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AMERICAN WOODTURNER

Journal of the American Association of Woodturners

April 2026 vol 41, no 2 • woodturner.org

JEAN-FRANÇOIS ESCOULEN'S ECCENTRIC REVOLUTION

GETTING STARTED AS A DEMONSTRATOR

TUNG OIL: AN ANCIENT FINISH FOR THE MODERN WORKSHOP

Louis Vadeboncoeur

Ontario, Canada

I've been a longtime admirer of the marvelous art nouveau and art deco glassworks of early 1900s French artists and the stained glassworks of Frank Lloyd Wright. Around 2010, I embarked on a journey to create turned wood pieces inspired by this glass art. I soon realized that I did not yet have the skills to create such pieces, so my journey took me to learn from master turners of the AAW: David Ellsworth, Binh Pho, and Steve Sinner, to name a few. In 2012, I created my first of a long series of wood art nouveau and art deco pieces which I describe as resting at the intersection of wood, abstract art, and glass. I incorporate the glass element through a highly polished, glasslike finish. My finished works are not replicas of past glassworks but unique pieces inspired by them and guided by my creativity. It has been a wonderful adventure which continues to this day. ■

First Work, 2012, Maple, spar urethane varnish, airbrushed acrylic paint, India ink, 8" × 4" (20cm × 10cm)

A Touch of Colour, 2014, Maple, spar urethane varnish, airbrushed acrylic paint, India ink, 14" × 4½" (36cm × 11cm)

Shades of Mackintosh with a Twist, 2025, Manitoba maple, spar urethane varnish, airbrushed acrylic paint, India ink, 8½" × 5¾" (22cm × 15cm)

Keep Your Eyes Out For Me, 2024, Manitoba maple, spar urethane varnish, airbrushed acrylic paint, India ink, 11" × 6" (28cm × 15cm)

Bill Luce/Louis Vadeboncoeur, *Light and Dark*, 2024, wood unknown, spar urethane varnish, airbrushed acrylic paint, India ink, 4" × 6" (10cm × 15cm)

The artist with *Shades of Mondrian Reinvented*, 2024, Manitoba maple, spar urethane varnish, airbrushed acrylic paint, India ink, 21" × 7" (53cm × 18cm)

De la Logique à l'Émotion, 2015, Manitoba maple, airbrushed acrylic paint, India ink, lacquer, 11" × 5" (28cm × 13cm)

Rising—Trust Your Creative Process, 2014, Manitoba maple, spar urethane varnish, airbrushed acrylic paint, India ink, 18" × 3" (46cm × 8cm)

A Few Thoughts for Frank Lloyd Wright, 2014, Manitoba maple, spar urethane varnish, airbrushed acrylic paint, India ink, 18" × 4" (46cm × 10cm)

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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Journal of the American Association of Woodturners

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COVER

Cover: Jean-François Escoulen, *The Chicken Family*, 2002, Cypress, elm burl, boxwood, 16" (40cm) tall

Photo courtesy of John Hill.

Back cover: Bill Hrnjak, Tom Bullock, and Barry Lundgren

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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.

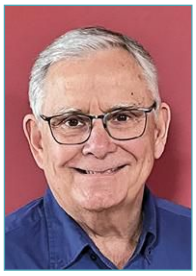
*Web address is case sensitive.

Editor's Note

Reflecting on my first five months at the AAW, what strikes me most is the engagement of the readership. I don't believe I've ever worked for an audience that cares so much, not only about what is in these pages, but about this community more broadly. The woodturning world is both far-reaching and intensely local, and the stories in this issue reflect this—from Jean-François Escoulen connecting turners across continents to Richard Findley and Ernie Newman providing primers on reaching out one demo at a time. That spirit of community is what draws so many to the AAW International Symposium, and I'm looking forward to meeting many of you in Raleigh this June. Meanwhile, if you've got a tip, a technique, or a story to tell, I'd love to hear from you.

—Sarah Marriage

From the President



Looking Forward to Raleigh!

The Raleigh Symposium is approaching quickly! I hope many of you will be joining us for an exciting celebration of our 40th year. Check our website, woodturner.org, for up-to-date event information. There will be exciting changes this year including an entirely new Saturday night celebration—not to be missed!

We have carefully selected a diverse group of 22 demonstrators from around the world. They will cover broad topic areas to appeal to a full range of interests, from craft to art, with projects suited to all skill levels. The lineup of vendors continues to grow, promising an extensive selection from abrasives to lathes and everything in between.

Board transitions

Would you like to be part of shaping the future of the AAW as we begin our next 40 years of educating and inspiring the global woodturning community? Three positions on our Board of Directors will become vacant at the end of this year. With just nine members on the Board, new arrivals will be brought up to speed quickly and join in setting our future direction.

For me, serving on the Board has been a rewarding experience that I look forward to continuing. To learn more or to be considered as a candidate in the upcoming election, contact Linda Britt (678-642-1700, lbbritt@comcast.net), nominating committee chair, or any other AAW Board member as soon as possible.

Improvements in woodturner.org

When the American Association of Woodturners was born in 1986, the "internet" was the National Science Foundation NET, a connection of roughly 2,000 computers helping scientists share just text about their work. It's grown, like we have.

We encourage you to check out the changes and updates the AAW staff is making to woodturner.org. First, the Explore! search tool is more efficient at gathering search results. It works faster, looks cleaner, and is designed to improve your exploration of our vast library of articles and videos on every conceivable aspect of woodturning.

The entire staff is working on different components that make up the digital side of this organization. This includes updates to stories and videos, removing outdated and duplicated content, fixing broken links, and updating pages so they work well on all screen sizes. In general, it's about making the site work better so your membership works better for you.

In parts of the website you don't see—the administrative side—they are working on efficiencies around managing our finances in a more timely manner and streamlining the process for member payments. They are working on our overall database that includes data you provide as you join or renew your membership, as well as improving connections to event registrations, like the Symposium. Work like this often uncovers unexpected issues, which the staff is addressing as they emerge.

Grant opportunities

I would again emphasize the availability of special funding through grants to support professional development, chapter development, and the acquisition of equipment or supplies. This includes additional one-time grants for individuals for equipment and tools through funding provided by the Maxwell/Hanrahan Foundation. Visit tiny.cc/aawgrants for information on available grants.

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

KC Kendall, Jr

KC Kendall
President, AAW Board of Directors

2026 AAW INTERNATIONAL WOODTURNING SYMPOSIUM

June 4-7 in Raleigh, North Carolina

2026 AAW Symposium Offers Wide Range of Demonstrations

At the 2026 AAW International Woodturning Symposium in Raleigh, North Carolina, you will have the opportunity to learn from woodturning demonstrators from New Zealand, France, Japan, and Australia, and across the United States. There will be more than 70 demonstrations and presentations, ranging from fundamental skills to improvised collaborations. Here is just a glimpse of some of the topics being covered:

- Turning Spalted Wood
- Heirloom Pepper Mills
- Sea Urchin Box
- Understanding the Skew Chisel
- Singapore Ball Basics
- Raindrop Box
- Surface Enhancements 101
- Burl Hollow Forms
- Segmented Construction
- Creative Powercarving
- Calabash Bowls

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

Photo: Andi Wolfe

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

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

REGISTER FOR THE VIRTUAL SYMPOSIUM AT AAWSYMPOSIUM.ORG

PANEL DISCUSSIONS

Demonstrating: From Getting Started to Making it Big
- Andy Cole (moderator)
- Mike Mahoney
- Dennis Belcher
- Molly Winton

Turning with Physical Limitations
- Andi Sullivan (moderator)

On the Shoulders of Giants
- Dan Zobel (moderator)
- Craig Edelbrock
- Roberto Ferrer
- Sally Burnett
- Mark Sfirri

How to Take Better Pictures of Your Work
- Emiliano Achaval (moderator)
- Andi Wolfe
- Curt Theobold

Selling Your Work: Tips to Improve Your Sales
- Andy Cole (moderator)
- Melissa Engler
- Mike Mahoney
- Davis Choun

Feeling Rejected? How to Improve Your Exhibition, Show, and Grant Applications
- Kim Winkle (moderator)
- Janine Wang
- Mark Sfirri
- Mark Gardner

An Eye for Color
- Heather Marusiak (moderator)
- Melissa Engler
- Carol Hall
- Donna Zils Banfield

Art or Craft? The Identity Crisis of the Modern Woodturner
- Miriam Carpenter (co-moderator)
- Kim Winkle (co-moderator)
- Mark Gardner
- Tom Windross
- Tib Shaw

Cultivating Creativity: Practice and Possibility
- Heather Marusiak (moderator)
- Betty Scarpino
- Mark Sfirri
- Miriam Carpenter

Instant Gallery Critique
- Kimberly Winkle (moderator)
- Laurel Porcelli
- Derek Weidman
- Miriam Carpenter

CELEBRATE & CONNECT: SATURDAY NIGHT CELEBRATION

We've listened carefully to years of attendee feedback and we hear you. The former Saturday Night Banquet and Awards program often felt a bit too long, and the packed symposium schedule didn't always leave room to enjoy dinner out with the friends you've traveled across the country—or even across the world—to see.

So this year, we're trying something new. Join us for **Saturday Night: Bluegrass, Brews, and Bites!** Enjoy hearty food stations, a lively bluegrass band, a cash bar, and a streamlined honors and awards presentation woven into the evening. What's not to love? Great music, good company, and meaningful recognition delivered in a more relaxed, social format.

Even better? The celebration will wrap up at 8:00 PM, giving you the rest of the evening to head out with friends, explore the local scene, or simply continue the conversation. Come raise a glass, tap your toes, and celebrate the 40th Annual Symposium together!

Note: $75.00 paid ticket required. See aawsymposium.org for more information.

JOIN THE FUN – VOLUNTEER!

Photo: Andi Wolfe

Volunteers say they have the most fun at the Symposium. Volunteer for a shift or two in your favorite Symposium area to meet new people and help make the event run smoothly. You don't need to be a registered attendee to volunteer—everyone is welcome! Sign up online at aawsymposium.org/volunteer.

THANK YOU, JPW INDUSTRIES!

Our heartfelt thanks to JPW Industries (JET/ Powermatic) for providing lathes for the demonstration rooms and for donating the hands-on program lathes and raffle lathe. We are grateful for their many years of donations supporting woodturners at the AAW Symposium.

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

Photo: Andi Wolfe

SPONSORSHIPS AVAILABLE

Express your support of AAW by sponsoring a demonstration room or event activity during the 2026 Raleigh Symposium. Whether as an individual member, an AAW vendor, or as a local chapter, you can visibly display your support of woodturning education, community, and the programs that mean the most to you. For more information, please email AAW staff at memberservices@woodturner.org.

WOODTURNING TRADESHOW

Photos: Andi Wolfe

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

3rdGenPenShop & Sew Amusing!
Airbrushing Wood
Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts
Ashley Harwood
Big Monk Lumber Company
Branches To Bowls
Carter and Son Toolworks
Casual Woodworking
Craft Supplies USA
Curt Theobald Studios
Easy Inlay
Easy Wood Tools
EcoPoxy Inc
Grit-Grip
Hunter Tool Company
John Jordan Woodturning
JPW Industries
Klingspor's Woodworking Shop
Kutzall Tools
Lyle Jamieson Woodturning LLC
MDI Woodcarvers Supply
North Carolina Woodworker
Oneway Manufacturing
Power Carving Depot
Robust Tools LLC
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Stadium Pen Blanks
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Thompson Lathe
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TurningWood.com
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Woodturners Wonders

Vendor list current as of Feb 12, 2026. See the most up-to-date list at aawsymposium.org.

Make Your Souvenir Pen

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

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

EMPTY BOWLS PARTNER – BULL CITY WOODSHOP

Photo: Andi Wolfe

For many years, the American Association of Woodturners has embraced the **Empty Bowls** tradition as a way for woodturners to give back through their craft. At AAW symposia, members donate hand-turned bowls—each one unique—and attendees are invited to select a bowl in exchange for a monetary donation benefiting a local organization chosen for its impact in the host community.

This year, AAW is proud to support **Bull City Woodshop**, a youth-centered organization that guides individual development, cultivates community connection, and fosters creativity through hands-on woodworking—extending the values of making, mentorship, and generosity beyond the lathe.

Bring a bowl (or two or three!) to contribute to the Empty Bowls fundraising—then purchase a bowl to bring home!

LEARN TO TURN YOUTH PROGRAM

Photo: Andi Wolfe

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

Youth Classes include a variety of fun projects:

- Ball & Cup Game
- Ice Cream Scoop
- Ornament
- Egg Kaleidoscope
- Tea Lights
- Simple Box
- Color/Texture Spin Tops
- Brushes

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

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

FIRST TIMER AND INSTANT GALLERY AWARDS

Step into the heart of the Symposium, the Gallery Hall, featuring the world's largest display of turned wood. The Instant Gallery alone spans over 20,000 sq ft, showcasing the full spectrum of woodturning from members of all skill levels. From bowls and vessels to sculpture and beyond, every registered attendee is invited to display up to three pieces.

This year, we're excited to introduce a dedicated First-Timer area, celebrating those new to displaying in the Instant Gallery. A $200 First Timer award, sponsored by the Professional Outreach Program (POP), will be given to one lucky participant and announced at the Saturday Night Celebration—no need to be present to win.

POP also presents Instant Gallery awards in the Excellence ($500), Collegiate ($200), and Youth ($200) categories. Winning works are selected by a distinguished panel of three jurors who draw upon their expertise as artists, collectors, curators, and gallerists. The jurors also select work from the Instant Gallery for the Sunday morning IG Critique, one of our most popular panels.

Winners in all four categories, plus the AAW Member Show Masters' and People's Choice awards, will be announced at the Saturday Night Celebration and featured in *American Woodturner*.

Also new this year, a captivating "Please Touch" table invites visitors to explore the texture and form of selected works in a hands-on experience.

Browse and enjoy, but we encourage every attendee to bring a few pieces and be part of the show!

SPECIAL EXHIBITIONS

Photo: Andi Wolfe

- **Professional Outreach Program (POP) Exhibition and Auction: *Holding Space***—Each year this show of small-scale works features a mix of invited and juried, new and established artists from around the world. *Holding Space* invites exploration of what it means to create or contain space—physically, emotionally, or metaphorically—all within a 6" × 6" × 6" or smaller format. Auction proceeds support the Instant Gallery awards, Symposium panels, and other POP initiatives.
- **AAW Member Anniversary Exhibition: *Turning 40***—This juried, members-only show highlights the full scope of work being created today, from skillfully crafted traditional turnings to innovative sculptures incorporating contemporary techniques and surface design. Two awards will be given: Masters Choice ($300) and People's Choice ($200).
- **POP Artist Showcase Exhibition**—Work by makers Janine Wang and Matthew Shewchuk, selected by the POP committee as emerging artists of exceptional talent. Don't miss the opportunity to learn more about their artistic practices at the Artist Showcase panel.
- **POP Merit Award Artist: Jean-François Escoulen**—This award recognizes artists who have made significant contributions to the field of woodturning as an art form. An extraordinary artist and educator, Escoulen will give an intimate artist talk in the gallery. See the feature article in this issue to learn more about his remarkable career (page 52).
- **Ellsworth Legacy Project Exhibition**—Works by AAW founder and artist David Ellsworth. The exhibition is created in partnership with scholar Craig Edelbrock, author of the forthcoming book *The Spirit of Woodturning*, which features work from David's fifty-year career and an essay by Glenn Adamson.
- **AAW Live! Annual Auction**—Browse this extraordinary and diverse gathering of artistic works in wood. The connecting theme is excellence! Auction proceeds support AAW's educational mission.

TIPS FOR FIRST-TIME ATTENDEES

Photo: Andi Wolfe

Attend the Welcome Remarks on Thursday, June 4, to get the inside scoop on how to make the most of your Symposium weekend. Kick-start your experience with the Thursday night Tradeshow Preview and Special Interest Sessions to meet woodturners with similar interests. Bring up to three pieces of your turned objects to display in the Instant Gallery. All attendees are welcome to show their work!

Volunteer! Volunteering is a great way to meet other woodturners and get the most from your Symposium experience.

AAW Symposium Chapter Discount!

The American Association of Woodturners (AAW) offers a special Chapter Discount for the 2026 AAW 40th Anniversary International Woodturning Symposium in Raleigh, North Carolina, to encourage local club participation. Chapter members who are also AAW members can receive a $40 reduction on full Symposium registration when five or more members from the same chapter register together. To participate, a chapter officer or leader must identify at least five eligible members and request a discount code from AAW via email by April 11, 2026. Once issued, that code can be shared with qualifying members, who then enter it during online registration to receive the discounted rate.

It is the chapter leader's role is to request the code, promote the opportunity within the chapter, and encourage early registration to ensure the minimum attendance is reached. For questions or assistance, chapter officers are directed to contact memberservices@woodturner.org.

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

Photo: Andi Wolfe

Call for Demonstrators and POP Showcase Artists

For the 2027 AAW International Symposium

Application period: March 1 to June 30, 2026

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. Learn more at woodturner.org/calls.

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 receive an honorarium and Symposium registration. Applications will be juried by the POP committee. Application details can be found at tiny.cc/POP_AS.

2027 IS COMING INTO FOCUS

We can't wait to share the details of the 2027 AAW International Woodturning Symposium—look for the big reveal in the *Beyond the Bevel* newsletter on April 2.

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

Photos: Andi Wolfe

We are Grateful

On behalf of the AAW, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to the generous supporters and AAW chapters who contributed their time, talents, and treasures to the AAW in 2025. Your support directly impacts our charitable nonprofit mission, including education, youth and arts programs, and grants in the community.

We appreciate the foundations and individuals, over 500 members, who made a one-time donation or added a donation when renewing their membership—an easy way to make a meaningful difference. Please notify membershipservices@woodturner.org if you made a gift and your name is not listed below to ensure accurate reporting and gift acknowledgement; we apologize for unintentional exclusion or misspellings. We truly appreciate gifts of all sizes and want to make sure during the past year of transition that our records are accurate.

As we celebrate 40 years of the AAW, we look forward to the work to build a sustainable and thriving organization for the next 40 years. Membership dues cover only a portion of the costs for programs and services, so your generosity makes a significant difference. In 2026, we plan to enhance and update our website and member-facing technology, strengthen our programs, provide better support to our chapters, bring back virtual gatherings and offerings, and build upon our valuable knowledge sharing in *Woodturning Fundamentals* and *American Woodturner*. We appreciate your direct support in these meaningful investments as we strive to strengthen and empower the global woodturning community.

Thank you for your continued support of the AAW's nonprofit mission, vision, and the next 40 years.
—Gretchen Wilbrandt, AAW Executive Director

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Benoît Averly
Donna Zils Banfield
Simon Begg
Dixie Biggs
Jason Breach
Christian Burchard
Andy Cole
Luigi D'Amato
Cindy Drozda
David Ellsworth (June 25, 1944 – June 16, 2025)
J. Paul Fennell
Roberto Ferrer
Diana Friend
Greg Gallegos
Keith Gotschall
Stephen Hatcher
Paul Hedman
Michael Hosaluk
Georgianne Jackofsky
Mike Jackofsky
Lyle Jamieson
Kevin Jesequel
John Jordan (February 28, 1950 – February 28, 2023)
Dale Larson
Art Liestman
Eric Lofstrom
Bill Luce (Donated by Monica Luce)
Mike Mahoney
Alain Mailland
Joe Meirhaeghe
Tania Radda
Bob Rotche
Jon Sauer
Mark Sfirri
Jay Shepard
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Rebecca DeGroot
Easy Wood Tools
Jim Echler
Linda Ferber
Richard Findley
Joe Flemming
Dennis Fuge
Stuart Furini
GluBoost
Got Wood LLC
Ashley Harwood
Paul Hedman
Phil Holtan
Jeff Hornung
Michael Hosaluk
Jay Hostetler
JJ Marlix Inc
Rex Kalehoff
Dave Landers
Alan Leland
Liquid Solutions LLC
Jeff Luedloff
MDI Woodcarvers Supply
Power Carving Depot
Kathleen Quinn
Jerry Ritter
Rockler Woodworking & Hardware
Jim Sannerud
Doug Schneiter
Mark Sfirri
Phil Sikes
Stainless Bottle Stoppers
Thompson Tools
Andi Wolfe
Woodturners Wonders
Cathy Gilber, Vilma Blackowitz, Linda Ferber
Ellen Starr, Rebecca Reuteri, Linda Ferber

AAW POP Auction Contributing Artists

Benoît Averly
Dixie Biggs
Max Brosi
Lorin Bruckin
Michael Cullen
Felicia Francine Dean
Rebecca DeGroot
Melissa Engler
Daniel Essig
J. Paul Fennell
Richard Findley
David Fisher
Tiprin Follett
Mark Gardner
Tom Hale
Gabriel Hoff
Kenji Honma
Michael Hosaluk
Larissa Huff
Ulf Jansson
Kevin Jesequel
Rex Kalehoff
Emmet Kane
Michael Lee
Yann Marot
Heather Marusiak
Elizabeth Mézières
Pat Miller
Karen Miller
Rolly Munro
Tania Radda
Jeannette Rein
Joshua Salesin
Jim Sannerud
Coralie Saramago
Jason Schneider
Matthew Shewchuk
Jögge Sundqvist
Eiko Tanaka
Janine Wang
ELizabeth Weber
Derek Weidman
Doug Weidman
Hans Weissflog
Jakob Weissflog
Leah Woods

$1-$99

Emiliano Achaval
Mary Allen
Curtis Alliston
Thomas Alosco
Lance Anderson
Jerry R Anderson
Jimmy Asher
Joseph Atkinson
Ken Aupperle
Virgil Aurand
Kevin Avery
Paul H. Bailey
George William Ball
Barry Ballard
Max Bambridge
James Barkelew
Robert Batistoni
Cornelis Bavinck
Dr. George Bear
Carl Beaulieu
Temple Blackwood
Adam Blomeke
Arthur Bolsover
Phil Boozer
Kathy Botu
Austin Boyd
Timothy Braswell, Jr.
Edward G. Brekke
Jerry Bridges
Jim Briggs
David Brobeck
David Brown
Stephen Buie
Robert Buonfiglio
Dale Burdick
Sally Burnett
Kenneth Conrad Burnette
William Callaway
Trevor Camp
Tony Campbell
Susan Canfield
Sal Caramico
Stephan D. Carls
Ernest Ray Carmichael, Jr.
Reid Castrodale
Leemer Cernohlavek
David Chapin
John Chatelain
William Cherkin
Tina Chisena
Alex Chiuckman
Preston M. Christensen
Roger Christy
Robert Cizek
Robin Clark
Dawn Coats
Dr. Brian Coley
Thomas Collette
Randy Collord
Mike Copeland
Brenda Connors
George O. Cooper
Kerry William Corney
Dan Coulson
Sylvie Couzinier
Glen Cowan
Paul Cowan
Gerald Craig
Eric Cravens
James Cregger
Michelle W. Crissey
Liz A. Crossman
Bradley Cuff
Steve Curley
William F. Cyr
George D'Andrea
Joel Daniels
William Darlington
Bryan Davis
Thomas Mark Devisser
Thomas DeYoung
Gordon Dickens, Jr.
Donald Doan
Richard Dooling
James Downs
Colm Doyle
John Drake
Daniel Drecksage
Tom Edward Drees
Carroll Dudley
Ernst-Jan Eijlers
Stephen Evans
Gary L. Farlow
Kevin Felderhoff
Lawrence R. Fell
Linda Ferber
Shaun Fies
Steven I. Finkel
Ron Fisher
Rick Fishman
Alan Fletcher
Floyd Timber LLC
James Forbes
Robert Joseph Fowler
Daniel Fragiadakis
Anne Frank
Bruce Friederich
David Frederickson
Barb Frederiksen-Cross
Dr. David Gahn
Tom Gall
Jerry M. Galli
Glen Galloway
Vera May Gannaway
Ronald Gellatly
Timothy Gerlach
John Giem
John Giovale
Steven Glass
Phillip Glick
Albert Goldstein
Fernando Luis Gonzalez
Gisele Graber
Ralph Grande
Curtis Greb
Chris Griego
Dane Groneman
Charles Guibert
Scott Gygi
Herman Andy Hahn
Andrew Hale
Tom Hale
Charles Hall
Russell Hall
Ken Hallberg
Kathy Haltom
David Hamilton
Hel Hamilton
Carl Hansen
Jacque Hansen
Roger Hansen
Thomas Harlander
Larry Harrison
Richard P. Harrison
Adam Hartzke
Clyde Hause
David N. Hauseman
Mark Hazelwood
John R. Heckmann
David Ross Henderson
John Herberman
Ted Hicks
Berthold Hiebl
Michele Higgins
Debra Kay Higley
Gregory Hilbert
Jim Holcombe
Mike Holden
Griff Holmes
Phil Holtan
Julianne Holzschuh
Charles W. Honaker
Andrew Jack Horowitz
Tim Horton
Jay Hostetler
Jim Howe
Garry N. Hubbard
Matthew Humphries
Cy Hutchinson
Jim Hutchinson
Mark Isaac
James Jernigan
Kevin Jesequel
David Johnson
Eric J. Johnson
Genae Johnson
Noel Charles Johnson
O'Neal Johnston
Rick Johnson
Tom Johnson
Beverley K. Jump
Alan Marc Kaplan
John Karstens
Chris Kelliher
Geoff Kennedy
John Killian
Roger Kimber
Walter (Walley) King
Dr. Robert S. Kline
John Kowalchuk
Dr. John Joseph Kryston, Jr.
Christopher LaBonne
Kenneth Landis
Michael Lang
Anthony Irvin Laurent, Jr.
Gary Wayne Lawler
Steven Lazarawicz
Edwin Leach
Basil LeBlanc
Fred C. LeJeune
Wililam Lewis
Edwin Lieb
Tom Lieb
Jon Lindgren
Jeff Littman
Steve Lobel
Michael Loebenberg
Bryce Lord
Mike Loy
Patricia Lucido
Chance Luckey
Michael Lustig
David Lutrick
Malcolm Macaulay
Liam MacCraith
Michael MacLeod
Steve Maieli
William Malanick
James Mandel
Lance Mansell
Christophe Marquant
Robert B. Martin
Joel Mashke
Rex D. Matthews
Mark McBride
C Brent McCaghren
Mike McGaha
John Steven McClure
Mark Steven McGreevey
Felicia Merkson
Ben Meyer
Ken Meyer
Allen Miller
Jo Miller
Terry Lee Miller
Norman Miner
Rick Moreton
Wayne Morris
Dan Morrison
Cyril Moyher
Cathy Muckala
Poul Erik Müller
Dan Nantz
Charles Nelson, III
Michael Nelson
Sam Norgard
Robert Norton
Bob Novak
Kelvin O'Dell
Robert Ohle
Carol Oles
Rick Ono
Len Otto
William Padula
Nicholas Palliser
Trevor Park
John Pascoe
Rick Patrick
Greg Peck
Joseph W. Perkins
Nicholas Pesut
Mike Pezley
Stephen J. Pincsak, III
Greg Placy
Stéphanie Poisson
Todd Steven Pollpeter
Colin T. Potts
Phil Pratt
Larry Pritchett
Louise Prockter
Liam Quirke
Robert Raasch
Bobby Rapp
Lester Rassi
Alexandra E. Reinhardt
Josh Rich
Dennis Richardson
Michael Richman
Melinda Riley
Charles Ronco
Ron Rossen
Bruce Rudderow
John D. Rumisek
Matt Rupe
Mike Russ
James Rutledge
Tom Ryan
Richard Sabreen
Irvin Saron
Michael Sarvak
Raymond Scesa
Jay Schulz
Lucy Schuurman
Russell Sharp
Dick Shaw
Tib Shaw
Thomas Shields
Lucas Siba
Mike Sigler
Marv D. Slee
Tom Sloan
Dwayne Denton Smith
Jeffrey Smith
Mark Smith
Michael Smith
Marilyn Marie Soper
Troy Sorensen
Bob Sponsler
Robert St. Armand
Donna Stewart
Willie Stewart
John Stiehler
Patrick St John
Don Stogsdill
Bruce Stout
Stephen Stromstad
Vincent Stroup
Sonia & Julia Sulzbeck Villalobos
Brett Sutherly
John Sutter
Tim Swihart
Wes Sykes
Tim Thirion
David Thomas
David Thompson
Patrick Trimm
Sue Turnage
Roger Umber
Kevin Valez
Erick Van Abkoude
Luther Vann
Alex Van Wijngaarden
Christina Vincent
Ralph Viscomi
Marty Vogel
Beth & Joe Vogler
David Vollenweider
Gennaro Volpe
Steven Walgrave
Andrew Walsh
Beth Watkins
Dr. Jack T. Webster
Alan Weiler
Richard Weinbrenner
Eric Weinstein
Candace Whim
Ken Whitley
Doug Wilbrandt
Elisha Williams
Mich Williams
Ric Williams
James E. Winslow
Robert Wolfskehl
Mitch Wolgamott
Antony Wood
John Wood
Katherine Wozniak
Devin Robert Yaeger
Bruce Yoshida
Mark Zeglen

2026 AAW Board of Directors

Call for Nominees

Are you interested 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/Board. All application documents must be received by the AAW Executive Director as soon as possible.

Apply for an AAW Grant

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

Regular AAW Grants are awarded on a 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.

Get to Know the AAW Staff

Meet the team behind the scenes

Gretchen Wilbrandt

Executive Director

Joined: May 2025

Home base: Minnesota

First craft memory: Cross stitching holiday ornaments in first grade.

Creative practice: I collect hobbies/crafts as it's addicting to work with your hands and continuously learn. I've been working in fiber for 20+ years, but also enjoy broom making, working with flat wood, and most recently turning (it's so engaging!).

Tib Shaw

Curator

AAW Committees: POP, WIT, Demonstrator Selection

Joined: November 2005

Home base: Minnesota

First craft memory: I'll choose my first woodturning experience, circa Grade 4. My dad and I built a dollhouse and all of the furniture to go in it. I wanted 'fancy' legs, so we mounted a dowel in a drill and shaped spindles with folded sandpaper.

Creative practice: I enjoy a lot of different things. Carving sampler patterns, indigo dyeing, and wicker working kept me sane during COVID. Turning is pretty great, too.

Glenn Hansen

Marketing and Communications

Joined: November 2025

Home base: Minnesota

First craft memory: I built a wooden clock in woodshop when I was 13. I still have it (thanks for saving it, Mom).

Creative practice: Woodworking, of course, whether making new things or restoring old pieces.

Melissa McGrath
Event/Symposium Manager

Joined: November 2024

Home base: Minnesota

First craft memory: I used to do latch hook kit when I was a very young kiddo. My grandma and I would spend hours working together to finish a project. When we'd finish a "kit" I remember being so proud, thinking, *"I made this."*

Creative practice: I pretend to do some oil painting, but often I end up frustrated and the canvas just ends up in the bottom of my art supply cabinet unfinished. I really need to work on that. What does bring me joy though is taking in each piece of turned wood at the Symposium. It is so awe-inspiring. Woodturners are amazing.

Tamecka Johnson
Finance and Operations Director

Joined: October 2025

Home base: Mississippi

First craft memory: I enjoyed dance as a child and have fond memories of participating in competitions.

Creative practice: I enjoy participating and witnessing all genres of dance.

Dan Giulvezan
ASM & Web Developer

Joined: February 2026

Home base: California

First craft memory: Making fingerboards from Hot Wheels, magazine cutouts, and sandpaper when I thought I was a skateboarder.

Creative practice: I love finding new crafts. I'm heavily into 3D printing now, and I just bought a candle making kit. Excited to try turning this year!

Robyn Priestley
Administrative Assistant

Joined: January 2025

Home base: Minnesota

First craft memory: I did my first embroidery at maybe age 6, and my first "professional" commission was at age 10 for watercolor plant illustrations.

Creative practice: As a professional artist, my work spans printmaking, painting, textiles, and bookbinding.

Sarah Marriage
Managing Editor;
Editor, American Woodturner

Joined: September 2025

Home base: Maryland

First craft memory: Kneading bread dough on the kitchen floor with my mom when my brothers and I were toddlers.

Creative practice: Like most craftspeople, I find myself captivated by any activity that requires a careful practice and a hand-mind connection—whether I'm dabbling or just admiring from the sidelines. But my main love, and neverending study, is furniture making.

Don McIvor
Editor, Woodturning Fundamentals

Joined: October 2019

Home base: Washington

First craft memory: My parents placed my first camera—a Polaroid Instant—in my hands when I was about five. Watching a moment frozen in time emerge on that little white backdrop that spooled from the bottom of the camera was pure magic.

Creative practice: I subscribe to the polymedia concept, but photography will always hold a special place.

FROM THE EDITOR'S INBOX

Send emails to editor@woodturner.org

I consider myself a relatively experienced woodturner with about twenty years on the lathe. I always use safety gear, including a full faceshield with air filtration and hearing protection. I'm writing to share a recent experience as a reminder of the inherent dangers we face, regardless of experience level.

I was turning a seven-inch maple dish. After completing all tool work and power sanding to 180 grit at 60 rpm, I moved to an inertial sander which requires higher rpm. I increased speed toward the upper safety limit for a dish that size. When I placed the sander on the outside wall, I heard a loud crack and felt intense pain in my lower arm and wrist. The injury was clearly deep and required medical attention—I received five sutures to close the wound.

The dish had spontaneously exploded into multiple pieces with sharp, pointed edges. There were no visible defects in the wood beforehand, nor did the tenon break or come out of the chuck.

Although none of the pieces hit my faceshield, the incident made me think of turners who only use safety glasses. Without a full faceshield, this type of accident could be devastating. I consider myself fortunate—my hand and wrist are fully functional, though some numbness remains on the back of my hand at the time of this writing.

Wearing a full faceshield is mandatory when working on the lathe. Additionally, anyone observing you should also wear a full faceshield. Safety is first and foremost!

—Ed Weingarden, Connecticut

As a member of the AAW and the Woodworkers of Whittier (California), I wanted to share a community project inspired by the wig stand write-up in the October 2025 issue of *American Woodturner*. Our club has mainly focused on producing wood toys for children, which we distribute to organizations during Christmas. After reading that article, three members of our club who are woodturners decided to do something similar.

We started the project in mid September 2025 for Breast Cancer Awareness Month and donated fifteen wig stands to the Infusion Center at PIH Health Whittier in late October. On the same day as our donation, the first wig stand was provided to one of its patients. That was very satisfying and rewarding! The club has committed to continuing this valuable project as long as we can.

—Carlos Jackson

Clinical Manager Palmira Macedo-Pizano (second from left) with WOW members (l-r) Carlos Jackson, David Velasco, Dick Toney and Arie Karporaal.

Chicago Woodturners Making a Difference

The Chicago Woodturners was founded in 1988 and has since grown to more than 160 members. Since our beginning, community involvement has been a central part of our mission. Over the years, our outreach efforts have expanded to include a wide range of rewarding activities.

Beads of Courage

Our participation in the Beads of Courage program continues to grow in popularity. To make it easier for members to contribute, we are now providing kits that simplify the process of assembling and turning stave-constructed Beads of Courage boxes. This approach has proven effective—we currently deliver approximately 60 boxes each year to Lurie Children's Hospital and hope this will continue to grow.

Empty Bowls

Empty Bowls is another annual event. Each December, we partner with a local community college's ceramics program to sell hand-crafted ceramic and wooden bowls. Everyone who purchases an item receives a free bowl of soup as a reminder of what it's like to go hungry, and 100% of the proceeds go to local food pantries.

Pens for the Troops

Thanks to the efforts of a member who served as a Master Chief in the U.S. Navy, a pen donation program was established nearly twenty years ago and continues to thrive. Members turn pens that are then distributed by a nonprofit organization to troops overseas. The organization we work with provides pen kits in exchange for the donated pens.

Turning Pens with Students

One of our more enjoyable group outreach events involves working with students to turn their own pens. Two local high schools have invited us to participate in their biennial art education fairs for over ten years. The club provides pen kits and prepares blanks, and a team of about twenty volunteers brings six mini lathes to the schools. Over two days, students create around 120 pens—an experience they consistently describe as one of their favorites. The volunteers find it just as rewarding. We've also held similar events at local Boy Scout jamborees.

Wig Stands for Cancer Patients

A newer initiative focuses on creating wig stands for women undergoing chemotherapy. Led by our chapter's Women in Turning (WIT) group, the project has since expanded to include many club members. This activity is often part of the club's open-shop days.

Local Libraries

From time to time, we have the opportunity to create woodturning exhibits or hold live demonstrations at local libraries. These events are a wonderful way to introduce the public to the art of woodturning and to inspire interest within our community.

Our Partnership with the Chicago School of Woodworking

We are fortunate to partner with the Chicago School of Woodworking, where the club's nine full-size and six mini lathes are located. This facility allows us to host classes, invite professional demonstrators for hands-on workshops, and hold open-shop days. Many of these sessions are devoted to producing items for our community outreach programs. Through these efforts, the Chicago Woodturners not only give back to the community but also provide members with opportunities for growth and camaraderie. ■

—Al Miotke, Chicago Woodturners

(*Left*) Chicago Woodturners selling bowls and other small objects at an Empty Bowls event.

(*Right*) Chicago Woodturners mentor new members during a 2-day class.

Photos: Al Miotke

Mid South Woodturners Guild: Community Service in Action

Founded in 1997 in Memphis, Tennessee, the Mid South Woodturners Guild (MSWG) maintains a strong community service commitment. One of our most successful outreach programs was Beads of Courage. MSWG supplied Le Bonheur Children's Hospital with 100% of their Beads of Courage boxes. In May 2022, Le Bonheur halted their Beads of Courage program. MSWG replaced our BoC program with wig stands for area cancer patients, along with our other ongoing Pens for Troops and Tops for Youth service projects.

Delta Fair (l-r) Sam Dawson (Pens for Troops chair), Skip Wilbur, and Rick Stone.

Pens for Troops

In 2025, club members made over 300 pens for troops. We held several pen-turning classes at The Woodwork Shop, open to the public, with each student paired with a seasoned pen turner as their instructor. Each student kept their first pen, with all subsequent pens going to Pens for Troops. We also turn pens at three public demonstrations a year, held at local arts events and a local county fair. The success of our Pens for Troops program would not be possible without the many members who also make pens in their own shops.

Tops for Youth

MSWG believes we have a unique twist that makes this program very popular with the public. We use a dowel pin for the shaft and a process that saves time and standardizes the design. After quickly texturing the top's upper surface, we have the youth, under close supervision, use markers to decorate their new top on the lathe, which is run at a slower speed. When youth are not present, we allow adults to color their own tops, and we have found that the adults have as much fun as the youth—if not more.

Wig stands

The wig stand program matured and gained momentum in 2025. MSWG provides wig stands to West Cancer Center & Research Institute and works with Ruby Maclin, Volunteer Coordinator, WINGS Supportive Care. We have held turn-ins that combine wig stand production with instructional turning for new turners. We also created a YouTube video on making a wig stand for member reference.

During the club's 2025 Octoberfest, Lisa Jo Perdu, art teacher from Harding Academy,

(*Left*) Matt Garner, MSWG Wig Stand Program Chair, delivering a group of wig stands to West Cancer Center & Research Institute

(*Right*) Wig Stand finishing and embellishing class at Octoberfest

Donated Poplar being stored at National Hardwood Lumber Association. (l-r) Rick Gillespie, MSWG President and Dallin Brooks, Executive Director NHLA

Chesney Bethea and her tops.

Chesney collected a top from the MSWG demonstrators at the Pink Palace Craft Fair every year she attended as a child.

held a morning hands-on class for embellishing and painting wig stands. Perdu is also planning to have her art students embellish future MSWG wig stands—a good way to teach students that things are still made by hand, while also learning about community service and art at the same time.

Obtaining wood for making wig stands can be costly and problematic. In late 2025, MSWG asked Dallin Brooks, Executive Director of the National Hardwood Lumber Association (NHLA), if he knew anyone willing to donate wood. Dallin sent out a request to nearby NHLA members, and MSWG is now the grateful owner of 722 linear feet (2,200 lb) of poplar boards, which NHLA is storing for us.

A new home base

Because of MSWG's ongoing community service initiatives and the club's objectives to promote woodturning and wood-related activities, an unexpected opportunity arose in early 2025 when the National Hardwood Lumber Association, headquartered in Memphis, reached out to MSWG and offered the ongoing use of NHLA's classroom and facility as the club's new meeting and training venue. MSWG graciously accepted. This new relationship will enable MSWG to do even more in the areas of community service, woodturning education, and the promotion of the art and craft of woodturning.

Why we do what we do

Every now and then, something happens at a demo that reminds you why it all matters.

On the first day of the fiftieth anniversary of the Pink Palace Craft Fair (2022), a young woman named Chesney Bethea and her mother approached Joseph Voda and me. We were both making wood tops for the public. We noticed that Chesney was watching intently, and then she spoke up.

Her story went something like this:

"You guys have been doing this for years and I think it's great. I've been coming for years and you have always been here, and it makes such a difference."

Then she continued: "I got a top each year I came, and they are special to me. I have them in a collection at home."

Her mother told us that Chesney had been coming to the fair since she was a child, always waiting patiently for her top—it was something she looked forward to every year.

We must have talked for ten minutes. What a great story.

The next day, the unexpected happened. I was at the table for tops, and who shows up but Chesney. She made a special trip back to show us her top collection.

I was speechless as she pulled them out of her purse one by one—seven in all. She said she thought she had lost a couple of the very first ones. I just had to ask her to spin them for us. And this year, Chesney got to decorate her own top for the first time.

I hope this story inspires you to keep volunteering—it certainly reminds me why I do. ■

—Larry Sefton, Mid South Woodturners Guild

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

Mount clip-on lights on dust hood

When I was setting up my new workshop, I had to decide how to light my lathe. I have two large LED panels screwed to the ceiling above the lathe, but they provide only general and diffused light. In the past I had a lamp inserted into a block of wood attached to the headstock (visible in the photos). I could swivel that light to the rear, top, or front of the workpiece, but never all at the same time. I was staring at the lathe, thinking about where I could attach more than one light, and it struck me that the hood for dust collection is ideal. I have a number of small clip-on, low-voltage LED lights, so I attached one to the rim of the hood and it quickly became clear I could move it to any position on the rim that I chose. The lights themselves swivel on their mounts, and I can raise or lower the hood on its adjustable stand or move the stand around on the floor. The setup is almost infinitely flexible, and the lights give off no heat.

I can arrange two or more of them along the top of the hood for spindle work, one on the top and one on the right side for a bowl (as shown), one low down for the interior of a hollow vessel, or one from the left side for the bottom of a bowl.

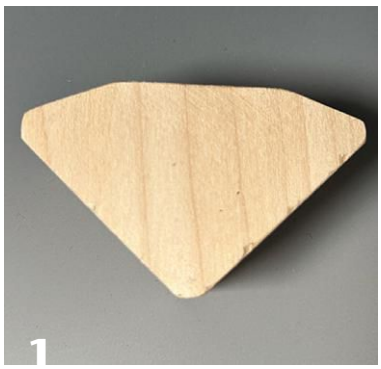
It is also easy to achieve that slanting light that illuminates imperfections on the wood so well, and I have never seen my work better than now, particularly when sanding. I obtained the lights from a local hardware outlet, and I am sure similar lights will be available locally for most readers. The angled plastic rim of my dust hood is ideal, but some adjustments might be needed if your dust hood has a thick rim.

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

Speed up tool sharpening

We all should make frequent trips to the grinder, but the goal is always the same—to get back to turning as quickly as possible. Here's a quick tip to save time and keep your grind angles consistent when using a jig for your gouges.

When using a jig such as the Oneway Vari-Grind, you normally adjust the V-arm position for each tool to achieve the desired bevel angle. For example, a bowl gouge might be ground to 45°, while a spindle gouge is 40°. Resetting the arm for each tool takes time, but you can skip that step with a few simple wooden spacers.



As an example, set the V-arm for your 45° bowl gouge. To switch to a 40° angle grind for your spindle gouge, make a spacer about ¾" (19mm) thick that fits snugly into the V-arm cradle (*Photos 1, 2*). Insert the spacer and you're ready to grind, no re-measuring or adjusting required. The thickness of the spacers used must be determined for your desired grind angles.

You can use the same method to create a secondary bevel on the heel of your gouges (*Photo 3*), giving you a smoother cut.

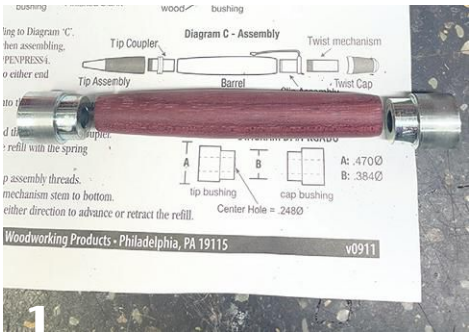
—Al Miotke, Illinois, AAW member since 2007

Custom pen mandrel

Last year I decided to make a couple of pens for holiday gifts. When I went to make them, I discovered, much to my chagrin, that I didn't have the correct bushings on hand. The smaller-diameter section of the bushings that is supposed to fit inside the pen barrel tube was too large for the pen kits I was using (*Photo 1*). Because I wanted to mail the pens as gifts, I didn't have enough time to order the proper bushings.

After thinking about it for a while, I realized I could make my own pen mandrel using a custom jam chuck and a 60-degree live center cone (*Photos 2, 3*). The setup worked great and now I don't have to buy new bushings each time I want to make items that require a pen mandrel for mounting.

—Jack Higgins, South Carolina, AAW member since 2018



Custom Indexing Templates for Total Creative Freedom

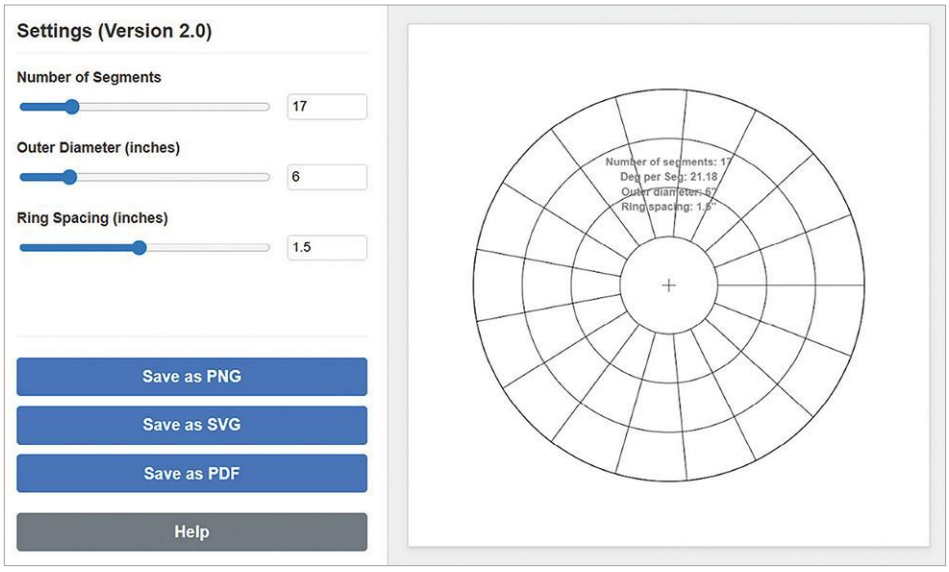
While many lathes include built-in indexing, they are often limited to fixed increments. Inspired by Steve Wilson's "Shopmade Indexing Jig" (*AW*, August 2025), I developed a free digital utility to help turners create bespoke templates for any project. Using my Platter Layout Polar Gridder, available at lumencarver.art, you can move beyond factory settings to create precise, project-specific layouts for fluting, piercing, or pyrography.

The tool allows you to define the exact diameter of your indexing wheel and the number of divisions required. Use the interactive sliders to set the circle diameter to match your physical indexing plate and the number of radial lines for your project. As you adjust the sliders, the current values are displayed in bold text at the center of the grid, serving as a record of your settings once printed. You can also use the concentric increment slider to add interior circles at specific intervals—these rings help ensure your marks remain consistent across the depth or width of a platter.

Export your design as a PDF, and when printing, disable "Fit to Page" in your printer settings to ensure the template prints at exactly 100% scale. For those using CNC or laser cutters, the tool also exports in SVG format.

Once printed, cut out the template and mount it to your indexing wheel using spray adhesive or double-sided tape. Use the automatically generated central plus sign to align the template with your lathe's spindle center. You can also tape a template directly to a finished platter to mark layout lines for embellishment—no dedicated indexing setup required.

—Joe Cornell, Washington, AAW member since 1991



The Platter Layout Polar Gridder interface, available free at lumencarver.art.

Calendar of Events

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

October 16–18, 2026, Wood Symposium presented by Intersections Wood Collaborative, Owen Sound, Ontario. Over 15 presenters on traditional and contemporary woodworking and woodturning, vendor displays, evening banquet and keynote, and feature exhibition. Intersections Wood Collaborative was developed from the vision of Stephen Hogbin (1942-2022). For more, visit intersectionswoodcollaborative.org.

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 Stuart Batty, Max Brosi, Kip Christensen, Beth Ireland, Elizabeth Weber, Sam Angelo, Neal Brand, Josh Buettner, Beth Buettner, Leo Louise, Mark Kielpinski, Dave Landers, Noah "Noble" Peters, Chad Schimmel, Angela Van Wiltenburg and Mark Wallace. For more, visit rmwoodturningsymposium.com.

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 18–20, 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)
- May 31–July 26: *Art from the Lathe: Selections from the AAW Collection*
- 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.

Montana

September 25–27, 2026, Yellowstone Woodturners Symposium, Roaring 20's Club House, Billings. Featured demonstrator Tom Wirsing, past president of AAW and expert in platters and bowls. For more, visit Yellowstone Woodturners on Facebook at facebook.com/turners18.

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.

August 28–30, 2026, SWAT (Southwest Association of Turners) annual symposium, Waco Convention Center, Waco. Demonstrators to include Doug Schneiter, Jim Burt, Ellen Starr, Travis Clayton, Michael Hardin, Bruce Pratt, and Raleigh Lockhart. Registration includes lunch each day, vendor tradeshow, and instant gallery. For more, visit swaturners.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. ■

DENTED CUBE BOX

Kai Muenzer

This project yields an elegant cube-shaped box with winged corners. In addition to shaping the inside of the box, the form is also turned on all six sides. The dented box invites users to close the lid by matching the shape as well as the grain. This project is ideal for any woodturner who wants to explore a unique box shape and learn to work with clamps and templates to achieve a perfect, repeatable shape.

Select stock

The ideal blank for this project comes from dry, straight-grained hardwood with no knots, voids, or large bark inclusions. Use a table saw equipped with a sharp blade to cut a 2-15⁄16"- (8cm-) square × 3-½"- (9cm-) long blank. The grain direction should run parallel to the longest dimension. The size of the box is not restricted to this dimension, but the remainder of the text will assume this size for the blank.

Dedicated jig

For the turning, the wood blank will be held in a dedicated jig (or clamp), so the clamp needs to be constructed first (*Photo 1*). Use a table saw to cut four 3-⅜" × 3-¾" (9cm × 10cm) pieces of ½" (13mm) plywood. These will form the sides of the clamp.

Using a scrap of hardwood, cut a piece measuring 2-15⁄16" square × 2-⅛" (5cm) long. This will form the base or core of the clamp. Make sure all the core's sides are true and square.

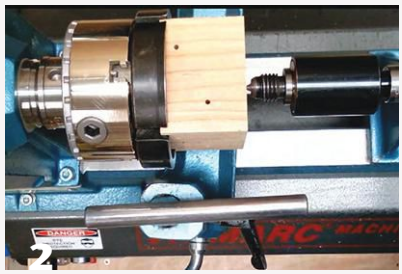
Test fit the sides to the core. Note from *Photo 1* that the sides stairstep around the core with each side overlapping a corner and offset from the base by ½". Later the clamp will be assembled using two 1-½" (4cm) woodscrews on each side. Use a pencil to number each of the sides and use arrows to identify the correct orientation. Number the four sides of the base as well. Match the sides up to the base and pre-drill holes for assembly.

Grasp the hardwood core in a four-jaw scroll chuck and turn a tenon sized to fit standard 2" (5cm) jaws (*Photo 2*).

To avoid damaging the corners of the core, use a bowl gouge and employ ▸

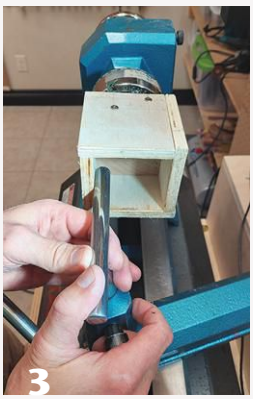
Make a workholder jig

1 Using ½"-thick plywood, construct a jig to hold the blank on the lathe.



2 The bottom with a hole for a knockout bar is turned from a hardwood block.

Check for true

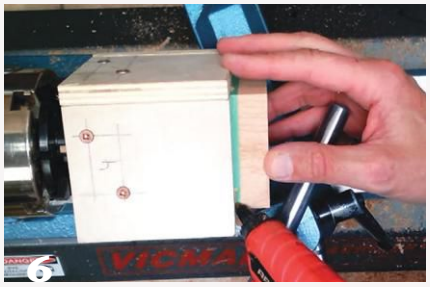


3 Mount the clamp by its tenon and use the toolrest to verify the jig is aligned on the lathe.

Mount the blank

4
Cut the turning blank to create top and bottom box sections. Label each face.

5
Add a spacer and then the box base with its top wrapped with masking tape into the clamp.


6
The spacer should be thick enough to extend the face of the blank about ½" beyond the clamp. Use hot-melt glue to secure the box in the jig.

a shoulder cut, working from the outside towards the center. Take care to ensure the gouge does not slip when entering the cut and generate a catch. This is a good opportunity to practice this cut as it will be used frequently for this project.

Drill a rescue hole through the tenon. Ensure the rescue hole is larger than the diameter of your lathe's knockout bar. Take the core off the chuck and attach the plywood sides using the 1-½" woodscrews, two on each side.

Mount the clamp on the lathe by the tenon using a four-jaw scroll chuck. Verify the clamp will run true; insert the toolrest inside the clamp and determine whether each side of the clamp is equidistant from the toolrest (*Photo 3*). Up to 1/16" (2mm) variance is acceptable, but dead-straight is ideal.

Prep the turning blank

Separate the turning blank into two pieces using a table saw. Cut through the blank at 1-13/16" (5cm). This will create a bottom and (shorter) top section proportioned according to the golden mean ratio (*Photo 4*).

Number the four sides of the blank. Place a small piece of masking tape on the top and bottom of the blank (to easily distinguish the top/bottom from the sides).

Turn the inside base

Check that the blank fits snugly inside the clamp. Place temporary spacers into the clamp so that the top of the box base will protrude about ½" from the clamp (*Photo 5*). Apply masking tape around the base blank where it extends from the clamp. Use the tailstock with a live center to temporarily hold the workpiece in place. Secure the workpiece in the clamp with a few drops of hot-melt glue applied on top of the masking tape (*Photo 6*).

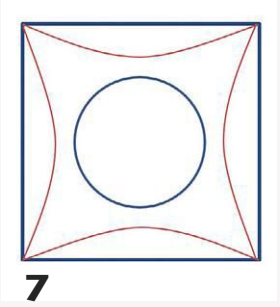
The inside diameter of the box should not exceed 2-1/16" (5cm) (*Photo 7*). This will allow sufficient wall thickness to accommodate the dents. The inside depth should not exceed 1-3/8" (4cm) for the same reason. To create a properly fitting lid, use a caliper to ensure the initial 5/16" (8mm) depth of the inside wall is parallel to the face (*Photo 8*).

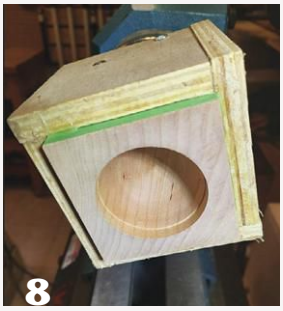
To remove the box from the clamp, heat a flat knife with a propane torch and use the knife to soften the hot-melt glue. Once melted, the base can be extracted and the masking tape with the glue residue removed. If the box is not easily removed, use the knockout bar through the headstock and the rescue hole to help free it.

Turn the inside lid

Place spacers in the clamp so that the box lid extends about ¾" (19mm) beyond the top of the clamp. Again, apply masking tape to the blank's sides where it meets the top of the clamp. Use the tailstock with a live center

Hollow the base


7
The diameter of the hollowed interior is constrained by the decorative "dents" that will be added later. Keep this in mind and leave adequate wall space for the exterior turning.


8
The base after hollowing. Note the vertical lip where the tenon on the (not-yet-turned) lid will fit.

to temporarily hold the workpiece in place. Secure the workpiece in the clamp with a few drops of hot-melt glue applied on top the masking tape.

Turn a 5⁄16"-long tenon on the protruding blank, taking care to avoid damaging the corners of the blank (*Photo 9*). Use a sharp bowl gouge and a shoulder cut, or a pommel cut with a skew. Aim for a fit with just enough play that one or two paper towels placed between the box lid and base will secure the lid in place for turning the exterior.

If you want to turn a recess in the lid, ensure it is less than ¾" deep, excluding the height of the tenon (*Photo 10*).

After sanding, remove the lid blank and spacers from the clamp. Remove the masking tape and clean any residual glue from the top surface of the clamp.

Add the dents

Mount the lid on the box base using one or two layers of paper towels to secure it in place (*Photo 11*). Tear off any paper towel that protrudes from the sides.

Use the table saw to trim the sides of the box. The goal is a perfect cube with the lid and base sides in exact alignment. Don't attempt to hand-hold these small forms on the table saw. Use a crosscut sled with hold-down clamps or a miter gauge with a clamp and a stop block set forward of the blade to avoid binding.

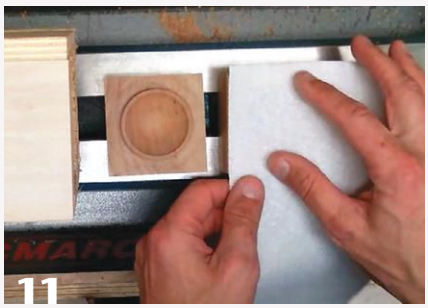
Mark the centers on all six sides of the cube (*Photo 12*). The turning sequence is important; the top and bottom surfaces will be turned last, ▸

Turn the top

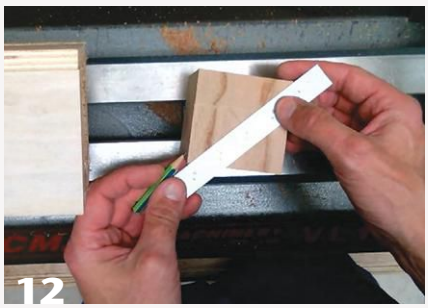
Create a tenon to fit the base using a shoulder cut across the square lid.

Hollow the lid, going no deeper than ¾" past the square face.

Assemble and mark

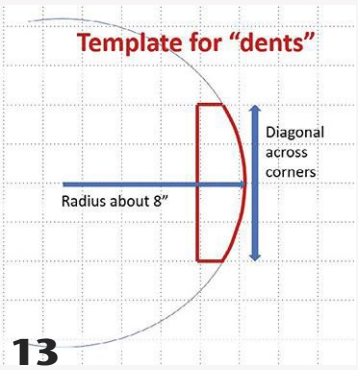


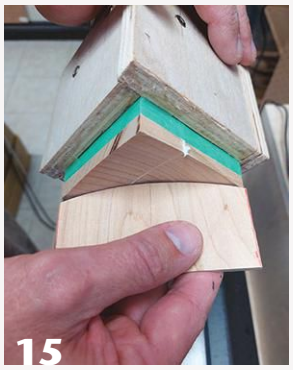
Sandwich one or two thicknesses of paper towel between the lid and base to create a snug fit.



Find and mark the centers on all six sides.

Turn the side dents





(13) Creating a simple template for the dents helps achieve a consistent shape on all six sides of the box.

(14) To remove material for the dents, begin cutting near the center, expanding the diameter of your cut with each pass.

(15) Monitor progress by presenting the template between corners.

so label these faces to distinguish them from the sides. Also number the sides 1 through 4 to track orientation as you progress.

Without using spacers, fit the box into the clamp so that one of the four sides is visible and protrudes about ½". Turn the dents on all four sides before denting the top and bottom. Again, add masking tape around the box where it meets the top of the clamp. With the live center oriented on the pre-marked position, temporarily hold the box in place and secure it using a few drops of hot-melt glue. Remove the tailstock from the lathe bed so the box can be turned unhindered.

The key to the aesthetic success of the dented box is shaping each side as identically as you can. To guide this process, I make a template to check my progress (*Photo 13*). I use the computer to design and print a paper template, which I then glue to cardboard or thin plywood. The arc is based on an 8"- (20cm-) radius circle, so you could simply use a compass to draw a template.

The deepest part of the dent is in the center of the turned face. Start shaping by removing wood near the center of the workpiece (*Photo 14*). Use a bowl gouge and a shoulder cut traversing from the outside towards the center. Make successively larger diameter cuts, initiating the final cuts just shy of the corners. Ideally, you want to avoid touching the corners of the workpiece with the gouge. Stop frequently to check the shape of the dent against the template.

The template should fit into the dent diagonally across two corners (*Photo 15*). Use a sharp bowl gouge and concentrate on cutting the high spots that touch the template. Avoid using scrapers at this stage, because scrapers will likely damage the corners of the workpiece. Instead, try hand-sanding or using a 2" disk sander with the lathe off.

After sanding, remove the box from the clamp and clean up any residual glue on the clamp. Rotate the box 90 degrees and re-insert into the clamp to prepare for turning the next side. Again, bring up the tailstock to help center the blank and to temporarily hold the box in place for gluing. Continue this sequence until you have turned all four sides.

Once the four sides are dented, turn your attention to the top of the box. Having removed material from the sides, you will likely need to insert some ⅛"-thick shims around all four sides to center and secure the box in the clamp (*Photo 16*). Apply hot-melt glue to the shims and to the masking tape around the box to secure the form in place. Turn the top using the same procedure as for the sides.

Repeat these steps to complete the bottom (base) of the box (*Photo 17*). ■

Dent the top and bottom

16 Clamping to turn the top and bottom will likely require shims to center the form.

Kai Muenzer has been an international turning demonstrator and teacher since 2012. His signature projects often combine art with function and can be viewed at kaimuenzer.com.

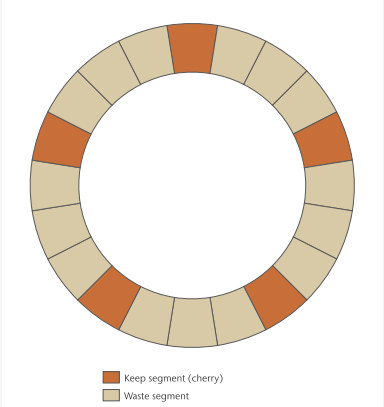
(17) Complete the box. An oil finish is a good option for these forms.

THE MAKING OF *WON'T HOLD WATER*

Doug Drury

Won't Hold Water, 2023, Cherry, 11" × 7" (28cm × 18cm)

The lost wood pattern



This diagram shows a sample row with a segment count divisible by four. With this arrangement, you have a waste segment on each side of a keep segment, with another waste segment between those two waste segments. This makes removal of the waste segments in the final steps of the project much easier.

One of the best things about our community of woodturners is the way we share knowledge and build on one another's techniques. *Won't Hold Water* is a segmented turning using a modification of the lost wood technique that Bud Latven developed. David Vanneir further developed the technique and presented it at the 2012 AAW Symposium in San José. Tom Kenyon saw that presentation, added his own refinements, and presented his version at the Chicago Segmented Woodturners Symposium in September 2022. This is my interpretation after seeing Tom's Armature Bowl presentation at the Chicago symposium.

Design and layout

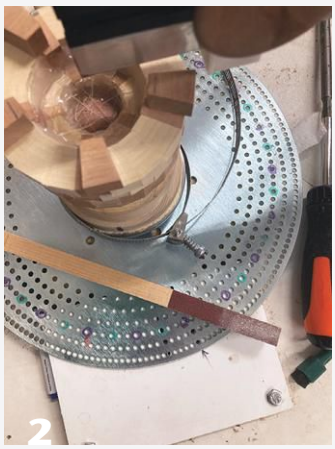
The piece was made using standard segmented construction and a Tom Lohman–style gluing jig. Only those pieces that are to be kept are permanently glued to the piece, and it is constructed not row by row but two or three rows at a time.

Won't Hold Water consists of twenty rows of segments, twenty segments per row. It is best if the number of segments per row is divisible by four (*see diagram this page*). With that arrangement, you have a waste segment on each side of a keep segment, with another waste segment between those two waste segments. This makes removal of the waste segments in the final steps of the project much easier.

Building up the piece

I built the piece in two sections to be joined at the widest part of the vase. With drying time factored in, I could assemble two rows per section per ▸

The glue-up process

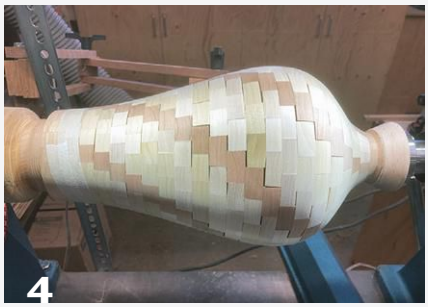


(*1*) The author uses a Tom Lohman–style gluing jig and indexing wheel to place the cherry keep segments. A band clamp secures the waste segments on the completed row below.

(*2*) A top-down view of the build on the indexing wheel. The sanding stick used to flatten waste segments is visible in the foreground.

Shaping the outside profile

The two halves of the vase are mounted on the lathe, held together by tailstock pressure, then turned to shape and sanded to 320 grit.



Gaps between waste and keep segments are expected, but there should be no gaps between keep segments within each row.

day. The building process took about a week.

I prepared my segments as if I were assembling a normal segmented ring, with one-quarter cut from my keep wood (cherry) and three-quarters from a waste wood (spruce, poplar, and whatever else came from the pallet). All stock should be dimensioned to equal thickness and width following normal good segmenting practices.

Starting with a base mounted on a waste block, I began by gluing only the keep segments in place. A Tom Lohman–style gluing jig (*Photo 1*) and indexing wheel allowed precise placement of each segment. I used Titebond Original, with enough glue to ensure a good bond but not so much that excess squeeze-out became a problem—any squeeze-out must be removed before proceeding. Each segment was held in place with a pushdown stick for thirty seconds before moving on to the next. Once all keep segments in the first row were tacked in place, a flat board with about 20 lb of weight on top served as a clamp. After thirty minutes, I removed the board and weights and cleaned up squeeze-out—a hex key with one end ground like a chisel works well for this. The board and weights then went back on for at least two more hours to ensure the glue had set sufficiently before attaching the second row with the same procedure. With both rows of keep segments now attached, I let the glue cure overnight.

The next day, I placed the waste segments between the glued keep segments on the first row. The waste segments need to fit tight enough to provide support but not so tight that you break the bond between glued keep segments—remember, only half a segment width of glue is holding each keep segment in place. After sanding each waste segment so it fit snugly but not tightly between the keep segments, I secured them with a band clamp and hot-melt glued them in place, keeping the band clamp on while the glue cooled and resolidified (*Photo 2*). The fit between the waste and keep segments does not need to be perfect, as later photos will show—just tight enough to support the keep segments during turning.

At this point I had one completed ring and one ring with just keep segments. The keep segments on the second row remained exposed, with no waste segments between them. Before filling in waste on the second row, I needed to glue on two more rows of keep segments—rows 3 and 4—using the same keep-segment procedure described earlier. The principle throughout the build is that you always stay two rows of keep segments ahead of your waste. If you fill in waste too soon, you risk permanently gluing a waste segment to the piece.

Because the piece cannot go on the lathe to true up each ring, the top surface of each completed row of waste segments needs to be leveled by hand. A stick with sandpaper

Taping the outside

The author tapes the piece both horizontally and vertically, stretching the tape as smooth as possible, then cuts at the seam between the two halves.

Turning the inside of the top

(*6*) The inside of the top half is full of hot-melt glue that must be cut away carefully with sharp tools and light cuts.

(*7*) Turning and sanding the inside of the top to 320 grit reveals the keep and waste segment pattern. Consistent wall thickness is essential, as any variation will show once the waste segments are removed.

glued to it works well for this—I used one to flatten the top surface of each ring so it was level and ready to receive the next row.

The rhythm from here was two rows of keep segments, then a row of waste below, until all keep rows were in place. Then I finished filling in the remaining waste rows.

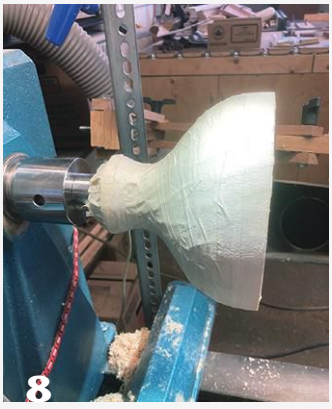
Turning the outside

With all segments in place and the glue fully cured, I mounted the two halves of the vase on the lathe to turn the outside profile (*Photo 3*).

The halves are held together by friction and force from the tailstock. It is important not to apply too much pressure—just enough so the two halves act as one piece and can be turned together to get the correct form. Too much and you risk blowing the piece apart.

Remember that at this stage the piece is held together only by the Titebond on the keep segments and the hot-melt glue on the inside, which is somewhat flexible. A gentle touch and light cuts with sharp tools are essential.

Finishing the top



(*8*) After turning the inside, the author peels off the overhanging tape and trues up the glue face that will join the two halves.

(*9*) With the top mounted on Cole jaws, the author cuts away the waste block and finishes turning and sanding the top.

The outside must be fully turned and sanded during this stage, as there will be no opportunity to rework it on the lathe after proceeding to the next step. I sanded to 320 grit. Gaps between the waste and keep segments will be visible between rows (*Photo 4*). This is fine—the waste segments exist only to provide structural support during turning, but there should be no gaps between keep segments within each row.

Taping

With the outside complete, the next step is to tape the piece. The tape acts as a cast that holds everything together during inside turning. This is critical: while turning the inside, all of the hot-melt glue will be cut away, so the only things holding the piece together will be centrifugal force and the tape.

Tape both horizontally and vertically, stretching the tape and getting it as smooth as possible (*Photo 5*). Then cut the tape at the seam between the two halves. Choosing the right tape matters—the first time I tried this technique, I used blue painter's tape, which was not sticky ▸

Turning the bottom

A steady rest helps reduce vibration while turning the inside of the bottom half.

Finishing the bottom

(*11*) With the bottom half held in Cole jaws at the tailstock end, the author removes the waste block.

(*12*) With the Cole jaws moved to the headstock, the bottom is finish turned, sanded, and signed.

enough. This time I used regular masking tape, which held well but proved a bit too sticky at the unwrapping stage.

Turning the inside

I turned the top half first, reversing the mounting on the lathe. The inside was full of hot-melt glue that needed to be cut away (*Photo 6*). Once again, sharp tools and light cuts are essential. The hot-melt glue tends to stick to cutting tools, so I clean them frequently with a cloth and denatured alcohol. It is important not to let the glue melt and move around—it needs to be cut away cleanly. Wear gloves when working with denatured alcohol, as it is toxic and can be absorbed through the skin.

All turning was done at about 1,000 rpm using conventional bowl and spindle gouges. I used carbide tools only to clean up the hot-melt glue at the inside bottom, where my spindle gouge would not reach. I also had to peel off some of the glue at the bottom, using denatured alcohol to loosen the worst of it, before finish turning.

Consistent wall thickness is critical. Later, when the waste segments are removed, any inconsistency will be on full display. I checked the thickness with calipers often throughout this stage.

With the inside of the top turned and sanded to 320 grit (*Photo 7*), I carefully peeled off the overhanging tape from the edge and trued up the face that would be glued to the bottom half (*Photo 8*). I then mounted the top on my Cole jaws, cut away the waste block, and cleaned up and sanded the top (*Photo 9*). Because the top row was a solid ring, I was able to turn it normally, keeping as much tape on the outside as possible.

Turning the bottom half brought more vibration, so I added a steady rest (*Photo 10*). It did not eliminate the vibration entirely, but it helped considerably. With so little holding the piece together, some vibration is expected. Light cuts, frequent tool sharpening, and constant thickness checks are the routine. My thickness calipers were not long enough to reach the bottom of the piece, so I made a new set. The wall thickness of the bottom half needs to match the top half as closely as possible, or there will be a visible ridge at the joint between the two halves. I turned and sanded the inside of the bottom and trued up the glue face. Finally, I mounted it in the Cole jaws, cut away the waste block, and finish turned, sanded, and signed the bottom (*Photos 11, 12*).

Unwrapping, assembly, and finishing up

With both halves turned, it was time for the exciting part: unwrapping. In theory, you remove the tape and all the waste segments fall away, leaving only the keep segments attached and turned.

As I peeled the tape from the top half (*Photo 13*), the waste segments sat loosely in place, just waiting for an opportunity to fall out. The bottom half, already unwrapped, sat nearby with its pile of waste segments (*Photo 14*). This is where my choice of masking tape came back to haunt me—it was too sticky, and the tape did not want to release cleanly. Two of the arms separated from the top rim, and three joints in the lower half failed during unwrapping. This was not entirely unexpected, and fortunately it was an easy fix.

I glued the broken joints and joined the top and bottom halves at the same time, using blue painter's tape as clamps (*Photo 15*). At this point I wanted just enough pressure to keep things from moving as the glue set, and an easy release so I did not cause any further failures. With everything glued up and in one piece (*Photo 16*), all that remained was some final hand sanding and finish.

I owe a huge thank you to Bud Latven, David Vanneir, and Tom Kenyon. As I noted at the beginning, this technique was developed and shared by each of these turners. I added my own refinements, but the majority of the credit belongs to those who shared their versions before me. ■

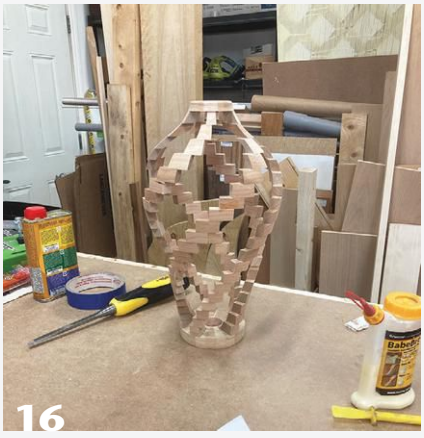
Unwrapping

13
As the tape comes off the top half, waste segments sit loosely in place, ready to fall away.

14
Both halves, fully unwrapped, reveal the open armature of keep segments. Some joints failed during unwrapping.

Assembly and finishing

15
The author uses blue painter's tape to clamp the repaired joints and join the two halves together.



16
The assembled vase after final glue-up, ready for hand sanding and finish.

Doug Drury first started turning in 2014, and after attending the St. Louis Segmented Symposium in 2018 switched to turning almost exclusively segmented pieces. Doug lives in Strathmore, Alberta, Canada with his wife, Jean, and is a member of the Calgary Woodturners Guild and a board member of the Segmented Woodturners (both AAW chapters). A former CFO, Doug retired in 2019 and now spends his time in his workshop, golfing, or traveling.

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.

- "Polychromatic Turning," December 1989 *AW* (vol 4, no 2)
- "Turning Your First Segmented Bowl," by Jim Rodgers, October 2015 *AW* (vol 30, no 5)
- "Segmented Turning Today: A Remarkable Evolution," by Al Miotke, June 2022 *AW* (vol 37, no 3)

TUNG OIL:
An Ancient Finish for the Modern Workshop

Greg Frost

EXPLORING NATURAL FINISHES!

EXPLORE!

To read Jim Sannerud's article, "My Journey to Natural Finishes," April 2025 *AW* (vol 40, no 2), log in at woodturner.org and use the Explore! search tool to access the online version. You need to be logged into your AAW account to use Explore!

You've spent hours creating a unique wood project—selecting the best wood, developing a design, turning with care, and sanding to perfection. You're ready for the final step, and the inevitable question arises: *What is the best finish to use?*

There are so many choices—shellac, waxes, polyurethane, linseed oil (boiled or not), tung oil (polymerized or not), varnishes, water-based/oil-based blends, lacquer...and that's hardly a complete list. The debate over the best way to finish wood has been ongoing through generations of woodworkers. Of many lessons I've learned while becoming a tung oil producer over the last fifteen years, foremost is that woodworkers have strongly held opinions on finishes! While I don't feel qualified to enter the great wood finishing debate, I do feel qualified to offer some insights into tung oil.

Over the past ten years I have detected a growing interest in natural finishes. One good example of the sentiment to move away from industrialized finishes is presented in Jim Sannerud's April 2025 article, "My Journey to Natural Finishes," in *American Woodturner*. In it he details his personal experiences with exposure to toxic chemicals while working in a cabinet shop and his subsequent transition to natural finishes. Sannerud's is one of an increasing chorus of voices advocating safer, all-natural finishes.

If you search the Internet for tung oil you'll find hundreds of articles, blogs, and how-tos. Some of the information is great, others not so much, and of course the divergent information causes a lot of confusion. Hopefully I can reduce some of the misunderstanding.

Finish Properties

Tung oil's qualities are attributable to its fatty acids content. For those of us

who are tung oil nerds, tung oil contains eleostearic, linoleic, linolenic, oleic, and tung oleic acids. Each of those acids has unsaturated double bonds, and when exposed to air, the double bonds crosslink with neighboring chains and harden. Other hardening oils can have similar characteristics, but in comparison to those oils, tung oil dries faster, harder, and is more water-resistant, making it a better wood sealer and finish.

Tung oil, as with other oil finishes, is classified as a penetrating finish. This term distinguishes them from film finishes (varnish, shellac, lacquer, water base) which with repeated applications build to a film on the surface of the wood (though they also penetrate enough to bond to the substrate). If water resistance is important in your application, it takes five or six coats of tung oil to achieve that characteristic.

Unlike linseed oil, tung oil tends not to discolor with age. While an antique linseed oil finish has its own aesthetic, you might opt for a different appearance for your woodwork a century down the road.

Pure tung oil cures slowly—faster than pure linseed oil, but a lot longer than any of us want to wait between coats. To speed curing, tung oil is usually mixed with a solvent (d-limonene or turpentine are natural options); a solvent can also help it penetrate dense or tight-grained wood. Another option is to use polymerized tung oil. Polymerized tung oil is made by cooking tung oil in an oxygen-free oven at 500°F (260°C). This initiates the crosslinking process without causing the bonds to oxidize and harden. Polymerized oil is viscous and needs to be thinned with a solvent, but the curing process proceeds fairly rapidly and the oil behaves more like varnish, curing hard and with a higher sheen.

Tung oil is remarkably versatile. It can be an effective finish not only on wood, but also on stone, concrete (think countertops), tile, brick, paper, leather, and metal. It can also be blended with other oils, citrus solvent, turpentine, mineral spirits (if you must), waxes, dyes, or varnish to come up with your own custom finish.

Finally, one of the great benefits of any oil finish is that it is easily maintained and repaired by the end user. An oil finish is easily renewed by the application of a new coat of oil. In contrast, repairing a film finish can challenge a skilled woodworker with an equipped shop.

Cultural history

While tung oil is being rediscovered in the U.S. by hobbyists and artisans, it is the history of tung oil that many find interesting. The story of the tung oil industry began in China and Southeast Asia, in the tung tree's native range. The extraction and use of the oil is attributed to China, where the t'ung tree or wood-oil tree holds an important place in the country's history. The use of tung oil dates to the Tang Dynasty (618–907 AD). One of the first references to the tung tree appeared centuries earlier in Confucius's *Classic of Poetry*. The tung tree attracted great respect as its wood, nuts, and oil provided many day-to-day uses. The Chinese used the wood from tung trees to make musical instruments like harps and lutes and even spun the bark into thread. Beginning with the Song dynasty (960–1279 AD), Chinese shipbuilders used tung oil to seal and waterproof boats. Tung oil was also used to formulate lacquers, inks, lamp fuels, waterproofing for clothing and umbrellas, skin salves, and legend has it, even mortar for the construction of the Great Wall of China.

The early Chinese tung oil extraction process entailed hulling the fruit by hand, crushing the seeds, then heating metal pans full of tung seeds over an open fire. The heated seed meal was placed in woven baskets. The baskets were placed in a type of press and struck repeatedly with a large log to expel the oil. This approach to processing was still being used in China into the 1930s.

The tung tree became known to the Western world in the thirteenth ▸

MORE ON OIL FINISHES!

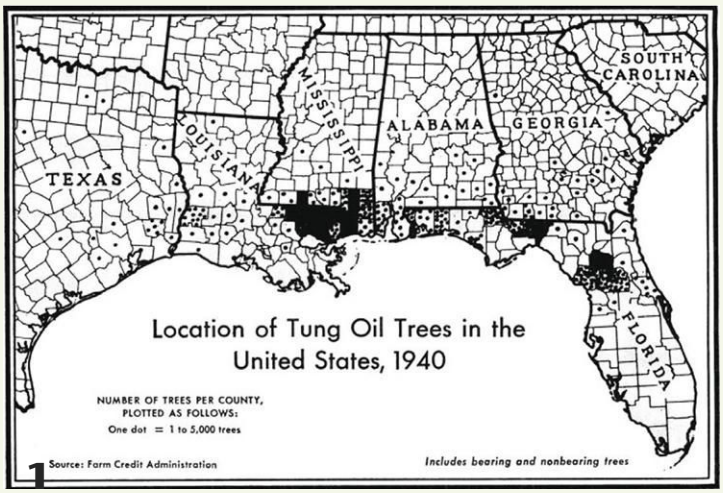
EXPLORE!

For more information on oil-based finishes, use the Explore! tool to read Don McIvor's article "Nice Turners Finish Last," from the February 2014 (vol 29, no 1) issue of *American Woodturner*.

HISTORICAL FOOTAGE

Interesting historical footage showing the hand production of tung oil in China in the 1930s can be found on YouTube. Use the search string "1930s China Wood Oil 221415-08" to find the short clip.

The Tung Belt



Tung trees were introduced in the Deep South as an agricultural crop in the early 1900s. By 1940, their distribution formed the Tung Belt.

Labor-intensive production practices eventually gave way to mechanical harvesting.

century when explorer Marco Polo documented Chinese wood-oil, describing it in *The Book of Ser Marco Polo*. More than two centuries passed before Portuguese traders would bring the substance itself back to Europe, purchasing a supply from merchants in Guangzhou city in 1516.

Beginning in the late 19th century, the U.S. imported tung oil from China to support domestic paint and varnish manufacturing. Rather than continuing to rely on imports, the U.S. began domestic production in the early 1900s. U.S. foreign officials and USDA representatives brought tung trees to the U.S. Gulf Coast as a possible new crop. With thousands of acres of longleaf pine trees clearcut for timber, landowners and farmers were looking for new crops. Tung oil promised a superior product and orchards of young trees embodied big hopes for U.S. farmers. The rapid expansion of tung growers and processors led paint and varnish makers to form the American Tung Oil Association in 1924 to back domestic production. During the 1940s and '50s, at the pinnacle of U.S. tung oil production, the Tung Belt stretched from Florida's panhandle to southeastern Texas (*Photos 1–3*).

Historically, tung oil was not only used for paints and as a wood finish, it was also used in the U.S. as a coating for metal products. Tung oil was used in food packaging, notably to line metal cans. A thin coat of tung-oil inside cans prevented the metal from rusting or reacting with the contents. This kept canned goods fresh and untainted by metal for many years. Tung oil-based can linings were an early solution to food storage safety and preceded today's synthetic epoxy linings.

The domestic supply of tung oil became especially important during World War II. The U.S. military turned to tung oil as a rust-preventive coating on metal equipment. Applying a thin film on steel surfaces helped stave off rust in harsh conditions, as the oil would cure into a protective layer. This was especially useful for firearms, ammunition, tools, and machinery prone to corrosion.

Cured tung oil is non-conductive, a handy characteristic that the military put to use with electrical equipment. It was used to varnish and seal electronic components and wiring, preventing moisture damage and ensuring reliable operation of radios, transformers, and motors.

Tung tree growers in the U.S. faced a couple of critical environmental challenges. Tung trees bloom early in the spring and late freezes caused devastating losses to annual production. The trees themselves were not impacted, but, in some cases, the entire crop for that year was lost. A significant financial setback for growers! To address weather-related losses, the USDA in Poplarville, Mississippi, developed a new tung tree cultivar in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The Spiers variety blooms several weeks later in the spring, thereby mitigating damage from late spring freezes. However, this gamechanger was not released to the public until 2015 when my company planted our first tung tree orchards with the Spiers variety.

Collapse and rebirth

Despite so many uses for tung oil and multitudes of tung tree plantations along the U.S. Gulf Coast,

U.S. tung oil production collapsed, driven largely by the petrochemical industry's production of synthetic coatings and finishes. The seismic shift began with the development of synthetic resins. Chemists developed alkyd resins, blending petroleum-derived polyols and acids to create finishes that mimicked (and often exceeded) the durability of natural oils. The new synthetics offered consistent performance, lower costs, and unlimited scalability, factors that industrial America could not ignore. By the 1950s, acrylics, polyurethanes, and epoxies—all products of petroleum chemistry—began dominating the coatings market. These materials dried faster, lasted longer, and resisted chemicals and abrasion far better than traditional tung oil-based products.

Falling demand and weather obstacles shrank the U.S. Tung Belt. By the early 1960s, the largest remaining tung tree orchards lay in Mississippi. The death blow to the industry came when Hurricane Camille ravaged the Mississippi region in 1969. The remaining acres of orchards fell to the bulldozer to be replaced with pine plantations and other crops.

Harvest and processing

Tung trees begin producing fruit—misleadingly called nuts (botanically they are seeds)—when they reach four or five years of age (*Photo 4*). The fruit has a fibrous husk surrounding four large seeds. As the fruit matures, it naturally falls to the ground and can be harvested and processed at a milling facility. During the 1920s and '30s, the first tung tree orchards in the U.S. were harvested by hand. Eventually, mechanized harvesting equipment was developed for the pecan industry (*Photos 5, 6*). A sweeper creates a windrow of the fruit between the planted tree rows, and a harvester comes in behind with the fruit ending up in a hopper for transport.

How tung oil is processed significantly impacts the quality of the final product. From the tung fruit seed, oil is produced using either a mechanical process that includes hulling, grinding, heating, and pressing, or a similar process that incorporates the solvent hexane. Most tung oil producers in other countries, primarily China and South American countries, use hexane to maximize oil extraction. Hexane is a toxic volatile hydrocarbon and even if used correctly it has the potential to leave behind toxic residues. Regardless of the process, once the oil is extracted it is filtered to remove solids. The highest quality tung oils are produced without the use of chemicals and are finely filtered. Properly filtered tung oil should be clear with a light amber color and a mild nutty smell. Pure tung oil is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration as safe for use on food-contact surfaces.

Tung seeds

The fruit of the tung tree harbors large seeds, the source of tung oil.

Application

As a relative newcomer to this continent, tung oil doesn't have the same deep cultural history that it does in parts of the Far East, and I rely on artisans like Martin Pryor to fill out my knowledge on best practices for using tung oil.

Pryor is the co-owner of Rebel Ventures Inc., a small company that salvages and mills timber and uses some of the material for custom woodworking. Tung oil finishes are an integral part of the furniture and cabinetry end of the business. For their products it's all about using tung oil to create a beautiful finish that is ▸

Modern harvesters

Modern harvesting utilizes equipment developed for pecan orcharding. A sweeper piles the fallen fruit in the center of the row where a harvester can glean the crop and load it in a hopper for transport.

durable, all-natural, and safe for the grower, processer, woodworker, and end user.

The versatility of tung oil is one of Pryor's reasons for using it. The flexibility of the oil allows him to experiment with different formulations including mixing with d-limonene (citrus solvent) in various ratios. He uses different ratios of oil-to-solvent depending on the species of wood, whether wax is incorporated in the blend, and the desired final appearance. Among many discoveries, Pryor has learned that stains made with pigments require a higher solvent-to-oil ratio.

Beginning woodworkers often over-apply tung oil finish. Adding citrus solvent reduces viscosity and encourages the user to apply less oil with each application. Much of the final appearance is controlled by the formulation, number of applications, and sanding.

Successive applications of tung oil can be applied without sanding between coats. However, Pryor has found that sanding between coats achieves a different aesthetic without changing the basic properties of the finish. Without sanding, tung oil cures to a matte finish, and depending on the wood species may have a slightly textured feel. Both the feel and clarity of the finish can be altered by working through a series of abrasives, using an increasingly finer grit with each application. A matte surface is still evident with 180-grit (but will feel smoother to the hand), a satin finish from 320–400-grit, and tung oil can be "polished" with 1500–3000-grit abrasive.

One of the keys to using tung oil is applying very thin coats and allowing it to soak into the wood, typically for 20-30 minutes. The oil can be applied with a brush or cotton rag. Following the soak, rub the surface thoroughly with a clean cloth to remove excess oil. Look for shiny areas on the wood surface (a raking light source is helpful) that indicate pooling oil. It's also worth checking the surface periodically to look for oil seeping out of the wood pores—wipe off this excess material, too. Wait 24 hours between applications.

Even though the current production level of tung oil in the U.S. is small compared to historic levels, it's the unique nature of the oil that has led to an increasing demand for the product. The finish remains as beautiful and durable as ever, but many modern consumers are factoring in issues like health risks and sustainability when making product choices (*Photos 7, 8*). Use it pure for a volatile-organic-compound-free, all-natural finish or create a home brew using additives; tung oil gives you control. ■

Versatile finish


7


8

A soft sheen can be achieved with multiple coats of tung oil. For an even higher gloss, give the polymerized version a try.

Photos 7, 8 courtesy of Rebel Ventures

Safety Note!

Tung oil impregnated rags can ignite on their own if not handled properly. As tung oil cures, it oxidizes and generates heat. When oily rags are wadded up or piled together, the trapped heat can combust. Never store used tung oil rags in a closed container or leave them in a pile. Instead, hang them in a well-ventilated area or lay them flat in a single layer to cure completely before disposal. This simple precaution eliminates the risk of spontaneous combustion and keeps your workspace safe.

Greg Frost and his family planted their first tung trees over fifteen years ago with a vision to reestablish the domestic production of tung oil. That vision is now a reality with Tallahassee Tung Oil—the only company cultivating tung trees and producing tung oil in the U.S.

Compound-bevel Lamination

for Curved Patterns in Turned Wood

A laminated bowl

1

Opposing bevels cut on opposite sides of the blank cause the curvature to reverse at the center. A plug in the center covers an imperfect joint.

A laminated vase

2

An eight-lamination Celtic knot pattern in a maple vase; moving beyond the traditional four-lamination Celtic knot requires either cutting compound-bevels or using a polyhedral blank. The lamination is 1/16" (2mm) padauk highlighted by black veneer. 8" × 3" (20cm × 8cm)

Alan Finn

Woodturners use many techniques to embellish a turned object with curved patterns including inlay and lamination. While some techniques bend the lamination to produce a curve, I have been exploring compound-bevel lamination to produce unique, curved patterns in turned pieces (*Photo 1*).

A compound-bevel cut—also called a compound angle or dual bevel—saws a blank using two angles simultaneously. The tilt of the cut is relative to the top of a blank. The miter is a rotation (or twist) of the cut relative to the blank face.

The well-known Celtic knot design is my inspiration for compound-bevel lamination (*Photo 2*). The laminations to make the Celtic knot are planar, so the visual curves arise from the rounded surface of the turning. The typical Celtic knot uses four beveled laminations cut rotationally about a four-sided blank. ▸

MORE ON WEDGE ASSEMBLIES!

EXPLORE! To learn another way of segmenting with milled wedges, check out Robert Craig's August 2014 *AW* article, "Wedge Assemblies Offer a Tangential Twist" (vol 29, no 4, page 24). Log in at woodturner.org and use the Explore! search tool.

This is a kind of compound-bevel lamination; the rotation of the blank prior to cutting provides the twist.

Beyond compound-bevel lamination with veneer or thin stock, I have also created laminations using wedge-shaped segments. The wedge-replacement technique substitutes a different species of wood for a wedge cut from the turning blank. A variation of this technique that I call the wedge-edge lamination involves laminating the edges of the cut before reinserting the wedge cut from the turning blank. In either case, wedge laminating allows you to choose a lamination width that is independent of the saw kerf. In the work described here, flat lamination is inserted against a compound-bevel cut and the process is repeated multiple times to create a patterned blank.

The exposed pattern depends on how the laminations intersect the turned object's surface (*Figure 1*). The part of the lamination that remains is approximately a section of a circle or ellipse. This feature can be designed to appear in the blank at any position or angle. Using compound-bevel instead of edge-parallel lamination opens possibilities for how the lamination will intersect the curved surface, and thus the intricacy of the resulting pattern.

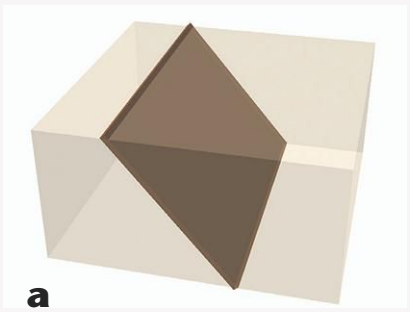
Aesthetically, a single lamination is not particularly interesting, but multiple compound-bevel laminations can form interesting patterns *(Figure 2)*. The patterns that I will be presenting are radially symmetric and are akin to those made by a Spirograph. The patterns are also similar to guilloché patterns, which are curved bands that interlace around a central point (and are far more intricately made by a rose engine lathe).

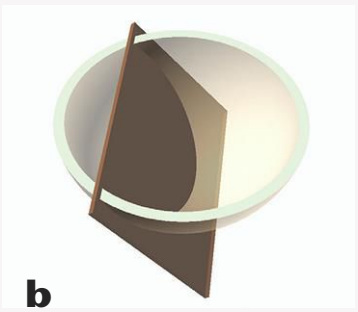
One well-known compound-bevel technique is Robert Craig's twisted staves method, which arranges identical wedges around a conical mandrel to create uniform spiral patterns. In the approach described here, rather than building a blank entirely of milled segments, an existing blank is cut on a compound-bevel to accept laminating pieces. Laminating this way does not require a mandrel and numerous wedges and does not limit the design to uniform spirals.

Design

There are three steps to produce compound-bevel laminated forms that will show curved patterns: pattern design to determine the placement and type of laminations, fabricating the blank to be consistent with the pattern, and turning to achieve the design.

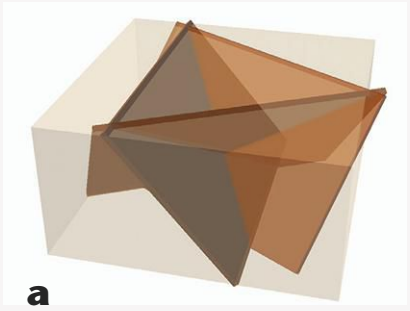
There are also two basic approaches to lamination to consider. You can glue a piece of veneer or thin stock between cut blank pieces. Alternatively, two angled stopped cuts can be used to remove a wedge-shaped piece from the blank; then either a wedge-shaped piece of a different wood is glued in, or the cuts may be lined by thin stock and the original wedge replaced. Laminating

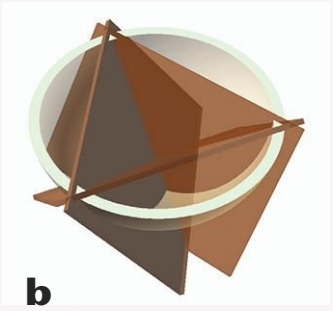




One lamination, modeled

Figure 1 (a, b, c)
(*a*) A beveled thin lamination in a blank; (*b*) where it will appear in the bowl, (*c*) the part of the lamination that remains after the bowl is turned.





Connected bowl loops

Figure 2 (a, b, c)
(*a*) Three compound-beveled thin laminations in a blank, (*b*) relative to the resulting bowl form (top-down perspective), and (*c*) the lamination elements that remain after the bowl is turned.

with wedges is simpler than with a through-cut because you only need mild clamping pressure on the wedge to achieve a good bond (sometimes horizontal clamping to buttress the blank against cracking may be necessary). Any wedge-edge lamination can also be done with through-cuts with consideration for matching the lamination width to the cut width.

A pattern design can be achieved through trial and error. There is little to say about this approach other than you can go through a lot of wood before getting a pleasing result. A more refined approach is to visualize how multiple laminations interact and then compute dimensions and angles mathematically to construct the laminated blank. I used both approaches before settling on a third option, a 3D Computer Aided Design (CAD) modeling program.

MORE ON CAD!

EXPLORE!

For more insights into applying CAD to woodturning design, see Ron Giordano's June 2024 *AW* article, "Visualize Designs with CAD Before Turning" (vol 39, no 3, page 32). Log in at woodturner.org and use the Explore! search tool.

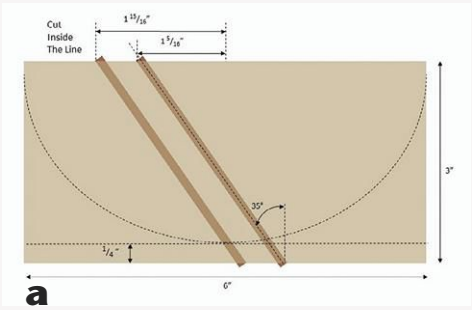
There are several free (for personal use) CAD programs that are useful for woodturning applications. I use OpenSCAD because its programming-style language and interface are familiar to me. Other CAD programs such as Fusion 360 use a more graphic-driven approach and may be easier to learn for non-programmers.

Construction

Compound-bevel lamination couples conventional woodworking (cutting, clamping, gluing) with woodturning. The practical aspects of woodworking influence the feasibility of a design.

The first step in construction is choosing the wood species. Contrasting colors provide visual drama, but choices can have consequences. Porous woods like ash, elm, and oak will capture the fine sanding dust from darker species (like purple heart, padauk, bloodwood, walnut) and the dust can be nearly impossible to clean out. Maple, beech, and cherry are better choices.

Laminations in through-cut blanks should match the width of material ▸



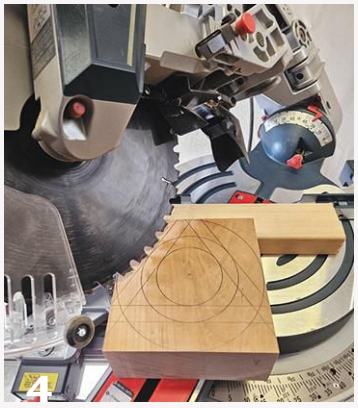
Double loops

Figure 3 (a, b, c) *(a, b)* The two laminations are repeated three times around the blank at 0°, 120°, and 240° to produce *(c)*, a pattern of overlapped trefoils.

Prepare a blank

3 Transfer your cutting plan to the top of a blank. Here the author has reproduced his CAD design on a cherry blank.

First cuts



4 Make the first set of cuts with the saw rotated clockwise (30°) and tilted 35° counterclockwise. Use a work-holding solution (not shown) that keeps your hand out of harm's way, such as a hold-down, clamps, or Fastcap stick.

5 Dry-fit the first laminations. The lamination must span the bowl outline, but any material (or lack of) beyond the outline will be turned away.

removed (the saw blade's kerf, at a minimum). Ignore this guidance and the blank will change in width and depth with successive laminations, distorting the design's continuity and symmetry. Using thin stock that is the same thickness as your saw kerf minimizes these issues. Otherwise, make multiple cuts to remove material to the width of a thicker laminate.

You can use lamination stock of any thickness for a wedge lamination because the blank does not change in width or depth. The only challenge is the replacement wedge may protrude above or lie below the top of the blank. This will not introduce discontinuities in the curved pattern but may challenge the accuracy of subsequent cuts on the blank.

To start constructing the blank, I copy the images from the CAD program and paste them into a graphics program, which I then scale to create a full-size diagram to use in the shop. I annotate the diagram with dimensions and angles which I use to mark the blank. I find it convenient to take measurements from the diagram rather than calculate them with trigonometry. The resulting patterns are not overly sensitive to small variations as long as the saw cuts are precise and you use a consistent set of dimensions and angles. The blank should be perfectly square (or perfectly regular for a polyhedral blank) because saw cuts will be made with respect to multiple sides.

I will illustrate the steps of construction using a design comprising three pairs of laminations (*Figure 3*).

I draw circles around the blank's center for the offset distance and draw tangential lines at the appropriate rotational angles (*Photo 3*). A long-arm angle protractor is useful for this step. On complex designs I might also annotate the tangential lines with the tilt angle. I try to avoid having a cut run parallel to the wood grain to mitigate cracking when laminating with wedges.

The tilt angle is easily set on a sliding compound miter saw (*Photo 4*). The rotation angle may be set by rotating the saw, rotating the blank, or both. When making a cut with a compound sliding miter saw, I like to start the saw and touch the blade down on the face of the blank to check that the cut is exactly where I want it. The score mark will be removed during hollowing.

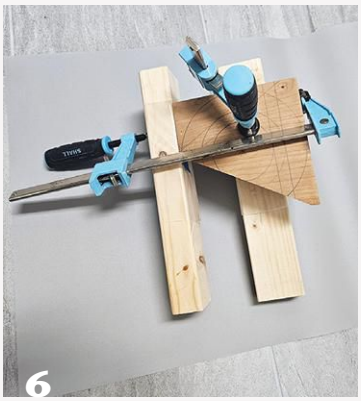
For some steeply angled cuts the drive arbor of the saw may get in the way and the blade may not slide all the way through the cut. Mirroring the cut (tilting the saw to the other side and rotating the blank 180 degrees) will help keep the drive arbor out of the way. Using a fence standoff of scrap wood (whose sides must be parallel) will extend the reach of the saw relative to the blank. The sequence of cuts should be planned to always allow you to safely hold or clamp the blank, typically making the outside-most cut first.

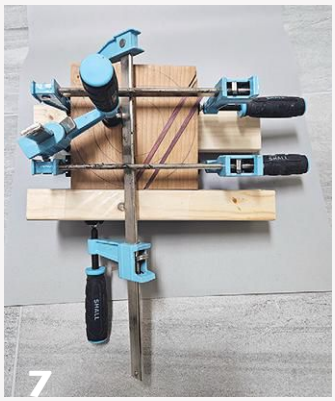
The longest lamination will be the same length as the bowl width. Some angled cuts will be longer than this (*Photo 5*). In that case, the lamination should be centered across the bowl outline as anything outside the perimeter will be turned away.

After the first cut(s), reassemble the blank by gluing and clamping the lamination(s). When clamping across a compound bevel, the pieces will attempt to slip in two dimensions. Maintain the alignment by clamping to scrap lumber to counter the slipping. Use wax paper or parchment paper to keep the glue squeeze-out off the scrap wood and your clamps. I typically clamp the larger piece of the blank vertically to a piece of scrap wood oriented along the bottom and a second caul clamped horizontally on the side (*Photo 6*). Lamination pieces can then be glued and clamped horizontally (*Photo 7*). The clamps should be iteratively tightened while monitoring slippage or misalignment. Clamping across the cut to hold pieces in an initial alignment and to pull pieces in a desired direction can be useful.

Make the second set of cuts as you did the first set, with the saw rotated and tilted appropriately (*Photo 8*). Glue and clamp the blank for this second assembly (*Photo 9*). Try to be consistent with your clamping pressure for each glue-up.

Clamp the assembly


6

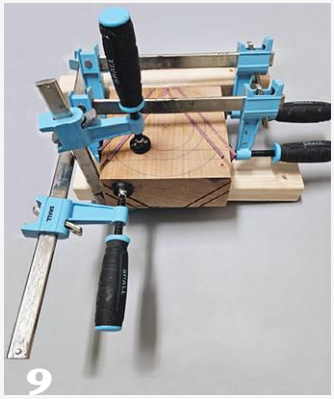

7

Glue and clamp the first assembly. Use scrap dimensioned lumber as a clamping surface to counteract the tendency for the components to slip out of place.

The last set of cuts in this example are perpendicular to an edge (*Photo 10*). After each cut, check the quality of the glue joints and lamination alignment (*Photo 11*). I generally scrap the piece if I find a bad glue joint, unless the defect will be turned away. For the final glue-up, the laminations are prone to slipping in only one dimension, so only one piece of scrap wood is needed to prevent movement (*Photo 12*). The completed blank is shown in *Photos 13* and *14*.

Second laminations


8


9

After the first glue-up cures, apply the second round of cuts (35° tilt, 30° counterclockwise rotation) and repeat the clamping/glue-up sequence.

Turning

Watching the pattern emerge as the bowl is turned is one of the pleasures of this process (*Photo 15*). A linear pattern evolves into a curved shape while the triangular figure in the center of the bowl progressively shrinks. Monitoring how the pattern emerges is a useful indication of how the hollowing is proceeding.

Though separated by only a fraction of an inch, the lamination pattern will appear different on the inside and outside of the bowl (*Photo 16*). This is attributable to the bowl's thickness, curvature, and the way our minds perceive patterns.

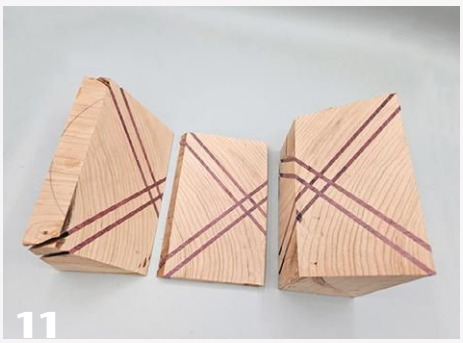
I mentioned the consequences of wood choice earlier, one of which comes from selecting species with starkly different turning properties. A cut that is reasonable for soft wood might be too aggressive for a paired harder wood. A hard and brittle timber or one with variable grain will be susceptible to chipping and tearout along thin edges. I hone my gouges on a 600 grit CBN wheel and, combined with a gentle touch, I rarely experience tearout. Working at the high end of the safe rpm range may also be helpful.

I use PVA glue, and I have noticed that the water from this adhesive may produce a bump where the different species abut. This is not glue creep; the differential absorption of the glue's moisture can cause this type of wood movement. To moderate this problem, let the blank completely equilibrate before turning. I have turned blanks that sat around for a few months and did not observe any subsequent wood movement. You could use a non-water-based adhesive such as epoxy or urea-formaldehyde. However, these two-part adhesives ▸

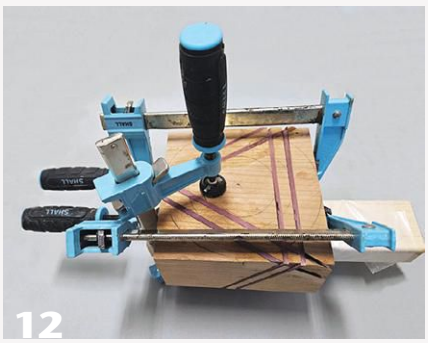
Third laminations


10

Complete the last set of cuts (35° tilt, no rotation) and glue-up. The final cuts are a simple bevel perpendicular to the face.


11

With each lamination cut, check the quality of prior glue-ups and lamination alignment. Cracks and voids can be repaired but may be visible in the completed piece; it's often better to create a new blank.


12

Only one caul is needed for the last glue-up.

Completed blank


13


14

Inspect the completed blank, top, sides, and bottom. Imperfections that will be turned away are ignored.

have their own challenges. For more details on laminating wood and glues, see John Beaver's "Laminating Wood for Turning," (*Woodturning Fundamentals*, June 2024).

Looking forward

The concepts I've laid out apply to patterns in any turned surface, including spindles, candle sticks, vases, boxes, bottles, ornaments, and treenware. These lamination ideas may also be applied to multi-axis turnings, three-point bowl designs, and more. Because the lamination pattern is significantly influenced by the curvature of the

Turn the bowl


15a


15b


15c

15 a-e (*a-c*) The pattern evolves as the vessel is hollowed. (*d*) Having designed the pattern, you'll have a good sense of when you've removed enough material. The completed vessel (with finish) is shown in (*e*).


15d


15e

turned surface, forms with little curvature (like a platter) will show little change from the pre-turned blank.

There are many variations to this technique beyond those shown here (*Photos 17-19*). Stacked patterns, using lamination of different thickness or multiple colors, multi-layer laminates, veneer on each side of the laminate to highlight the pattern, and off-center and asymmetric patterns are a few avenues to explore. The laminating wood need not be homogeneous—a laminated lamination is possible. Lamination techniques could be combined; edge-parallel lamination may be done before compound bevel lamination, and a blank may contain both through-cut and wedge lamination. Variations in a turned object's profile could be explored as this affects the resulting pattern. Even further, a saw cut could be sealed, the pieces of the blank fixed in position, and then the kerf filled with resin rather than a glued-in wood lamination. This would eliminate many of the glue-up challenges with thin-stock lamination.

The creative part of pattern design depends on posing "what if" questions. What if I use fewer laminations? Or more laminations? What if I don't place them symmetrically about the center? What if I use both wedges and planar lamination? CAD lets you easily explore these questions and often provokes more questions. What if I make the slant angle larger or smaller? What if I offset the lamination at a different distance from the center? Many aesthetically pleasing designs are waiting to be discovered.

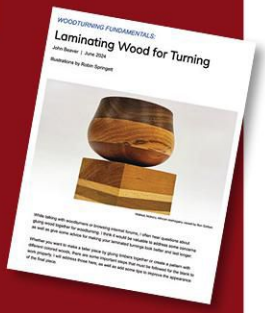
I would like to express my deep appreciation to all the members of the Chapel Hill Woodturners. They have had the expertise and patience to teach me woodturning. I have a long way to go to reach their level of skill and artistry. ■

Two sides of the story

16 The underside of the vessel shown in the Photo 15 sequence reveals a surprisingly different pattern from the interior.

MORE ON LAMINATING!

EXPLORE!



For more on laminating and adhesives, refer to John Beaver's June 2024 *Woodturning Fundamentals* article, "Laminating Wood for Turning." Log in at woodturner.org and use the Explore! search tool.

Prior to retiring, Alan M. Finn, Ph.D., was a research fellow at United Technologies Research Center working in the areas of mathematics and embedded computer systems. In 2017 he retired to Chapel Hill, North Carolina and has been woodturning with the Chapel Hill Woodturners since the pandemic. His love of curvilinear designs likely comes from his Celtic heritage.

Boundless design options

17 Maple wedges replaced cherry during this bowl's construction. 3" × 6" (8cm × 15cm)

18 The wedge edges were laminated for this piece's construction. Purple heart and magenta veneer in cherry. 3" × 6" (8cm × 15cm)

19 The design for this bowl is similar to the vessel shown in Photo 15e, but with three cuts repeated three times. Purple heart in cherry. 3" × 6" (8cm × 15cm)

SO YOU WANT TO BE A Demonstrator?

Richard Findley

The author demonstrating at the 2025 AAW International Symposium in St. Paul.

Photo: Andi Wolfe

My first demo was around 20 years ago: my local club had a demonstrator cancel at the last minute and the chairman, who had seen me turning at a small local show I'd attended with the club, asked if I would stand in. Because I was young and very nervous, the club split the evening between me and another member, an hour each. Since then, I have demonstrated at international and regional symposia in the U.K., Ireland, and the U.S. I also regularly demonstrate for clubs around the U.K. both in-person and via Interactive Remote Demo (IRD), averaging around 25 demos each year. But what makes a good demo, and how do you get started?

What makes a good demonstrator?

In the U.K., clubs up and down the country are crying out for good demonstrators. I imagine the situation must be similar in the U.S. But what does it mean to be a good demonstrator? At the most basic level, a good demonstrator will be able to make a project in the allotted time frame while talking to and engaging with the audience, making them feel comfortable and entertained, and maybe even teaching them some techniques along the way.

There are two main types of demonstrators. If you've been a member of a club for any length of time, you will have seen them at work. Some are project turners: they will demonstrate and teach the audience how to make a particular project, one that the demonstrator is perhaps well known for or could be considered a signature piece, with the aim that audience members might go away and have a go at making that project. Some, like myself, are technique turners: I use the project I'm making to teach or share a technique, or set of techniques, and the project, while important, is almost a by-product of the demo. I believe that with good technique, you will be able to make anything, so my focus is more on technique. Neither type of demonstrator is better or worse, if the demo is done well.

The good, the bad, and the boring

At the end of a good demonstration, the audience leaves feeling

entertained, inspired, educated, and excited to try out what they've just seen. Achieve any or all of these outcomes and you've done a good job.

But I'm sure we've all seen a bad demo: the demonstrator who focuses on their work in silence, never explaining what they're doing or why. The one who spends half the session with their back to the audience, rooting around in their toolbox for a forgotten tool. The one who thinks they're a stand-up comedian. The one who spends too long hollowing out a large vessel while the audience can't see what's happening. Or the one who totally misjudges the timing and never gets anywhere near finishing.

The good news is that the difference between a good demo and a bad one is mostly within your control, and the work starts long before the demo begins.

Know your material

Your first demo is likely to be a one- or two-hour slot at your local club. The topic doesn't need to be big or showy. It doesn't need to be an award-winning piece. It needs to be something you've made lots (and lots) of times before, that you understand, that you enjoy making, that you are passionate about. If you show up at a demo with a bit of wood from the firewood pile and plan to make something you saw on YouTube last week but have never tried before, you are probably in for a rocky ride. It can be something as simple as a pen or a bowl with a little personal twist that you bring to it. The object itself is far less important than the fact that you know how to turn it and could almost do it blindfolded. *Editor's note: do not turn blind-folded.*

Talk to your audience

If there's one piece of advice I would give to a would-be demonstrator, it is to talk. Long periods of silence get filled by a bored audience chattering like schoolchildren. So talk. Describe what you are doing and why. Explain what the tool is, why you chose it, what the grind is, alternative tools, wood type, grain direction... the list goes on. Even if what you're doing seems blatantly obvious, trivial, or boring, talk about it—someone in the audience won't know about it. Talk about the thoughts that are going through your mind as you turn, how you are planning the next cut or next stage of the project. Talk about how you are presenting the tool or how you once got a catch during this process so now you do ABC to avoid it. Tell a funny story about the thing you're doing, about how you cut through the bottom of one of these because of XYZ. Whatever you do, talk about it. The audience is there because they are wood nerds, just like you and me. All of this speaks their language. It is relatable, and it is engaging.

Selection of items made in the author's demos. Some are complete projects, while others are meant to reveal technique rather than a finished product.

(*Below*) The author talks to the audience at Cheam Woodturners, Surrey, U.K.

Photo: Richard Shirazan

Preparation and timing

Before you get to a demo, you must be prepared. The old saying, "fail to prepare, prepare to fail," is very fitting for demos. Preparation is the key to a smooth demo, and the starting point is choosing your subject.

Let's say you decide to make a bowl with an interesting rim detail that you like to turn. If this takes you two hours to make in your workshop, you will not be able to do it in a two-hour demo, especially if you talk as I have described earlier. For a two-hour demo, you need to be able to make the piece in no more than an hour. I often make a small table leg in an hour-long demo. If there's time at the end of the demo I will sometimes turn it in production mode and it usually takes around five minutes. Timings change in a demo situation. If you are properly describing what you are doing and why, it will take considerably longer to make than it normally would in your workshop.

I highly recommend practicing the demo, in full, in your workshop, at least once. When I say "in full," I mean talking and everything. You'll feel a bit of a fool talking out loud to your workshop wall for a couple of hours, but it will make you aware of points of interest, things that could go wrong. Most importantly, it will ▸

The author demonstrates at the Emerging Turners Programme (ETP), an initiative of the Register of Professional Turners (RPT) designed to help young turners ages 18–35 take the next step toward professional turning.

Photos: Nathan Savory

show you how long it takes you to do it as a demo.

If your practice demo runs long, think about the scale of the project. An old turner once told me that an audience won't learn any more from you turning a 16" (41cm) bowl than they will from you turning a 10" (25cm) bowl, if you do it properly. You can also prepare several versions of the piece at different stages of completion, so you can skip through the more repetitive parts of the process during the demo. Getting your timing right at any level of demonstrating is important, from an evening club demo right up to an international symposium. If you finish too early or too late, it causes problems for the organizers and makes you look unprofessional.

As you work through your trial demo, make note of everything you use—tools, chuck jaws, abrasives, glue, etc.—so you have a full list of everything you'll need. Forgetting an important piece of equipment is embarrassing and inconvenient at best. At worst, it might prevent you from doing the demo. Anyone who has demonstrated for some time will have a tale about forgetting something, and it happens, but in those early demos, knowing you have all your gear gives you one less thing to worry about.

Nerves

In your first few demos, you will be nervous. Sometimes hand-shakingly nervous. I still get nervous, although it is more like a shot of adrenaline than stage fright these days. I think nerves show that you care. Before a big symposium demo, I often have a recurring anxiety dream where I'm standing in front of an audience, and I don't have my tools or my wood. Good preparation and organization are the best tools you have to ensure things go to plan. If you manage everything that is within your control, then there's not much more you can do. This will give you peace of mind and help to settle some of those nerves.

Arrive in plenty of time, with all of your equipment, and you're at least halfway there. In the early days, I even took along my own lathe so I was familiar with the equipment and knew my chuck and several jigs would fit (*below left*).

Remember: the club members are your friends and want you to do well. This isn't a crowd baying for your blood. Sure, there will be cheers and jokes if or when you get a catch, so it's important that you can laugh at yourself. If your first reaction to a catch or things going wrong is to fly off the handle in a rage or to curl up in a ball and cry, perhaps demonstrating isn't for you. But if you can accept that sometimes things will go wrong, and in those moments manage to turn the situation into a joke or, better yet, a learning experience for everyone, then you will do well.

Early in his career, the author would bring his own lathe to demonstrations for added familiarity and control.

The author demonstrating at Craft Supplies USA in Utah. These days he describes his nerves as more of a shot of adrenaline than stage fright.

Photo courtesy: Craft Supplies USA

The author's remote demo setup, with cameras positioned around the lathe and laptop within easy reach.

Two camera angles on the lathe give the audience the best view of the action.

Health and Safety

It's hard to argue that health and safety isn't important, but it's a pretty dry subject, and a 30-minute safety lecture before your demo is likely to send the audience to sleep before you get into the project. Personally, I try to use best practice in the demos and explain and clarify things in conversation as I work. That way, the message is passed along in a conversational way, and people don't feel patronized or harangued.

Editor's note: For comprehensive safety guidance, visit the AAW's safety resources at tiny.cc/turnsafe.

Timber

Your timber choice is closely tied to health and safety, because a poor choice of timber could easily put someone in the hospital. I would never turn a piece of timber with splits at a demo. I would rarely turn one in the workshop, but that's another discussion entirely. Splits, shakes, knots, and faults in general, even if they don't explode, will make your job as a demonstrator much more difficult. Pick nice clean timber with easy straight grain, unless the aim of your demo is to teach how to deal with problems of soft punky wood and tear-out. The other thing to be careful of is the species of wood you use. Several woods, including yew, laburnum, and many exotics in the rosewood family, are known to cause allergic reactions and are best avoided for both you and the audience.

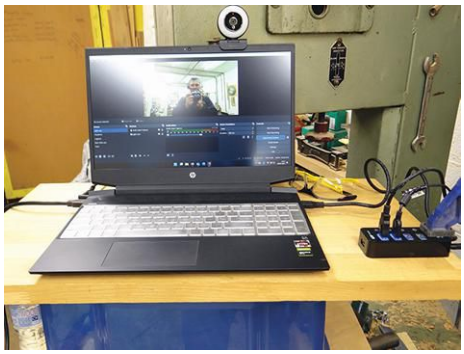
Technology in the demo room

When I first started demonstrating, most clubs had some sort of rudimentary camera setup, but not all of them. At some, you just had to arrive early to claim the best seats and there was always "that guy" who managed to bag the best front-row seat! As technology became more accessible and commonplace in our lives, clubs stepped up with their equipment, often using several remote-controlled HD cameras and large flat-screen TVs to give the audience the best view of the work.

As a demonstrator, I have found it useful to have a good understanding of how these setups work. Occasionally "the guy who knows how it works" is late or can't make it, leaving a group of woodturners scratching their heads, and I have often been able to press the right button or make the right cable connection to get everything up and running in time for the demo to start. It is also useful to have an idea of the camera angles the club is using so you can present the demo in the best way. I like to keep my camera operators on their toes during a demo, making sure they are showing the thing I want them to show. More than once I have had to wake up a cameraman to move in for a better angle or a zoomed-in shot.

Interactive remote demos

Since the pandemic, remote demos have exploded onto the scene. A few pioneers were pushing their use beforehand, but when the lockdowns of 2020 happened we all got on the bandwagon. There were some who proclaimed that demonstrations would never be the same again, but since normality returned, most professionals have found a way of doing both. I still offer IRDs and do half a dozen a year, usually in the winter months to U.K. clubs when the weather is bleak. Some clubs formed around that time as online-only clubs and are still thriving; some have a hybrid offering to their members. IRDs are also useful for demonstrating to a wider audience: I have demonstrated remotely to several clubs in the U.S. and Canada, and the ▸



The author uses OBS Studio, a free software, to control camera selection when streaming through Zoom.

The author's workshop-built camera stand is low-cost, mobile, and practical.

journey home was considerably shorter and far less affected by jet lag!

Remote demo setups vary wildly from quite basic to incredibly high-tech and expensive. I did a lot of research into different options and opted for a reasonably simple setup (*top of page 45*). It was a significant investment, but the equipment has paid for itself several times over. I bought a new laptop with plenty of power to deal with the streaming, and I keep it dedicated to this purpose so it doesn't fill up with all the day-to-day junk that clogs memory. I bought three HD webcams, some extension cables, a USB hub, and a Bluetooth microphone headset. Some people use a dedicated hardware switcher to move between camera feeds, but OBS Studio, a piece of powerful free software that can be downloaded from the internet, allows me to do this from the laptop keypad so I didn't feel the need (*top left*).

I know of at least one turner who runs dedicated 4K video cameras for their superior resolution, but he also produces DVDs and video downloads. For streaming through Zoom and recording the occasional video, HD webcams are more than sufficient, because Zoom compresses video quality and will often stream at less than HD no matter how good the cameras are. I mount my cameras on workshop-made fixtures held in place with spring clamps, which keeps them mobile, flexible, and cheap (*bottom left*). While cheap is not what I am aiming for, as cheap usually looks that way, too, I always look for good value without compromising on quality. I have been very happy with my setup and always receive good feedback from the clubs who have watched my IRDs. I'm sure my setup will evolve over time as my needs and technology develop.

While IRDs are fantastic for connecting people and making the world a smaller place, they do have their drawbacks. For me, they lack the connection with the audience that I thrive on in a demo. When I demonstrate online, I am standing in my workshop alone, talking to a wall, and looking at the screen to make sure the correct camera is on at the right time. I can usually see four or five small boxes across the top of my screen from which I will occasionally get a thumbs-up if things are going well. When I'm in a room of people, I can read the room and feel if things are going well. Some audiences are more boisterous than others and, depending on how things are going, I can play up to those who like a bit of banter or tone it down a little for more reserved groups.

Conclusion

You've chosen your topic carefully. You've practiced it half a dozen times. You've made lists and triple-checked them. You've brought spares of tools and wood. The wood is good quality. You've arrived an hour early, and everything you can control is in hand. Despite this, sometimes things still go wrong, but if you can talk about the subject you are passionate about with a smile, you'll do alright. I once had a lathe stop working on me as I was finishing off a finial in a demo and managed to get an audience member to spin the lathe by hand as I turned. You can imagine how the audience enjoyed that!

I hope that this article gives a little insight into the world of demonstrating and has perhaps tempted you to put your hand up next time the club president asks for volunteers. You never know where it might take you. ■

Richard Findley is a full-time production turner based in Leicestershire, U.K., who thrives on variety—making turned components for joiners, furniture makers, restorers, designers, and architects. Richard demonstrates for clubs around the U.K. and has appeared at international symposia in the U.K., Ireland, and the U.S. He has published over 200 woodturning articles, some of which have been compiled into two books. For more, visit turnersworkshop.co.uk or find him on Instagram and YouTube, both under the handle @richard_findley.

MORE ON DEMONSTRATING

EXPLORE!

For more thoughts on demonstrating over the years—including related shop projects—log in at woodturner.org and use the Explore! search tool to find useful articles on the subject, including:

- "On Demonstrating," by Richard Raffan, April 2019 *AW* (vol 34, no 2)
- "First-time Demonstrator," by Larry Genender, Spring 2003 *AW* (vol 18, no 1)
- "A Boom to Demos," by Jamie Donaldson, Summer 2008 *AW* (vol 23, no 2)

DEMONSTRATING FOR KIDS

Ernie Newman

I love demonstrating for kids. One of life's greatest privileges is to make children happy. But a kids demo is a different beast from a woodturning club demo. Let's set the scene: you're demonstrating at a booth at a school fair, shavings are flying—adults wandering past your booth will be intrigued, but one in a thousand will care about tool sharpening angles and chuck jaws, and none of their kids will. Parents will be thrilled when you give a spinning top to their child. That's your audience.

Presentation matters too. The first time I taught woodturning in the U.S., back in 1995, I asked my host how I could improve my demo. He was polite: "It was great." I asked a second time. Same answer. A third time, and he said, "Get in the car." He took me to the local markets and bought me a brightly colored shirt. I looked at my dowdy tee shirt and got the point. Now I wear better clothes, a turned wooden hat, and a carved wooden bow tie (*Photo 1*).

Be realistic, though. Kids can be humbling. After a demo for a fourth-grade class I was elated to overhear a boy say, "When I grow up, I'm gonna be a woodturner." His friend came back at him immediately, "Nah, there's no money in that, I'm gonna be a lawyer."

Keys to a great kids demo

Preparation

Sharpen tools beforehand. Abe Lincoln had it right: "If I had eight hours to chop down a tree, I'd spend six hours sharpening my axe."* Always have a spare honed gouge to save sharpening time.

Make a packing list and include a few slim wedges so that you can eliminate any wobble in the lathe stand.

Make a list of projects in the order you will turn them.

Turn tenons in advance so the demo flows (*Photo 2*). Practice before the demo to raise confidence and improve fluency.

Before the demo, set out tools, wood, calipers, abrasives, etc. on a table behind or beside the lathe. Arrange them in the order you'll need them. ▸

The author, ready to demo—turned wooden hat and carved wooden bow tie included.

**Lincoln may not have actually said this. But it's good advice all the same.*

Speed—Keep the shavings flying

A woodturner's shavings are like "a shower of sparks beneath the hooves of a galloping horse" (Gustave Flaubert, *Madame Bovary*, 1857). Heaps of shavings are crucial. Stay safe but turn small simple items as swiftly as possible. Kids want to see the process. You can showcase gallery-quality items in an adjacent display.

Reduce sanding to an absolute minimum by honing your tools. Most kids won't notice if the work is sanded or not. Remember the Australian adage, "Rough enough is good enough," and its North American equivalent, "Good enough for government work." Exact shapes and proportions are not necessary.

If possible, avoid calipers and storyboards. Choose softer timbers for speed and to reduce sharpening. Select knot-free, straight grain. Partially turn longer projects in advance—for example, complete the recess in an eggcup/trophy so that only the stem is turned in the demo.

If you demonstrate for an elementary school group, keep the demo under an hour. Any longer and the kids are likely to get restless.

(2) A pre-turned tenon ready to go—no time wasted at the demo.

(3) Woodpeckers that peck their way down brass rods—guaranteed to stop traffic at any kids demo.

Communicate while turning

Greet your audience when you begin and thank them when you finish. Make eye contact with everyone from time to time if possible. Smile. Show pleasure in the process.

Keep explanations brief. Let the shavings fly. Tell jokes and stories if that comes naturally.

Consider asking a friend to explain what you are doing so you can focus on turning. Collaborative demos reflect camaraderie while taking the pressure off both turner and talker. The roles can be swapped periodically.

Give turnings to young kids who answer ridiculously simple questions—for example, "What country do we live in?" or "What is that big yellow ball in the sky called?"

Talk very briefly about design—for example, the Greeks made spinning tops like this 2,500 years ago. It's also worth naming the species of wood, whether or not it was recycled, where it grew, etc.

Safety

Keep kids well away from sharp tools, electrical leads, and moving parts, and use only split-free wood. Avoid medium density fiberboard (MDF), treated lumber, and any species linked to allergies. Set up a safety screen to protect your audience. Don't give a small child any toy that could be swallowed. If demonstrating for a class, check with the teacher in advance whether child protection guidelines allow you to give turnings to kids—if not, give them to the teacher to use in the classroom.

Display suggestions

Kids want to touch as well as watch, so have finished examples of each demo item ready to pass around as you turn them. Also display a selection of higher-quality pre-turned work—bowls, candlesticks, sculptural pieces—so kids can see what's possible. Woodpeckers that peck their way down brass rods are guaranteed star attractions (*Photo 3*). Print a large-format image or drawing of your demo projects to display at the booth. Designate a helper to manage these pieces and make sure they're collected at the end.

Have fun and the kids will, too.

DEMO IDEAS

Finger spinning tops and mini baseball bats

Turn these quickly and give them away. Young kids can successfully spin lightweight tops with 3⁄16–¼" (5–6mm) diameter stems and a total diameter of around 1½" (38mm)—heavier tops with larger stems frustrate young kids. Each one can be turned and sanded in less than a minute—one wasn't sanded at all. While the top is still spinning on the lathe, color it with felt tip pens for a dazzling effect, then invite the kids to decorate their own off the lathe or at home. If you're quick enough, spin a top and turn another before the first one stops.

Mini baseball bats are equally quick to turn and just as popular—teddy bears and dolls need equipment too. Precise shape is not important. Get on to the next toy lickety split.

For added drama, burn lines on the outer part of tops with wire before decorating (*see Wire burning on p. 50*).

Trees

A simple cone-shaped tree is quick to turn and instantly recognizable to kids. The traditional Swiss and German versions were made from unseasoned Linden; seasoned North American Basswood or Pine also work well. A star on top is optional but always popular.

Don't feel bound by the traditional form—play around with abstract shapes and see what else might look like a tree.

Dolls

Simple shapes work best—kids can project whoever they want onto them. Many teachers prefer dolls without facial detail for exactly this reason. A good rule of thumb: place the waist at 60–65% of the total height. You can burn a line or two at the waist with wire for definition (*see Wire burning on p. 50*).

MORE ON TURNING DOLLS

EXPLORE!

For more ideas on turning dolls for kids, log in at woodturner.org and use the Explore! search tool to find "Dolls for Play and Healing," by Ernie Newman, February 2021 *AW* (vol 36, no 1).

Double cones

A double cone is exactly what it sounds like—two cones joined at their widest point, turned as a single spindle piece. They're quick to turn, generate spectacular shavings, and have a trick up their sleeve: placed on a V-shaped triangular track with the wide end slightly elevated on a pencil, they appear to roll uphill. Ask a child to activate a magic wand with an enchantment—"abracadabra" works well—then release the cones and watch their eyes go wide. *See sidebar on p. 50: The Double Cone Demo: It's Not Magic, It's Physics.*

Encourage kids to make their own version at home with two ice cream cones, three school rulers, and masking tape.

In the 1970s, I showed my brother a diagram of the double cones and triangle from a math book and told him I'd make them for my elementary school class. He came back within seconds with an alternative: reverse the cones so the fat ends face outward, elevate a corner of the triangle instead of a side, and it works just the same. I tried it—he was right. It's annoying when your brother is smarter than you. ▸

DEMO IDEAS CONT.

Wire burning

Press a length of wire into a small V-cut on a spinning piece to burn clean, crisp lines—the friction generates heat instantly and the smoke adds drama that kids love. Steel guitar string works particularly well. Never wrap the wire around your fingers; hold each end loosely so it can release freely if it catches. Color between the burned lines with felt tip pens for a striking effect. Wire burning works beautifully on tops, dolls, and magic wands.

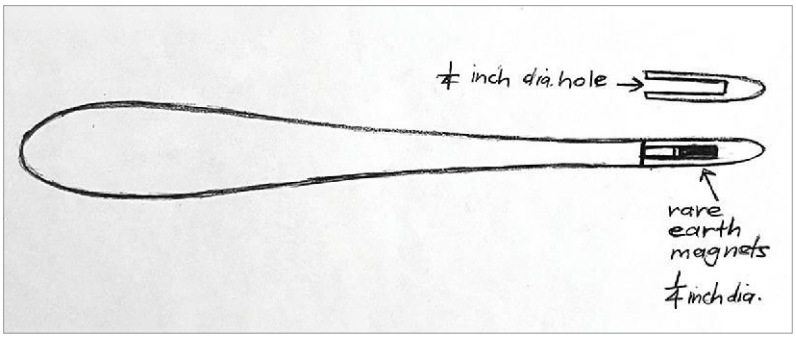
Cut steel with big scissors

Ask the kids if it's possible to cut steel with scissors. Then pull out a small bolt cutter or nippers and cut a large steel nail. It's not woodturning but it's fun.

Magic wand with hidden magnet

A magic wand with a tiny rare-earth magnet hidden inside is a wonderful way to beguile children. Because the wood and magnet are lightweight, a young child won't suspect a thing. Drill a ¼" hole in the tip, insert the magnet, and disguise the joint line with a decoration or wire burning. Wave the wand just above a steel ball bearing and—hey presto—the ball moves. It must be magic.

Enlist a child to hold the wand, wave it, and say a magic word. Then spin a tippe top—a top that flips itself upside down while spinning—and watch the wonder. If you burn three lines on the wand with wire, you can suggest it may be good for three wishes. A quick pass of a gas burner on the tip adds a convincingly dragon-proofed look. The more smoke and fire in your demo the better.



The Double Cone Demo: It's Not Magic, It's Physics

The double cones demo (*p. 49*) is a great opportunity to introduce some basic physics to older children. After turning your cones, take the triangular track to a table where the children can gather around and look down at it. Here are some prompts to guide them through the physics:

Place a sphere on the table to confirm it's flat—it doesn't roll, so the surface is level. Elevate one flat side of the track on a pencil. Ask: can anything roll uphill by itself, without a motor, a magnet, or any other force? Nothing can, right?

Hold the cones on the lower, narrow end of the track with your fingers, making clear you are not pushing them. Release—and watch them appear to roll uphill.

Now invite the children to investigate. Did the cones really roll uphill? Can you measure it? Try viewing from table level rather than from above. What happens if the track is raised or lowered? Predict, then experiment.

Here's the explanation: although the cones appear to travel uphill along the track, they are actually moving downward in space. The convex double cone falls into the triangle. Newton was right.

MORE ON TIPPE TOPS

EXPLORE!

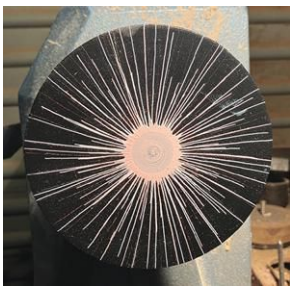
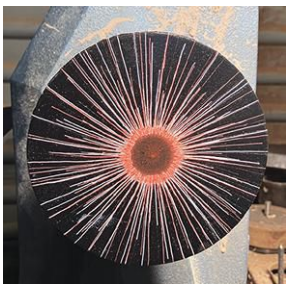
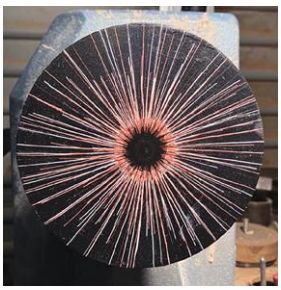
For instructions on turning a tippe top, log in at woodturner.org and use the Explore! search tool to find "Turning a Tippe Top," by Neal Brand and John Solberg, *WF* vol 4, no 1.

Spin art

Spin art is a simple, fun activity that kids can participate in directly. Mount a disk on the lathe, start with a dry black base, and apply diluted acrylic paint to the center in small increments—stopping the lathe to inspect progress each time. A big blob of paint will create a mess. Colors can be layered immediately without waiting to dry, as long as each color is darker than the one before. Paint flies off perpendicular to the disk, so position yourself and any observers to the side. Run the lathe at high speed—3,000 rpm works well. Protect the lathe bed with a rag under the disk. If the result isn't impressive, have a second pre-painted disk handy. But the result isn't important—kids are entranced by the process. Cheap children's acrylics work fine; artist-quality paints give superior results.

The color sequence shown here reflects the artistic sensibility of the author's 3-year-old grandson, who supervised throughout: white over black, then pink, then red, then a tiny amount of black.

Safety note: If kids participate, ensure they wear a faceshield and an old coat. Parental permission is required.

Uncle Stanley's false teeth

Corn on the cob turns surprisingly well on the lathe—cook it first, keep the speed very low, and use a ring center in the tailstock. It's messy, which is half the fun. I usually spin a tall tale about my uncle Stanley, who died long ago. All I have left of him are his teeth. Kids laugh when I use his false teeth to eat the corn.

Turn a hard raw potato

Turning a raw potato on the lathe is guaranteed to get a laugh. Keep the speed very low and use a ring center in the tailstock rather than a cone center. Rough down with a spindle gouge, then smooth with a vegetable peeler. Kids like to see old blokes and blokettes fooling around. (Even if you're in your twenties, you're ancient to them.)

Eggcups

Eggcups are quick to turn and double as trophies—kids love receiving something they can actually use. Keep the recess to about 1⁹⁄₁₆" (40mm) so most eggs seat snugly. Bring a pre-turned egg to sit in the cup so kids can see exactly what it's for.

Leaf

Not everything has to be turned. This leaf took about 30 seconds to shape with a sanding disk and was made from the bark of a Scribbly bark gum—an Australian eucalyptus whose bark is naturally marked by the trails of moth larvae, giving it that distinctive scribbly pattern. A beautiful giveaway that takes almost no time at all.

Acknowledgements

I am particularly grateful to master turner and teacher George Hatfield. I was privileged to do his three-year trade woodturning course for apprentices back in the 1980s. ■

Ernie 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 ten countries. His work has been featured in numerous books and magazines. For more of Ernie's ideas, visit: ernienewman.weebly.com.

Jean-François Escoulen

2026 POP Merit Award

Terry Martin

The AAW's Professional Outreach Program (POP) grants the Merit Award to individuals who have shown exceptional development in their careers as artists and whose artworks have directly influenced or had a significant impact on other artists within the field of woodturning. This year, this prestigious award goes to Jean-François Escoulen.

Photos by Terry Martin unless otherwise noted.

Jean-François Escoulen is one of the world's most respected woodturners. In his native France he has legendary status. He led the revitalization of woodturning in France and then became one of its most influential ambassadors internationally, laying the foundations for the remarkable contributions of the French turners who followed. I asked many turners what they admire most about Jean-François, or Jeannot as his friends call him, and all echoed the words of his friend Christian Delhon: "From the first time I met Jeannot I was captivated by his kindness, humility, and especially his mastery. His virtuosity commands respect, but he always listens to others." Another good friend, Yann Marot, agrees: "Jeannot embodies the link between traditional and modern turning. He never takes himself too seriously, but when Jeannot demonstrates, the room instantly falls silent."

A challenging beginning

Jean-François began his turning life in the most traditional way. He started his apprenticeship in his father's workshop in 1972, before he was 16. His father, trained in 1939, was a custom woodturner, using only a small set of basic tools to make pieces for carpenters, cabinetmakers, and decorators. Jean-François says, "At that time, woodturning was mostly utilitarian and really monotonous. My father taught me spindle turning as a fast, practical way to make a living. In the early months I did nothing but rough out wood for nine hours a day - with no breaks! Later, I learned to reproduce Renaissance-style turned pieces by being shown only twice before being left to practice alone. I spent seven years repeating this work. Unlike my father, who found joy even in reproducing thousands of bed balusters, I did not share the same passion (*Photo 1*)."

The bedan

Jean-François is *the* master of the bedan. The tool itself is simple: a square shaft with a single bevel at one end, but in his hands it is remarkable how much can be achieved. "I used the bedan to reproduce the same shapes

1

Pages from Jean-François's father's catalog.

Photos 1, 2 courtesy of Jean-François Escoulen.

2

The spinning wheel Jean-François completed to achieve his status as the leading woodturner in France. Walnut and cherry, 35" (90cm) high.

over and over until they became part of my subconscious," he says. "You can still find those shapes, even in my most eccentric creations." Today, due to Jean-François's influence, the bedan is widely known in many countries.

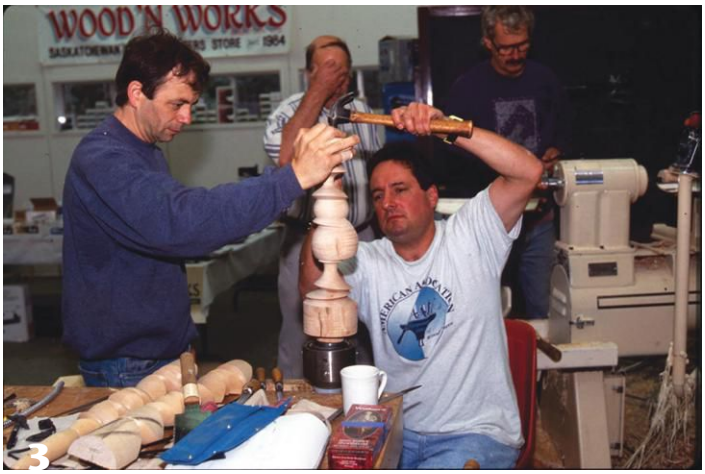
Jean-François's turning skill eventually earned him recognition by the French government as the leading exponent of woodturning in France. He recalls, "The competition was open to any candidate. Each was given a plan and had one year to complete a specified piece, with little room for creativity. I participated in 1982, at age 26, and had to make a spinning wheel." (*Photo 2*)

Establishing his own workshop

The most important development in Jean-Francois' life was when he met Monique, his future wife, in 1978. "She was a cabinetmaker, and our shared passion for wood brought us together. After we opened a workshop in the village of Puy-St-Martin, she made and restored period furniture, while I continued traditional woodturning. Although Monique worked nearby, I found working alone quite lonely. I wanted to share my craft, so I bought four old lathes in 1987 and began giving weeklong workshops. The first time, I invited four friends and asked them to critique my work in exchange for training. When I showed them how to use the bedan, I said, 'You have to do it this way.' They asked me 'why?' And I realized I didn't know! From that moment, I analyzed everything: body position, cutting angles, and hand movements, and learned to put them into words. My students taught me all this, and they also taught me patience."

Early changes in French woodturning

In 1988, Marcel de Roover founded the House of Woodturning in Bédarieux and began importing equipment from England. He and Jean-François became friends. Marcel introduced him to what was happening in English-speaking countries. "It was a revelation," says Jean-François. "Woodturning suddenly became more creative and playful. I discovered that in England, the United States, Canada, and Australia they were turning green wood, sculpting turned forms, and much more. He brought me new tools and chucks, and my passion for the craft became all-consuming. In 1988, I went with Marcel to a conference in Sheffield, England, where I was asked to demonstrate. I was terrified because I had never demonstrated before and couldn't speak English. But when I arrived at the event, there were two large posters: David Ellsworth on one side of the entrance, and J-F Escoulen on the other!"



3 Jean-François and Mark Sfirri at the Breaking the Barriers event in Saskatchewan in 1998, using Jean-François's chuck made of tractor parts.

4 Multiaxis lidded box made by Jean-François on the Escoulen chuck in 1997. Blackwood, 10" (25cm) high.

The first international turning conference in France

The first French international woodturning symposium was held in the Jura region in 1995. Designed to promote traditional turning, it also exposed many French turners to innovative ideas and brought together practitioners who had never worked collectively before. The seeds of future ▸

collaboration were sown and, despite his shy reserve, Jean-Francois was shown remarkable respect. He recalls: "That event transformed the craft in France, irreversibly shifting it toward a more artistic and contemporary style. For the first time we could share, exchange ideas, learn, and even argue. The need to unite quickly became clear, so in 1997 we created AFTAB, the French Association of Artistic Woodturning." Christian Delhon believes Jean-Francois was central to this development: "Without him, the association would never have existed. His growing reputation and the hundreds of turners he trained legitimized his role as AFTAB's founder."

(5) Jean-François at the ITE in 1996.

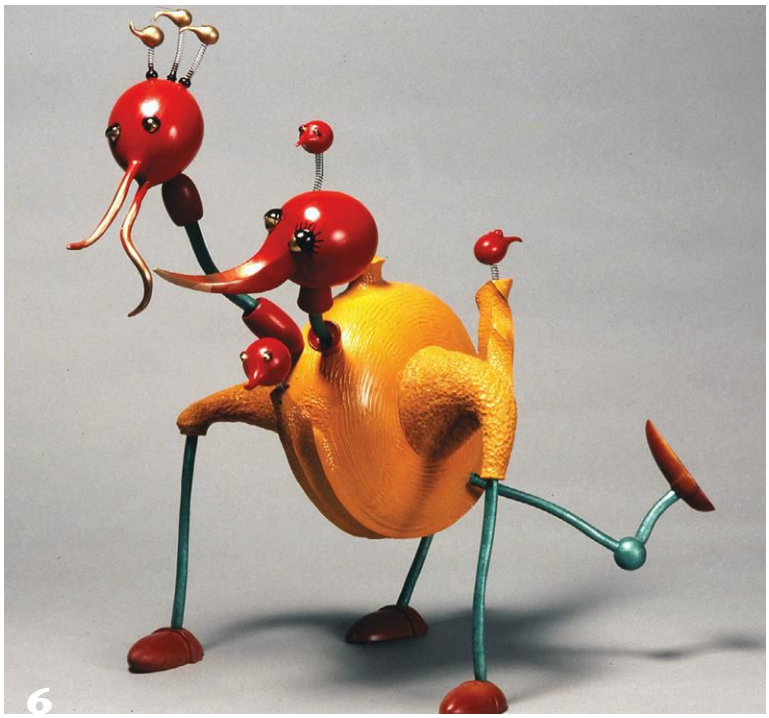
Eccentric turning

During this time Jean-François was also looking for ways to change his own turning. "I was experimenting with between-centers turning of boxes with multiple axes, but it drove me crazy. I could only offset pieces in a cup chuck, with no accurate way to reproduce the same shape, so everything was a one-off. One day I noticed the ball joints on a tractor's lift bar, so I had a chuck made incorporating one. Over the years this chuck evolved and helped make me known. I sold chucks and offered training courses worldwide. Designing tools is also a form of creation." (*Photos 3, 4*)

The International Turning Exchange

Albert LeCoff also attended the 1995 symposium in France and he invited Jean-François to apply for the 1996 International Turning Exchange (ITE) at the Woodturning Center in Philadelphia (*Photo 5*). Jean-François found it liberating: "For two months, I could do whatever I wanted, with unlimited access to equipment and wood. I was with two Americans, Michael Brolly and Hugh McKay, and the Australian Terry Martin. The first weeks included visits to collectors, the AAW Symposium in Greensboro, and the Emma Lake collaborative event in Canada organized by Michael Hosaluk."

This exposure to new ideas completely transformed Jean-François's thinking, and this is shown in the bizarre masterpiece he made during the ITE, *The Chicken Family Goes on Vacation*. Everyone was astonished by what this shy, unpretentious man had created. His innate creativity had been unlocked and it was unlimited (*Photo 6*).



(6) *The Chicken Family Goes on Vacation*, 1996, 13" (33cm) high.

International workshops in Puy-St-Martin

Even before his transformative ITE experience, Jean-François had invited Mike Hosaluk, the Canadian creative genius, to teach at his home in Puy-St-Martin in 1995. Hosaluk immediately felt comfortable there: "Every morning before class we would go for a 10 km bike ride then stop for coffee, pick up a few baguettes, and return for a breakfast which was full of laughter and fellowship. Jean-François has such a love of life. He wanted French woodturners to be part of the global movement and saw that exposure to other turners was one way to achieve this. As a result, French turners have become one of the most significant influences in our field today."

After his return from the ITE, Jean-François wanted to invite more international turners to France to demonstrate and teach not only turning, but also their ways of thinking. The French Chamber of Trades, which supports the professional development of craftspeople, funded a series of classes.

Woodturning conviviality, French style: conversation, food, and most of all, the wine. Jean-François is at center left.

Photo courtesy of Joss Naigeon.

Jean-François speaks outside the church in Puy-St-Martin at the 2000 symposium.

Photo courtesy of Yann Marot.

Jean-François had met Mark Sfirri in 1996 and recognized a kindred eccentric: "For me, Mark was a breath of fresh air, someone without limits who dares to try. His multiaxis technique was rich and unconventional, and I loved it immediately." Mark returns the compliment: "I was amazed at Jean-François's creativity in his fanciful boxes and sculpture. He invited me to teach in his studio in Puy-St-Martin several times in the late 1990s and early 2000s. These were incredible experiences for me."

Other international turners teaching in Jean-François's studio were Andre Martel, John Jordan, Terry Martin, Neil Scobie, Binh Pho, and Hans Weissflog. Jean-François says that it was very gratifying to see the immediate benefits of these workshops in exhibitions. For Christian Delhon these events were priceless: "The most beautiful memories of my professional life are of the enrichment turners from all over the world brought to us. They shared their techniques, customs, and good humor, and all of this is thanks to Jean-François." Mike Hosaluk says that he, Mark, and Jean-François once discussed how great it would be if the three of them could receive the POP award together. Now, with Hosaluk and Sfirri having received the award in 2025 and 2024 respectively, he says: "It's visionary of the AAW to celebrate the three of us consecutively. The Three Amigos!"

Visiting Australia

Starting in 1997, Jean-François traveled several times to Australia, as he explains: "I was invited to Australia to teach traditional woodturning and they were very interested in what I did, especially since woodturning was also booming there." Betty Scarpino was there for one of his visits in 2005 and recalls: "Terry Martin arranged for us to demonstrate at clubs along the East coast. It was a long road trip with three days of work: me demonstrating in the morning and Jean-François in the afternoon. I understood my assignment—I was the warm-up act for the 'real' turner. It was clear Jeannot's skills were hard-won, and my respect for him grew. Even though I don't possess a fraction of his turning abilities, Jeannot recognized that I held the audience's interest and I fondly remember him saying, in his delightful French-accented English, 'Ah, Bettie, you are charming!' His skills are otherworldly, but even more important is his engaging personality. That, plus a lifetime of delightful wooden objects, makes him an excellent choice for the POP award."

The first symposium in Puy-St-Martin

During the 1996 AAW Symposium, Jean-François enjoyed many aspects of the event, but at times he found it so overwhelming that he couldn't really connect with the lives of the people attending. He started to think of a different kind of symposium: "I imagined an event to bring together woodturners from all over the world, but with a spirit of French conviviality (*Photo 7*). With the help of AFTAB we organized the World Woodturning Days in 2000 in my village, Puy-St-Martin (*Photo 8*). It was a wonderful celebration and nineteen countries were represented." The members of AFTAB descended on the village and transformed it. They wired the whole town for workshops, demonstrations, and celebrations. Pavilions were erected. The primary school became a classroom for turners and carvers. Farmers offered their barns ▸

9

Inside the church, transformed into a gallery.

10

The Chicken Family, 2002, Cypress, elm burl, boxwood, 16" (40cm) high. Made for John Hill, with echoes of the piece in Photo 6.

Photo courtesy of John Hill.

for demonstrations. All the demonstrators were hosted in locals' homes, and even the church became a spectacular gallery for the major exhibition that accompanied the event (*Photo 9*).

Best of all, the atmosphere was unlike any other symposium. Laughter prevailed, dancing to live music went late into the night, and it was repeated over three days. It was open to the public, and local police managed lines of cars stretching for miles as thousands of visitors descended on the village. Everyone agreed it was the best woodturning symposium ever held—and then they did it all again in 2003!

Personal relationships

Despite all these wonderful distractions, Jean-François always found time to build deep personal relationships that changed people's lives. Joss Naigeon was one. "I met Jean-François in the late 1990s and it was love at first sight with woodturning and the Escoulen family. I took my first woodturning course with him in 1998. Since I lived nearby and still had a piece to finish, I returned the following Wednesday. I completed it, started another piece, returned the next week...and in that way Jean-François welcomed me every Wednesday afternoon for a year, in exchange for small computer jobs and a bar of chocolate! Pure bliss. Eventually, I completed a rigorous two-year apprenticeship in his workshop in 2005–2006."

Like many, Joss strongly believes that Jean-François's legacy will continue for a long time: "The founding of AFTAB and the Escoulen School are among his greatest achievements." In 2012, Jean-François helped bring L'école Escoulen to life in Aiguines, a dedicated woodturning school that has since become one of his most enduring legacies.

Jean-François agrees: "I am proud of the school in Aiguines. The classes are taught by full-time professional woodturners, each with their individual approach. Every year, the school selects seven students from all over the world who stay for six months. Classes change every week and after six months most of them can make a living with woodturning if they wish." (To learn more, see my earlier article "The Escoulen School of Woodturning," August 2013 *American Woodturner*, vol 28, no 4.)

John Hill is one of Jean-François's many American friends, but with a deeper connection than most. "I first met him in 1996," he says, "then in 1998 I was assisting at the Arrowmont school and was told Jean-François was coming. I became his assistant and, despite not speaking each other's languages at first, we became close friends. When he came to the US, he often stayed with us, then in 2007 we went to France to stay with him and Monique. We had a fabulous time! Over the years, I collected many of his major works and because I have a farm, he created a special piece for me, *The Chicken Family* (*Photo 10*). Jean-François has influenced the entire field of woodturning, setting a standard for professional wood artists and more than earning this prestigious award."

One story captures especially well how deeply Jean-François is loved. He once casually told one of his students, Nath, about a dream he had as a teenager: to own a red Vespa scooter. "Then in 2016," he says, "at a small symposium in Aiguines, I announced my retirement. To my amazement, I was presented with a red Vespa!" Nath had quietly collected money from 120 people all over the world to make the gift possible (*Photo 11*).

The happy couple on the red Vespa.

Photo courtesy of Yann Marot.

The Escoulen Family

Jean-François always acknowledged the support of his wife Monique, and his children Emilie, Violette, Robinson, and Celine: "My professional life has been a wonderful story because I've always had their support. I often traveled for conferences or workshops, sometimes very far away and for long periods."

Emilie describes what life was like with such a famous father: "When I was a child, I could see that my parents had a hard time making ends meet, not because they lacked work, but because they found it difficult to sell what they produced at a fair price. They were too shy. During my childhood, my parents' house was always full of friends and woodturners. I didn't realize it was special, but it seemed the world was coming to our small village. Through the eyes of other woodturners, I understood how famous he was. I began to understand that my father was special and, above all, a great unifier."

Most of all, Jean-François says Monique's support made his life possible: "Monique always took care of everything at home. We shared the same passion and we hosted other turners, students, and professionals for twenty-five years. She encouraged me in my creative explorations and supported me through moments of uncertainty. If I've achieved my goals, it's entirely thanks to her. Then illness struck and for twelve years I tried to ease her daily life, but when she passed away, I was completely lost. Eventually I left our home and set up a new studio at one of my daughters' houses. My life with Monique was enriched by encounters with turners from around the world, and it was something we did together. When I first met Monique I made her a salt cellar. It was made from four pieces glued together, and I was very proud of it. That box stayed with us throughout our life together, and then one day in December 2022, the glue ▸

Jean-François in a gentle moment with his granddaughter Anouk.

Monique and Jean-François, happy to be together, as always.

MORE ON JEAN-FRANÇOIS ESCOULEN

EXPLORE!

For more on Jean-François Escoulen and French woodturning, log in at woodturner.org and use the Explore! search tool to find useful articles on the subject, including:

- "The Gallic Scene," by Terry Martin, Spring 1998 *AW* (vol 13, no 1)
- "Members' Gallery: Eccentric Turnings" by Jean-François Escoulen, December 2011 *AW* (vol 26, no 6)
- "The Escoulen School of Woodturning," by Terry Martin, August 2013 *AW* (vol 28, no 4)

failed and it broke. Three weeks later, Monique passed away after forty-five years of marriage."

A personal view

I was fortunate to be present at many of the moments described above, often with a front-row seat to Jean-François's journey, so I share the admiration expressed by our mutual friends. But there is one moment that has stayed with me more than any other: during the 1996 ITE, Jean-François and I were riding in the back of Michael Brolly's truck on our way to visit Fleur Bresler and her extraordinary collection of wood art. The cab was too low to sit upright, so we lay side by side on our backs, talking about all we were experiencing. After a few quiet minutes he said, "Terry, I used to think technique was everything—but now I realize I was a prisoner of technique."

That simple statement signaled a decisive shift in his thinking toward self-expression. From that time Jean-François was not only advancing his own work, but he was helping to redefine French woodturning and set the stage for its emergence on the international scene.

My friend Jeannot embodies a rare balance of quiet humility and unshakable resolve. He has always placed the love of his family and friends at the center of his life, doing so naturally and without ever drawing attention to himself. Knowing him has enriched my life in lasting ways, and it is deeply moving to see the woodturning community come together to show its appreciation of the character, generosity, and values he represents. ■

ARTIST TALK IN RALEIGH

Jean-François Escoulen will be a speaker at AAW's International Woodturning Symposium in Raleigh, North Carolina, June 4-7, 2026, where he will share his wealth of experience with the attendees. Don't miss this chance to learn from Jean-François, live and in person! For the latest details, visit aawsymposium.org.

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

Members' Gallery

Bill Hrnjak, Tom Bullock, and Barry Lundgren, California

Bill, Tom, and Barry are longtime AAW members and members of the Central Coast Woodturners. The story of their collaboration can be found on the back cover of this issue. ▸

Busby, 2025, East Indian rosewood, ebony, soft maple, holly, lacquer, 17" × 12½" (43cm × 32cm)

Polestar, 2025, Soft maple, East Indian rosewood, ebony, lacquer, 12" × 20" (30cm × 51cm)

Paul Russell, Utah

I'm attempting to redefine the saying "life's too short to turn ugly wood." In fact, I've discovered a source of beautifully ugly wood from which I'm creating one-of-a-kind vases you could build a room around.

My *Barely There* series pieces are not intended as hollow forms. They are dry vases that accentuate the natural character of chaparral biome root burls by exploiting cracks and fissures, creating a play on negative space, and rough versus polished. The pieces are elegant and raw at the same time, with each angle offering more intrigue and discovery. Your mind will wrestle with the finished silhouette against the negative space, wanting to complete the shape in the areas that are "barely there." The story of each is the struggle to survive drought, fire, decay, heat, and cold in its native environment.

My forty-year turning journey started in high school in San Diego. A college semester with Dale Nish propelled my turning skills. It was only much later in life that I discovered the local clubs and the larger woodturning community that I now immensely enjoy. ■

Learn more about Paul's burl turning process in his article, "Barely There Twig Pots," October 2020 (vol 35, no 5).

The Screw, 2024, Podocarpus, lacquer, 20" × 4" × 6" (51cm × 10cm × 15cm)

Fissure, 2025, Lilac root burl, lacquer, 7¼" × 7¼" (18cm × 18cm)

Untitled, 2023, Cherry branch, lacquer, 15" × 10" × 3¼" (38cm × 25cm × 8cm)

Untitled, 2024, Knobby oak branch, lacquer, 8" × 7" × 5" (20cm × 18cm × 13cm)

Which Way Did He Go, 2025, Wood unknown, lacquer, 2¾" × 3" × 1½" (7cm × 8cm × 4cm)

J, 2022, Mesquite root burl, lacquer, 17¼" × 9" (44cm × 23cm)

Always Good to C You Around, 2024, Manzanita root burl, lacquer, 6" × 4½" (15cm × 11cm)

Dalmatian, 2025, Knobby oak branch, lacquer, 11½" × 8" (29cm × 20cm)

Paul Russell, Utah cont.

Off the Edge, 2024, Oak root burl, lacquer, 7" × 5½" (18cm × 14cm)

Lucy, 2021, Lilac root burl, lacquer, 5½" × 4½" (14cm × 11cm)

Glory Revealed, 2023, Lilac root burl, lacquer, 12" × 11" (30cm × 28cm)

Cavernous, 2022, Mesquite root burl, lacquer, 15¼" × 6½" (39cm × 17cm)

A raw burl

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*Raleigh symposium tradeshow vendor as of 2/1/26.

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BILL **HRNJAK**
TOM **BULLOCK**
BARRY **LUNDGREN**
CALIFORNIA

Bill Hrnjak has always worked with his hands—as a finish carpenter, a union propmaker in Hollywood, and eventually a full-time woodturner after retiring in 2009. Then in 2019, a series of strokes left Bill without the use of his left side. He could no longer work at the lathe, but he still had detailed sketches, partially built pieces waiting to be finished, and a stockpile of exotic offcuts from a local guitar manufacturer.

Bill's friend Tom Bullock, a turner since 1980, volunteered to finish one of Bill's partially made pieces. Bill had already milled the forty-five ebony fins and built the feature ring for what would become *Topsy-Turvy*. He gave Tom the raw material along with his sketches. The two live fifty-four miles apart, and Tom's shop sits at the end of seventeen brick steps Bill could no longer negotiate—so Bill mentored Tom via video calls. The collaboration proved its value early: it was Tom's idea to angle the alternating rosewood and maple rings, giving *Topsy-Turvy* its distinctive sense of energy and movement.

Barry Lundgren, a retired sea urchin diver and prolific woodturner, became a third collaborator when he photographed this first piece in the developing *Finned Series*. The formula stuck: Bill designs, Tom turns, and Barry photographs.

Find two more examples of their Finned Series *collaboration on page 59.*

Topsy-Turvy, 2024,
Soft maple, East Indian rosewood,
kingwood, ebony, lacquer,
12" × 16½" (30cm × 42cm)