

# Women in Turning Newsletter

Winter 2026



## WIT Wig Stand Initiative on the Third Anniversary By Robin McIntyre



Who would have thought that one idea from a WIT member would spark the wig stand initiative? Who would have thought that caring turners and embellishers would have delivered 3,951 wig stands to community members who are going through a tough time in three years? Think of all the pleasant surprises, smiles, joyful exclamations, and accolades that the turning community has created! On our third anniversary of the wig stand initiative, thank you to everyone who has participated. We hope that you will continue to be inspired to spread kindness through turning.



Left: Jimmy Tolley, Central Texas Woodturners. Right: Ellen Adamson and Robin McIntyre, Cape Cod Woodturners.

## Thoughts from a woman woodturner by Dianne Looker

I've always loved working with wood. When I was in school, they didn't let girls take shop class which is what I wanted. We had to take a class in cooking and sewing. Well, I already knew how to cook and sew, thank you very much. I wanted to work with wood! So, when, as a university student, I got a chance to take a wood class at a nearby community college, I jumped at the chance. And I loved it as much as I thought I would.

That said, it's curious how I got into woodturning. I and my ex were both amateur, hobby woodworkers when we met. We both did what woodturners call "flat work"—making things like cutting boards, knife racks, some small furniture. One year I mentioned to him that I'd love a drill press for Christmas. And he bought me a lathe. Hmm. I'd never used a lathe. I had no idea how to use a lathe. It turns out that he wanted a lathe. But when we broke up, it was my lathe.



## Thoughts, con't

So, then I had to figure out how to use it. This was well over twenty years ago and there were not a lot of options if one wanted to learn how to do woodturning. I bought books and watched the few videos then available. When Lee Valley started offering woodturning lessons, I took the basic "Intro to woodturning" from the same instructor three years in a row. In my defense, I was working full time and didn't get a lot of time to practice my hobby.

Eventually I got the main idea and started my hesitant journey forward. And it was hesitant! I seem to have an inability to visualize what to take away from the lump of wood to make the shape I want. That's a fairly serious limitation for a turner. However, I'd "practice" on a lump of plasticine! Hey, it worked. And I could reuse the plasticine or try again if need be. I just needed to remember to put down a piece of waxed paper before "turning" the lovely stuff.

And over time I got a bit better. Once, when I was at a wood show of some ilk, I was looking at a display of turnings and some lovely pieces of wood. There was a woman there who encouraged me to join the local woodturners group, the Nova Woodturners Guild (NWG), and I did. They were very supportive and I learned a lot from them about turning techniques, tools and jigs. Even though I was often the only woman in the group, I was welcomed.

Mind you, that didn't stop the feminist in me from teasing them when they'd say things like "well, gentlemen!" Rather than shifting to "gentlemen and lady", I suggested they say "well, folks" and that worked. Similarly, for talking about "manning" a booth, "staffing a booth" worked just as well. And they'd chuckle and make the change.

I confess there were still times when I felt like "the other". The guys all seemed to be more comfortable with tools and metal than I did. One of my biggest challenges—which lasted for years—was dealing with sharpening my tools. I mean, as a flat worker, I didn't have to sharpen my tools—the table saw, bandsaw, planer. A woodturner has to be constantly sharpening their turning tools. Yikes! I tried. I can't tell you how many times I ended up with multiple bevels on the tool often leading to a much too blunt edge. Or a sharp point instead of a gentle curve at the tip. So, I resisted sharpening. And that, of course, meant I was too often trying to turn with a dull tool which led to frustration and tear outs. Oh my. To this day sharpening is the least favorite part of turning for me.

This type of experience seemed to contrast with that for the men in the group. Maybe some hid their similar experiences and frustrations, but many not only sharpened with impunity, they made their own tools, for heaven's sake! I mean, really!

And yet I persisted. I turned more and more pieces and took more classes, locally at Lee Valley as well as further afield. I got instruction from: Bonnie Klein, Jimmy Clewes, Marilyn Campbell, Steven Kennard, Michael Hosaluk, Richard Raffan, Glenn Lucas, Stuart Batty and many others. I attended woodturning symposia, including the AAW national symposium and the Totally Turning event in Saratoga Springs, NY. I followed online instruction from Cindy Drozda and many others.

I joined the AAW and have an impressive collection of the *American Woodturner*. After the Women in Turning group was formed, I joined and one year participated in the WIT Exchange. That was good fun, and I got to develop my skills using the skew.

Needless to say, I was and am well and truly hooked! Goodbye flat work.

Before I retired from formal employment, I treated myself to the 2011 woodturning cruise in Norway. I had instruction from many woodturners, including some I already knew, including Bonnie Klein. I learned from and hung out with Rolly Munro and John Hodgson. Overall, the experience on that cruise was informative and good fun.

I became more active in my local woodturning group and served on the executive board, including several years as president. In that role, I had the honour and privilege of hosting Binh Pho in my home when he gave a weekend course for our group. Before he left he gave the beautiful piece he had turned, pierced and air brushed over the weekend to the group to raffle – and I won it! So, I own a genuine, signed Binh Pho work of art.



And of course, there are all kinds of tools and jigs and kits one can buy and I was a sucker for many of them. As the saying goes among artisans of many trades, "the one who dies with the most tools wins". I know my tool collection pales in comparison with those others have gathered. However, I did my bit. I remember one time going into our local Lee Valley store six of the seven people behind the counter said, "Hi, Dianne!". Oh my!

And then, of course there is all that beautiful wood! Wood from wood stores, wood from local trees. Like many others, whenever I'd see a hardwood tree coming down, I'd stop and ask if I could have some of the wood. Once I was in a kiosk at a farmers' market that sold handmade wood products and wood.

## Thoughts, con't

I kept going back to look at this one lovely burl. After stopping by a few times to look, the merchant asked me, "Do you suffer from wood lust?" I laughed and said "Oh, does it show?" Of course, I bought the burl.

I love working with wood. It's fascinating to see a lump of wood turn into something beautiful, something useful, or something just fun or lovely to see. And I love the planning, the dreaming, the "maybe I can." Sometimes reality hits and reminds me, "well, actually my dear, you have neither the skill level nor the tools to do that." That reminder, of course, does nothing to stop me dreaming and fantasizing about possible projects. And so I turned things, lots of things, mostly gifts for family and friends.

The years crawl on and the body slowly starts to balk at standing for any length of time. This and that ache and pain constrain how long I can stay in my shop—not very long at all these days I fear. A partial hour at best. And not every day. Yet the dreams and fantasies refuse to die. So, I'll still do what I can when I can.

After a recent period of doing little or no turning, I found I could at least express my love of turning into another form. With a lot of help from my tech savvy son, David, I made a Youtube video of this little ditty I wrote about how ***I love to play on my lathe.***

I hope you enjoy it.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tc3yWlwpYrc>

And so, my journey muddles on. It remains to be seen how many of my woodturning dreams I can turn into reality. But I still enjoy looking at what others do, and still encourage others, especially women, to take up this fascinating craft. I hope they too will learn to "love to play on their lathe".

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NOTE: In the photos in the video, there are some showing me without protective gear. These photos are posed. I never turn without protective gear!

Photo credits for this article: Steven Kennard and Chris Palmer



The AAW International Woodturning Symposium is the biggest woodturning event in the world and has something for everyone, no matter your experience level.



- **Internationally Renowned Demonstrators** – Top woodturners from around the world will be demonstrating for woodturners of all skill levels.
- **Woodturning & Woodworking Trade Show** – Many of your favorite woodturning and woodworking vendors in one place with exclusive deals and a hands-on look at the latest and greatest products.
- **A Sense of Community** – Connect with a welcoming community of woodturning hobbyists, professionals, artists, collectors, and vendors.
- **Gallery, Exhibitions and Auctions** – The largest and most unique display of awe-inspiring wood art from around the world
- **Two Ways to Attend** – Register for full access to all the demonstrations, presentations, gallery, auctions and tradeshow, or attend just the tradeshow and gallery for free.



## LOUISE BUTLER

*Reidsville*



**L**ouise Butler leans into the whirring lathe, coaxing a bowl from a jagged piece of wood whose future only she can see. Curled shavings of maple cling to her cotton polo shirt like the memories in her mind.

The things she crafts are born of skills handed down over four generations. Butler learned to work wood by watching her parents and grandfather. Now 65, with her two brothers gone and no children, she feels the weight of being the last of her family to practice the craft: The quiet ability to find the tune in a piece of maple or walnut may fade with her unless she passes it on.





To shape her works, Louise Butler uses a lathe, a carbide-tipped cutting tool, and skills passed down through her family.



Butler grew up accompanying her father, David (below), to the building supply company (left, in the 1950s) where he and her grandfather (bottom) worked.



## “You won’t know what you’ll find in the wood until you start turning it.”

Determined not to let that happen, she’s carving out a place to teach near downtown Reidsville — in a shop just across the railroad tracks from the building supply company where her father, grandfather, and great-grandfather worked. In 2021, she bought a former garage with three bay doors where, occasionally, someone still pulls up looking for an oil change. For more than a decade, she’s collected tools and machinery, and she hopes to open for classes in early 2026.

“Teaching is in my soul. It’s the thing that keeps me going,” Butler says, perched on a chair in the cluttered office of her shop. “I like for somebody to bring me a piece of wood that they want something done to. But I’d rather take it and say, ‘Why don’t you come help me with it?’”

**SOME SATURDAYS WHEN BUTLER WAS A LITTLE GIRL,** her father would drive her to the building supply company in downtown Reidsville. There, she and her brothers might get a Sun Drop from the basement drink machine. They’d listen to the whine of equipment as it planed the lumber unloaded



from the freight trains that rumbled through town morning and night. She recalls stories of her great-grandfather, who was said to be able to calculate board feet of lumber coming off a train car just by looking at it.

Her father and grandfather died less than two months apart in 1974, when Butler had just turned 14. But those Saturday mornings — the smell of wood that made her “spine tingle,” the piles of sawdust, the clacking of the Norfolk Southern line — ingrained something deep within her.

“When you see the striations in figured maple, you know that only God put that there,” she says.



Butler's works include pens and bowls, like this one crafted from maple, with natural bark and a turquoise-blue resin in the gaps.

## Butler has spent her life at the lathe, helping to keep woodworking alive in her hometown.

"You won't know what you'll find in the wood until you start turning it. That's when the magic happens."

She's held fast to this place, too. Except for her college years in Boone, Butler has spent her entire life in Reidsville, and she's seen it change as downtown businesses emptied and knitting mills shuttered. But, her devotion as solid as oak, she's spent her life at the lathe and in the classroom, helping to keep woodworking alive in her hometown.

**AFTER COLLEGE, BUTLER RETURNED HOME TO TEACH** math at the local high school. "When I started teaching, I needed a computer stand, and I said, 'I can take care of that,'" she remembers.

She constructed one of wood, like the bookcases her mother made. When she renovated her first house several years later, she built the

cabinets, trim, and door casings herself — all the while thinking of the house her father built, the one where her mother still lives.

Beginning in the 1990s, she taught woodworking at the old Woodcraft store in Greensboro, including a series of classes just for women. "We used to call it 'sawdust therapy for women,'" she says. "It was a judgment-free zone where these women could come learn to use a hammer without someone telling them they weren't doing it right."

She also taught math at Rockingham Community College for 37 years — holding night classes after her work at the high school. And she watched as graduates from the college's fine and creative woodworking program fed North Carolina's voracious furniture industry.



## She remained at the lathe, determined to share her craft in one way or another.

“Those people were being snapped up just as quick as we could get them out the door,” Butler recalls. But enrollment waned as production shuttered or moved overseas, and woodworking became more of a hobbyist’s game than a sought-after skill for pay.

Three years after the college ended its associate degree program in 2010, it opened the Center for Creative Woodworking in downtown Reidsville, with Butler as director. Some of the students who came through were hobbyists; some were homeowners who wanted to turn their own staircase balusters. Still others hoped to turn a career from the sawdust, degree or not. When the center shifted after the pandemic to focus on construction skills, Butler stepped away.

But she remained at the lathe, determined to

share her craft in one way or another.

In her office, she points to a smoothed-out bowl that’s coated in a thin layer of sawdust. “This is a piece of maple from a tree that was in this woman’s yard her entire life. She had her swing on it. I was able to give her something back from that tree.”

She’s made urns for people to bury their loved ones — “We all have to go back to the earth somehow,” she says — and pens for writers to sign their published books.

The granddaughter of a tobacco farmer, Butler was especially moved when she heard a retired Army officer turned author talk about “priming” tobacco as a child. “You can tell someone grew up around tobacco if they say ‘priming’ tobacco as opposed to ‘picking,’” she says. Then she grins like someone who does not suffer the unserious and adds, “He had me then.”

She made him a pen from an old oak tobacco stick. “The man had tears in his eyes,” she recalls of giving it to him. “That’s what happens when you give something to a person that really means something to them.”

Imagine, she says, that you have a piece of wood from a tree that your grandfather felled 65 years ago. “That wood will not be lost but is living on in pens, platters, and boxes. I love wood with a story.”

**WHEN THE KUDZU DIES BACK IN THE FALL,** Butler can see her family’s old building supply company across the tracks from her shop. It’s here that she prepares to teach what the college no longer does — what she refuses to let end.

“I admire jazz musicians who can stand up and riff. If I don’t have music in front of me, I can’t play,” Butler says over the racket of a noontime freight train. “But I can do that with a piece of wood. I’m just looking at it from the outside, and I can find the tune.

*Mm-hmm.”* **Os**

— Cate Doty

# Women in Turning - Sharing Experiences

## Northeastern Oklahoma Wood Turners Association by Robin Carstens

With the encouragement of our membership, Northeastern Oklahoma Wood Turners Association (NEOWTA) held its inaugural meeting of Women in Turning in January. We started with a pizza dinner to visit and get to know one another. After a group photo we began turning wig stands in support of the AAW national initiative. All of our club's eleven lathes were busy with women turners helping cancer patients. Our wig stands will be given to Oklahoma Cancer Specialists and Research Institute's patient wig program. Our WIT group will meet monthly and several members of NEOWTA are turning wig stands to support our WIT chapter and our philanthropic effort.



## Arizona Woodturners by Sarah Slocum

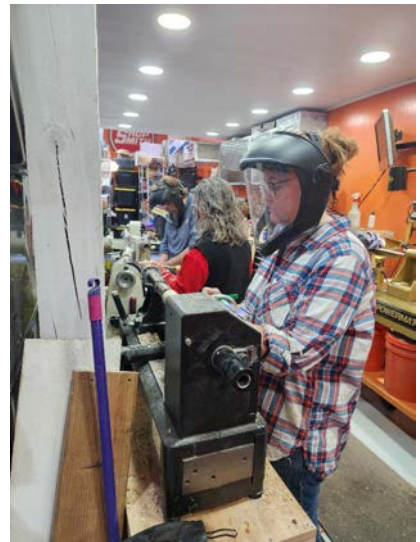
The Arizona Woodturners WIT group continues to meet monthly at our learning center. In November we had an all-day workshop making Christmas ornaments (lightbulbs, umbrella ornaments and a captive ring Christmas tree). In December Kelli led us in making salt boxes out of carob wood. I sent out an email asking the women to think about their goals for turning in the coming year and what they really wanted to learn or master. They sent their replies so I am working on projects for this year to help enable those responses. In January we turned and finished wet wood bowls in mesquite.



*“No matter how difficult and painful it may be, nothing sounds as good to the soul as the truth.”  
- Martha Beck*

# Central Ohio Woodturners by Chris Stein

Central Ohio Woodturners held their first WIT turning event on November 22. Eight of us turned various Christmas items—snowmen and trees. Devon Palmer, our host, fellow club member and wood turning instructor answered questions and made us lasagna. We even got a lesson in aniline dyes!



## Woodcraft Norfolk had the honor of hosting a very special class for Team Grace by Regina M. Cox

Grace is a courageous 15-year-old young lady currently battling Hodgkin lymphoma. She arrived with her team—her mother and her boyfriend, Lucas—for a meaningful day of woodturning, creating her very own custom wig stand.

This story began with an email from California. Noele DeSafey, chapter liaison for the AAW Women in Turning (WIT) program, reached out with a request to help locate a donated wig stand for Grace. Knowing Grace was in the Tidewater area, Noele forwarded the message to me in my role as a Tidewater Turners Women in Turning (WIT) member.

After connecting with Kim Wildey, we began brainstorming ways to make the experience even more meaningful. That's when the idea was born—not just to donate a wig stand, but to have Grace be part of making it herself.

I shared the idea with Ed Sontag, owner of Woodcraft Norfolk, proposing that Team Grace be gifted a free class to turn their own wig stand. Without hesitation, Ed was fully supportive, and the plan quickly came together.

As fate would have it, just prior to this class, Emma Cook had been at Woodcraft Norfolk demonstrating for the Tidewater Turners Woodturning Club and teaching a class featuring her stunning chameleon color-shift mica flakes. The idea of adding this vibrant, ever-changing color to Grace's project felt perfect, and Emma generously donated the product to support the effort.

The class allowed Team Grace to learn new skills, share lots of laughter, and show off their creativity. Grace left with a beautiful, personalized wig stand infused with color and care. Lucas even turned a cereal bowl of his own, making the day special for everyone involved.

As the day unfolded, Kim shared that her sister-in-law's sister, Courtney, is also battling cancer. In true woodturning community spirit, another wig stand was made—because kindness multiplies when shared.

This day was about far more than woodturning. It was about community, compassion, creativity, and coming together to support one another—one turning at a time.



# Front Range Woodturners

by Debra Higley

Ladies of the Lathe (LOTL), part of Front Range Woodturners meets in the basement of the Denver Rockler woodworking store (thanks Rockler) almost every month for turning classes (<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100057331244918>). Attached are photos from the April Lidded Boxes with Embellishments, and the May Live Edge Bowls classes. The March LOTL class was turning and decorating magic wands, and in June we turned weed pots from asymmetrical wood blanks. Attached photos include classes from August 3rd (candlestick holders), August 17th (kitchen tool handles), and January 6th (hot air balloons). We generally have four to eight people in each class depending on which lathes are working with both men and women demonstrators from FRW. Some of us also mentor FRW members and volunteer for FRW and AAW events.



*“Hold your head and your standards high even as people or circumstances try to pull you down.”*  
- Tory Johnson

## Cape Cod Woodturners by Robin McIntyre

Four members met in November to work on bowls and a snowman. We also spent some time on sharpening and tool control for newly used tools.



In December four members met to work on bowls and woodburning. We also spent time on sharpening or reshaping tools.



We started 2026 with a Zoom planning meeting with seven members. Our gathering will focus on flowers in February as a follow-up to a club demo early in the month. Our February highlight is our first WIT gallery exhibit at the Falmouth Art Center with 12 participants, 70+ pieces. The exhibit had an article and photo in our local newspaper, *The Enterprise*.



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## First State Woodturners by Marge Sloan

The First State Woodturners WIT met on January 11, 2026, at STEAMworks. We were fortunate to obtain this space for our planning and woodturning meetings.

Our goal this year is to make turned wooden Christmas tree ornaments. These will be used to decorate an auctioned Christmas tree for Delaware Hospice, New Castle County.



## Chesapeake and Baltimore Area Turners by Julie Schmidt

Hi Everyone,

I hope you have been finding time for holiday fun. I want to report that the wig stands I received finally made it to Stevensville on Monday, December 1. I delivered 44 wig stands between the Chesapeake and the Baltimore Area Turners. I did not have many days available, so I made the trip around the top of the bay on Monday the 1st. (I would rather have a tooth pulled than drive the Bay Bridge, lol). I met Jen Schmidt and a few other ladies who were there sorting refurbished and styled wigs from Marc Jacobs and Paul Mitchell. It was wonderful! The women were overwhelmed and excited as they looked through the variety of stands. In one of the pictures, I am holding a stand that Lenny and Kent had made for us. I showed them one or two of the special stands that were made and they were thrilled.

Arizona sent wig stands to them as well. If you look in one of the pictures, Arizona has been adding messages of hope to their stands. I encourage you to add special messages or words of encouragement to yours. As of right now they have approximately 80 stands. Please do more with your cutoffs and small rounds. I believe that George is going to be giving us a demo on wig stands in January. His wig stands are exquisite and absolutely beautiful.

I hope to see you all at the meeting and will have news on the upcoming [WIT EXCHANGE](#) soon.



## Tennessee Association of Woodturners by Judith Houk and Pat Matranga

On January 17, 2026, 12 women of the Tennessee Association of Woodturners (TAW) gathered at Pat Matranga's workshop in Lebanon, TN to make wig stands for cancer patients. This WIT event was a huge success and lots of fun.

Pat had mahogany blanks ready at each of three lathes. One lathe was set up for the tops, one for the spindles, and one for the bases. Pat showed her method for making bases and tops using just a few cuts with the bowl gouge. For efficiency, Pat had pre-drilled the bases and tops with 3/4" diameter, 3/4" deep holes for the spindle to connect the pieces.

To efficiently chuck the tops, Pat made a jig by screwing a scrap piece of hardwood onto a faceplate and turning a tenon to attach the underside of the top to the jig; we then secured the top with double-sided tape and kept the tail stock for extra safety until the last cut across the top.

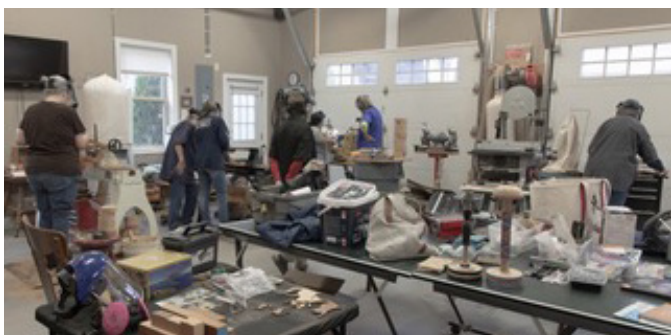
The bases can be chucked in the same way, but we used Pat's vacuum chuck for even more efficiency.

The spindles were turned between centers, providing good practice time with gouges and skewers. We used a 3/4" open end wrench to quickly determine when the tenon was turned down to 3/4". Who knew an open-ended wrench could be used as a caliper?

To ensure everyone could create and have fun even when all three wig stand lathes were occupied, a mini lathe was also available for making Turned Connections Beads. Additionally, carving, painting, and laser engraving stations were set up with plenty of materials to add embellishments, or to just play and experiment.

Despite Pat's efficient methods, it takes time to slow down and teach, and part of the emphasis was ensuring every attendee had an opportunity to learn and practice the three main cuts with the bowl gouge. Everyone left more confident and capable of turning wig stands in her own shop, and with a warm feeling of fellowship with a great group of women turners.

The event was a great way for the women of TAW to spend some social time together, getting to know one another better, and sharing some delicious potluck foods (and recipes!) We have talented cooks as well as turners in our club. This wig stand event was definitely a great way to start 2026 off right, and it won't be our last get-together this year!





## Tracey Lee

I turned this 10" plate from cherry. After turning it, I embellished the surface with the Zentangle® pattern Huggins, a design I have revisited in several previous works each time pushing the pattern further to add depth and dimensionality. As a fiber artist who enjoys weaving and lace making, the Huggins pattern appealed to me as something that could be carved. I created the pattern using a combination of micro-carvers, woodburners, and an NSK handpiece, allowing for both precision and detail.

I applied the texture with a woodburner and it adds both visual structure and tactile interest. As the piece evolved, I introduced a rope-textured border to help define and frame the woven areas. I colored the carved portions black with India ink to enhance contrast and depth.

To finish the surface, I applied approximately fifty coats of acrylic paint using a dry-brush technique. This slow, layered process built the color gradually while keeping the carved details crisp and visually prominent.

This piece was 'Turning of the Week' on the AAW Forum in early November.

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## Videos from AAW Video Source & YouTube

[Making a Wig Stand - Frank Didomizio](#)

[Woodturning Wig Stand for Cancer Patients](#)

[Richard Raffan Wig Stand](#)

[Jan 2026 Lancaster Area Woodturners Demo](#)

[How to Turn a Wig Stand - Dean's Woodworking](#)

*"In the end, there is no ideal condition for creativity. What works for one person is useless for another. The only criterion is this: Make it easy on yourself. Find a working environment where the prospect of wrestling with your muse doesn't scare you, doesn't shut you down. It should make you want to be there, and once you find it, stick with it."*  
- Twyla Tharp

# Women in Turning Gallery - Wig Stands

## Jennifer Shirley

Here's a wig stand that I recently made for one of my best friends that I've known since kindergarten. She was diagnosed with Alopecia a few years ago and it was devastating for her at first. She went through all sorts of anger then grief. Her insurance will not pay for the drugs that can reverse alopecia because it is considered cosmetic. They are incredibly expensive and have terrible side effects. She is much better now and is having fun changing her hairstyle frequently with the wigs. She also had her eyebrows tattooed on and they look amazingly real! She has the best attitude, and I love her to pieces. She is an inspiration to me! I asked her if she would mind writing something about the wig stand as many of us don't know who they end up with when they are donated. Here's what she wrote. I have to admit that my eyes were leaking when I read it! Attached is a photo of the stand and a picture of my tribe headed on a road trip. Evan is front right.



Dear Jeni,

Where do I begin to thank you for the beautiful wood wig stand you made for me? It's the most beautiful piece of art I own! And your talent never ceases to amaze me! But what might look like a beautiful piece of art is so much more than that to me.

Losing my hair has been one of the hardest parts of this journey we call life! There have been days I didn't feel like myself... days I felt anything but beautiful. And then you, with your steady love and thoughtful hands, created something just for me. Not just practical — but beautiful. Solid. Intentional. Made with care.

Every time I see it, I don't just see a wig stand. I see years of friendship. I see loyalty. I see you reminding me — without saying a word — that I am still me, still worthy, still beautiful.

You sure do know how to make my day and make me cry tears of joy all at the same time!  
You truly lifted me up in a moment when I really needed it! Love you girl!

Ev

# Women in Turning Gallery - Wig Stands

**Linda Ferber**

Fashionista stands. L to R: 1920s, 1940s, 1960s, 1980s



**Andi Wolfe**

Linda's fashionista wig stands inspired me to try my hand at ladies' fashions from the 1930s to 1950s. I looked at sewing patterns from those decades to get some ideas of what women were making to wear.

# Women in Turning Gallery - Wig Stands

## Robin McIntyre

AAW Chapters have been very busy!



Cape Cod Woodturners



Palmetto Woodturners



Coulee Region Woodturners

# Women in Turning Gallery - Wig Stands

## Judith Houk and Chris Price

### Tennessee Association of Woodturners Wig Stand Updates

On October 18th, 2025, the Select Your Crown (SYC) organization held its fifth runway event for individuals experiencing hair loss, whether due to cancer treatments or other causes. The honorees received a custom natural hair wig from SYC volunteers who weave natural hair wigs, and a hand-crafted wig stand from members of the Tennessee Association of Woodturners. They were also treated by various vendors and suppliers to a new outfit, makeup, nails, and many other gifts. What an opportunity to meet these wonderful people, see their smiles, and share in their journey.

As we move into 2026, we will continue to support Select your Crown as it grows through runway events, research programs, and private care for exceptional individuals. Their goal for next year's event is to provide 50 wigs to adults and 50 to children. I hope we will be able to provide a stand for every wig created. If you would like to learn more about the Select Your Crown foundation, visit [selectyourcrown.org](http://selectyourcrown.org).

Since 2023 through October 2025, the TAW has processed 311 stands, with 271 completed and donated to the Sarah Cannon Cancer Center and the Select Your Crown foundation. Most of these stands have been donated to the Sarah Cannon Center under the guidance of Tri Star Medical Center. They also have an ongoing need for wig stands and greatly appreciate your donation. Even though we cannot meet the recipients, the need remains the same. You can learn more about the Center by visiting [SCRI.com](http://SCRI.com).



# 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>

### 2026 Schedule

#### Arrowmont:

21–26 Jun: Dixie Biggs

11–16 Oct: Donna Zils Banfield

1–6 Nov: Andi Wolfe

#### John C. Campbell Folk School:

8–13 Mar: Christine Smith

22–28 Mar: Joy Cowan & Alan Leland

29 Mar – 4 Apr: Annie Ogg & Joy Cowan

3–8 May: Cheryl Lewis

14–17 May: Andi Wolfe

17–23 May: Andi Wolfe

7–13 Jun: Crystal Earley

25–30 Oct: Dixie Biggs

#### Peters Valley School of Craft

23 May: Kate Davidson

5–9 Aug: Julia Swyers

7–11 Oct: Annalise Rubida

#### Marc Adams

20–24;25–26 Apr: Dixie Biggs

15–19 Jun; 24–28 Aug: Jennifer Shirley

8–12 Sep: Kimberly Winkle

14–18 Sep: Heather Marusiak

#### Snowfarm

6–10 May: Elizabeth Weber

5–7 June: Julia Swyers

14–19 June: Kimberly Winkle

28 July–2 Aug: Joy Cowan

24–27 Sep: Donna Zils Banfield

#### AAW Symposium

4–7 June: Diana Friend, Carol Hall, Peggy Schmid  
Janine Wang, Molly Winton

#### Turn-On! Chicago

30 Jul–2 Aug: Janice Levi

#### SWAT Symposium

28–30 Aug: Rebecca DeGroot, Ellen Starr, Margaret Stiles

#### Rocky Mountain Woodturning Symposium

18–20 Sep: Beth Ireland, Elizabeth Weber, Beth Buettner  
Angela Van Wittenburg

### 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 AAW 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](mailto:wit@woodturner.org).

#### [AAW Woodturning Fundamentals](#)

##### [Learning Portal](#)

[\(sign in as](#)

[a member to access\)](#)

#### **Useful links for Women In Turning**

[AAW Website](#)

[WIT website](#)

[Newsletter archive](#)

[WIT Liaison](#)

[WIT events archive](#)

*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!*

# Women in Turning - From the Archives



## AAW WIT Wig Stand Initiative—One Year Later



As part of a WIT wig stand initiative, members of the Tennessee Association of Woodturners (both female and male) collaborated with students from Covenant School and the folks at Tri Star Medical Center.



A selection of WIT-initiative wig stands from the Minnesota Woodturners Association monthly challenge project.

Photo: Linda Ferber

Women in Turning (WIT) is a program of the AAW that brings together women worldwide who share a passion for woodturning. WIT is dedicated to encouraging and assisting women in their pursuit of turning by sharing



Genae Johnson turns a wig stand spindle/post during a Cape Cod Woodturners WIT gathering.

Photo: Robin McIntyre



Cape Cod Woodturners' Deb Chase shares her embellishment talents on a wig stand top.

Photo: Don Chase

ideas, information, and processes to further their skills and creativity. WIT programming provides a platform to connect women, embracing all backgrounds and differences in celebration of equity and inclusion.

### WIT Liaisons

Club officers help engage women in their local club by supporting a WIT Liaison—a point person in the club, either female or male, who works within the group to bring women together and also engages in the larger WIT Liaison community.

Since early 2022, WIT Liaisons have been meeting online every six to eight weeks to share ideas, insights, and concerns and to problem-solve and build community. They also connect via the WIT Liaison online community, sharing information and ideas.

### The WIT Wig Stand Initiative

In late 2022, New Jersey's Atlantic Shore Woodturners Club Liaison Susan Chiarello presented the idea to launch a national WIT project to make wig stands. Wig stands have been crafted by other clubs over the years, but this was to be specifically a WIT initiative. The wig stands are donated to local partnering organizations that are giving away free wigs to those in need. The partners may be hospitals, oncology clinics, cosmetology programs, or other organizations that

support people undergoing (most often) cancer treatment. Almost all of us—our families, friends, and communities—have been touched by cancer, so this project resonates with people on a personal level.

After a few months of gathering and organizing resources for distribution, production, an introductory letter, and photos by Robin McIntyre, Jean LeGwin, and the WIT Committee, the AAW WIT Wig Stand Initiative was launched in March 2023. The response has been widespread. WIT groups and entire woodturning chapters have jumped on the bandwagon and have produced 541 wig stands to date. These creations of talent and TLC are treasured by their recipients, who are having to endure a tough time in their lives.

It would be wonderful if there was no ongoing need for these wig stands, but unfortunately the need continues. Join us on this journey. To see all of the resources in our initiative—the what, why, and how, plus distribution materials—**visit the WIT Calls, Projects & Grants webpage at [tiny.cc/WITInfo](https://tiny.cc/WITInfo)** (URL is case-sensitive). Let's keep a good thing moving forward! Many thanks to all who have donated their time and talents to this community project. ■

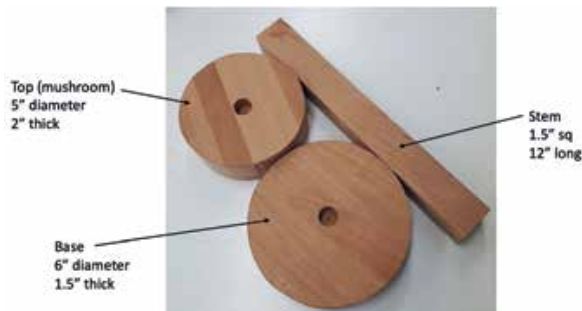
—Robin McIntyre, WIT Liaison Coordinator and Cape Cod Woodturners WIT Liaison

## Helpful Tips for a Chapter Wig Stand Project

The Central Illinois Woodturners has been turning wig stands for cancer patients for at least five years, and we are closing in on our 1,500<sup>th</sup> wig stand donated. A lot of other AAW chapters have started supporting this cause, so for the benefit of the woodturning community, I'd like to share some insights our club has learned about making and donating wig stands.

- **Find a reliable source for free or cheap wood.** Until recently, we had a custom woodworking shop that donated all of their cutoffs to our club. Most was either kiln-dried maple, walnut, or poplar, with other domestic hardwoods thrown in as well. This made the endeavor much more appealing to members, since they didn't have to supply their own wood. We also found a school that was upgrading the bleachers in their gym and purchased the wood from the old bleachers for dirt cheap.
- **Share the work of preparing the wood for turning.** Free wood is great, but it takes a lot of work to convert boards into wig stand kits. We had a club member who would plane the boards, glue them up, and make kits (a base, a top, and a spindle—see photo). Having boxes of these kits ready to be turned made it easy for members to “grab and go” at club meetings. Having multiple members participate in the

A wig stand kit includes just three pieces. Details about how we make the kits and the wig stands, including helpful videos and an instructional PDF, can be found at [centralillinoiswoodturners.com](http://centralillinoiswoodturners.com).



prep work eases the burden, and having club members come together for a day to make the kits is a great way to bring members together.

- **Offer a training session.**

Our club offers a hands-on training course for new turners each year. During this course, they are taught to make wig stands, as this project is great for practicing basic turning techniques. It also gives the newer turners a sense of accomplishment to make something for a worthy cause.

- **Collaborate with art students.**

Our club has an arrangement with three local schools, where we provide unfinished wig stands to their advanced art students, who add whatever embellishments they like. Getting younger people to at least be aware of woodturning is great (especially if we can get the shop teacher to play along), and it involves more people in our community as part of a charitable project.

- **Involve school woodworking programs.**

One of the schools still has a woodworking shop with several lathes, so we are working



through how our club can provide the wig stand kits for even more student involvement.

- **Find more than one cancer center to support.**

If we donated all of the wig stands we made to the local cancer center, we would have quickly inundated them. By partnering with the Susan G. Komen foundation, we are able to spread the donation across hundreds of cancer centers, covering about one-third of the state. Partnering with a larger organization has been huge in keeping our effort going.

- **Identify your chapter.**

For each wig stand we deliver, we put some kind of tag on it to identify our turning club. We currently use Tyvek bands, like you get at concerts or water parks, as they won't come off during handling.

- **Make it a chapter challenge.**

If your club has a President's or other monthly challenge, consider adding a wig stand (or embellishment of a wig stand) into the challenge. This will keep your production numbers up.

- **Publicize what you do.**

I suggest this not in a boastful spirit, but in a more practical way since promotion is a great way to bring attention to your club in the larger

community. Each time our club demonstrates in public, we bring a few wig stands to spark a conversation about the project. I'm always amazed at just how many people relate how their lives have been touched by breast cancer. The first time a woman at a demo said she'd used one of our wig stands, I was just blown away.

- **Avoid burnout.** As with any effort, burnout is real. After all this time, many members of our club have grown tired of making wig stands. They still support the effort, but turning their 100<sup>th</sup> wig stand isn't nearly as fulfilling as creating their first. Be on

the lookout for ways to keep the project interesting, and remember to publicly recognize those who turn wig stands during normal club meetings.

I hope other turners get to experience the quiet satisfaction that comes from

knowing what has been given without expecting anything in return, from making a total stranger whom they will probably never meet smile on what could be one of the worst days of their life. ■

—Mark Toon, Central Illinois Woodturners



## From the Editor:

I hope everyone is surviving the challenges of winter. Here, in Ohio, we've had a lot of snow and cold temperatures. It's been a long time since we've had so much snow, but I don't mind it too much. My shop is in my heated basement and I've spent much of the winter with my latest mania, glass blowing. I do feel empathy for all my woodturning friends who have to wait for good weather to get back to what they love. Spring will be here soon – hang in there!

Many thanks to the contributors for this edition of the newsletter: Louise Butler, Robin Carstens, Regina M. Cox, Linda Ferber, Debra Higley, Judith Houk, Tracey Lee, Dianne Looker, Pat Matranga, Robin McIntyre, Chris Price, Jennifer Shirley, Marge Sloan, Sarah Slocum, Julie Schmidt, Chris Stein, and Andi Wolfe. 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.***

***Deadline for Spring newsletter: May 1st***

*“Sometimes the greatest act of kindness is to pretend you haven't already heard that story before.”*  
— Sarah Schroeder

## 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.

(Adopted April 19, 2019)

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*Nothing is ever  
as good as you  
think it will be  
or as bad as you  
fear.  
— Gail Baron*

# AAW

# AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF WOODTURNERS

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