

Women in Turning Newsletter

Autumn 2024



Turning Miniatures by Anne Ogg

AAW | AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
OF WOODTURNERS

I have been intrigued with miniatures since my mother first magically created a fabric covered miniature chair out of a milk carton. She also built me a dollhouse. Over the years I have built several dollhouses for my daughter but never made any furniture beyond completing a simple kit. When I saw the Carolina Mountain Woodturners (CMW) at the 2016 NC Mountain State Fair and got an opportunity to try my hand at the lathe, I was hooked. The first thing I wanted to learn to turn was a miniature table leg. Eight years later, I have yet to turn that leg. But it turns out (pun intended) that, while I still desire to make miniature furniture, my passion has been replicating 18th and 19th century wooden kitchen objects. And I will add that I have created legs for miniature three legged stools!

During Covid, I began to experiment with turning small bowls and hollow forms. CMW brings in demonstrators with a wide range of skills that they teach in our shop the day following the demos. Once we started having classes again, I got into the practice of reducing in size each item that I turned in the classes. I particularly liked turning lidded vessels in 1:12 scale. If an object was 6 inches in length, I reduced it to half an inch. I created an Etsy page and threw some of them up there to see if there was any interest. Imagine my surprise when a collector from the Boston area contacted me and asked if I could reproduce specific antiques in 1:12 scale if he sent me photos and dimensions. He helped me hone my skills and continues to place orders to this day.



In 2021, I applied for Artisan status in the International Guild of Miniature Artisans (IGMA). The Guild was founded to promote fine miniatures as an art form. I submitted five pieces of treen (antique kitchen objects) and was rejected. But the feedback was detailed and I was encouraged to apply again. The main complaint about my pieces was the finishing. I was not surprised since finishing is my least favorite part of making something. Meanwhile, I continued to be active in my club and I volunteered for the AAW Symposium as a videographer. (I love working as a videographer. I love the work but the best part is the intimate relationship with the demonstrator and the camera! It requires detailed attention to their movements.) It was as a videographer during a session at the 2022 AAW Symposium with Sammy Long that I saw his use of Dixie Biggs' method of using small punched out pieces of sandpaper attached with double-sided tape to a mandrel on a micro pro carver. It was a game changer for me. This simple tip allowed me to create the finish that vastly improved my work.

The following September, I applied again to the IGMA and this time was accepted as an Artisan. The status allows me to teach in the Guild School and to sell at the Guild events.

Miniatures, con't

In the miniature tool world, there are limited types of tools available. As a videographer for Cindy Drozda during the 2021 AAW Symposium, I watched her use the negative rake scraper and wondered why there isn't one for miniatures. Typically the mini tools come in sets with a parting tool, two different-sized spindle gouges (or some call one a bowl gouge), skew, and a round-nosed scraper. There are slight variations but small tools always come in sets. In our club, Tucker Garrison offers many lessons on making tools. I went to him for help on how to make a miniature negative rake scraper. He ordered the materials, I met him at our club shop, and we spent the day playing around with the metal and grinders. Eventually we landed on a perfect shape that allowed me to make a finished cut using the newly ground negative rake scraper.

In the spring of 2023, the Guild encouraged me to submit a proposal to teach in the Virtual Guild School. I taught a tool-making class so that others would be able to make their own tools. Since then, I have learned to make tiny collets with tiny set screws to insert into handles so that the tools look like their large counterparts with handles that can be used again after the metal has been depleted.

This year, I attended the IGMA Guild School in Castine, Maine, learning to craft an 18th century cupboard. There was no turning involved but I learned how the school operates. I submitted a proposal to teach at next year's school but it was rejected. However I was encouraged to apply again next year. And I will!

In the spring of 2018, I attended a WIT event in which Molly Winton introduced me to turning small hollow forms and bending allen wrenches to use as hollowing tools. During a critique of her work, she was told to develop her own style. Her message is important as we develop as turners. I can master the small area of turning miniatures. And more importantly, it is what I love to do. The other tidbit I have learned is that rejection is part of learning how to improve. Having my work and proposals critiqued is challenging and can derail me if I take it personally. I have found, however, that each time I open myself up to critiques and I follow the suggestions, my turning improves exponentially!



WIT Virtual EXCHANGE 2024

By Marie Anderson & Linda Ferber, Facilitators

The WIT EXCHANGE is a collaborative challenge that focuses on the process of creativity, not on the final product. That said, many of the projects have been created with an impressive amount of talent. We believe you will agree that what started with teams of three women at different skill levels who were each given inspiration words and a six-week timeline became a story of community, teamwork, lasting friendships, and yes, inspiring artwork.

The AAW's Women in Turning (WIT) programming includes the WIT EXCHANGE and the WIT Liaisons providing a supportive environment for women in woodturning. The AAW is confident that the awareness raised by WIT will lead to a genuinely inclusive woodturning community.

Thank you to our sponsors, Carl and Robin Jacobson from Niles Bottle Stoppers for their continued support of this event. And thank you to new sponsors this year, Chris and Christy Caliendo from Easy Wood Tools.

The EXCHANGE—Random words, skill-balanced teams, weekly meetings, enrichment, and community are all part of this process. Participating women attended weekly group virtual meetings, individual team meetings, chat sessions, and multiple emails building connections. By working together and sharing what they learned, they created opportunities for individual growth and creative thinking.

The emphasis has always been on exchanging skills and pushing oneself to try something new. WIT Committee members Robin McIntyre, Andi Wolfe, Tib Shaw and former WIT Committee member Betty Scarpino created enrichment presentations to assist the participants in building essential skills that they can use throughout their woodturning journey. New this year, participants enjoyed a presentation that Jessica Edwards, a WIT EXCHANGE alumni and current participant, created on using social media.

- Health at the Lathe with **Robin McIntyre**
- Photographing your work with **Andi Wolfe**
- How to use PowerPoint to make a recorded speed talk with **Andi Wolfe**
- Creating your artist statement with **Betty Scarpino** and **Tib Shaw**
- Introduction to Social Media with **Jessica Edwards**

The EXCHANGE is meaningful, these quotes speak for themselves.

“As a facilitator and participant, over the past 5 Virtual EXCHANGES, my life has been enriched from meeting and getting to know over 285 women.” (Linda Ferber)

“The WIT EXCHANGE has opened many opportunities for me; meeting and becoming friends with women from all over the world.” (Marie Anderson)

“The experiences of the seven EXCHANGES, have been inspiring, humbling, energizing, and truly life changing.” (Marie & Linda)

“Without the support of the WIT community, and the experiences gained in each of the WIT Virtual EXCHANGES, I doubt I would still be a woodturner today. As it is, I’m fully committed and stuck in, and loving the connections continuing to be made.”

“I employed existing skills in new and creative ways, such as segmenting and carving/texturing.”

“The practice of playing within a creative process that gives an opportunity to focus, yet be creative by connecting hands, heart and head becomes a therapy and when life gets simply too much, the shop becomes a sanctuary.”

“Our team discussed how much fellow female turners have meant to our personal woodturning journeys, having provided us with training, support, and encouragement.”

“We had fun, pushed some limits, and learned from networking together.”

“This experience and process has truly CHANGED me.”

You can watch the 2024 Virtual WIT EXCHANGE Presentation of Projects, and past years at this link:

<https://woodturner.org/Woodturner/WIT/2024-WIT-Virtual-Exchange/WIT-Exchange-2024-TRT-1-06-45.aspx>

Women in Turning - Wig Stand Initiative

In honor of October as Breast Cancer Awareness Month, we celebrated the efforts of our turners who have participated in the wig stand project over the past 18 months. Some WIT groups and some whole clubs have participated. To date, we have 1,707 wig stands that have been created with TLC. Many thanks to all of those who have helped with this project. New to the idea? Get all of the particulars on the AAW website at WIT Page - [Calls, Projects & Grants](#).



Michael McGuire from Sequoia Woodturners and his wig stand with drawer.

Sequoia Woodturners by Cheryl Waymack

My club, Sequoia Woodturners in central California, has been making wig stands for some time now. After the last WIT meeting someone suggested putting a small drawer in the base of the wig stands. I passed along the suggestion to members of the club. The club met yesterday and to my surprise, one of our members, Michael McGuire, came to the meeting with several completed wig stands. One of them had a drawer in it! He was SO proud of what he had made!! (He said I “shamed” him into it, but that’s not true!)

Email from Linda Ferber:

I want to share this email I (Laura from eBeauty) received from Hennepin Cancer Center.

Hi Laura.

I just came from my first "official" eBeauty partnership wig fitting. And just as you predicted, there were some leaky eyes in that room.

My patient is a breast cancer survivor who is now living with stage IV lung cancer. I met with her today to discuss a wide range of resources, and to be honest, I didn't have a whole lot to offer her. But I shared that we have a new wig program, and she was interested.

"Do you have wigs for 'us, '?" she asked. Your thoughtful curation of wigs for Black women was a blessing to her today.

I used your suggestions of asking her what she had in mind. "Not too long," she said. I looked through our collection and set out three that I thought might fit the bill, all looking gorgeous on the wooden stands. Rolling in with them looking cute made it special from the start. It was such a nice way to begin instead of rustling through bags and pulling them out.

The first one, braids, immediately lit her face up. Her granddaughter was on FaceTime and said she looked "hot." A short, straight 'do with bangs had her instantly looking at herself with satisfaction in the mirror.

When I offered one of the stands, she was so touched to receive something that somebody made for her with their own hands. I told her the story, and we looked at the artist's signature on the bottom, and we talked about what all those rings on all those different trees mean—years that varied but that represented ongoing growth even in times of hardship.

Two wigs (and a variety of other goodies) gave her some uplift on a day when I know there were some hard things on her mind.

Thank you. You enabled us to do some good work today. All the best, Anne

Email from Margaret Turner:

WIT and the Richmond Woodturners partnered with the Massey Cancer Center for wig stand donations. We had a demo on September 19 by Pam Bozkurt, a WIT member. A representative from the Massey Cancer Center was there as well.

Arizona Woodturners Association (WIT members)

By Sarah Slocum

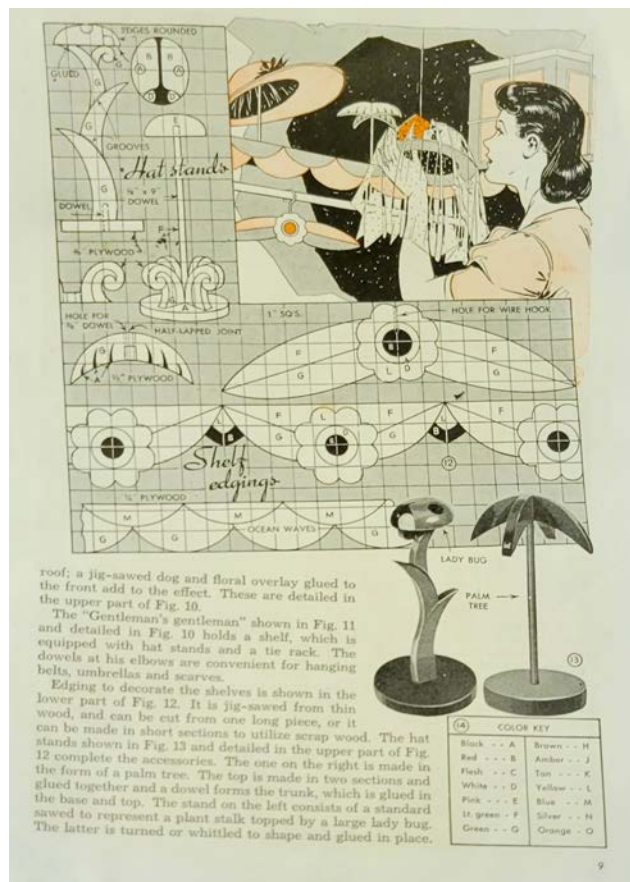
We have a small but consistent group that meets each month at the club's workshop with a different project to make and take. So far this year we have made scoops, sea urchin ornaments, bowls for the empty bowls project, and added fill to a bowl rim, and our big project, wig stands.

Mary Shick approached me about the project. She found a place to donate them and led the women in making them. Once those details were in place we asked the men to get involved. One of the men decided we needed to have a club contest for who could make the most! That led to other challenges such as best technical and people's choice stands. It was fun and a great way to peak interest and liven up the project.

At the end of the three-month project, we had a total of 89 wig stands. Mary contacted one of the local TV stations which came out to E-Beauty when we made the delivery and devoted a news segment to it that same day. E-Beauty donates wigs across the country to women dealing with alopecia and hair loss due to cancer.

They were very excited to receive the stands and will be able to donate them to women who come into their onsite salon for wig selection and to local hospitals that they support. Mary did a wonderful job with the project. We are planning for another collection for next year. I threw out 100 as our goal but I am hoping we can do far more.

We have lots of projects in the pipeline and have had some wonderful people volunteering their time to teach.



An old article on hat stands that could be adapted for wig stands.

Women in Turning - Sharing Experiences

Cape Cod Woodturners

by Robin McIntyre

Five club members met on July 30 at Jan Casiello's shop to work on a funnel, a salt cellar, and a pestle. After coffee and conversation, we headed to the shop to plan our projects, pick wood, and work together on techniques and problem solving. Everyone learned some new ideas to apply to another project.



On September 21, five club members met at Jan Casiello's shop to work on a scoop, a tree, woodburning, and a bud vase. We worked together to share techniques and knowledge.



Cape Cod Woodturners con't

We delivered a batch of wig stands in September to our partner, the Cosmetology Program at Cape Cod Technical School. The students assist clients with their wig selection, fitting, and styling. Six members participated in the creation of these wig stands.



Front Range Woodturners by Debra Higley-Feldman

The Front Range Woodturners, Ladies of the Lathe group had a Shaker box and tray class on Nov. 5th and 6th. Raleigh Lockhart taught us how to soak, bend, anchor, glue, saw and build the Shaker boxes and provide excellent background info on each step. Boxes are cherry with a figured maple/stained rim lid. Class info will be on the LOTL FB site <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100057331244918>.



WOMEN OF WOOD: A TURNING JOURNEY

Exhibiting artists

Kailee Bosch, Alex Bradley, Jessica Edwards, Jenni Elke, Viki Laurence, Lynnette SanNicolas, Merryll Saylan, and Margaret Stiles

November 1 - 30

The Coal Creek Gallery

Louisville Public Library

951 Spruce Street, Louisville, CO

Step into the world of artistic woodturning, where a group of talented front range women artisans showcase their mastery of the craft in this captivating exhibit. Featuring a diverse range of creations, from traditional wood turned bowls to exquisite sculptures, abstract forms, and intricately carved pieces, this exhibit celebrates the artistry and skill of women woodturners at various stages of their careers.

Woodturning has a rich history, rooted in the functional art of crafting wooden objects for daily use. In this exhibit, you'll discover how this age-old tradition has been transformed into a contemporary and expressive art form. The women behind these works have harnessed the beauty and versatility of wood to breathe life into their creations, each piece resonating with a unique story and personal touch.

The Twirling Sisters and Ladies of the Lathe are both dynamic and diverse groups of women woodturners from Louisville and surrounding communities who share a deep passion for the art of woodturning. Established in the spirit of sisterhood and artistic exploration, these groups brings together a blend of professional woodturners and newcomers to the craft, all united by their love for the lathe.

Subgroups of the Rocky Mountain Woodturning Club (Twirling Sisters) and Front Range Woodturners (Ladies of the Lathe), they work to empower female woodturners in a traditionally male dominated art form. They gather monthly to foster mentorship, share their extensive knowledge, and kindle their passion for creating. With a shared dedication to the art of woodturning, these women come together not only to enhance their skills but also to build lasting friendships.

The Twirling Sisters and Ladies of the Lathe form an inspirational community of female artisans who exemplify the beauty of collaboration, learning, and the art of woodturning.



SWAT Symposium Meetup

by Ann Mellina

Women In Turning (WIT) met for lunch at SWAT (Southwest Association of Turners) in Waco, Texas on August 23, 2024 to exchange ideas.



Virginia Woodturning Symposium

by Regina M. Cox

The Virginia Woodturning Symposium was held November 2nd and 3rd, 2024 as a biennial event in Fishersville, Virginia, attracting woodturning enthusiasts from across the country. This symposium was designed for all skill levels, from beginners to seasoned woodturners, and offered a mix of educational, hands-on, and networking opportunities.

Key Features

- 1. Demonstrations:** Renowned woodturners and artisans led demonstrations, showcasing various techniques and projects. These sessions cover topics such as bowl turning, spindle work, tool sharpening, and finishing techniques, providing valuable insights for attendees to improve their craft.
- 2. Hands-On Sessions:** The symposium included hands-on experience at many vendor booths, allowing participants to practice skills under the guidance of experts, learning directly through experience.
- 3. Vendors:** A variety of vendors were present, offering tools, sanding equipment, carving and airbrushing equipment, segmenting jigs, high-quality wood, and finishing products. This gave attendees the chance to purchase materials and equipment directly and learn about the latest advancements in woodturning technology.
- 4. Gallery:** The symposium included an exhibit where attendees could showcase their work, fostering creativity and appreciation for different styles and techniques and highlighting exceptional craftsmanship and innovation.
- 5. Networking and Community:** The event brought together woodturning enthusiasts creating a space for networking, collaboration, and community building. Many participants gained inspiration, made connections, and exchanged ideas with others who share their passion for the craft.
- 6. The Women in Turning panel discussion** at the Virginia Woodturning Symposium featured a group of influential female woodturners, including Kristin LeVier, Linda Ferber, Andi Wolfe, Donna Zils Banfield, and Barbara Dill. This panel was part of the Women in Turning (WIT) initiative by the American Association of Woodturners (AAW) which aims to support and increase the visibility of women in the woodturning community.

Virginia Symposium, con't

Key Aspects of the Panel

a. Sharing Experiences: Panelists shared personal stories and insights from their woodturning journey, discussing how they discovered the craft, the challenges they faced, and moments of success and growth.

b. Artistic Perspectives: The panelists, who are known for their unique artistic styles, spoke about their creative processes, the inspiration behind their work, and how woodturning has become an expressive art form for each of them.

c. Challenges and Opportunities: The discussion also touched on the challenges women often face in a traditionally male-dominated field from access to tools and materials to overcoming stereotypes. The panel highlighted how the WIT initiative has created more opportunities, mentorship, and resources for women in woodturning.

d. Community and Mentorship: Emphasis was placed on the importance of building a supportive community. The panel encouraged women, especially beginners, to seek mentorship, share their work, and participate in events like the symposium to strengthen connections within the craft.

This panel offered valuable perspectives on the evolving role of women in woodturning and was inspiring for all attendees. It underscored the dedication of these artists to growing the field and fostering a welcoming, inclusive woodturning community.



Left to right: Regina M. Cox, with panelists Kristin LeVier, Linda Ferber, Andi Wolfe, Donna Zils Banfield, Barbara Dill.

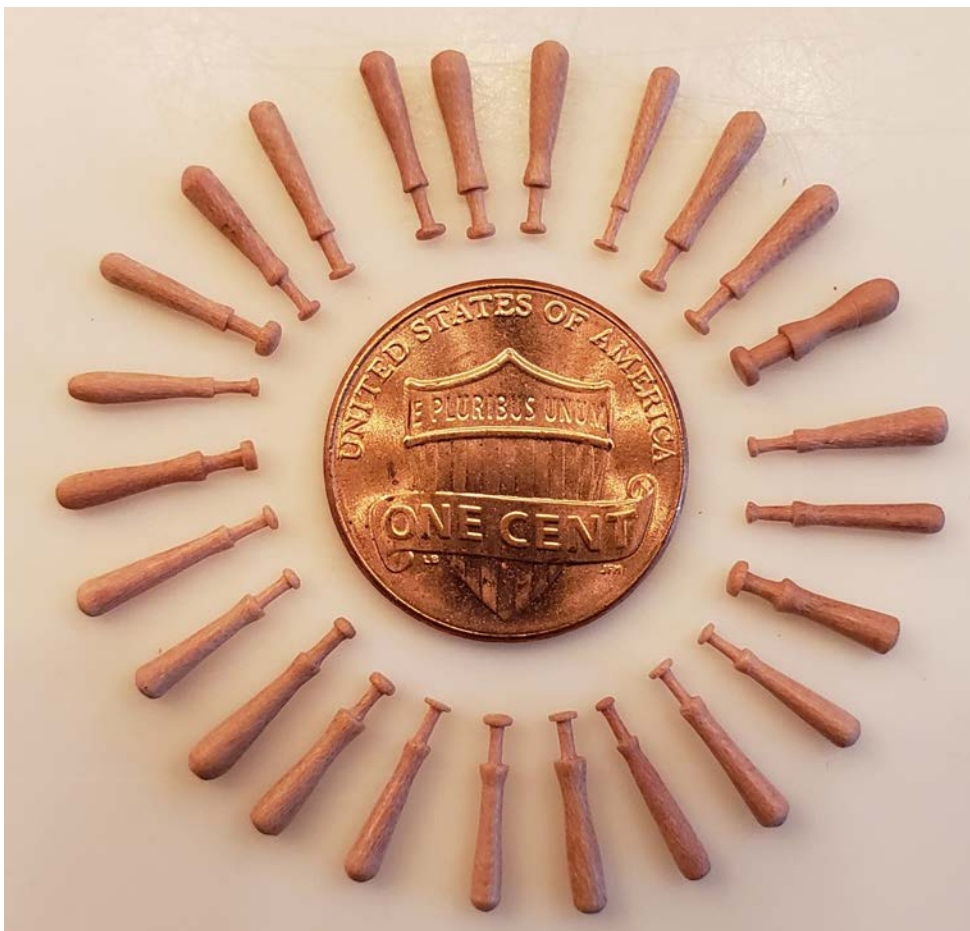
*“The only rule is that there are no rules. Anything is possible.
It’s all about risks, deliberate risks.”*

– Helen Frankenthaler

Women in Turning Gallery - Miniatures

Eileen Collins

I made some lace bobbins for a friend for her dollhouse. The bobbins are 1/12th scale with a length of approximately 1 cm. Of the 24 bobbins I sent her, the smallest neck on one of the bobbins was 0.017" in diameter. The wood was local Madrone. One of the photos is of the bobbins around a penny, and the other is a penny, a miniature bobbin, and a full sized bobbin. Let me know if you have any questions. These were made in 2020.



Women in Turning Gallery - Miniatures



Marie Anderson

These pieces are created on stained glass with split turned or natural edge wood as shelves or supports for shelves. The shelves hold various turned miniatures (not scale miniatures, but miniatures none the less.) Almost all my miniature vignettes include a hanging icicle as my signature piece. The 10" x 10" square is titled "In the Clouds" The other, is "Nature Wins" and I was very pleased that it received the People's Choice award at Turn On! Chicago.



Opportunities for Women in Turning

Classes, Workshops, Exhibits, Demonstrations, and Grants

AAW: Resources for Remote Demonstrations:
<https://www.woodturner.org/Woodturner/Chapters/Chapter-Officers-Toolkit/Chapter-Remote-Demonstrations.aspx>

AAW Grants available for WIT

Under-represented Populations Outreach Grants: These grants may be requested for events such as activities or workshops to promote women in turning. All AAW Grant applications are reviewed annually. However, since these events may be time-sensitive, such grant applications will be considered periodically during the year. More details are available on the website. Grant recipients are expected to disperse information about AAW, and promote its activities. Grants cannot be used for food or personal expenses, or to pay a stipend to the grant applicant.

WIT AAW Membership Grants: To encourage women to join AAW, the WIT Committee offers a limited number of WIT-sponsored half-price one-year "General" AAW memberships to women. WIT is also offering at no cost a one-year "General" AAW membership to women who join AAW for the first time AND join their local chapter for the first time.

Eligibility

To be eligible, a grant recipient must be a woman who has never previously been a member of AAW.

Process

Only the chapter AAW WIT Liaison, chapter president, or chapter vice-president may request the grant. If you have questions, please email wit@woodturner.org.

2025 Schedule

Arrowmont:

25–30 May: Janice Levi

15–20 June: Ellie Richards

27 July–1 August: Heather Marusiak

3–8 August: Sally Ault

21–26 September: Donna Zils Banfield

John C. Campbell Folk School:

19–24 January: Sally Ault

24–26 January: Sally Ault

16–22 February: Elizabeth Weber

23 February–1 March: Scarlette Rouse

4–9 May: Cheryl Lewis

Peters Valley School of Craft

17–18 May: Julia Swyers

13–17 June: Terese Audet

25–29 July: Beth Ireland

8–12 August: Melanie Abrantes

22–26 August: Elizabeth Weber

4–5 October: Lisa Nguyen

Marc Adams School

7–11 July: Janine Wang

4–8 August: Jennifer Shirley

Tennessee Association of Woodturners Symposium

31 January–1 February: Donna Zils Banfield

Florida Woodturning Symposium

14–16 February: Seri Robinson, Donna Zils Banfield

Oregon Woodturning Symposium

14–16 March: Elizabeth Weber, Kimberly Winkle

Midwest Pen Gathering

11–12 April: Linda Ferber

AAW International Woodturning Symposium:



“If you’re not making some notable mistakes along the way, you’re certainly not taking enough business and career chances.”

– Sallie Krawcheck

Women in Turning - From the Archives

This article appeared in
American Woodturner
Volume 3, Number 3, 1989: p12.

Miniature Turning

by Bonnie Klein

Miniatures can be defined as items for the doll house 1/12th scale of 1 inch equals one foot, or as small copies of regular sized items, or possibly anything which could be made on a miniature lathe. In any case, small items are very intriguing and collectible as well as challenging to make. Turning miniatures is an excellent way to build skills for the larger pieces without consuming large quantities of materials.

The Lathe: First, it is not necessary to have a small lathe to do miniatures. I have done some very small goblets on a 2,000 pound bowl lathe. The main advantage of a small lathe is its portability. You may also do woodturning in places not possible with a standard sized lathe such as the kitchen table, outside in the sun or where there isn't room for a shop. Since the whole turning process is scaled down, it is just so much nicer if the lathe, as well as the tools, is in proportion.

The Work Area: Good lighting is one of the things I find to be essential. I always have a goose-neck type lamp near the lathe and adjust the light to where I need it most. It is also important that the lathe be clamped down on a solid surface. If you don't have to follow your lathe across the table, you can concentrate more easily on your tiny turnings.

Sometimes magnification is needed for the very small items. I use two forms, one is a pair of glasses with a power of about 2.25, and the other is a Vision Visor like the jewelers use which can be flipped up or down as needed. Sometimes I will use the two together. Another hint is to be aware of your background. Depending on the material being turned, it is good to have either a very dark or a very light background. I just lay a piece of paper down to silhouette the turning.

Tools: I have made tools from chain saw files, cement nails, dental tools, and band saw blades; but the ones I prefer and use the most are of high speed steel. I sharpen them on a 100 grit grinding wheel and hone with a hard arkansas stone.

Materials: The woodgrain for very small items should be very fine and even. You need to be aware that the size of the grain and the pattern must be in scale with the piece.

Bone is a wonderful and very inexpensive material resembling ivory. Obtain the lower leg bone from the meat market, have the knuckles cut off, and boil for about two hours to clean it and remove the grease. Different parts will have various wall thicknesses. Usually, I cut it with the band saw into lengths needed for turning, and then into lengthwise sections taking off the corners with the disc sander, and squaring one end in preparation for glueing onto a waste block. This will make your shop smell horrible and give you nightmares of trips to the dentist. I like to do this job at the end of the day giving the dust a chance to settle and the odor a chance to dissipate by the next morning. It is not good to breathe the dust so be sure to wear a mask for protection. Bone can be cut with a gouge or scraped.

Acrylic is available in extruded or cast and in colors. It is lots of fun to work with, but tends to melt and gob up when warm. With your "extra" hand, you can hold a small wet rag against the work to keep it cooler. It will sand well, and then polish with jewelers rouge to a high clear finish. Alabaster is found in Colorado and Utah in a wide variety of colors and consistencies. It turns best with carbide tipped tools, sands

well and makes a nice finished piece. Often there are fracture lines or small quartz deposits to make it a little more difficult to have a 100% success rate.

Soap Stone and Pipestone are found in various parts of the US and generally are mined. They are much softer than alabaster and yield a much higher success rate. Regular gouges or scrapers may be used.

Brass compression nuts are used for the tool handle ferrules and can be turned with scrapers, sanded and polished nicely.

Aluminum is a lot of fun to work with. It needs to be cut at quite a slow speed, 200-300 rpm. It can be scraped, and it sands well and polishes to a high shine. I've been using very large 1/4"-3/8" (6-9mm) diameter rivets obtained from a Boeing Airplane Surplus store.

Tagua nuts grow on a palm tree somewhere in South America. It is actually a seed and is nicknamed "vegetable ivory." It has been used for years for scrimshaw, carving, and jewelry making. It cuts with a gouge or scraper, is very easy to work, has no grain and finishes very nicely. Most nuts have shrinkage cracks of unpredictable size and shape.

Mycarta, which is very hard and strong, is used for knife handles. It is available in an ivory color; and cuts, scrapes and finishes very well.

Mounting Techniques: Since 80% of the work I do in miniatures is mounted only on the headstock, I don't use the tail stock very often. The majority of work is fastened to a waste block on a face plate with a cyanoacrylate glue. There are three consistencies and an accelerator available. I use the very thickest for mounting work and speed up the set with the accelerator. I use the very thinnest to run into checks and cracks and other defects encountered in the material. You are able to use very small pieces with very little waste, and the waste block can be tapered down to allow more clearance for the tools around the work.

Another way of mounting material is with the use of double stick tape such as carpet tape. For greatest effectiveness, you will need to clamp the material to the waste block with the tape and apply pressure for a few minutes. This is the method I use for mounting bracelet blanks.

I also use a 3-1/4" diameter 3 jaw scroll chuck. The jaws are of soft aluminum and reversible making it a very useful chuck. Another chuck is the spigot/collet chuck allowing you to make a very small bowl with a choice of foot of either 7/8" (22mm) or 5/8" (15mm). Two other chucks I use are the 1" (25mm) diameter screw center chuck and the cone chuck for items such as lace bobbins or pen blanks.

Sanding and Finishing: I start sanding with 220 silicone carbide paper and then with 400 and 600 wet and dry paper. I burnish the pieces before applying the final finish with either the back of my fingernail, a small piece of polished bone or with a pencil shaped piece of wood. The final finish, when I am demonstrating, is usually "Kiwi" neutral boot polish, a hard wax in a very convenient small container for traveling. I also use a paste wax or a combination of shellac, linseed oil and alcohol as a "french polish." Generally, since the finish needs to be in scale with the piece, I prefer a finish that doesn't have a high gloss or seems to "coat" the work. ☺

This article appeared in
American Woodturner
Volume 6, Number 2, 1991: p20.

TINY TREASURERS FROM AUSTRALIA

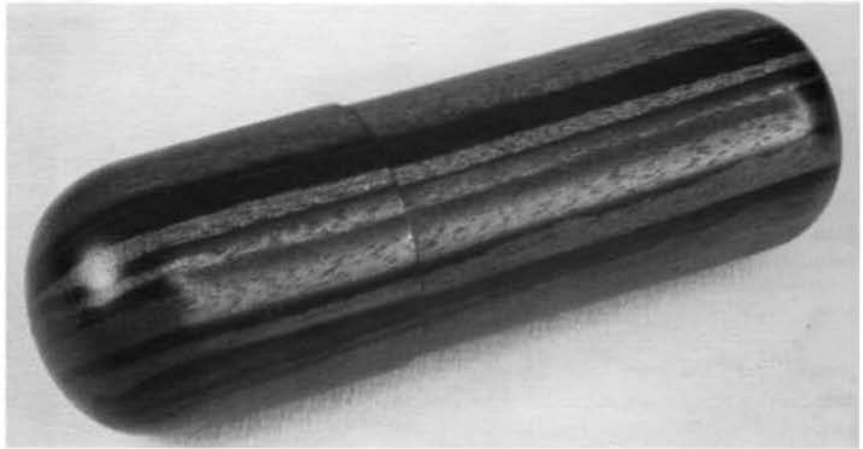
Betty J. Scarpino

An inherited love of woodworking, precision, accuracy, and detail, combined with exceptional woodturning skills, account for the variety and quality of Warren Hielscher's turned objects. Warren is from Maryborough, Queensland, and was exposed at an early age to woodworking by his father and grandfather. He has taught patternmaking, cabinetmaking, carpentry and joinery, woodcarving, and woodturning.

Recently, Warren has been concentrating on making miniatures and, like Bonnie Klein in the United States, decided that he needed to design and build his own miniature lathe. That lathe will soon be marketed in the U.S.

Rex Vaught from Rockville, Indiana, introduced me to Warren through the story he tells about goblet drinking (see opposite page). I wanted to make Rex's story more complete so I wrote to Warren requesting photos of his work to include in the same issue with Rex's tale. As you can see from the photographs, Warren's miniatures are quite detailed for such small turnings.

Warren's talents are not limited to miniatures, as the photos on the next page illustrate. In addition to woodturning, Warren does wood carving, wood sculpture, and ornamental turning. ☺



Miniature turning, macassar ebony, 1-inch diam. x 3-inches long. Capsuel size 000. The large capsuel contains 12 plastic capsuels of miniatures made from ebony. The objects range from a 1/8-inch high goblet to a 3/4-inch long lace bobbin.



Quail's egg
mounted on ebony
1 3/4 inches high



MAKING SUCCESSFUL MINIATURES

John Russell

furniture made by Jose Rodriguez

photographs by John Russell



Photo 1 round table, mahogany; covered vessels, l. to r., tan oak and camatillo, olivewood and ebony, maple burl and ibony; platter on wall, cocobolo; book case, cherry; bowls, l. to r., lignum vitae, tan oak; small covered vessel in book case, boxwood and pink ivory; tall vase on floor, myrtlewood burl

When I began this article on miniatures it seemed straightforward. I would first make a list of all the questions people have asked me about miniatures; then add some techniques I use in my turnings; photograph examples that answered the questions; and finally, illustrate the techniques. It all seemed quite simple. Well, the list grew to a volume, the techniques became at least two chapters, and the photographs to illustrate all this would fill a good-sized coffee-table book. Back to the drawing board!

I sat down, had a cup of coffee, and asked myself what was the common thread in all the questions and techniques? The answer seemed to be another question: What are the elements that make a successful miniature? Now I had something to work with, and I will try to answer that question. I feel obligated to add, however, that the opinions in this article are my own. I learned a long time ago that when a question like this is tackled, a suit of armor may be required.

Element 1: Believability

Miniatures fall into two basic categories, scaled and "small things." The scaled category is somewhat easier to define. Most doll-house miniatures are one-twelfth scale: 1 inch equals one foot. There are other scales, but the two above are the most common. I stated "somewhat easier to define" because when you scale something, you first must know the size of the original. If we are talking about common items like dinner plates, goblets, period furniture, or a salad bowl it's easy. A six-inch miniature goblet will be one-half inch tall. Where it gets a little fuzzy is with things like hollow and lidded vessels, decorative bowls, platters--things that vary in size. If you start to make a miniature 14-inch tall John Jordan vase and it winds up to be 3 inches tall, you could always say it was a 36-inch tall vase. In that case, it would be a miniature Ed Moulthrop vase.

The "small-things" category is just that, small things. Whenever we make something small, calling it a miniature

vase or bowl seems to describe it better. Small things fall into the eye-of-the-beholder realm.

All of the pieces photographed are one-twelfth scale with four exceptions. In photo 7 the largest lidded vessel is a "small thing," and the smallest lidded vessel could be considered half scale--it's 5/8-inch tall. In photo 3, the smallest goblet is half scale, 11/32-inch tall, and the quarter is full size.

What does all this have to do with believability? When you make something small it is all too easy to have it look clunky. The stem on a goblet is thick because you broke the last six you tried to turn. The wall thickness of a bowl or hollow vessel is now 1/8-inch thick because you just really don't need another 1/2-inch napkin ring due to punching a tool through the side. A good test of a miniature, especially scaled miniatures, is to photograph it and see if you can tell how big it is. If you cannot determine whether or not it is a miniature from looking at the photograph, you have achieved believability.



Photo 2 dining table, mahogany; on table: small goblets and candle sticks, brass; plates and serving bowl on front right corner, olivewood; tall goblets, dogwood; soup bowls, holly; lidded bowl, center bowl and small serving bowl, cherry burl; side table front, mahogany, bloodwood, holly; bowls on top, l. to r.: maple burl, madrone burl, olivewood, lignum vitae sapwood; table in back, mahogany, applewood; on top, l. to r. champagne glass, lignum vitae; tall vase, myrtlewood burl; lidded bowl, spalted curly maple; platter on wall, cocobolo

Element 2: Detail

The details on turnings of any size can make the difference between success and failure, at least from a design sense. The treatment of the base or the rim on a platter or bowl or the choice not to have any detail at all can make a big difference in the artistic quality of the final product. In miniatures this is no less important. The details just get a lot smaller. My approach in making a miniature piece is the same as when I make a full-size piece. If a bead helps the design, it gets a bead even if the bead may be only 1/64-inch wide. A lid that falls off because the fit isn't quite right is even more annoying when you are crawling on the floor trying to find it--or worse yet, you hear a crunch. Finishing the bottom is also just as important. I turn the bottoms on all my miniatures, sign, date, and sometimes include the wood used (photo 10). This gets tricky, but more on that later.

A lot of my full-size work is inlaid or overlaid with gems and minerals. I use turquoise, opal, azurite, crysocola, pewter, copper ore, malachite, and

others. Recently I have started making miniatures with inlays as well (photo 4). My best advise is to let your imagination go.

I could not think of a better example of how important attention to detail is than in Jose Rodriguez's furniture. The turned and carved legs, the edge treatment to tables, the claw-and-ball feet just amaze me. This guy even dovetails his drawers--now that's detail. The use of his furniture in the photographs is key to the believability element. Jose, in my opinion, is truly a master at miniature-furniture making.

Element 3: Material

What works best? Just about any material you would use for full-size turnings will work in miniature, with an explanation. I like burls, especially madrone, maple, boxelder, and myrtlewood. Tagua nuts, dogwood, boxwood, ebony, and holly are great because of their tight grain. Brass, aluminum, and copper also work well.

Now for the explanation. The particular material you use is not the important consideration. It is the

characteristics of that material that element 3 is all about. Think of it this way. If you want to make a set of plates, you will end up with something about one inch or less in diameter. If the wood has open grain like red oak or it came from a fast-growing tree and the growth rings are half-inch wide, it may not be the best choice. Try using end grain, side grain, part of a knot -- whatever gives the wood the appearance of also being scaled down. One of the reasons I like burls is that you can get almost any representation of scale by where and how you cut the blank.

I don't find that the type of wood I choose is any harder to turn in miniature than in full size. Sometimes the more figured wood can even be easier if you keep the tools sharp and go slow. I have made 3/4-inch tall goblets out of redwood burl. The stems were only about 1/32 inch in diameter. I don't recommend redwood for this--it's very soft and breaks easily--but it can be done. The point being, don't restrict yourself. Use whatever material will make the best looking piece, making it believable. For example,



Photo 6 goblets from largest to smallest: olivewood, holly, holly, boxwood, brass

when I make sets of bowls, plates, or goblets, I use the same section of wood for the entire set. I select a section of say, olivewood or spalted maple, with the same pattern and large enough to make all the pieces in the set. That way they will match each other in color, figure, and texture. Photo 6 is a good example of the selection process. Even though myrtlewood has large growth rings, the burl eyes were tight and in scale for the size of the piece.

This brings to mind one of the most often asked questions: Where do you get the wood? As I mentioned, I also turn full-size work. One of the reasons I started turning miniatures was that I don't like to throw anything away, and I always have a lot of trimmings from a blank. I cut some

into pen blanks and others become miniature blanks. The only thing left is the shavings. I guess I could glue them into blocks, but that might be taking a good thing too far.

Element 4: Equipment and Tricks

Everyone wants to know what kind of lathe and tools are best. The best lathe for turning miniatures is the one you have and the one you are most comfortable with. All of my turnings pictured were turned on a 12-inch Woodfast lathe. Jose used a Dremel lathe for all the turned parts in his furniture. That just about covers the range of lathes. I have two smaller lathes, but I don't find them as comfortable to use, so I use them

primarily for other tasks (one is a metal lathe) like tool making and demonstrations as it is hard to drag around my Woodfast lathe.

One consideration is the speed of the lathe. I find that 2500 to 3000 rpm works best for me. If the speed is too slow the cleanness of the cuts is diminished. Some people like higher speeds, however, I find that they can cause more problems than lower ones. When the wall thickness gets down to 1/32 inch or less, chatter and centrifugal force become a factor.

A set of miniature turning tools is almost a must. The Bonnie Klein set and Sorby set are both great and may well be all you ever need. When it comes to woodturners and tools, though, it seems that building a better mouse trap is inherent. I make special tools to do special things (photo 8). I find HSS drill blanks and air-hardening drill rod work well. Drill rod works best for bent tools and where a lot of grinding is needed to get the shape. The drawback is that you then have to harden and temper the tool. This is an art in itself. I find that air-hardening drill rod is easier and more forgiving than oil- or water-hardening rod. Tempering can be done in a kitchen oven. Drill blanks are much easier because they are already hardened and tempered. Just remember not to grind them so fast that you lose the temper. Also, they will hold an edge as long as most tools. The holder in the photo was made from 3/8 inch drill rod. I drilled a 3/16 inch hole in the center and tapped a set screw to hold 3/16 inch drill blanks. This way I only need one handle for many of the tools that only get used occasionally. The tools I use often are epoxied into their own handles.

Three things I find invaluable are cyanoacrylate glues, double-stick tape, and black electrician's tape. The glue is for holding the blanks to the glue block, for inlays, and for adding different woods in lids and handles. The tape is used mostly for remounting to turn the bottom recess and inside of lids. If you are making plates, for example, turn a tenon the same size as the plate, square the end off so it runs true, and tape the top of the plate to the tenon. Electrician's tape works best because it stretches. It will almost center itself automatically. Now the



Photo 4 l. to r., maple burl, 1/2" tall x 1/2" dia.; boxelder burl, turquoise, opal, crysocola, 7/8" tall x 1 1/4" dia.; madrone burl, turquoise, 13/16" tall x 1 1/16" dia.



Photo 5 large piece in center, maple burl, tagua nut, walnut, 3 3/8" tall x 1 3/8" dia.; small pieces l. to r., maple burl and ebony, spalted tan oak and camatillo, boxelder burl and ebony, boxwood and pink ivory, and olive wood and ebony

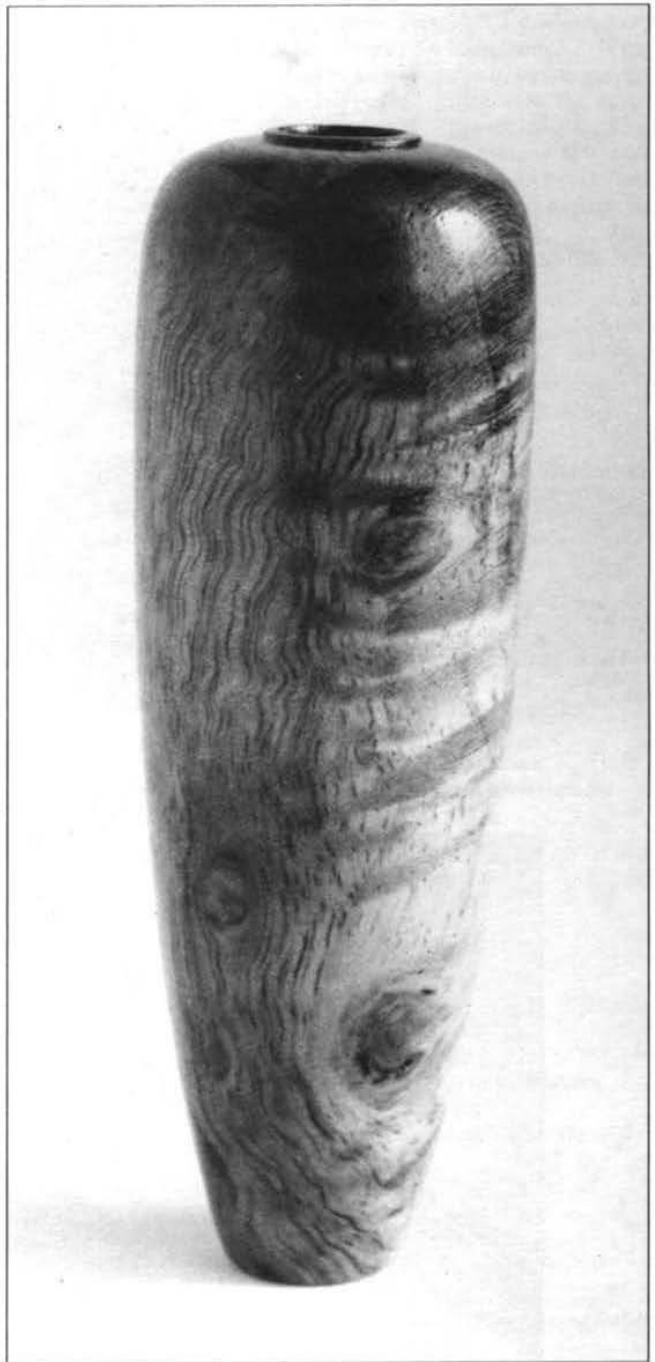


Photo 6 myrtlewood burl, 2 3/8" tall x 3/4" dia.



Photo 7 table in foreground, walnut and cherry; on table: stack of soup bowls, holly; stack of plates, spalted maple; goblets, dogwood; lidded bowl, boxelder burl and ebony; salad bowl, marbled maple; fork and spoon, rosewood; side table in back: mahogany, cherry, bloodwood and ash burl; on top, l. to r.: boxelder burl, madrone burl, maple burl; desk, cherry; platter on wall, maple burl

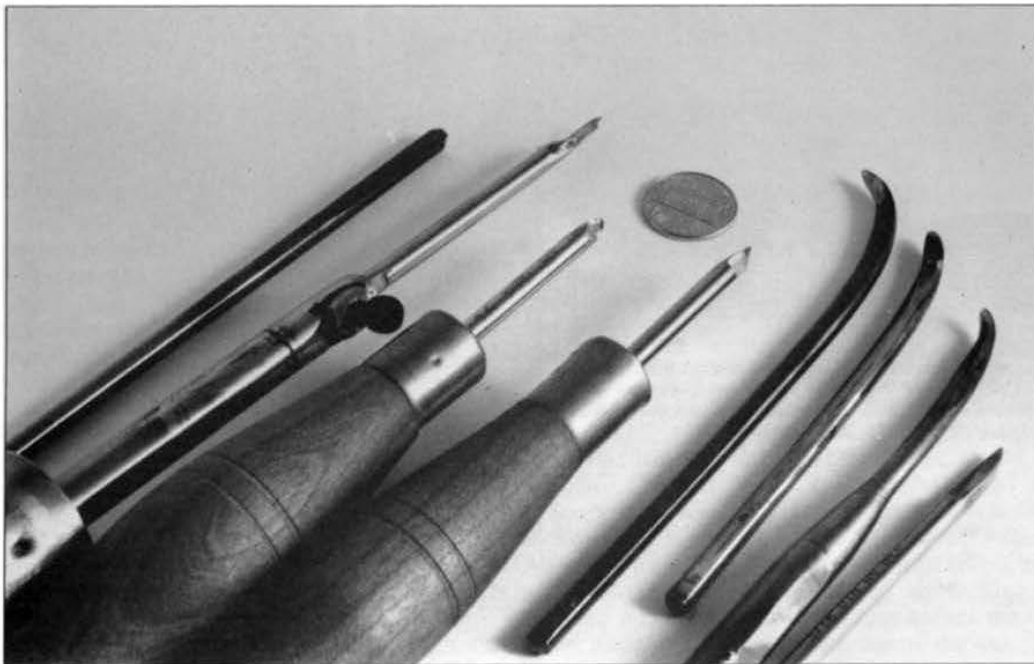


Photo 8 l. to r., small deep-fluted gouge made from 3/16" drill rod; 1/32" parting tool in holder made from 3/16" drill blank; 3/16" round scraper, made from 3/16" drill blank; pointed scraper made from 3/16" drill blank; three curved tools to hollow out vessels, made from drill rod; round-sided scraper, made from 3/16" drill blank



Photo 9 spalted tan oak and camatillo, 7/8" tall x 7/8" dia.



Photo 10 boxelder burl

bottom recess can be turned. Double-stick tape serves a similar purpose where the electrician's tape might get in the way.

Another trick of sorts is how to sign the bottom. I use technical pens and India ink found at most art-supply stores. If you are writing small, use a small point. The point I use for miniatures is .13 inch. These pens are a pain and tend to clog easily, but if you clean them after each use, your mental state will be better. Replacement points are available, but like the pens they are not cheap, about nine to twelve dollars. As for having a steady hand, you're on your own. My only advise is practice and patience.

Conclusion:

I hope that I have at least provided some food for thought as to what makes a successful miniature. Two sources that may be of interest are *The Nutshell News* and *The International Guild of Miniature Artisans, Ltd.* To a large degree, success lies in being happy with what you've created and the enjoyment that your creating gives to yourself and others. Above all, don't be afraid to try. Explore the possibilities, use different woods, make a few 1/2-inch napkin rings . . . failures often lead to greater achievements. And, should you hear negative comments, ignore them. One person picked up a goblet; studied it intently for a while; set it down and

said, "totally useless." I thought, yes, he was right in one sense. You wouldn't serve wine in it, unless maybe to a designated driver. On the other hand, I had a lot of fun making it; many other people enjoyed looking at it; and I've talked with others about how it was made--some were intrigued enough to try making one of their own. So, after all, it wasn't totally useless. ☺

Source List:

MSC Industrial Supply Co.
151 Sunnyside Boulevard
Plainview, NY 11803-9915
800/753-7900

Drill rod, HSS-drill blanks, and lots of other things

Campbell Tool Company
2100 Selma Road
Springfield, OH 45505
513/322-8562

Book: *Hardening, Tempering & Heat Treatment* by Tubal Cain
Also drill rod and other supplies

Nutshell News
published by Kalmbach Miniatures
P.O. Box 1612
Waukesha, WI 53187
414/796-8776

Miniature Collector
published by Collector
Communications

170 Fifth Ave.
New York, NY 10010
212/989-8700
Magazine dedicated to miniatures

International Guild of Miniature
Artisans Ltd.
P.O. Box 71
Bridgeport, NY 13030

John Russell lives in Springfield,
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Useful links for Women In Turning

[AAW Website](#)

[WIT website](#)

[Newsletter archive](#)

[WIT Liaison](#)

[WIT events archive](#)

[AAW Woodturning Fundamentals Learning Portal](#)
([sign in as a member to access](#))

Would you like to support the programs and activities sponsored by the AAW Women In Turning Committee? It's easy to donate to the program online. Your gift will help strengthen communities and enrich lives through its investment in a variety of activities. [Click here to donate](#). Thanks!

Woodturning Safety

Safe, effective use of a wood lathe requires study and knowledge of procedures for using this tool. Read, thoroughly understand, and follow the label warnings on the lathe and in the owner/operator's manual. Safety guidelines from an experienced instructor, video, or book are a good source of important safety procedures. Please work safely.



AAW Safety Recommendations

- Use a full face shield whenever the lathe is turned on.
- Tie back long hair, do not wear gloves, and avoid loose clothing or objects that may catch on rotating parts or accessories.
- Always check the speed of the lathe before turning it on. Use slower speeds for larger diameter or rough pieces, and higher speeds for smaller diameter and pieces that are balanced. Always start a piece at a slower speed until the work piece is balanced. If the lathe is shaking or vibrating, lower the speed. If the work piece vibrates, always stop the machine to check the reason.
- Check that all locking devices on the tailstock and tool rest assembly (rest and base) are tight before operating the lathe.
- Position the tool rest close to work, almost touching the wood. Check tool rest position often and as wood is removed, turn off the lathe and re-position the rest.
- Rotate your work piece by hand to make sure it clears the tool rest and bed before turning the lathe "on." Be certain that the work piece turns freely and is firmly mounted. A handwheel on the outboard side of the headstock simplifies this process of spinning the lathe by hand before turning on the switch.
- Be aware of what the turners call the "red zone" or "firing zone." This is the area directly behind and in front of the work piece - the areas most likely for a piece to travel as it comes off the lathe. A good safety habit is to step out of this zone when switching the lathe to the "on" position. When observing others turn stay out of the area.
- Hold turning tools securely on the tool rest, holding the tool in a controlled and comfortable manner. Always contact the tool rest with the tool before contacting the wood.
- It is safest to turn the lathe "off" before adjusting the tool rest or tool rest base (banjo).
- Remove the tool rest before sanding or polishing operations.
- Never leave the lathe running unattended. Turn the power off. Do not leave the lathe until it comes to a complete stop.

Videos from AAW Video Source & YouTube

[Miguel Sanchez – Angel Ornaments](#)

[Bell, Snowman, Gnome Ornaments](#)

[Christmas Tree Ornament](#)

From the Editor:

As I was researching the AAW website for videos on turning miniatures (there were none), I found a bunch of articles as downloadable pdfs. To use this resource, one needs to be a member of AAW. The link to that page is: <https://www.woodturner.org/AAW/Article-Search.aspx>. If you are not already a member of AAW, the WIT program has a grant for a one year membership. The link for that program is on page 13 of this newsletter. Having access to the archive for *American Woodturner*, and the Article and Video Search resources page, is definitely worth the cost of membership. It would be great to have more women join AAW. We have already increased the proportion of women members through the activities sponsored by the WIT Committee, but wouldn't it be awesome to bring our representation up to 50%?

Our WIT liaisons have shared activities in this edition of the newsletter, some of which are focused on our wig stand initiative. You will find instructions for making wig stands in the [Spring 2023 issue of the WIT newsletter](#).

If your AAW chapter doesn't yet have a WIT group, please consider forming one yourself. It's a great way to bring women together for fun activities and learning experiences. If you don't know where to start, check out the [AAW WIT Liaison area of the AAW website](#). [Robin McIntyre](#), our WIT liaison coordinator, is always willing to help new liaisons get started.

Many thanks to the contributors for this edition of the newsletter: Anne Ogg, Marie Anderson, Linda Ferber, Cheryl Waymack, Margaret Turner, Sara Slocum, Robin McIntyre, Debra Higley-Feldman, Alex Bradley, Ann Mellina, Regina M Cox, and Eileen Collins.. A special thank you to Jean LeGwin for help with copy editing, and to members of the WIT committee for proofreading.

I'm always looking for articles to put into the newsletter. If you have news to share about your local WIT group, a story about your journey in woodturning, tips to share, or projects to share, please [send them to me](#). The newsletter is only interesting if we share our activities with one another.

SO.....Please do send me information from your WIT groups and stories about your events and successes. I'd also like schedules for demonstrations and classes you teach.

“Still, I wonder if more women artists, musicians and writers aren't household names because we don't have enough faith in our own pursuits to give ourselves the time we desperately need to be transformed by a creative vision. Maybe that glass ceiling isn't really made of glass at all, but of sticky little fingers, dishes piled in the sink, and mortgages that demand two incomes.”

–Holly Robinson Peete

Endnotes:

Encourage WIT. The mission of WIT is to encourage and retain women in woodturning. Here are some suggestions of how you can help: 1) Introduce a friend or neighbor to woodturning by bringing her to a chapter meeting, 2) accompany her to an open shop session, 3) teach her in your own shop, and/or 4) offer to be her mentor for a year.

If there is a new member in your chapter who is not yet a member of AAW, tell her about AAW's 90-day guest membership: <https://www.woodturner.org/Woodturner/2020%20Grants/WIT%20membership.aspx>.

Pay it forward. Instead of telling a new member about the guest membership, buy her a membership. In return, she can pay it forward by bringing another new member into the AAW. This generous gift may be the beginning of a lifetime of enjoyment for many new woodturners.

Did you know? There are many benefits of AAW membership, including a world-class journal, publications on techniques, videos, a directory of learning opportunities, and other online tools. Check out all the opportunities for members at [Why Join AAW?](#). If you've not had an opportunity to explore the AAW website, take a few minutes to look around at <http://www.woodturner.org>. The [Women in Turning website](#) is hosted by the AAW site. You'll find all our newsletters, information about WIT outreach grants, and many other goodies there.

Diversity Statement:

The American Association of Woodturners (AAW) is dedicated to advancing the art and craft of woodturning worldwide by providing opportunities for education, information, and organization to those interested in turning wood. The AAW welcomes and encourages participation by all individuals regardless of age, race, culture, ethnicity, national origin, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, physical or mental difference, politics, religion, socioeconomic status, or subculture. We strive to cultivate an organization built on mentorship, encouragement, tolerance, and mutual respect, thereby engendering a welcoming environment for all. The AAW further promotes diversity in all areas of activity, including membership, leadership, committees, staff, outreach, public engagement, and recruitment, within the association as a whole and within each chapter.

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“To accomplish great things, we must not only act, but also dream, not only plan, but also believe.”
– Anatole France

AAW

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF WOODTURNERS

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