us to sense the nature of this specific, temporary, situation.

In her exhibitions, we also encounter Sanna's compositions that suggest chains, which she refers to as "loops." Like her drawings, the loops suggest a camaraderie with woodturning while having their own distinct personalities. They bring a sense of activity and liveliness to what we commonly perceive as static objects. In making them, Sanna enjoys the dramatic slowing down of her sensations from the tensions involved in forcing her wishes on the wood. The loops offer a more personal rapport with the wood, the sloyd knife, and the chisels that she uses to carve the transitions. ▸

Sanna is in full stride as she explores a central dedication to breaking with expectations and conventions.

From 2D to 3D



Sketches, 2024

Scene One, 2022, Birch, 15¾" × 39¼" × 15¾" (40cm × 100cm × 40cm)

Photo: John Salquist

The Shift, 2023, Pine, paint, 4¼" × 20½" × 4¼" (11cm × 52cm × 11cm)

Photo: David Eng

Not chains, but loops

In process: carving "loops"

Perceived as having the potential to grow, the loops also create a visual dialog amongst their parts and with other strands when grouped. It is this invention of the loops and their transitions where Sanna's work, again, notably diverges from the mainstream. She embraces opportunities to play with contrast: large to small, simple to complex, quiet to busy, neutral to the suggestion of narrative.

One of the threads of this thinking can be seen in her creation of multiple heads that seem to grow from single components through a central stalk, becoming a unified whole. We see the expression of her earlier sentiment, that "something functional can be quite burdened by different conventions and rules about how things should be done." With these pieces, Sanna is in full stride as she explores a central dedication to breaking with expectations and conventions. One piece might suggest an anchor, with a muscular chain connecting the two components, though its placement on the floor could suggest security, feeling stuck, or a fear of moving on. Other constructions might suggest table legs or pillars but ones that heed no official style.

Between the two-dimensional drawing investigations and the fully three-dimensional compositions is a zone that Sanna occasionally spends time in. Her low-relief wall sculptures display some of the physicality of the larger works while blending some of the effects suggested in her drawings and large profile cutouts. With a subtle strategy reflective of Sanna's intent, these spindles are not cut in half along the *exact* center axis, but ever so slightly to the sides of the center. To the viewer, this presents curves of the dimensional block that retain some of the energy of the extending curves, rather than giving us the expected tangency that true center would establish.

These compositions present qualities of both the 2D and 3D realms.

Pillars

In addition to the dry, stable wood she usually employs, Sanna has also used entire sections of oak trees. She initially works these masses into surprisingly concentric cylinders, collaborating with Paul Kovac, who has a lathe large enough for the shaping process. Sanna's pillars have been used in the creation of benches, as well as towering totem-like columns typically placed in groups, creating outdoor spaces that the viewer feels part of.

The large wet trunks bring an invigorating voice to the "conversations" between Sanna and her "bodies" as they dry and crack during the shaping process. And, as the cracks continue to develop, so do the conversations between multiple pieces within her indoor exhibitions. ▸

Evolving conversations

Gallery arrangements of the same piece vary, leading to different interpretations and conversations.

Four-Leaf Clover, 2024, Linden, alder, birch, 47¼" × 7" × 7" (120cm × 18cm × 18cm)

Collection of Trollhättan Municipality

Photos: David Eng

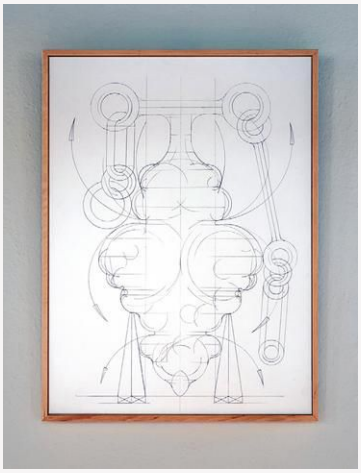
The Form Is the Memory's Gap, 2024, Pine, pigmented linseed oil, 57" × 17¾" × 17¾" (145cm × 45cm × 45cm)

Photo: Alexander Beveridge

Stage of Transformation, 2024, Pine, dry pastel, rouge, 90½" × 12" × 15¾" (230cm × 30cm × 40cm)

Photos: David Eng

2D energy translated



(Left) Sketch, 2024

Photo: Alexander Beveridge

(Middle, right) Cross-Section, 2024, Pine, MDF, plywood, pencil, flash vinyl paint, 12" × 12" × 1½" (30cm × 30cm × 38mm)

Photo: David Eng

Sanna is constantly and joyfully attuned to these voices as the wood expresses itself.

The future

In that her work prompts both bold and subtle impressions, Sanna is concerned with the world's shift toward needing to have everything explained—its ever-shortening attention span and its concern with a quick assimilation of data versus a genuine involvement or conjecture. She doesn't want to *tell* you anything, not about the piece and, most certainly, not about herself. She wants you to slow down and speculate, to listen, to sense—to become part of the "conversation" within each piece and between pieces, in this particular moment.

As for the future, Sanna has exhibitions scheduled and is always on the lookout for commission possibilities. She would enjoy new residencies and their travel abroad. But more than anything, she simply wants to have the most time possible in her studio, time to find joy in the process of imagining and developing her work, to pursue "the goal that may not always be completely clear." Sanna Lindholm has certainly developed a distinctive niche within contemporary woodturning. ■

For more, visit lindholmsanna.com and follow Sanna on Instagram, @sanna.lindholm. Email her at lindholm.sanna@hotmail.com.

Steve Loar is a sculptor in Grand Rapids, Michigan, who uses wood, especially lathe-turned forms, to create colorful, abstracted, often narrative compositions. His thirty-six years of university teaching, exhibiting, and offering workshops gives him expertise in an unusual breadth of teaching, writing, design, creativity, brainstorming, collaboration, woodturning, sculpture, and woodworking. Follow Steve on Instagram, @steve.loar.

From large oak sections

Public commissions in process (sculptures in oak)

Sanna evaluates one of her large sculptures, or "bodies."

Members' Gallery

Tracey Lee, Florida

I am a creator—a maker who finds meaning in transformation. As a fiber artist and woodturner, I work with my hands to bring form, color, and texture into harmony. In my woodturning practice, I give new life to each piece of wood, embracing its natural grain and history while enhancing it with embellishments and paint, often inspired by intricate patterns and organic forms. I aim to honor the material while elevating it.

Creating is both meditative and expressive for me. It provides peace, focus, and a quiet sense of stillness in motion. Whether I'm shaping wood or working with fiber, I create to connect—with myself, with nature, and with those who experience my work.

I began my woodturning journey just six years ago, and I am still finding my voice. My artistic vision and technical skills continue to evolve as I explore new techniques, forms, and ideas. Each piece I create is part of a larger dialogue between tradition and innovation, reflection and discovery. ▸

For more, visit twineandtwigs.com.

Huggins Wall Plate, 2023, Maple, acrylic, gilding paste, ½" × 8" (1cm × 20cm)

Dew Drops, 2024, Cherry, acrylic, 6½" × 3½" (17cm × 9cm)

Fission, 2023, Cherry, acrylic, 8" × 3" (20cm × 8cm)

Green Bark, 2024, Cherry, acrylic, 5" × 2½" (13cm × 6cm)

Huggins Hollow Form, 2024, Cherry, acrylic, 7" × 3½" (18cm × 9cm)

Bruce S Lamb, Maryland

I turned my first bowl in junior high school. However, a career in science and technology created a large gap in my resume with respect to the art and craft of woodturning. Many years later I joined a club and spent many Wednesday evenings in a hot garage in south Florida with a mentor. He had the skill and patience to teach me how to use a variety of tools and techniques. Perhaps just as importantly, with several professionals looking over my shoulder, I learned to blend curves, add design elements, and balance proportions. I'm still learning and never fully satisfied with the end-product. Perhaps that's what keeps me going. Today, as a board member and former president of the Baltimore Area Turners, I try to pay it forward.

In my designs, I prefer simple, continuous curves. I also try to let any unique features within the wood stand out. But the chemist in me sometimes moves in a different direction.

For more, follow Bruce on Instagram, @bruce_s_lamb.

Untitled End Grain Platter 2021, Maple burl, epoxy, 12" (30cm) diameter

City in the Trees, 2024, Dyed maple burl, African blackwood, Tallest: 17" × 5" (43cm × 13cm)

Untitled Hollow Form, 2025, Coolibah burl with natural edge, 7" × 4" (18cm × 10cm)

Untitled Flower 2021, Red mallee burl, maple, 4" × 4" (10cm × 10cm)

Tree of Life Platter, 2025, Coolibah burl with natural edge, epoxy, 12" (30cm) diameter

Untitled Hollow Form, 2025, Canarywood, African blackwood, 8" × 9" (20cm × 23cm)

Josh and Beth Buettner, Wyoming

As a husband-and-wife team, we feel incredibly blessed to share both life and woodworking. Josh primarily focuses on turning while Beth leans into carving—but we often collaborate, swap roles, and explore new ideas together. One of our favorite joint projects is the *Fragmented Series*, inspired by stained glass. Beth came up with the concept: a shallow turned bowl that's carved and filled with vibrant epoxy. Josh turns the bottom. Beth draws and carves the design, then fills it with epoxy. Once cured, Josh refines the form and hollows the interior. The name "Fragmented" came from our son, who saw a connection between the design and how light passing through a prism breaks into the colors of the rainbow.

Josh also creates double-mouth hollow forms using multiaxis turning. As he turns to the secondary mouth, a ring remains around the shoulder. That ring is removed using a custom XY vise jig and burr-equipped drill. Once carved away and sanded, the piece is hollowed like any other.

Whether we're working side by side or independently, our goal is always the same: to transform wood into something that surprises, invites closer inspection, and celebrates both skill and imagination. ▸

Josh Buettner, Untitled, 2025, Boxelder, varnish, 5" × 5½" (13cm × 14cm)

Josh and Beth Buettner, *Fragmented #002*, 2025, Silver maple, epoxy, mica pigments, lacquer, 2" × 8" (5cm × 20cm)

Josh and Beth Buettner, *Fragmented #005*, 2025, Silver maple, epoxy, mica pigments, lacquer, 1½" × 14½" (4cm × 37cm)

Josh and Beth Buettner, *Fragmented #001*, 2024, Silver maple, epoxy, mica pigments, lacquer, 2" × 15¾" (5cm × 40cm)

Josh and Beth Buettner, *Fragmented #004*, 2025, Silver maple, epoxy, mica pigments, lacquer, 1½" × 14¼" (4cm × 36cm)

Isaac Vincent, Indiana

I have been turning for just over three years, starting when I was fourteen. At first, I was just making fairly standard pieces that lacked a definitive style. Nothing distinguished my work from others. Then seven months ago I discovered Zhostovo! This Russian folk art originated in the early nineteenth century in Zhostovo, a small village outside Moscow. It is characterized by intricately hand painted floral patterns with delicate golden borders on a black background. Learning this style of painting has captivated me. It can be quite time-consuming, but the results are well worth it. When I first started, I used acrylic paint but was quickly unhappy with the results. Now I use a water-soluble oil paint. Water-soluble oil offers the vibrant colors and workability of traditional oil paint but cures much faster and cleans up with water and soap. I have been thrilled with the results that I am able to achieve on my platters with this process. I hope that I can continue to learn this skill and many new ones in years to come.

Zhostovo Flower Platter, 2025, Sycamore, acrylic paint, spray lacquer finish, 1" × 14" (2.5cm × 36cm)

Oil in Process, 2025, Sycamore, water-soluble oil paint and acrylic paint, 1" × 14" (2.5cm × 36cm)

Oil in Process 2025, Sweet gum, water-soluble oil paint and acrylic paint, 1" × 9" (2.5cm × 23cm)

John McKenzie, New Zealand

I am a relatively new woodturner from New Zealand. I began turning in 2018 after retiring from the corporate world. I learned from a local turner then completed my New Zealand Certificate in Woodturning. After watching a Michael Gibson demonstration, I was encouraged to turn teapot forms. Initially my teapots were conservative, but I have always enjoyed the freedom of steampunk. In steampunk there are no rules, so you can let your imagination go in whatever direction you choose.

(*Left*) *Time For Tea*, 2023, Macrocarpa, multiaxis turning, gold gilding wax, polyurethane, 6½" × 8½" × 4" (17cm × 22cm × 10cm)

(*Right*) *Submarine Tea*, 2024, Sycamore, multi-axis turning, gilding wax, metallic acrylic paint, polyurethane, 9½" × 7" × 4" (24cm × 18cm × 10cm)

Time for Tea was my second steampunk-inspired teapot and placed first in the ornamental section of the 2023 New Zealand Art of Wood Awards. In this piece I wanted to honor the steampunk style but at the same time showcase my eccentric turning and carving skills. The carved elements in the lid, handle, and body required some experimentation.

With *Submarine Tea* I pushed the boat out further (pardon the pun). I wanted to create a piece that followed the steampunk style but tested my imagination and pushed my skills. Every part of this piece (except the cog propeller) is turned from wood and then aged with Chroma-Craft metallic paint.

In all, I enjoyed the journey on both pieces. I believe they are in line with the style I want to be recognized for. ■

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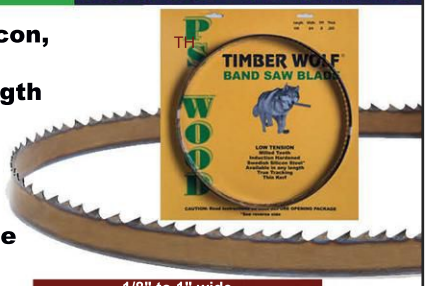

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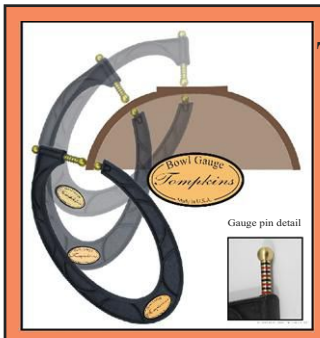

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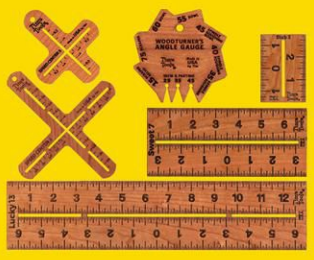

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GABRIEL HOFF
AND
ETHAN HOFF
OHIO

Making and donating Beads of Courage (BoC) boxes has long been a meaningful and charitable way for woodturners to give back and support the broader community. In the BoC program (beadsofcourage.org), children coping with serious illness are given a bead for each medical treatment or milestone in their care. Different bead colors and designs represent different stages of treatment, so the beads gain powerful meaning along a child's treatment journey. Many woodturning chapters cherish the opportunity to contribute to this important cause by creating special boxes in which the children's beads can be safely stored. Helping children and their families endure healthcare challenges makes it very rewarding to design and make these special boxes.

Ethan Hoff

Gabriel Hoff

Inside This Issue!

Discover the design and build process behind Gabriel and Ethan Hoff's segmented Beads of Courage boxes and learn how you can create your own. Find their full article on page 32.