

Dear AAW members,

I'd like to start this month's letter by addressing diversity in woodturning. This is a subject that comes up over and over. I don't think I have the last word on this subject, but here are my thoughts.

I do not consider diversity a new occurrence. We have had carving, inlay, texturing and painting, among other things going on for many years. One example of carving, besides hand carving, is ornamental turning, which has been around since the late 1700's.

I started turning about thirty years ago when the man I was doing carving for asked me to do five spindles that were missing from an antique cradle. I bought a thirty-five dollar AMT lathe, did the spindles and got hooked on turning. About a year later I purchased a used Delta and taught myself faceplate turning. Almost from the beginning, I added carving to my pieces. I and the people who bought these pieces consider them embellished wood turnings. They were done on the lathe and then finished by hand. I am very interested in any kind of embellishment that can be done to my turnings. I am also a lapidary and goldsmith, and am considering how to use those skills in my turnings.

I have taught woodturning, both spindle and faceplate turning since 1991. I was the founding president of the Chesapeake Woodturners and the founding Vice President of the Mountaintop Turners. The people I have taught are doing all sorts of turning, some plain and some decorative. They all consider themselves wood turners.

My wife, Elizabeth, started turning in the mid 90's and has studied with Bonnie Klein, me, David Ellsworth and Al Stirt. She does beautifully shaped, thin walled delicate pieces reminiscent of Bob Stocksdale. She picks beautiful wood and does a wonderful finish.

What I am trying to say is that I enjoy the diversity of our turning at home and in our clubs, and I can certainly live with it in the AAW and its venues. We are all creating out of our love for turning, and that creating process leads us all in different directions, and rightly so. The need to rigidly define woodturning is unnecessary and harmful to our organization. I hope we can put this behind us and get on with turning, no matter what our style.

On the subject of the AAW, I'd like to touch on the benefits of becoming a member. They are many, and include:

- **American Woodturner** – a quarterly journal packed with a world of woodturning information, including a wide range of articles, pictures, and news.
- **AAW Resource Directory** – complete listing of membership, addresses, local chapters, instructor/demonstrators, woodturning resources, book, video and DVDs.
- **National Symposium** – the largest woodturning event of its kind with three days of extensive demonstrations, exhibits and trade show in a new U.S. location each year.
- **Website** – <http://www.woodturner.org> – extensive online information about events, sources, suppliers, products, forum opinions, and woodturning pictures.
- **Scholarships** – available for classes, workshops, the symposium, youth outreach, school program curriculum development, special projects and chapter library expansion.
- **Local AAW Chapters** – camaraderie, idea and technique sharing with local turners, access to a lending library, plus information about local exhibits and volume purchases. Many of us forget that without the AAW, there would be no chapters.
- **AAW Discounts** - membership discounts on AAW merchandise and symposium registration. Also, be sure to check with your local woodworking store for discounts.

**Frank Amigo**

*AAW Board Member*