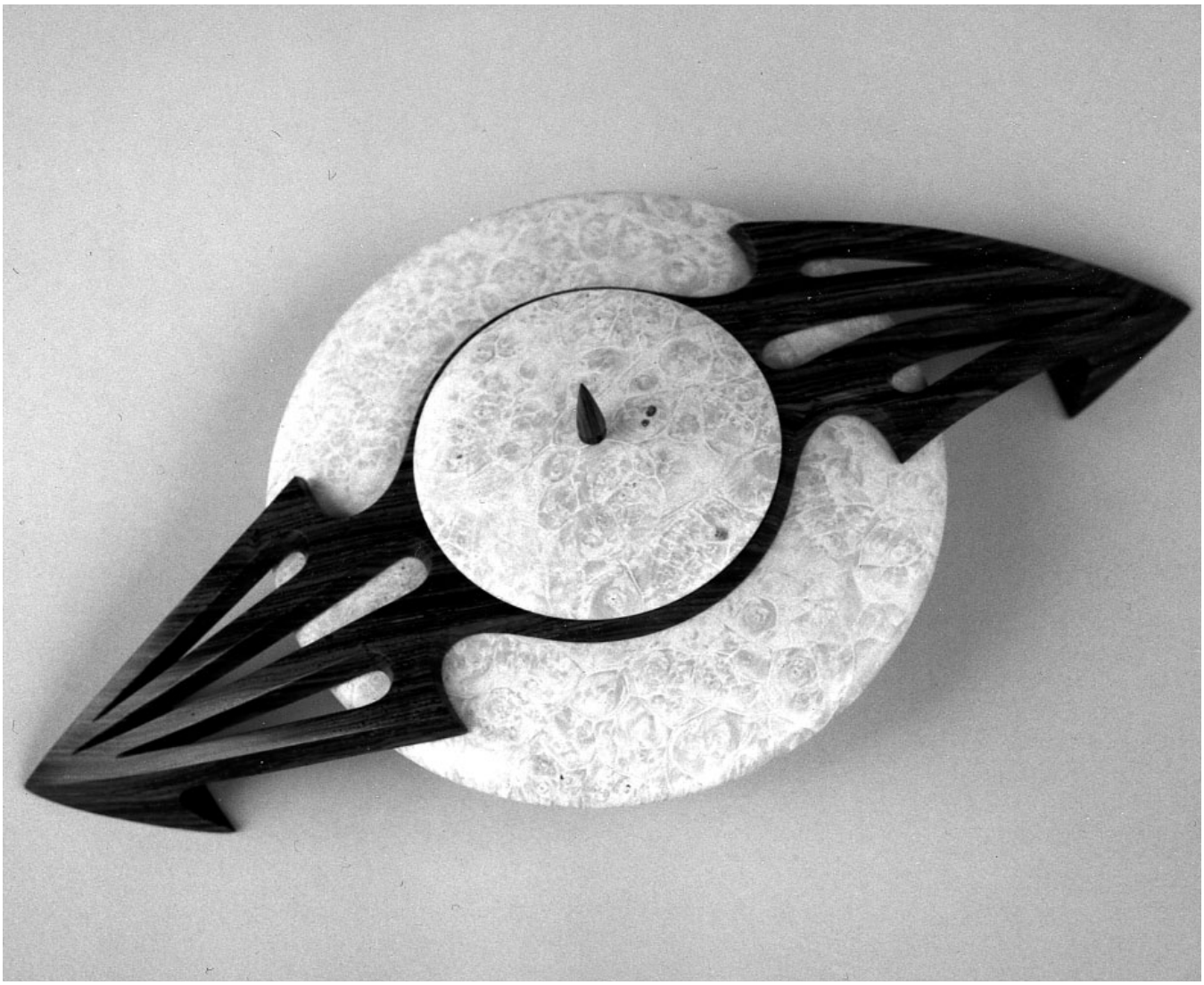
■ Charles Alvis ■ East Meets West in Japan ■ Ornaments ■ Turned Gavel ■

American Woodturner

The Journal of the American Association of Woodturners Winter 1999 $5.00 Vol. 14, No. 4



Gary Sanders' Elevated Vessels

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Dedicated to Providing Education, Information, and Organization To Those Interested in Woodturning

JUST AS THE WOOD TURNS, SO DOES THE AAW BOARD

THOSE WHO FOUNDED THIS organization had the foresight to build in a rotation to the board. Each person is elected to a three-year term, with three of the nine rotating off each year. No one can serve more than two terms or six years. This gives the assurance that there will be some change and fresh ideas coming on every year. Just as a piece of wood on your lathe continuously shows fresh and different surfaces as you cut some away and allow reshaping and refining, the board also rotates every year. Our goals remain constant, but new and fresh ideas allow us to constantly change and improve the way those goals are accomplished. The membership continues to grow, we surpassed 8,000 members this year. This means increased demands on the board for keeping up and growing with the organization. I like to think of us as being in an 'upward spiral'. As according to the plan, a significant portion of the board remains to maintain some stability but the changes this year are significant. The three members whose terms were to expire this year are Charles Alvis, Clay Foster and Norm Hinman.

Norm Hinman chose to run again and was reelected. We welcome him back and know he will continue to be an integral part of this board. His biggest job is as secretary which he handles with great efficiency. That is only a part of the important contributions which he has, and I am sure will continue, to give to the board.

Clay Foster has chosen not to go for a second term. The membership owes a great deal of thanks to Clay for the work he has done. His knowledge and insight have been extremely valuable to this organization. He has done much in the areas of working with symposium demonstrators and heading the exhibitions committee, and the chapters committee; though not continuing on the board, I am sure he will still be supporting the AAW. We wish Clay the best of luck as he continues turning.

A Tribute to Charles Alvis

I wish to dedicate this page to Charles Alvis. No one on the present board has been without the helpful guidance and presence of Charles. In addition to serving as president, he worked hard on the Conference Committee, the Finance Committee, and led the Educational Opportunity Committee. His leadership and hard work while on this board has been the driving force that has maintained the integrity of this organization. He was never deterred by anyone trying to sway our direction because of their own personal goals. The conduct of Charles on the board was always an example of service to the organization and never of being served. He stood strongly for the purpose statement (page 17 of the Resource Directory) which is "to foster a wider understanding and appreciation of lathe-turning as a traditional and contemporary craft and a form of art among the general public, hobbyist turners, part-time turners and professional turners."

Although his career had been in the corporate world, teaching was a top priority with Charles.

Just three weeks before his death he taught a class at Arrowmont. He had to have known it was just a matter of time, but he chose to continue doing what he had committed his life to – teaching others of the pleasure of turning.

Many people are aware of our craft due to the unselfish efforts of Charles. Many of us are better turners due to his efforts. All of us can learn much about life from the example he set for us.

Charles would have completed six years on the board at the end of December. I know he tried hard to finish the term, but it just wasn't to be.

It is with pleasure and in love that the board has unanimously appointed Jeanne Alvis, Charles' wife and faithful working partner, to fill his remaining term. This is our way to acknowledge her for the dedication and support which she so lovingly gave throughout his time on the board. She has stood by him and shared all the burdens of the job while he served on the board. She has had to share Charles with the AAW for nearly all of his retirement years. With the love and gratitude of the AAW, we wish Jeanne the very best.

New Board members

As the board of AAW turns, two new and fresh directors come into view.

One is Bobby Clemons who brings experience in leadership from his career in the telephone business. Bobby is looking forward to working with the Conference committee, and because of his strong feelings about education plans to help with the Educational Opportunity committee.

Our other new member is Linda Hawkinson VanGehuchten. Having lived in other countries, Linda brings a better international understanding to the group. Because of her experience in jurying shows, she is interested in joining the Exhibitions Committee. She also would like to work with Chapters and Membership. Her expertise and experience are going to be a welcome addition to this board.

I welcome these two new members and I am very confident that they have the time and capabilities to bolster the quality that is expected of this board. Just as the membership continues to grow, the board will be working on advancements to the organization for the future. We hope we are offering you what you would expect from the AAW. If we are not, let us know where we are falling short. I think our future looks as bright as it ever has. The AAW will continue to develop for the betterment of all those interested in the quality of life that exists when it is enhanced by some association with woodturning.

—Dave Barriger, President
American Association of Woodturners

American Woodturner

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A Note about your Safety
An accident at the lathe can happen with blinding suddenness; respiratory problems can build over years. Take appropriate precautions when you turn. Safety guidelines are published in the AAW Resource Directory. Following them will help ensure that you can continue to enjoy woodturning.

On the cover: *A stunning vessel by Gary Sanders of Greenville, TX, is a visual delight, and as you can see by its components at left, a fascinating assembly of finely designed and well-turned elements. Read more about Sanders and his techniques on Page 10. COVER PHOTO: Gary and Sheryl Sanders.*

Submissions to *American Woodturner* are encouraged. Please contact the editor with articles or proposals.

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Denver Ulery Dies

Woodturning friends,

Our good friend is gone. Denver Ulery lost his long battle with cancer Nov. 3. I just spoke with one of his daughters. His wife Jean, and all his daughters were with him. Apparently he had some chemotherapy the previous week that made him really tired. He went into the emergency room Sunday and spent the rest of the time in the hospital.

Denver was my first woodturning instructor years ago and I have always felt honored to have him as a dear friend.

I know he is in a good place, no more suffering, but we will all miss him.

Sorry to be the bearer of sad news.

—Bonnie Klein, Renton, WA

Too Much Symposium

A couple of comments on the magazine: the issue previous to the most recent one (Fall 99 was superb. By far the best in the field. If we could publish more often, and charge more, I bet it would sell.

The most recent issue was not as interesting to me — much too much about the symposium. I've attended one symposium and hope to go to North Carolina next year. They are great, even not having attended. I feel the coverage was more than was interesting.

—Robert Morrell, Brunswick, ME

Open Letter to Rude Osolnik

Sometime during the late 1980's I was honored to help host you here in Hawai'i. During your stay I discovered what a caring and giving man you are. And you left me with two valuable lessons beyond what I learned about woodturning.

As part of your demonstration to our turning group, you turned your famous candlesticks. While the lathe ran full speed and your hands did what your eyes needn't follow, you told us how you made thousands and thousands of these throughout your life; they were your 'bread and butter.' You told of going out to your shop early in the morning and when you had roughed out 40 candlesticks it was time to get the kids up for school. The surprising lesson for me was: The great master and national treasure makes "small kind" production stuff.

I have been a full time, self-employed woodworker for 27 years. Back then, my "extra" time on my lathe was when I did my "art." I didn't do "trinkets." Well, thank you, Rude. Since I met you, I have become a full-time turner, making lots of small kinds of stuff and that small kind stuff makes up about 20% of my income. And, I get it all done before breakfast.

While you were here, you asked for a piece of my work for your collection. I was so honored that you even noticed, I would have given you everything I had, but you wanted to trade. I timidly asked if I could have one of your candlesticks. You said "No, they only come in threes." So there I stood, mouth agape, with three Rude Osolnik candle holders in my hands. Needless to say, I was the envy of all the turners in the Islands. And, getting those candle holders lead to lesson number two.

On a recent warm, tropical evening with the trade winds softly blowing, my wife Debby and I had just enjoyed a nice meal with a good bottle of wine. Following the meal, and after finishing up the dishes, I went into the bedroom. There on the dresser were my three Rude Osolnik candlestick holders with real candles in them and real flames burning and hot wax dripping on the wood....And there on the bed, with the pillows all fluffed up and the warm glow from the candles caressing her skin and her smile, was the woman I love.

I'm sorry, Mr. Osolnik, if I called your candlestick holders small stuff. They truly hold the magic of art.

With warm Aloha,

— Jerry Kermode, Hau'ula, HI

Executive Shop Cleaning Duties

I have finally discovered the prime duty of members of the Board of AAW. My wife and I were visiting a couple of Fridays ago when the phone rang. My wife answered and the party on the other end asked, "What are you doing?" She told him that she was going out to my shop to start cleaning it up. Adrian Sturdivant said, "I'm about 15 minutes away and I'll be right there to help." After about one and one half hours, the two of them had done a pretty good job with me sitting on a stool watching and directing.

I am pretty well disabled with partial blindness and emphysema. I still like to turn, but with these two restrictions it does go a little slowly. I thank Adrian and my wife for cleaning, and now I have to go through a period of rediscovery of tools, faceplates, finishing materials, etc.

I want to echo the message of the article "Never Give Up" by Dr. Robert Waddell in the Fall 1999 issue of *American Woodturner.* I still have enough side vision to obtain a pretty good shape. I use my fingers for determining what kind of surface I have obtained during the finishing process. I then use a fully sighted person for final inspection and redo

Nominations Update

Dick Gerard filled in for Alan Stirt in the interview part of the nomination process for new board members. The other two members were Mets Lerwill and me, Larry Hasiak, as board representative and chairman

Letters edited for clarity and space.

as necessary. I do an unconventional job on tool sharpening taught to me by Mick O'Donnell.

I am 73-years-old and have been a member of AAW for several years. I am an exhibiting member of the Craftsmen's Guild of Mississippi and the Magnolia Woodturners, Inc., the local chapter of AAW. I spent 1998 fighting a malignant lung tumor and won that battle. The Lord blessed me beyond measure. As He continues to give me one additional day at a time, I will try to use it productively and praise Him for it.

All of you hang in there, and if you have a Director nearby, inform him that he is supposed to clean your shop periodically.

— *Charles Culpepper, Rolling Fork, MS*

Never Give Up Part Two

I enjoyed Dr. Robert Waddell's article for turners with physical impairments. I have a few other suggestions to make that might be helpful.

1. Do not pick up anything that is heavy. This means that you ask for help when necessary. Get somebody who is young and healthy to do the lifting. Arrange your shop to decrease the need for lifting. Sometimes it is necessary to remove your tailstock. This can be very heavy. Instead of putting it on the floor where you will have to lift it again and possibility hurt your back, have a table made that is the same height as your ways. Slip the tailstock onto the table that has wheels on it that is the same height as the ways.

2. Work on smaller projects. The weight of the object is much less, putting much less strain on you. Also the turning forces are much less, causing much less wear and tear on the body.

3. Use sharp tools. They cut better with less vibration. This saves wear and tear on you and the wood.

4. Get a friend in the club to run the chain saw. You can think of something to pay him back. People will do you favors if you pay them back.

5.Get in a very comfortable working position. This will very often mean sitting down. I often use a padded bar stool. This saves a lot of wear and tear on my back.

6. Stop and rest often. Excess fatigue will cause muscles to cramp. This will cause pain and can lead to chronic problems. Also you do better work if you are not fatigued. You are less likely to make a mistake and ruin your work.

7. Arrange a tool cart on wheels that has all the tools and supplies (sandpaper) that you need for a project. This will save you from getting up from your stool and walking all over the place looking for something.

8. Use good magnification. Good vision is necessary for good turning. As we get older our vision is degraded. Use magnification loops and good light to see better. People have a tendency to tense up when they are straining to see well.

9. Do all things in moderation. If you follow some of these suggestions, you should be able to keep turning for a very long time.

— *Mickey Charlton, DeKalb Texas*
Ark-La-Tex Woodturners

Gearing Up For The Charlotte Symposium

Plans are well underway for the next annual symposium, June 30-July 2, in Charlotte, NC.

Featured demonstrators, each of whom will do six rotations, include:

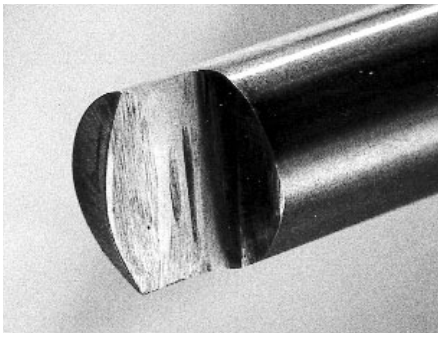
National demonstrators: Trent Bosch of Fort Collins, CO; Michael Lee, Kapolei, HI; and David Ellsworth, Quakertown, PA. International exhibitors will be Allan Batty, England; Kurt Johansson, Sweden and Irene Gafert, Denmark.

Other events include the popular Instant Gallery, a trade show devoted to woodturning equipment and supplies, a banquet and auction to benefit the AAW Educational Programs.

Charlotte is a thriving metropolitan area with an abundance of restaurants, galleries, stores. And its location in the state's Piedmont area puts it close to some fine lake and mountain resorts.

Among the events in the Charlotte area during the symposium will be a showing of the Jane and Arthur Mason Collection which will be featured in its new home at the Mint Museum of Craft and Design.

For more information contact the AAW office (651-484-9094) or the conference coordinators, Butch and Pat Titus at 210-649-2166



Need Another Photo

I really enjoyed the last Journal which I just got yesterday. All the photos look good except the one I wanted to see. I still don't quite understand what the shear scrapers in David Reed Smith's article (Fall 99) look like. I have some $^1/_2$-in. drill rod so I guess I'll experiment a little.

— *John Lucas, Cookeville, TN*

Hope the shot above helps- Ed.

ON-LINE WOODTURNING RESOURCES

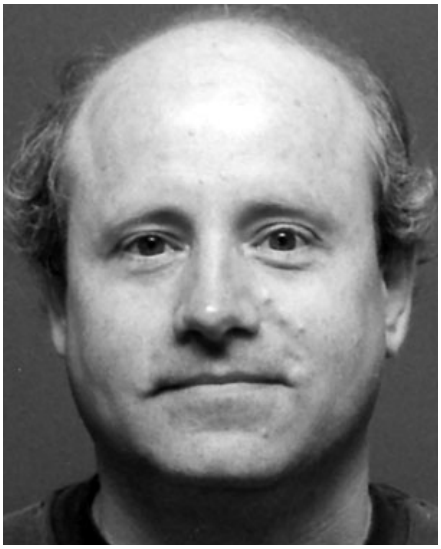
Editors Note: More and more, a computer terminal is becoming part of the essential tool kit of many turners. Several of these on-line turners have been meeting with Roger Austin during the last two symposiums. Roger, officially vice president of the AAW, is a self-proclaimed computer geek. He's also the webmaster for the AAW and works very hard to ensure that the web site continues to be a good source for information and inspiration.

After meeting with the Cyberturners in Tacoma, Roger decided to write a regular column in the Journal to discuss On-line Woodturning Resources.

— Dick Burrows, Editor

WEB SITE MOVE: The AAW World-Wide Web site has moved to a new address. It is now http://www.woodturner.org/ The site is hosted at a commercial service provider, which offers more features than the past non-profit site. You can look for changes as we progress in the construction of the site. Currently we have moved the content from the old RTPnet site to the new server. We have also updated the look and feel of the site. The move is part of our strategic plan to increase our on-line presence. We are making more information available on woodturning and the AAW on-line. The new site provides a variety of tools which may not be immediately obvious. The two largest changes are the ability to have dynamic pages where information is pulled from databases rather than static pages and the ability to do on-line credit-card processing. Another big change is a 15-fold increase in our web space which will become obvious as more graphics are added to the site.

DATABASES: Dynamic web pages are not very difficult in concept. AAW staff enter or update data in databases which are structured lists



Roger Austin

(or tables) of information. You click on a page at your home computer and the server constructs the page from a template using the current database information at that time. Thus, the latest information is provided to you. The information in the database can be updated very easily and fewer changes have to be made as in the past. This system also allows for searching for information in databases. Currently, the local chapter information, demonstrator connector, national organizations and several other databases are on-line.

SECURE ON-LINE PROCESSING: The general public has become more comfortable in ordering from catalogs on-line. We will have on-line credit card processing in the near future for ordering AAW videos and logo products as well as memberships and registrations. This will allow very easy processing and reduce the number of telephone calls. We hope that this will become a popular feature on the web site and save members time and money.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: One resource on the web site is the Frequently Asked Questions list or FAQ. FAQ's are very common on the web. This allows a visitor to get answers to common questions and saves a long distance phone call to the home office. It also allows prospective members a very clear idea of what is offered by our association before they join. This page contains FAQ's relating to Membership, Organization, Chapter, Symposium, Publications, Education, Safety, Resources, and Miscellaneous

FINDING ARTICLES IN AMERICAN WOODTURNER: Did you know that the index for American Woodturner is on-line? You can view it on the web site from a link on http://www.woodturner.org/aw/ This is currently a static page, not a database application. You can search a web page from Navigator or Internet Explorer by using the Control-F command. Click on a link to bring up a web page. Hold down Control and press the character "F". This will bring up a "Find" window where you type in your search string. This allows you to find the occurrences of your search throughout the document. For example, if you wanted to search for "side-ground gouge" or "baluster", you could find the references to past articles in our journal. You have to click on "Find Next" for each new occurrence of the string.

SYMPOSIUM PAGES: We are very interested in getting photographs and comments from the first two symposia in Lexington, Kentucky and in Philadelphia, PA in 1988. Please let us know if you have any photos and would let us borrow them for use on the web site.

Please e-mail ideas for this column or questions to the AAW geek at webmaster@woodturner.org or snail mail to 210 Wilmot Drive, Raleigh, North Carolina 27606-1231.

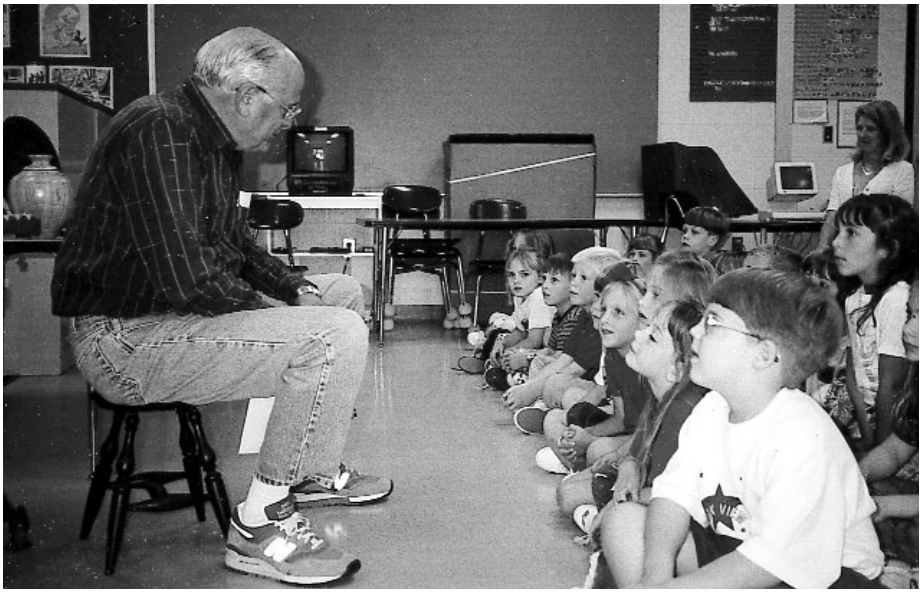
REMEMBERING CHARLES ALVIS

When Charles Alvis' friends and colleagues gathered to say goodbye, there was a laugh and a story for every tear. And most stories centered on his love of helping everyone, especially children, learn to turn. The picture at right is a family favorite. The stool is one he built. Family members said he had to, because he didn't want to disappoint the kids when they asked if he had turned the thing he was sitting on.

He kept teaching right up until the day he lost his battle with cancer on Oct. 1. Some Nashville friends said he had helped a local turner with a finishing problem just hours before he died. And few that attended his classes at the Campbell Folk School in North Carolina or Arrowmont in his home state of Tennessee will forget the penetrating stare and booming voice on the first day of class demanding that "We are here to have FUN."

A teacher's rewards are often intangible, but I think he would cite something like one youngster's report — "The woodroller was cool … I want to be a woodroller when I grow up." The student was in a group Charles visited with the Tennessee Association of Craft Artists (TACA). His fellow TACA mentors plan to add another school to their roster this fall with no pay in honor of Charles, and donations in his memory have also been made to the TACA educational fund.

The AAW is also forming an educational fund in honor of Charles. The fund was established with an initial donation from his long-time friend and fellow turner, Rude Osolnik of Berea, Ky. For more information contact the AAW administrative office. The Tennessee Association of Woodturners, of which Charles was a founding member, has also contributed to the fund and set up a separate scholarship in Charles' memory for a TAW member.



Charles talking to a first grade class following one of his in-class demonstrations.

Mike Zinser, immediate past TAW president, praised Charles for his leadership and drive after his retirement in 1985 from AT&T. "Woodturning offered him a challenge in many directions such as a hobby, an avenue of continued learning, using his skills to motivate others, and most of all his organizational skills and foresight toward the organization of the Tennessee Association of Woodturners … Charles was a teacher, motivator, organizer and a friend to all who passed his way."

A former AAW president and current board member, Charles was also remembered by his colleagues there.

Mary Lacer, AAW administrator, said "Charles' commitment and dedication to the field of woodturning were very evident as I worked with him day-to-day running the American Association of Woodturners. His first love in woodturning was the children. He spoke so often about going to schools and seeing the excitement on the kids' faces when he would put a piece of wood on the lathe and a top, candle stick, vase, goblet or small bowl would emerge from it …. He will be greatly missed."

Charles also helped Bob Rosand, when shortly after joining the board Bob felt overwhelmed by the job. "Charles took me down to a bar and bought me a drink, and said, 'let me ask you something. Do you have the best interests of the AAW at heart?' I responded, 'Yes, of course I do.' He just smiled at me and said, 'Then you'll do just fine.' I never made one chip fly with Charles, but in many ways he was a mentor to me as well as a father figure and most important, a friend. "

Board member Norm Hinman remembers Charles for his help during the hectic days after the Davis, CA, symposium in July, 1995.

"The previous two weeks had been very busy for me, preparing for the symposium, and I was quite tired. Talking with Charles on the way out and back was like a cool breeze on a hot day.

He made me feel very comfortable and refreshed just by being there. I have never lost having that feeling whenever I was around him."

— Dick Burrows, Knoxville, TN

OHIO VALLEY WOODTURNERS GUILD — Turning 2000

The Ohio Valley Woodturners Guild (OVWG) Turning 2000 program stated that the group wanted the symposium to be remembered as an inspiring and educational experience. It was that and more, in addition to being a lot of fun.

The Turning 2000 Symposium, held in early October, drew more than 140 woodturners from 11 states to southern Indiana to interact with some of America's top turners.

OVWG members had worked for a year in planning and organizing this first ever regional event, and it showed. Notwithstanding some behind the scenes scrambling by club members, the whole affair proceeded smoothly, from breakfast at 6:30 AM to wrap-up after 9:00 PM on Friday and Saturday and till 1:30 PM on Sunday. Attendees were drawn by the opportunity to see and learn first-hand from some of the finest woodturners/teachers in the United States and Canada: Michael Hosaluk, John Jordan, Frank Sudol, Alan Lacer and Dave Hout. These featured demonstrators were ably supplemented by nine guest demonstrators including Lyle Jamieson, who as an attendee volunteered to do a couple of sessions.

Each morning and afternoon featured five concurrent one hour sessions by guest turners and then five two-and-one-half hour presentations conducted at the same time by the five featured demonstrators. Attendees could schedule their time to meet their own interests. Friday after dinner the turners were subjected to two hours of questions from the attendees; this session was enlightening, insightful and entertaining with no shortage of candor from the participants. Saturday night featured a banquet (prime rib with home-made pie for dessert!) followed by an auction of items donated by demonstrators, club members and some 15 vendors and suppliers. The auction was invigorated by professional auctioneer Elwood Leathley, who kept the interest and tension level high and the money flowing!

Featured demonstrator Michael Hosaluk impressed everyone with his versatility and inventiveness. Photos by Bob McFalls

Attendees had the flexibility to sit in on any session at each of five action centers and could migrate between sessions at their discretion at any time. The biggest fear was that you might miss something. So what did you miss if you weren't there?

• Michael Hosaluk — inventive and ingenious as always, Mike adjusted his program each session as the spirit moved him, involving his audience and impressing all with his versatility.

• John Jordan — effortless hollowing with exceptional insights on shape and texture, (made more effortless by the Stubby lathe John brought which he imports from Australia.)

• Frank Sudol — deep hollowing of thin walled vessels which seems impossible but which Frank makes look easy, enhanced (as always) by some serious and not-so-serious philosophizing. Frank also unveiled for the very first time the Mauri telescoping tool rest, and a deep vessel caliper which will enable him to reach 5-ft. and beyond!

• Alan Lacer — expert end grain hollowing, skew virtuoso, and make your own hook tool guru, Alan, AAW 1999 Honorary Life Member, does it all. His discussions about his recent visit to Japan and woodturning there were fascinating.

Dave Hout — in an art unfamiliar to most attendees, Dave took the mystery out of metal spinning. Twenty-six years as a woodworking teacher have made Dave a resourceful and creative demonstrator, in addition to being a fine turner.

Other demonstrators included:

Don Bash, Louisville Area Woodturners — natural-edge end-grain bowls.

Dave Beery, Central Indiana Chapter, AAW — platters.

Jim Burrowes, Ohio Valley Woodturners Guild — sharpening and small boxes.

Lowell Converse, Ohio Valley Woodturners Guild — Christmas or-

OHIO TURNING 2000

naments.

Richard Frye, South Central Pennsylvania Turners – goblets.

Mark Gardner, Ohio Valley Woodturners Guild — small vessels and texturing/carving.

Mike Gordon, Ohio Valley Woodturners Guild — wood weaving.

Lyle Jamieson, Northwestern Michigan Chapter — hollowing tool.

Bill Stephenson, Ohio Valley Woodturners Guild — tree identification.

The seminar was held at the Higher Ground Conference and Retreat Center in southern Indiana, a few miles west of Cincinnati. The setting was remote and park-like with eating and over-nite facilities on-site. Most attendees stayed on-site and were too busy to notice the absence of television and other entertainments. The food was good and plentiful (did you hear about the home-made pie?)

The setting was perfect for a relaxed walk in the woods with a seemingly infinite potential supply of bowl blanks.

The center even contributed a cherry tree which was cut down to provide fresh wood for the turners. They also provided transportation between buildings when rain made walking a challenge.

Other attractions included:

The Instant Gallery showcased some of the uncommon talent in the midwest as well as the exquisite work of the featured turners.

Auctioneer Elwood Leathley kept the tension and the money flow high, with an assist from OVWG vice-president Dave Morrical, at left.

The vendors' area was busy all the time and all the vendors sold out:

Oneway Manufacturing brought four machines and a full line of their tools and accessories and conducted impromptu demonstrations throughout the weekend.

Performance Abrasives of Mason, Ohio passed out free samples of their sanding products.

The Beall Tool Company showcased their buffing system and unique tools.

Rockler Woodworking had a full line of their turning tools and equipment for sale.

Exotic Wood Services from Coquille, Oregon shipped in 4000 pounds of exotic wood and sold it.

Kelton Industries was represented by Oaksville Woodwork from Westchester, Ohio.

CPH International from California offered free samples of their Japan Starbond CA adhesive.

Many were sorry to see it end on Sunday. Being immersed in woodturning with America's premiere turners and 140 plus like-minded individuals in a setting like Higher Ground was an exceptional experience. The critiques from the event are in: every single one was most favorable and encouraged OVWG to do it again. Dave Barriger, AAW president, attended the symposium, and in a note to the OVWG offered high praise: "..a very successful symposium," "...offered something for everyone," "...a job well done." The Ohio Valley Woodturners certainly met their goal to have Turning 2000 be remembered as an inspiring and educational experience.

Congratulations to Earl Choromokos--OVWG President, Dave Morrical, John Lannom and all the other hardworking volunteers who made the symposium such a success. We hear they're planning something else for the next one. Better put it on your schedule.

— Lowell Converse, Beaver Creek, OH

Demonstrators clown around with OVWG president Earl Choromokos. From left, Frank Sudol. John Jordan, Alan Lacer, Choromokos, Lyle Jamieson, Michael Hosaluk and Dave Hout.

THE NEW AAW OFFICE AND LATHE

Thanks to members of the Minnesota Association of Woodturners, the AAW offices were relocated to larger quarters in a single Saturday last August.

The crew, which had everything moved by 2 pm. included Eunice Wynn, Mary Lacer, Duane Gemelke, John Magnussen, Don Wynn, Bob Picek, Don Wattenhofer, Don Robinson, Nate Gemelke, John Ratliff, Chuck Pitschka, Ed Johnson. Jeff Redig and Amelia Redig.

"The guys (and gals) were GRRRRRRRREat - worked real hard. John Ratliff came back and Alan Lacer helped one Saturday putting up the second set of shelving," said AAW administrator Mary Lacer.

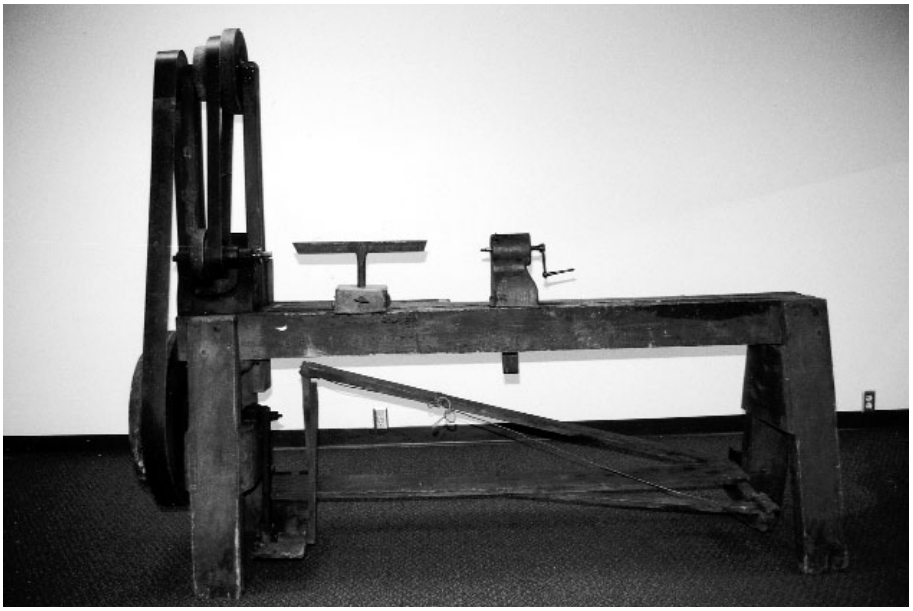
In addition to offering more space for storage and member services, the office will feature a small gallery and an antique lathe.

The lathe was donated by AAW member Joe Nopola of Moose Lake, MN, who had received the lathe from friends in Northern Minnesota. Evidently it had been stored in an old barn, sitting idle since the 1920's.

AAW Contributing editor Alan Lacer says the headstock and tailstock are finely shaped from wood, and the spindle and other metal parts are well crafted (many pieces are clearly forged). The many bearing surfaces for the different shafts run on babbit–and most are still quite tight.

The lathe will turn 14 in. over the bed and 54 in. between centers – suggesting it was well suited for furniture and architectural turning. Alan said one interesting design feature is that the lathe can be operated by treadle or easily adapted to an outside source, such as water power. Mounting of the flywheel low and the step pulleys high avoids the top heavy tendency that many treadle lathes have. The system also keeps the flywheel out of the way of the operator, he said,

The moving crew outside the new AAW office at 3499 Lexington Ave. North, Suite 103, Shoreview, MN 55126. Phones remain the same



Antique treadle lathe will provide a fascinating exhibit at the new AAW office.

but more importantly eliminates the need for a long connecting rod from the treadle to the flywheel crank.

Alan said it's difficult to pinpoint the lathe's age, but unusual wood screws and forged bolts and other factors indicate mid-19th century.

The restoration efforts will be moderate: replacing the missing treadle board, substituting leather belting for the modern belting that is currently on the machine, creating an appropriate drive center, and forging several missing bolts.

All and all, a beautiful lathe with most of its history intact.

Special thanks to Frank White and his colleagues at Old Sturbridge Village, MA for the design commentary and help in dating the lathe.

— Mary Lacer, Shoreview, MN
— Alan Lacer, Shoreview, MN

The Northern California Great Turn Off

We do it every year. Since August, 1992, that is. That was the year that the two AAW chapters in Northern California, namely Bay Area Woodturners and Nor-Cal Woodturners, held a 'joint' meeting at the home, and shop, of Chuck McLaughlin near Sebastapol. There was lots of turning talk, and even some turning, along with the gallery "Show & Tell." The accompanying picnic and barbecue was great for making and renewing friendships.

The following year it was Nor-Cal's turn to host what was destined to become an annual event, this time in the foothills of the Sierras. Along with the rest of the fun, what more fitting activity could be conceived of than (you guessed it) a turning contest. After a delicious picnic lunch, each chapter's team of six turned an object of its choice from identical blocks of wood using similar lathes. An unbiased (?-yeah, sure) person was chosen from the audience to judge the results.

By the time 1996 rolled around two more chapters existed in Northern California, so we had four teams. A fancy plaque had by that time been designed on which to place a series of small brass plates showing the name of the winning chapter and year. The plaque would be retained by the winning chapter for the ensuing year. The rules had evolved a bit, were slightly more complex, provided a bit more excitement and provoked more thought. This time, unfortunately, part way through the contest the lathes stopped turning. The power had gone off. Some of us were convinced that Chuck secretly had it turned off because his team was falling behind. It later became known that the power was out over seven Western states from Montana to Arizona. (It is amazing what some turners will do to save themselves from embarrassment!)

This year the Great Turn Off, as the event has come to be known, was hosted by Sequoia Woodturners on the campus of California State University, Fresno, on August 28. Great anticipation surrounded plans as the various chapters prepared to perform their assigned tasks. Sequoia, as the hosts, provided the lathes. Bay Area set the rules for the actual contest, with Redwood Empire providing the wood and West Bay Area established the rules for judging the finished pieces. Silicon Valley and Nor-Cal contacted businesses throughout Northern and Central California garnering donations of door prizes. Although the event was planned around six chapters we were pleased by the arrival of two members from a seventh chapter, Central Coast Woodturners of CA.

The "Pack: At the table from left to right :Bob Adam, Bruce Friederich, Rollie Bowns, Will Michaud, and Jerry Bracketti, all members of Nor-Cal Woodturners. Photo by Mets Lerwill.

A feature added last year is the Egg Cup Race which attracted many as they challenged the clock while attempting to create a fine turning. Two prizes were given for the winners in this event. One was for the shortest time of one minute and twenty seconds, accomplished by Loran Courpet, and the other for the finest creation, which was done by Will Michaud. A continuous pole lathe demonstration took place during much of the day.

After a delightful picnic style lunch of barbecued beef and chicken, baked beans and all the salads and deserts one could desire, the time had arrived for the Turn-Off. Although not every chapter could field the required six members, a number of gallant turners from the more heavily represented chapters volunteered to fill in. (As you have probably discerned, fun and camaraderie are at least as important as winning, despite the hype.)

Each team had ten minutes to think about and decide upon what to make. The wood was mounted, the first heat turners selected their 'weapons', the starter/referee shouted "GO!" and the Turn-Off was happening. Each turner standing before his or her lathe gently (perhaps a little frantically at times) coaxing away the non-essential material. One by one the six ten-minute heats came and went. The pieces each took their respective final forms as time ran out. The panel of judges, consisting of one member from each of the turning teams, did their thing, subsequently announcing that West Bay Area's name would go on the coveted plaque as this year's winner.

Following several announcements, including the date of July 15, 2000 for the next Great Turn-Off, everyone headed, tired but happy, for home.

— Norm Hinman, Yuba City, CA

LEVITATING VESSELS

A perfect balance of materials and proportions

GARY SANDERS

WHEN I AM DESIGNING A PIECE, I'm constantly manipulating shapes, textures and colors to showcase what I feel is the most dominant element of the object. Often this dominating feature is the outside curvature of the legs or bridge, as in the piece shown at right, or it may be the pieced design carved into the legs.

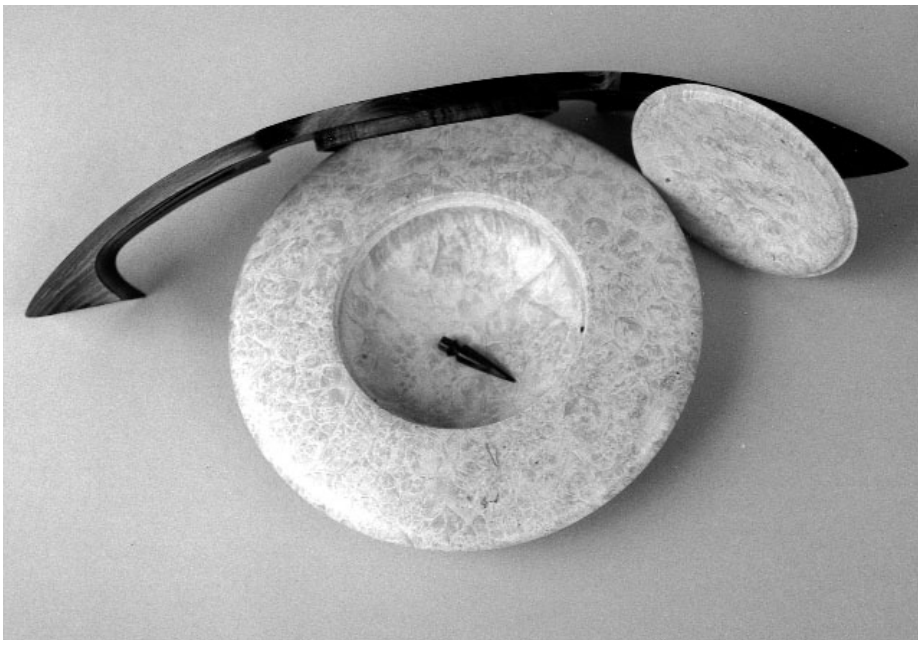
Much of my design is pretty subjective, and difficult to put into words. I like to create the illusion that each piece is floating, almost magically, but I don't have any definite rules as to what works. My eye seems to know if the arrangement is working.

There are a couple of constants. I avoid making the design too busy. Restraint is essential. I add only enough carving and other decorative details to make my main element more dramatic. Combining contrasting woods is for me an especially effective way to make the design more dramatic without dominating the entire piece.

I also like to design the piece so that it flows around the lid, going from one foot to the other. Usually the box part of the design has a diameter that is about half that of the bridge. These proportions also help balance the various design elements.

In making the components of each piece, I usually begin by forming the dominant element, in this case the legs. Then I can custom fit the lid and box to meld with the dominant design feature.

Since the bridge and the illusion it creates are so important, I'll concentrate in this article on those features. You probably already have your own methods for turning boxes and lids.



The author's box, before assembly: bowl, with top knob in it, bridge on its side and the lid, between the bowl and bridge. Photos: Gary and Sheryl Sanders.

Start with a rectangle

I developed my method several years ago after watching a demonstration on turning square-edged bowls. I decided that the technique was ideal for the legs I wanted. I liked both the look of the square edges and the fact that the waste blocks, which temporarily convert the square-edge piece into a more conventional-looking blank, make the piece easy to turn without wasting the valuable, highly figured hardwoods I use.

The one problem I had initially was centering the square stock on my lathe.

I decided to center the stock in my chucks before I glued on the two flanking waste blocks. For most of my suspended boxes I use rectangles, but triangles can be centered in a three-jaw chuck. To secure a rectangle I remove two of the chuck's four jaws. I mark the center of the rectangle and align it to the live center and tighten the chuck.

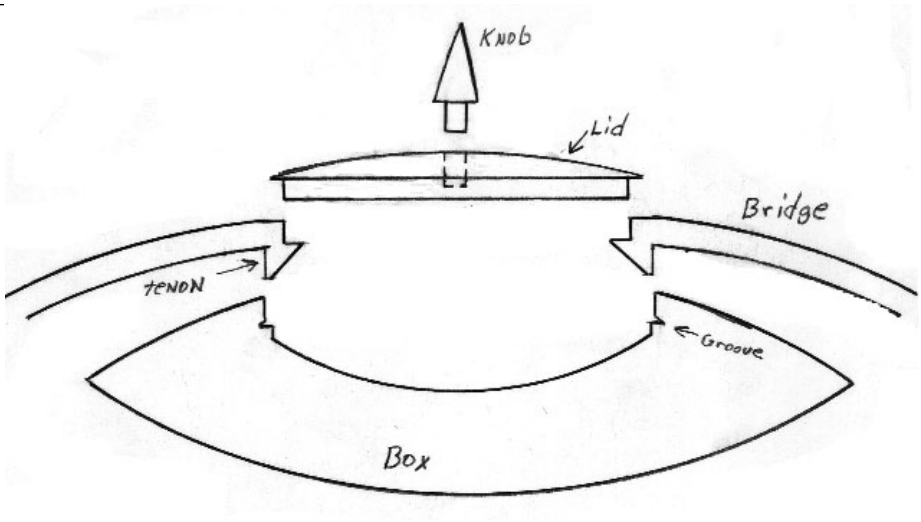
Because of the danger of turning a rectangle, I set my tool rest so that it and my fingers are out of danger. It's important to work carefully, avoiding the chuck jaws and blank edges and setting the lathe speed to avoid vibration. Now, I true the top of the rectangle to the bottom. I also turn a recess in the rectangle, so the piece can be glued later to a block mounted in my chuck, which enables me to center the rectangle after it is sandwiched between the flanking waste blocks. The recess, which is on the face that becomes the top side of the legs, is about 2-in.-dia.-X-$^{3}/_{16}$-in.-deep.

I remove the rectangle and glue the flanking blocks onto its sides. I spread Hot Stuff cyanoacrylate glue (gap filling) to both the rectangle and the blocks and press them together, one side at a time. I get some glue squeeze-out all the way around the joint. I then spray activator along the joint and hold everything together until the glue sets.

While I wait for the glue to cure, I mount a piece of scrap into my chuck.

I turn it to the diameter I want the box lid to be. This later provides a visual reference to help me refine the way the bridge and box fit together. I then turn a tenon on my scrap block to fit the recess in the rectangle. I look for a snug fit. If the tenon is too tight, it may lock up when glue is applied and not seat properly.

However, before I glue the rectangle-scrapwood assembly onto the scrap block, I bandsaw off its corners, so that I don't have to turn off the sharp corners. I spread Hot Stuff onto the glue block's tenon and spray activator into the recess. I quickly press the unit on to the tenon and make sure that it is aligned to run true.



The author's sketch of one of his elevated boxes.

Turning the bridge

Now that I have my turning-blank assembly mounted on the lathe, I turn the bridge or leg unit for the box. I turn the top of the bridge with a $^{5}/_{8}$-in. bowl gouge. Since the mounting block holds the assembly out and away from the chuck, I have room to start at the lid diameter and curve the top down to the outside edge. I curve the top so that it looks good with the height and the diameter of the bridge. I then sand the top with 120-grit sandpaper to remove any small ridges.

The next thing I decide is how big I want the feet to be. I mark that measurement on the bottom. If the bridge has only two feet, I make them longer and wider than one that has three or four feet, to ensure that it will stand without rocking.

Because the blank is mounted on a scrap block and therefore held away from the chuck, I can move my tool rest to the back side and do most of the turning needed to hollow the bridge.

Many of the bridges I turn have an undercut area where the bridge meets the foot. I use many different tools to do the undercut area. A $^{1}/_{2}$-in. roundnose scraper for the rounded undercuts and a $^{1}/_{2}$-in. skew for the tight, sharp angled undercuts are two of my favorites. It's much like regular bowl turning, except I leave a large tenon in the center, which will be used to join the bridge to the box.

To make it easier to gauge the shape and thickness as I'm undercutting, I carve a window in one waste block with a die grinder. That lets me measure wall thickness with a depth gauge. I draw a line on one side of the window, indicating the area to be thinned. I like the bridge to be around $^{3}/_{16}$-to-$^{1}/_{4}$-in.-thick, so that it won't flex. Once I have enough room to measure with a double-ended thickness gauge, I draw lines around the bridge indicating where I need to shape the legs to a constant thickness. I mark the tenon's diameter and stop turning the bridge when I get to the mark. The tenon is approximately $^{5}/_{16}$-in.-long and 2 $^{3}/_{4}$-in.-wide. Locating the tenon on this piece makes the bridge stronger when it's glued into the box.

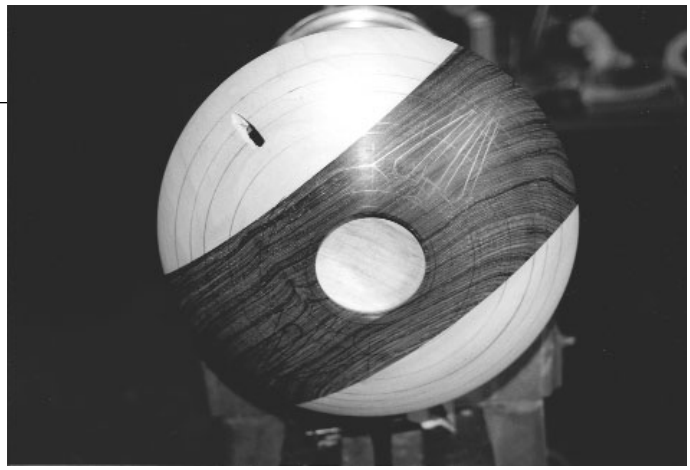
When I've completed turning the underside of the bridge, I take my die grinder and roll the edge of the window. That way I don't have a sharp edge when I next sand that section to 800-grit sandpaper. I check the feet to make sure they're flat by placing a straight edge across the bottom. If they aren't flat, I have a sanding block that spans the opening and I sand both sides at once. This insures having the feet flat all the way across the bottom.

I then go back to the top side and sand to 320-grit sandpaper, which removes any marks left by the thickness gauge. I part off the bridge at the joint of the glue block.

Reversing the bridge

To reverse the bridge I mount a new piece of wood into my chuck and turn a recess, creating a jam chuck to secure the tenon under the bridge. Next, I turn a hole through the center of the bridge to match the diameter of the box opening. This diameter is usually around 2 $^{3}/_{8}$-in. On the outside of this hole I turn a recess using a $^{3}/_{8}$-in. spindle gouge for the lid to fit into, as shown on the top of the next page. This recess is about $^{1}/_{8}$-in. deep and has a seat that is about $^{1}/_{8}$-in. wide. The reason I use these measurements is to make sure the lid recess is smaller in diameter than the box tenon. This will give the bridge added strength and limit the lid diameter to around 2 $^{3}/_{4}$-in., which is the size I prefer. I then angle the inside of the tenon from the edge of the lid seat outward to the bottom of the tenon, leaving a thin edge at the bottom of the tenon. The thin edge makes a better-looking joint where the tenon and box meet on the inside, as you can see

Using a 3/8-in. spindle gouge, the author turns a recess into which the lid will fit.This recess is about 1/8-in. deep.



To gauge the shape and thickness in the undercut the author cuts a window in one waste block with a die grinder.

on the drawing on the previous page. I then sand the inside of the tenon and the lid recess to 800-grit.

Drawing the bridge cutout

Now it's time to draw a pattern on the bridge. Because the pattern goes around the lid, I draw a line around the lid recess. This line must be far enough out to ensure that when I cut along the line I don't cut into the box tenon. I take the bridge off the lathe, so that I can lay it flat. This makes it easier to draw on, plus I can see the design better looking down on it.

I draw the pattern on only one side. I start by locating where I want the foot or feet to be at the outside edge and work back to the line that is around the recess. I use drafting templates to draw the pattern, but any thin flexible material can be used. Many of the ideas I have used have come from mag wheel and jewelry designs. I like to see a lot of the box, so most of my designs are narrow or have slots cut into them. Once I have drawn the pattern on one side I remount it into the jam chuck. I draw lines that extend around the bridge about 1-in. apart. If there is a sharp edge or a slot that has a point in the design I draw a line at that point. I rotate the bridge on the jam chuck so that the intersections of the circles and the pattern line up with my indexer and make a mark at the circle. Once I have all the reference marks for a line I go ahead and draw that line so that I don't get the marks confused.

I transfer each line until the pattern is the same on both sides and remove the bridge from the lathe.

If the pattern has slots cut in it, I use large carbide burrs to rough them out, as shown in the photo on the following page, top left. I put the burr in my drill press and adjust the table height to change the depth of the cut. I set my drill press at 2800 rpm. I push the bridge into the burr by hand. I like this technique because the angle never changes and I can feel the pressure that I put on the wood. When the burr has cut through the bridge I take light cuts so that I don't chip the end grain or jam the burr into the bridge which could cause the wood to split. I cut right to the line, except where the design gets too narrow.

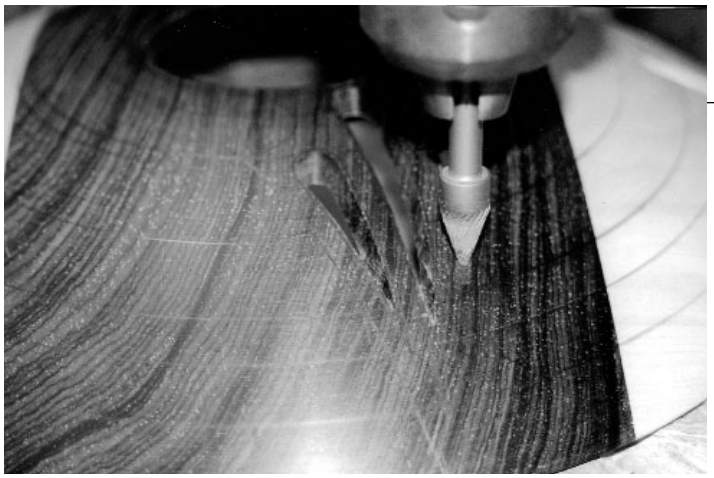
To finish the slots I use needle files. I like jewelers files since they come in several coarseness, and they clean out easier than metal cutting files. I have modified some of my files by grinding them to a sharp edge that I use like chisels to cut the shape of narrow, deep grooves. I use the pencil lines that extend around the bridge to measure the width of the slots for accuracy from one side to the other. When the slots are the shapes I want, I wrap sandpaper around the file and sand the slots. On the narrowest grooves that come to a point I wrap sandpaper around my pocketknife so I only touch one side as I sand, as shown in the photo, top right on the next page.

To cut the outside shape I use a bandsaw with a 10-tooth blade to minimize chipping. I use drum sanders in my drill press to rough sand the outside shape. If there is a tight inside corner that my sanding drums won't fit into I use a carbide bit. To sand the outside edge, I wrap sandpaper around a small sanding block. For the section around the lid I turn a waste block that fits into the lid recess. I turn it to the diameter I want the curve around the lid to be. This way I can sand to the waste block and have a curve that appears to be round like the lid. When the slots and outside edge are sanded to 800-grit I sand the top to 800-grit.

Turning the box

After the bridge is cut out I turn the box. This makes it easier to fit the box on to the tenon and enables me to see how it fits under the bridge. I start with a piece of wood that is thick enough to provide both the box and lid. This is usually 2-to-3-in. thick. I bandsaw it to roughly the diameter the box is to be. I leave a small area flat to use for bandsawing later. I mount the piece between centers and turn small tenons on both ends to mount the box into my chuck and the lid into a glue block. The lid end I turn down to a diameter just larger than the lid will be and about 3/4-in. long. To cut off the lid area I put the small flat side I left on the outside on the bandsaw and cut off the lid. This gives me a thin straight cut.

I mount the box section in my



The author cuts slots in the bridge using a large carbide bit chucked in his drill press.

To sand where the narrowest grooves come to a point the author wraps sandpaper around his pocket knife.

chuck and mark the tenon diameter by using a dial indicator that is set to the tenon diameter. I turn the inside of the box using a 1/2-in. bowl gouge, just smaller than the tenon and straight down past the depth of the tenon and then curve it inwards to the center of the box. To determine the depth for the box's inside, I measure the distance from the top of the bridge tenon to a flat surface. I subtract about 3/8 in. from that measurement for my depth. After the inside is turned and sanded I start enlarging the opening until the tenon starts to fit into the box. At this time I am also shaping the top of the box to fit under the bridge. When the tenon fits into the box, it will also seat on to the base of the recess. I cut a groove at the base of the recess so that if I put too much glue in the joint hopefully it will go into the groove shown in the drawing on the second page of this article. After I shape the top of the box , I do as much of the bottom as I can reach. This allows me to sand the top and outer edge.

To reverse chuck the box, I use plastic jaws on my chuck. I have turned steps into the jaws that will fit different size box openings. I use my bowl gouge to finish turning the bottom of the box, leaving the bottom about 1/8-in.-thick. I sand the bottom to the outer edge. Since the lid piece is so thin, I turn a glue block with a recess for the tenon to super glue the lid to. I find the diameter of the lid recess with a dial caliper and turn to 1/8 in. of that diameter. I then turn the bottom of the lid so that there is a flat outer edge that will sit on the base of the lid recess. I only turn a slight recess in the rest of the bottom, so that the center of the lid will be thick enough to drill a hole in which the knob will fit. Using a 3/8-in. spindle gouge turned at a steep angle, I get a cut that requires very little sanding. I check the fit of the lid in the recess and make sure the rim is above the bridge. I sand the bottom and lightly sand the tenon to clean it up.

The rim of the lid will cover the gap of the loose fitting lid so the diameters vary depending on how much of the bridge I want to reveal. Because the lid tenon is so short, it doesn't give me very much wood to grip when I reverse chuck the lid. So I start shaping the top of the lid as I part it off the glue block. This way I only have to take some fine cuts on the top when I reverse chuck it. To reverse chuck the lid I turn a jam chuck that has a thin wall thickness so that I can get under the rim to pry it out. I finish turning the lid with a bowl gouge, taking light cuts, then sand to the same grit as the box, which is usually 800 grit. I then drill a 1/8-in. hole in the center of the lid that will be about 1/4-in. deep.

To turn the knob I use a piece of the wood that the bridge was made of. If I used the whole piece of wood to make the bridge I turn the knob out of the cone I parted from the center of the bridge. I cut a length about 1 1/2-in. long and 3/4-in. square. I mount this piece into a chuck and turn it down to around 3/8-in. diameter. I turn a tenon on the end that fits very tightly in the lid. For the shape of the knob I like a simple design that will not distract from the overall shape of the box. Using a 3/8-in. spindle gouge I turn a wide base and taper it to the top until it is so thin that it comes off the lathe.

To sand the knob I drill a 1/8-in. hole into the wood that is left in the chuck. Because the tenon was turned to fit tightly I jam it into the hole and sand the entire knob. Since the knob fits so tightly I hand sand the tenon to get a snug fit into the lid. After all the pieces are turned and sanded I finish them with Watco oil.

I put a coat of finish on all the parts and let them dry for 24 hours. All woods, except cocobolo, receive at least two coats of finish. I sand between coats with 1000-grit sandpaper. When I achieve the desired finish, I apply a coat of Antiquax.

For cocobolo I apply only one coat of finish, sand with 1000-grit sandpaper, and apply a coat of Renaissance wax.

Last I epoxy together the bridge and box and also the knob and lid. I check the bridge and box to see if the piece sits flat. If it doesn't, I place a piece of sandpaper, usually 320-grit, on a flat surface and square it up.

Gary Sanders is a turner in Greenville, TX

'Tis the Season

An Easy-to-turn Snowman Ornament

NICK COOK

With the holiday season upon us, many start thinking about handmade ornaments or decorations.

The possibilities are endless: bells to trees, hollow vessels to miniature birdhouses, snowmen and everything in between. Some of my ornaments are very complicated, but this snowman is very simple. Almost anyone can make it with a little practice and patience. It is also an excellent project to help develop your skills with the skew.

A flurry of traditional-style ornaments from the turner's shop.The author's decorative paint technique on the snowman also enlivens the pine-tree stoppers.

Stock and weight

Weight is a major factor when making ornaments. In fact, the local "Festival of Trees" has restricted ornaments to a maximum of only $2^{1}/_{2}$ ounces. Choose your stock carefully or downsize the ornament to keep the weight down.

I have selected basswood for this snowman ornament. It is both light in weight and in color, so you won't have to paint it. Basswood is also very easy to turn as long as your tools are sharp. Walnut or most any other dark wood will work well for the top hat.

As a production item that I make to sell, I have found it more productive to make these snowmen two at a time between centers. It saves both time and material, even if you aren't going to sell them. Plus, you can't ever have too many ornaments. I start with $^{8}/_{4}$-stock and cut it into squares approximately $1^{3}/_{4}$ x $1^{3}/_{4}$-in. Before cutting to length, I set the bandsaw table to 45° and saw the corners from the material. The resulting 8-sided or octagonal shapes are faster and easier to turn. With the bandsaw reset to square, I use a sliding table to cut the basswood stock to 8-in. lengths. The blanks are now ready to turn.

To speed production, Cook turns two snowmen at a time with the blank between centers. The two units are bandsawn apart after being sanded.

The walnut stock is prepared in the same manner. The final blanks should be about $1^{1}/_{2}$-in. square by 4-to-6-in. long. Even smaller scraps and off-fall from other projects will work fine.

Turning the bodies

I use a $^{1}/_{2}$-in. mini-spur drive and a cup-shaped live center to turn most small-to-medium-sized spindles. This is an ideal combination for these snowmen ornaments.

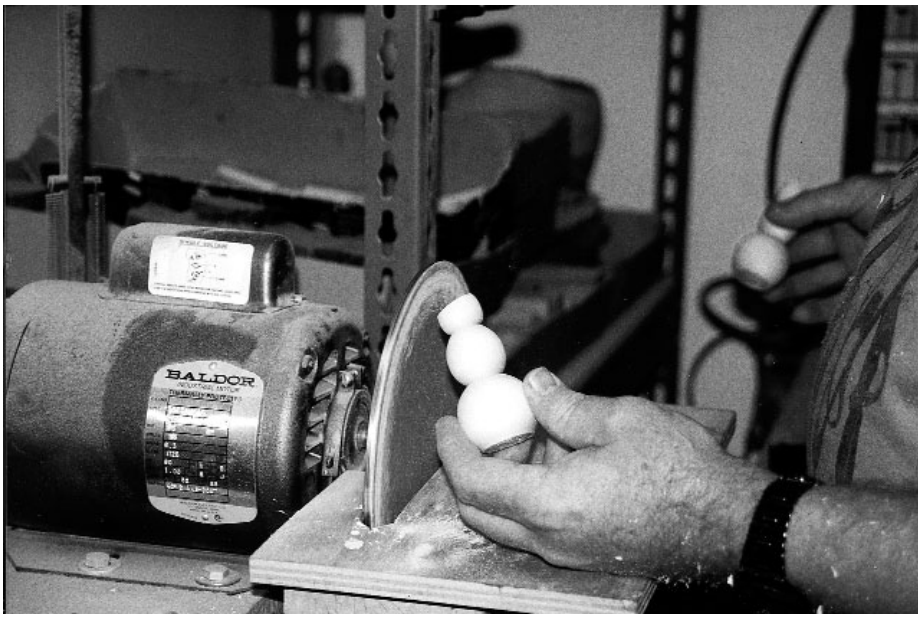
Mount the blank between centers and position the tool rest just below the centerline. It should be parallel to the stock and about $^{1}/_{8}$ in. from the corners. Always rotate the stock by hand to ensure clearance all around before turning the lathe on.

Set the lathe speed at approximately 2000 RPM and start the machine. You can use a large roughing gouge at first, if you like, but a large skew is a better choice. I prefer the $1^1/_4$-in. oval skew. Using this tool on a wood as soft as basswood is not only fun, but it also helps to build confidence and skill with the skew.

Rough turn the blank to a cylinder as large as you can keep it. Measure and mark the blank to lay out the two snowmen. I use a marking gauge or layout tool for marking the three sections of each snowman. This tool is simple to make and will save a lot of time, especially if you are making multiples. I set the tool for the following dimensions. I leave the bottom of the ornament full diameter x $1^1/_4$-in. long. The middle section is about 1-in.-dia. x $1^1/_8$-in.-long and the head is $^3/_4$-in.-dia. and $^3/_4$-in. long.

The gauge is made from a small piece of scrap lumber approximately 10-in.-long and two-to-three-in. wide. Measure and mark the gauge where you will make cuts in the turning blank. Use small brads nailed into the edge of the gauge and cut off the heads with wire cutters to leave sharp ends on the brads. You may need to tap the ends of the brads to make them the same length for marking the blank. You are ready to mark the basswood blank.

I use a $^3/_8$-in. bedan tool to cut about half way through the material at the center of the blank to separate the two ornaments. With layout lines in place, I use either the $^3/_8$-in. bedan or $^3/_8$-in. parting tool with a turning gate attached to rough down the center section of each snowman to approximately $1^1/_8$ in. Next turn down the outer ends of each to $^3/_4$-in-dia. You can use a separate parting tool with another turning gate or just use the same one and turn down past the gate to approximately $^3/_4$-in. You should now have two halves cut to three different diameters each.



After the snowmen are sawn apart, angle the top of each on a sander, so the hat will sit at a festive angle.

Now comes the fun part, turning the three segments into beads. This is where you learn to use the skew. I prefer the $^3/_8$-in. round skew for this, but most any style of skew will work. The round profile makes rolling a bead very easy. First take the long point of the skew and cut straight down the side of each segment. Then make a second cut at each point to produce a half of a "V". This will give you room to roll each of the beads. You may or may not want to mark the center of each bead with a pencil line. This can help in making each of the beads uniform.

Lay the flat of the bevel on the centerline and roll the skew in each direction to produce a well-rounded bead of each segment. Take care not to get in a hurry. Several lighter cuts work much better than trying to take it in one heavier cut. It will also help in building your confidence.

Once all six beads have been turned and the intersections are crisp "V's", you are ready to sand the surface. Clean cuts on basswood should allow you to sand with 180-or-220-grit sandpaper. Anything heavier will leave scratches. Use a small parting tool to cut down each end of the blank and at the center. Remove the blank from the lathe and finish cutting with the bandsaw or a handsaw.

With the two ornaments separated, you can now sand the ends of each. Use a belt or disk sander with 60-or-80-grit sandpaper to sand the bottom of each piece flat. Sand the top or head of each snowman at a slight angle to make his hat tip to one side.

Turning the top hat

Place the walnut blank in a scroll chuck. Use a skew or gouge to rough the blank to a cylinder approximately 1-in.-dia. Trim the exposed end of the blank to a slight dome with a skew or small spindle gouge. Measure back about 1 in. and make a parting cut with a thin parting tool about half way through the blank. Use a small skew to shape the top hat and brim. Sand with 180-grit sandpaper and part off the top hat. Use the belt or disk sander to make the bottom of the hat flat. The hat is ready to attach to the basswood snowman. Use a drop or two of Cyanoacrylate glue and

The author can turn a series of hats from a single block held in a chuck. Above, he prepares to catch a hat as he slices it free.

carefully center the hat on the head of the snowman. It is now ready for the finishing touches.

Finishing the ornament

Once assembled, spray the ornament with a clear sanding sealer before applying any other decoration. This will keep any additional finish from bleeding into the wood. Next I add the scarf. I use $^{1}/_{8}$-or $^{3}/_{16}$-in. satin ribbon available from most any fabric or craft supply store. I like dark green and red. I cut it into lengths of about 4-to-5-in. to make it easier to tie and handle. Any shorter and it is almost impossible to work with. I tie the ribbon around the neck of the snowman and put a drop of CA glue on the knot to keep it from coming apart. I then cut off the excess ribbon with scissors and tack the ends down with tacky glue. It is also available in fabric and craft stores. Apply it to the ribbon with the end of a toothpick to avoid getting too much. Allow the tacky glue to set before proceeding.

Buttons, eyes, nose and mouth are created with polymer paint which dries proud of the surface. Other accents can be added with permanent markers.

After the tacky glue is dry, you may now work on the buttons, eyes, nose and mouth. I use Puff paint for all but the mouth. It too is available in fabric and craft stores in most any color. It is polymer paint and comes in an applicator bottle. Simply cut the tip and it is ready to apply. Squeeze the bottle with tip at the point you wish to leave a dot and pull the tip up from the surface. It will leave a small lump of paint. Black works well for eyes, buttons and even the nose if you like. Orange is a good choice if you want the nose to look like a carrot. You can use the same paint to decorate wine stoppers and other projects.

For the mouth, I use an indelible fine tip magic marker such as the Sharpie. Four or five dots in an arch gives the snowman a big smile. Put the ornaments aside to allow to dry before proceeding. After the paint has dried, I apply a coat of clear satin lacquer to seal the final product.

The only thing left is a screw eye for hanging the ornament. I use tiny silver or brass colored eyes. I drill a pilot hole at the drill press to make sure it goes in straight. Make sure you center the hole on the body of the ornament and not the top hat since it is at an angle. This would cause the ornament to hang at an angle. These make great stocking stuffers, tree ornaments or decorations of holiday packages. Happy Holidays.

Nick Cook is a writer, teacher and professional turner in Marietta, GA. Photos by Cathy Wike-Cook

CONFETTI OIL LAMPS

Turn on a little light and romance

BOB ROSAND

I MAKE MY LIVING AS A WOODTURNER, so I turn a wide variety of items, including many that are destined to be used as gifts. One of the more popular ones in this category is my confetti oil lamp.

A confetti oil lamp is simply a turned base that encloses a glass vial of oil into which a wick fits. The flame produced as the oil burns is about equivalent to that produced by a candle, and each lamp burns for a couple of hours before needing to be refilled. That makes these lamps just about right for those romantic evenings with your significant other.

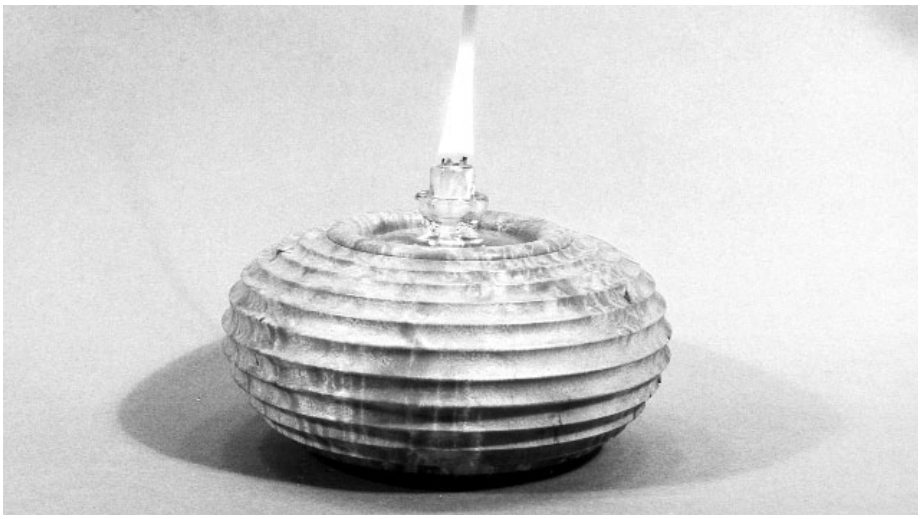
Maple burl is one of my favorite woods, so I turn a lot of it, and end up with many small pieces that are just too pretty to toss into the fireplace. I make most of my lamp bases out of these burl odds and ends that I have laying around from larger projects.

I start with pieces 4-in.-square X 2-in. thick. I glue this blank to a waste block that I hold in a three-or-four jaw chuck. The waste block helps keep my fingers away from the jaws of the chuck and also allows me to minimize any waste of the precious burl.

Begin by roughing the base of the lamp down to a cylinder and then true up what will be the top of the oil lamp. Tool choice is up to you, but I generally use a $^3/_8$-in. or $^1/_2$-in. gouge.

At this point, you should drill a hole to accept the lamp base (or the tea light, if you prefer that option as discussed in the Supplies box). I use a $1^1/_2$-in. Forstner drill bit and bore down until I'm just short of the depth needed for the finished bottom. Then I use two small scrapers, a round-nosed and a square-nosed, to clean up the little dimple left by the drill bit. This generally removes enough material so that the lamp base can "sit down" into the base a bit.

Originally I drilled a small hole into the base and then used a square-nosed scraper to clean out the rest of the lamp opening. You can do it that way, if you prefer, but I now generally find it easier to bore out the bulk of the waste and just clean up the bottom a bit. The $1^1/_2$-in. diameter drill bit also allows for a loose fit around the lamps I use, so that the lamp base can be removed for easy refilling and cleaning. Before boring the hole, check the diameter of the lamp you buy, to ensure that you are using the correct bit to allow the lamp to fit easily in the hole.

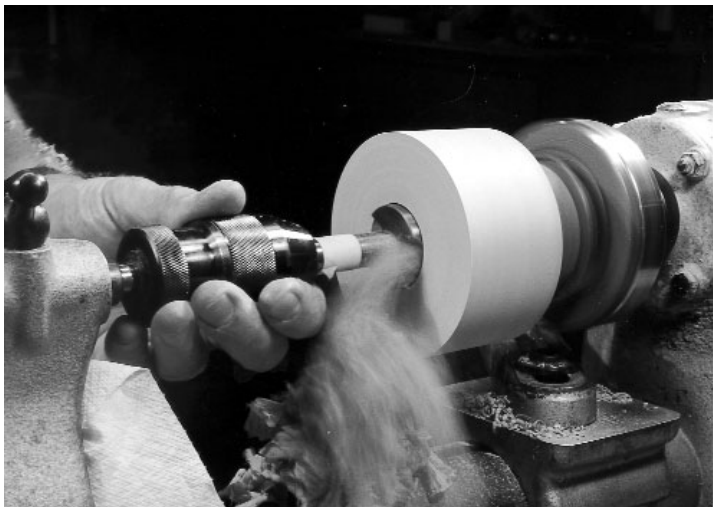


Bob Rosand's confetti lamp is a delightful project, that will make a great gift and allow every turner lots of room for individual design ideas and decorative touches. The necessary raw materials and equipment, as shown below, are few and simple. Photos by Bob Rosand.

Shaping the base

Now we are ready to rough shape the base and establish a shoulder to surround the glass lamp insert. The shape can take any form you desire. I prefer a shape that has its widest diameter high, toward the top of the piece, then tapers to a relatively small base.

In designing the piece, don't forget about safety — the lamp will sustain a live flame. You must make sure that



Though you can form the lamp opening with turning tools alone, Rosand finds it faster to bore out most of the opening, then clean up the bottom of the hole with scrapers.

After establishing the opening, the author creates a flat area to surround the lamp. You could also decorate the flat, or form a bead, as shown on the next page.

the base is large enough to avoid any chance of tipping. As you are refining the shape, also keep in mind that you want to leave enough mass at the bottom of the base to keep it from vibrating or chattering.

Once the upper part of the lamp approximates your desired shape, you can begin removing more material from what will be the bottom of the lamp base, to refine that shape. This is the fun part; the possibilities are virtually unlimited.

BUYING SUPPLIES

I generally purchase confetti lights in wholesale quantities from Lamplight Farms in Menomonee, Wisconsin. (800-645-5267)

Smaller quantities can be purchased from Craft Supplies, USA (800-551-8876) or from Packard Woodworks (800-683-8876).

Another option is to go to the supermarket and purchase Tea Lights, small candles in metal containers, instead of the confetti oil lamps. The last time I checked you could buy a box of ten for about a dollar. Tea lights burn for an hour or two, then can be replaced with a new tea light.

(You can see the whole process on the AAW's second techniques video tape "Turning Projects from Scrap with Bob Rosand". An order form can be found at the back of this Journal.)

Before parting the lamp base from the waste block, you should sand it. If you've made good clean cuts, sanding shouldn't be much of a chore. I generally start with about 150-grit and go up to about 400-grit. If your cuts are rougher, you may have to start with coarser paper, but be careful not to obliterate any details you may have added.

After you sand the piece and part it from the scrap block, you should make the bottom concave so that it sits properly. My method is to rechuck the lamp base on another shaped waste block held in the chuck. I turn a tenon that will fit into the lamp hole that I previously drilled in the lamp base. If you work carefully, you can make the tenon a tight friction fit into the base, so that you can turn and sand the bottom. If the drill wandered a bit when you bored the hole, the base might be a little off center, but don't worry about it. It probably won't be noticeable when the lamp is finished. Even so, don't get careless about the boring operation. It's best to drill as accurately as possible during the initial stages of the project. Then you don't have to worry about anything being out of line during the finishing stages of the project.

Decorations reduce sanding

After you've turned loads of these bases, you may begin searching for some variations in design. I became very tired of sanding these bases and as a result, came up with two "no-sand" or "minimal-sand" variations.

The no-sand approach involves no special tools, but does require a good sharp spindle gouge. Before removing much material from the bottom of the lamp or parting the base from the waste block, mark a series of lines with your compass, as shown on the next page, starting from the top of the oil lamp and moving down to the bottom. I space my lines anywhere from $^1/_8$-to-$^1/_4$-in. apart, but usually stick with $^3/_{16}$ in. I then make a light cove cut between the pencil lines with the nose of the spindle gouge.

Stop the lathe and look at the quality of the cut. At this point, I generally wet the piece with a mixture of sand-

Lay out coves with a compass, starting at the top. Space the lines $^1/_8$-to-$^1/_4$-in. apart, then form the coves between the lines.

Rosand turns the coves with a spindle gouge. To avoid tear out, don't crisscross any of the coves.

For added decoration, the author often cuts coves across the entire recessed bottom of the lamp.

ing sealer and turpentine (50/50) and then take a final deeper cut. The finish makes it much easier to get clean cuts on most woods. I avoid having two coves intersect; otherwise it tends to tear up the fibers of the wood. If the cut is clean, you can touch up the piece with a fine abrasive pad. Part the piece from the lathe, friction fit it and repeat the process. This is where accuracy in drilling comes into play. If the piece "wobbles" here, the final cuts may be noticeable.As an added design detail, I sometimes carry the coves all the way across the recessed base of the lamp. It's a nice effect.

The second variation involves "texturing lines." The texturing is accomplished via the use of a small spindle gouge sharpened to a fine point. I proceed exactly the way I do when cutting my small coves, but I free hand the cuts. I simply start at the top of the lamp base and work my way to the base making a series of fine cuts into the wood. There is no bevel rubbing here. I "push" the gouge in at about 90 degrees to the surface of the wood, remove it and proceed with the next cut until I have textured the entire piece. I also tend to reserve this procedure for wood that is cutting "good." I have found Optivisors, available from most tool suppliers, or some other visual aid, to be very useful when cutting these lines. Remember, you don't want the lines to overlap otherwise you tend to tear up the fibers. Touching up the piece with an abrasive pad should be all the sanding you need to do.

Bob Rosand is a full-time turner, teacher and writer in Bloomsburg, PA., and a member of the AAW Board of Directors. "Turning Projects from Scrap with Bob Rosand" *is available from the AAW office in Shoreview, MN.*

LATHE MODIFICATIONS

Shop-built accessories enhance any lathe

THEODORE FINK

YOU'VE HAD YOUR LATHE FOR A while and you've stabilized it with bracing and ballast. Perhaps you've added some fancy chucks and better lighting, but as you step back from the lathe you still notice problems.

Your turning tools are set on every available surface, intermixed with chucks, spur centers, hones, wrenches, sanding discs and finishing waxes. How can you get a handle on this mess?

Help is just a few simple do-it-yourself projects away.

The first is to make a built-in-nest of drawers, as shown beneath my lathe in the photo at right.

Because your legs will be pressed against these drawers they must not have any projecting pulls. The solution is to turn them directly into the drawer faces. This method also eliminates the possibility of electric cords becoming snagged while doing such operations as power sanding.

The bottom of some of the drawers can be fitted with basswood inserts carved to hold individual accessories, as shown in the top right photo on the next page. This eliminates searching for specific items and avoids their vibrating against one another causing damage and noise.

To prevent the drawers from vibrating open, install a small roller-ball cabinet catch at the back of each drawer.

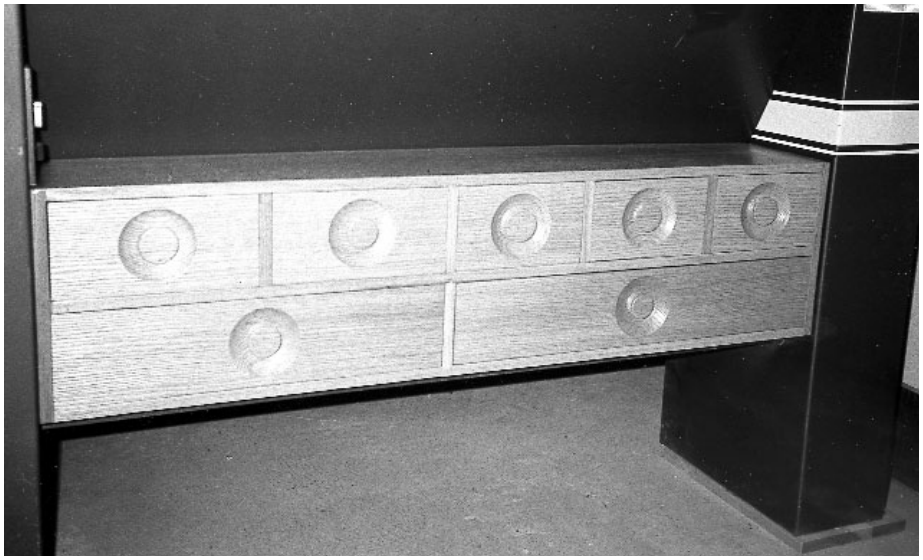
A built-in nest of drawers and tool carousels are among the simple shop-built projects that can make your turning time more pleasant and efficient

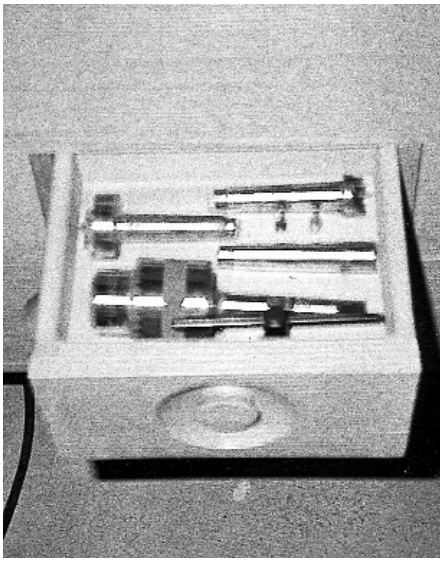
Set up a tool carousel

One of the most obvious problems in turning is where to place the five to ten tools that you may be using on a particular piece. The solution is to use a carousel, as shown on the next page, lower left, uniquely designed (modified idea of Ken Storey, *American Woodturner* Fall 1997) for turning tools. Then place the carousel on a moveable tray, as shown on the next page, lower right, which sets into the lathe bed.

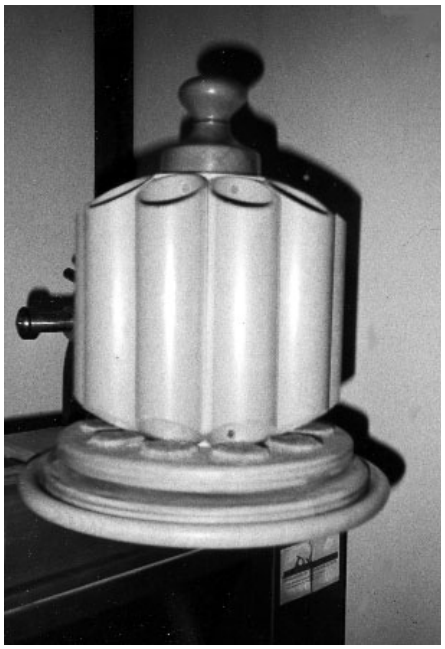
This tray should have a high lip and be turned very slightly concave for greatest stability. A downsized carousel for microturning tools can be used with the same tray.

The tubes that hold the tools are beveled, top and bottom, at 30 degrees. The top bevel eases and speeds setting the tool into the tube and the bottom bevel allows shavings and chips to pass through the tubes. Each tube has a pad at its base to soften the handle's striking of the





Nesting set of drawers enhances the look of lathe, by eliminating a common shelf of clutter and chips, plus providing organized storage for frequently used tools. Drawers can be fitted with basswood supports to prevent damage.



Carousel provides a handy, safe way to store even the largest gouges.

Moveable tray, shown above, sets into the lathe bed, providing an ideal platform for a tool carousel or other items.

base as it falls into the tube. A large turned handle epoxied to the top allows easy carrying of the carousel.

Place five of the beveled tubes side by side in two or more rows and mount it on the wall next to or behind the lathe and you have a neat, functional turning tool storage rack.

The final modification is to put enough $1/4$-in. pegboard near your lathe to give you quick and easy access to faceplates, wrenches, face masks, respirators, hearing protectors, calipers and dividers.

If you plan to put threaded chucks or faceplates on metal pegboard pegs, cover the pegs with drilled pieces of dowel to avoid any damage to the threads. After putting it all together, I ended up with the shop shown on the previous page.

Theodore Fink is a woodturner in Shelburne, VT.

East Meets West

Tacoma show enchants Japanese

ALAN LACER

What began as idle speculation when I first visited Japan in 1995 — a joint show of Western and Japanese woodturning —– came into being this year, to the delight of audiences in both countries.

The idea of such an East Meets West(EMW) show sounded interesting from the first, but the project was fraught with difficulties: selection of work, transportation, insurance, risk of damage, customs, sales, exhibition costs and numerous other details.

In organizing the show, the AAW decided that one way to solve many of the problems was to create a small exhibition (25 pieces from each culture) and to limit the size of the entries to 15-in. in any direction, so that the pieces could be easily transported as extra luggage on an international flight. The customs problems were solved by obtaining ATE Carnets (an international document to speed the flow of commercial samples between countries) from both Japan and the United States.

Wedding figures by Akihiro Sakurai, an EMW participant and demonstrator at the 1995 AAW Davis Symposium.

Japanese school children, notebooks in hand, get down close to study Western-style turnings displayed in Narugo, Japan. The same show was featured in conjunction with the AAW symposium in Tacoma, WA.

Guides for international jurying

The selection process varied considerably from Japan to the United States.

In Japan pieces were selected from the northern region — an area rich in both woodturning and lacquer work. Many of the pieces were selected as being representative of particular types or styles of turnings or from individuals well known for their fine work. Several of the toys were loaned from the National Kokeshi and Toy Museum, and the makers were not even identified.

The AAW used a combination of jury and invitation to make the selection of Western work. The invited turners were selected by the AAW Board of Directors for their many years of commitment and involvement in the woodturning field: Mel Lindquist, Bob Stocksdale, Palmer Sharpless, Dale Nish, and Rude Osolnik. The other 20 pieces were selected by a strict jurying process.

The US jurying was open to any individual doing Western-style woodturning, in any country, of any age, new work or old work, work for sale or not for sale. The only restrictions were the 15-in. size rule and that woodturning be an essential component of the work. The jurors were Ray Ferguson (retired art education professor) and Dave and Ruth Waterbury (long-time collectors of woodturning).

Seventy-five individuals from eight countries submitted slides for a total of 186 pieces. About 10 pieces were excluded from the jurying for exceeding the size restriction. To move from 176 pieces to 20 was an involved process. The jurors — without knowing the names of the makers — cycled through the slides several times to get a feel for the submissions. Once there was a clear view of the pool, the jurors decided upon two important points to make their selections: only one piece per maker

would be in the final selection (due to the small number being selected) and that they would pick work representative of types of turning being done in the West — to give a broader picture to the Japanese of our work.

After watching this process with the jurors, I really came to understand the importance of slides — a less than ideal method for picking the "best" work, but the most practical approach. A "professional slide" does not simply mean clear quality and good lighting and background, but what specific information about a piece is offered in the slide. A sizeable number of excellent pieces were probably excluded from the show simply because their sides presented incomplete information — really worth pondering for those of you serious about entering exhibitions and higher end craft shows.

The show opened on June 17th in Tacoma, WA, the night before the AAW annual Symposium kicked off. Housed in the Handforth Gallery, part of the Tacoma Public Library building, the show was well attended during its six-week duration. It was estimated that between 60,000 and 75,000 individuals, many of them young people, saw all or part of the show. The fine display cases, professional lighting, and openness of the show led to numerous positive comments in the exhibition journal.

Views of the East Meets West Show in Japan: Displays in the large halls drew crowds to both the turnings and demonstrations of technique. And turners everywhere found time to talk about tools and what they could do. Photos by author.

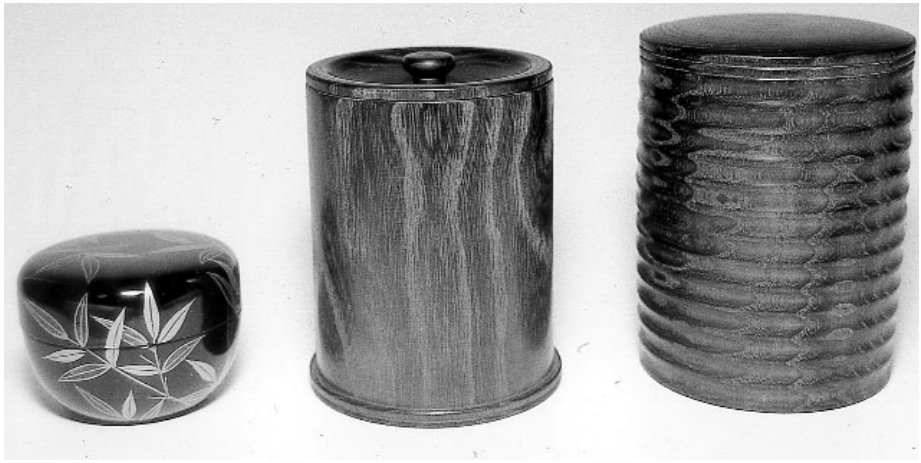
Show moves to Japan

The show next moved to Narugo, Japan. Narugo, in the north near the major city of Sendai, is off the beaten path. Not a Mecca for Western travelers, as we found out on the journey to attend the opening. Narugo has been for centuries a destination point for Japanese visitors, primarily due to the mountainous terrain and remarkable number of natural hot springs.

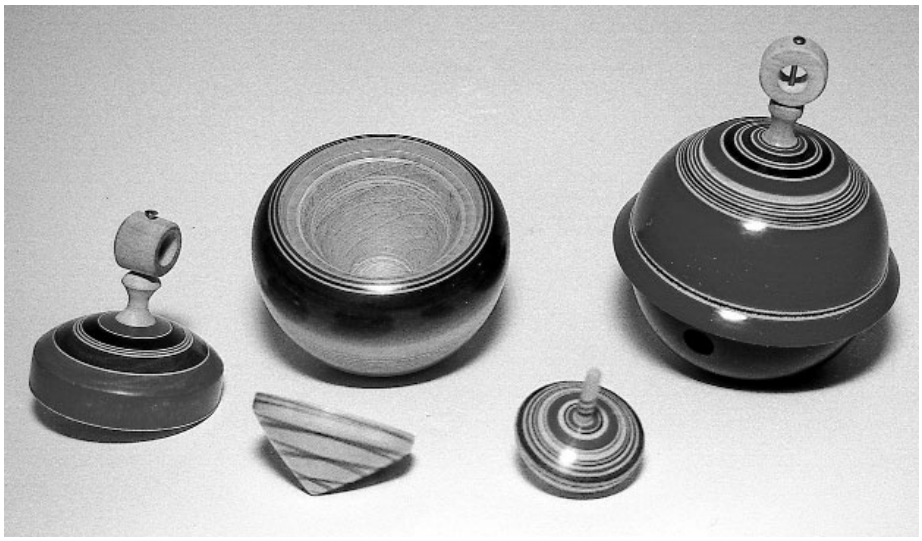
It has also been a center of turning activity for several hundred years. As a matter of fact, with approximately 75 turners just in the town, woodturning is the major commercial activity. There are also many fine lacquer ware artists in this same locale. Every year towards the end of summer, the area hosts the National Kokeshi Festival, as well as a regional lacquerware exhibition and flower arranging competition. The EMW show opened in time to be part of the festivities.

Finding an appropriate exhibition space in Narugo was a bit of a challenge. Community or private galleries in the Western sense were not to be had. What serves as the local school's gymnasium and a civic center was converted before my eyes into a huge gallery and demonstration space. Temporary walls, cases, pedestals and the like bloomed from the energetic work of a large cadre of woodturners and volunteers. Once the area was

Turnings from Western turners shine in a very oriental setting during visit to Japan.



Lacer found boxes by Hisaya Saitoh stunning in fit, feel and attention to detail. The piece on the right is a full cover for the center box.



Michiaki Hiroi, a turner for 40 years, delights in turning and impressed the author with his 50 models of tops, jewels of creativity and technical mastery.The three pieces on the left are all part of one "jumping top" — all three are spun as one top and when the cover, far left, is removed, the smaller top literally jumps out spinning.

completed it was literally filled with hundreds (if not thousands) of turnings — representing some of the best work being done in Japan today.

Turners slept with display

Because of the extraordinary dollar value and delicacy of many of the Western pieces that traveled to Narugo, the EMW show was placed inside of cases. Also, woodturners slept in the building to protect all the work (I was told that they weren't worried about theft; the simple curiosity of folks wanting to handle the work was their greatest concern).

Once the festival began thousands of folks streamed through the great hall to see the works, award winners for this year, and to watch a wide variety of demonstrations — contemporary Japanese turning, traditional turning on human-powered lathes, painting techniques, tea ceremony, and even Western-style turning.

The response to the Western work was across the whole spectrum of reactions — as it is with most of us, too! The humor, use of materials, highly figured wood, thinness, coloring and the like brought many positive comments.

Following the Kokeshi Festival the East Meets West show had two more short visits. The first was for several days in the National Kokeshi and Toy Museum located in the mountains just outside of Narugo. There another 400-to-500 people viewed the show. Lastly, the night before I left to return with the show to the U.S. I picked nine pieces to be featured at a discussion session with some of their leading turners and lacquerware artists. That night we talked at length about the two cultures, turning traditions, current trends and the future. I did my best to gather comments about our work from folks who really had not been exposed to such things — but were themselves outstanding craftsmen.

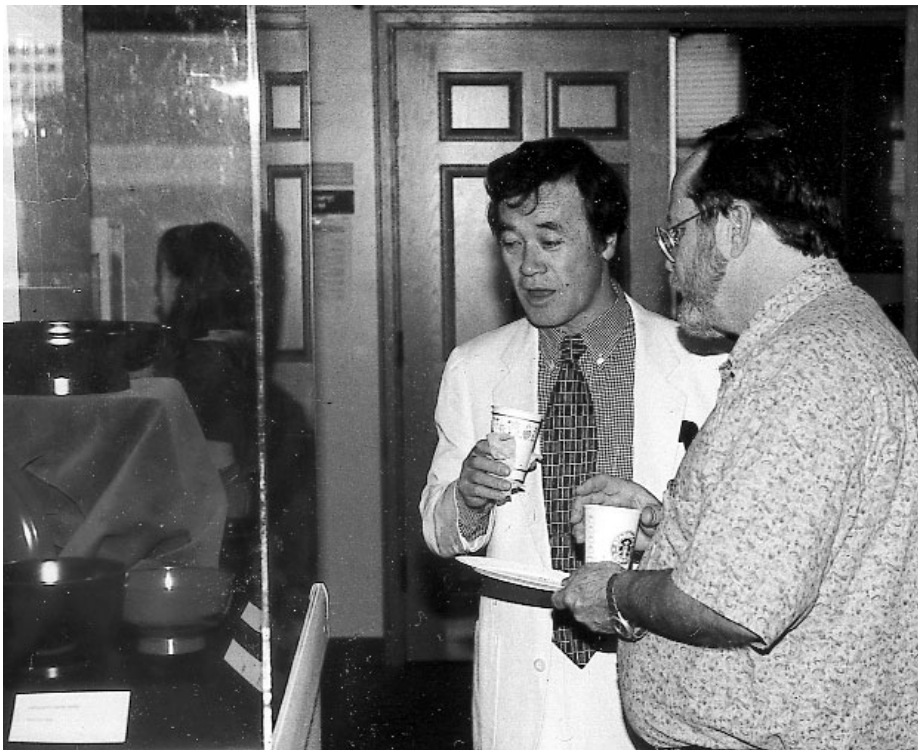
In the little time I had free away from setting up the show and demonstrating, I once again had the great fortune to visit the shops of a number of the finest Japanese turners.

My visit to Hisaya Saitoh was overwhelming. This man has been turning boxes since 1938 and is still going strong. His boxes had an incredible fit of lid to base, a fine feel in your hand, and real attention to details.

Next, my visit to one of Japan's most renown top makers was pure joy! Michiaki Hiroi has been at it for probably over 40 years and still laughs and gets excited about a great spin from one of his tops. I'm sure I counted over 50 varieties of tops this man makes — and with many it was not very obvious that they are really tops. The use of color, incredible creativity and imagination, and technical ability with his designs was astonishing.

And the shop of Katsuo Sasahara, with whom I had turned a bowl five years earlier, is still one of the most valued experiences I have ever had in my turning career. This man does it all. A turner for more than 40 years, he creates hollow turnings, lidded boxes, bowls, plates, wine cups, and on and on. He understands a fine line as well or better than any turner I have ever met.

This show was a departure from what most of us in the US have grown accustomed to in exhibitions. Two turning traditions that grew up independently of one another, when shown side-by-side, provided a wonderful display, simply for the contrasts — whether it be for use of color and materials or for the objects themselves. Also, the realization that the turning universe is far more vast than either tradition helps everyone to keep their work in perspective. Let me go out on a limb and share with you some of my own impressions from this show and related activities.



At a reception opening the East Meets West show, the author, right, discusses lacquerware with Mr. Masanobu Yusa, who acted as translator for the Japanese turners at the Tacoma Symposium and chief organizer of the show in Japan.

It seemed a little hard for the makers on both sides to fully appreciate what the other tradition has done. The public, according to the comments, seemed to move more easily than the turners between the two traditions and appreciate good work no matter where or how it was made.

Once turners loosened up and showed a willingness to be open to the other tradition — then the appreciation of good work started to flow.

Also, I found myself becoming more critical of our work in general, the more I saw some of the best Japanese work and makers up close. While in Japan I often felt that too much of our current work was a bit clunky, oversized, immature in understanding a form, lacking in refinement, or had too much reliance on novelty.

I'm sorry, but I don't think we have anything over the Japanese turners in design or execution–only different objects and a much, much wider band of forms and objects that we explore. Their understanding of lines, use of color, subtlety, refinement, and a strong desire to produce objects that are pleasing is hard to top.

And in the five years between trips to Japan I saw exploration and new techniques that were not there before–texturing, use of translucent colored lacquers over highly figured woods, and the adoption of some Western turning methods to name but a few.

There is so much that different turning traditions can learn from each other. I can only hope that this exhibition sets the stage for future exchanges with Japan and other parts of the world.

Alan Lacer is a turner, writer and teacher in Shoreview, MN., and a contributing editor of American Woodturner.

WATER-BASED URETHANE

Ancient techniques embrace modern products

DAVE RAMSEY

LACQUER FINISHING BECAME AN ART form in Japan hundreds of years ago. These artisans worked for years to develop the perfect finish for Japanese wood turnings and other objects.

Patience and flawless techniques are the hallmarks of the traditional lacquer craftsmen. And I've found that these qualities and the ancient concepts developed in Japan, combined with the state-of-the-art finishes we have now, can enable today's woodturner to produce exceptional finishes.

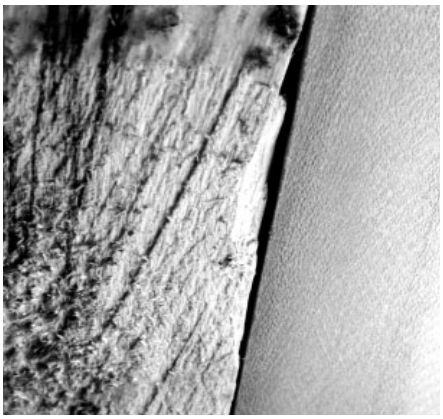
Among the modern materials that have worked exceptionally well in my work are water-based finishes, which were developed in the 1970's in response to California's prohibition of air-polluting, volatile organic compound (VOC) based finishes. Working with these products demands some special techniques, and in this article I will describe my process for obtaining a museum-grade finish on a turning. Water-based finishes today are excellent, far better than some of the earlier products which some considered inferior to the more-established VOC products. The lack of VOC makes breathing safer for the finisher.

Water-based urethane finish is available at most paint or hardware stores. I have tried many brands, but the one I like the best is the General Finishes High Performance Gloss Polyurethane. (Available from Woodcraft: 800-225-1153 or Woodsmith: 515-255-8979)

Applying the finish

The first challenge with the finish is that once applied, it runs like water. Keep your turning on the lathe and slowly hand-rotate it as you brush on the finish.

Use a soft brush to "mop" on the urethane. I have found the Craft Supplies USA Pony Hair Mop Brush (800-551-8876) or Windsor and Newton Series 240, No. 3 (from an art supply store) work well. When finished, be sure to wash the brush thoroughly under cool tap water. Once dry, polyurethane is no longer water soluble.



As he finishes a spalted hackberry turning, above, the author uses a small brush to fill a crack in the wood with urethane. Vessel as shown has six coats of urethane and will probably need five-to-eight more coats to achieve a fine finish. The author refills the crack with urethane before applying each successive coat.
Photo at right shows how spalted hackberry compares with maple, a fine-grain wood. Hackberry has a much more open grain with many fissures.

When the piece is covered with the urethane, continue rotating while you blow on it with hot air from an electric hair dryer. This will evaporate some of the water and stabilize the finish until it hardens. At room temperature and low humidity, the finish dries in about three hours.

The water finish will raise the wood grain for the first coat only. After the finish dries to the point where sanding removes a powdery residue, you can run the lathe at about 600-RPM and sand with 220-grit paper held with an insulating pad to keep the friction-produced heat from burning your hand. Keep the paper moving on the vessel to avoid a streaky build up of urethane on one area caused by overheating. If this should happen, remove the streaks by carefully hand sanding the static vessel with 150-grit paper before applying the next coat of finish.

Never hurry the process

When you are finished sanding,

wipe the vessel with a cloth to remove spent sand particles left from the paper. Apply additional coats of finish in the same way you did the first coast. Obtaining a smooth "feel good" finish will require six-to-fifteen coats of finish, depending on the grain structure of the wood. Open grain woods such as oak or padauk require more coats of finish than hard maple or ebony.

Like the Japanese artisans, today's woodworker will find that patience in applying repeated coatings will produce the kind of finish that wins acclaim. Never try to hurry the process.

Repairing cracks and gaps

Most vessels will have small gaps or cracks which can easily be filled with urethane. Examine your turning under a bright light and use a small brush or toothpick to place finish in the voids. If there are large voids, fill them with cyanoacrylate glue (available from Craft Supplies) after applying one coat of urethane. Hand sand the excess glue and proceed with urethane finishing.

Sanding final coats

As the finish begins to build up, sanding technique must be modified to prepare for the final coat of polyurethane. After sanding the first five coats of finish, I use flexible abrasive pads (from Woodcraft) to smooth instead of sandpaper. Use the coarse pad, then work to the fine pad. The pads will produce a more even, unstreaked surface than can be obtained by common sandpaper. Keep on building additional coatings of finish until the surface is free of grain indentations.

If your vessel shows brush marks which aren't removed with the abrasive pads, sand with 320-or-400-grit paper discs mounted on a three inch Sorby Velcro Bowl Sanding System (Woodcraft) held in an electric drill.

Carefully examine the turning off the lathe and under a bright light. By now, even tiny flaws should be filled and become invisible. If not, patiently apply more urethane, let dry and sand, repeating until the flaw is filled. When the vessel appears free of defects, apply one more coat of finish and let it dry overnight.

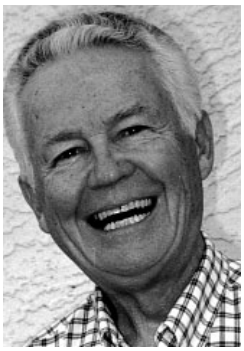
The author uses an ordinary, household hair dryer to stabilize the water-based urethane after coating the vessel.

The final coat is smoothed with the gray Woodcraft abrasive pad at 600 RPM. Again examine the vessel to make sure it is free of defects.

Now, using a new pad of 0000 steel wool, again smooth the turning at 600 RPM. Next, polish the vessel with a tripoli loaded buffing wheel in an electric drill while the vessel is turning 600 RPM on the headstock. (buffing wheel and tripoli from Craft Supplies) Finally, apply a coat of wax followed by polishing at 800 RPM. I use Briwax or Renaissance Wax. (Craft Supplies USA)

This finishing process is not for everyone. A production turner can't lavish the time necessary for the finish and those who are in a hurry will not find it acceptable.

In my experience, the combination of a well designed turning with a museum grade finish makes for a vessel which achieves the acclaim that makes the time and effort worthwhile. Fine grade, old Japanese lacquered turnings are among the prized antiquities of the country. We can learn from their patience.



Dave Ramsey is a part-time professional woodturner in Rio Verde, AZ. He wrote about his method of making tall, segmented vessels in the December 1998 issue of American Woodturner.

SHOP-BUILT SHARPENING SYSTEM

A perfect edge on every tool, every time

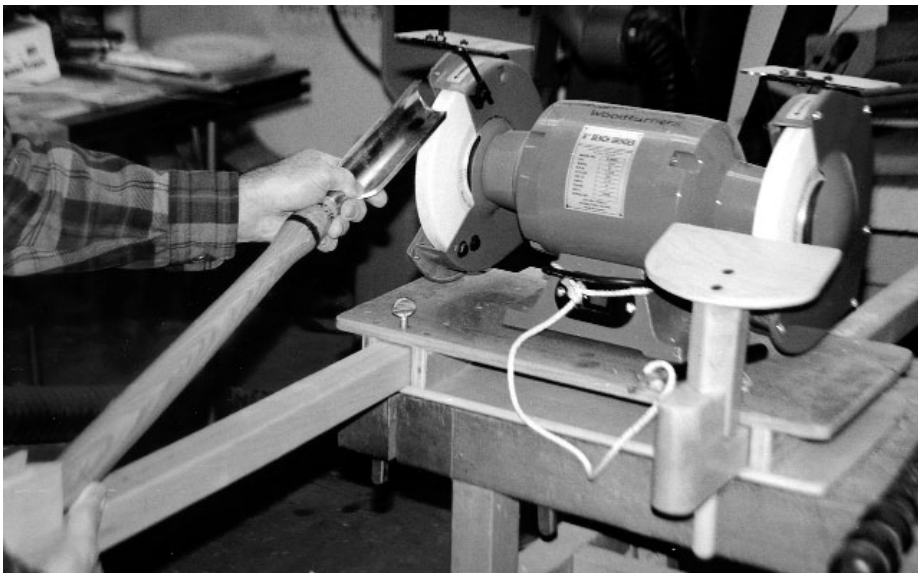
KING HEIPLE

AS "FINGERNAIL GRINDS" FOR turning tools became steadily more popular, I struggled to learn to create them freehand. And with persistence I gradually acquired reasonable proficiency, but I never could produce exactly the same angle each time and often had less than perfect results.

After buying two different commercial systems for fingernail grinds, I got much better results. But many of my fellow turners in the Northcoast Woodturners chapter in Cleveland were reluctant to make such an investment for something they doubted could make a difference in their work. When our club decided to purchase its own grinder to go with its three lathes, though, I suddenly decided that the club had to have a dedicated sharpening jig system to be really useful. In light of the club's budget, I decided to build one from scratch.

The result of my work is shown in this article. I used it at home for a month and now prefer the gouge holding jig over the commercial ones I also own!

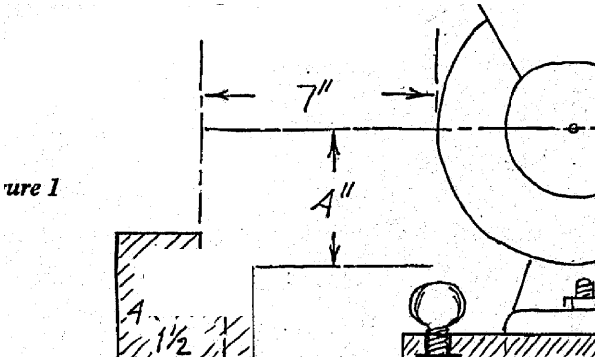
If you have some leftover plywood and a few other pieces of scrap, you can make the entire system for less than $5.00!



Author uses his sharpening system to grind a large roughing out gouge. The support arm can be adjusted to accommodate all sizes of gouges, so that each can be ground to the correct angle every time. The rest at right can be used for scrapers and skews, or can be replaced with a second gouge support..

The base and slides

The only metal parts are two $^{5}/_{16}$-in. T-nuts and matching thumbscrews, which are available from any local hardware, and enough drywall or other screws to assemble. Glue all the joints together during assembly as well; the unit has to withstand lots of vibration over time. Make the base first, as shown in the drawing on the third page of this article, then custom fit the slides to move easily. It's a good idea to make two slides at once, to avoid the hassle of changing the slide between the two wheels. By having an economical way to obtain two slides, you're already better off than you would be with a commercial unit.



ure 1

The shop-built system is very versatile. For freehand or skew sharpening, the author uses a variety of tool supports fit to the basic setup.

Figure 1 represents the side view of the grinder on its base. The height of the wood block will vary, depending upon whether your grinder has 8-in., 7-in. or 6-in. diameter wheels. Size the pieces so that the pivot dimple in the block is 4-in. below the midpoint of the face of your wheel. When I'm sharpening/grinding a bowl gouge the distance from the face of the wheel will be about 7-in.. Vary this to set your "nose angle" on your bowl gouge. I set mine to get 65° but you may use a slightly different angle.

This system will also do a spindle gouge very nicely, but the slide will be moved in towards the wheel until the nose angle is closer to 45°. Again, you may prefer something slightly different.

I built this base from $^{3}/_{4}$ in.-thick plywood, carpenter's glue, and drywall screws. Note that you have to match the center line distance between your grinder wheels fairly closely. In addition, after laying it out carefully put in your T-nuts before assembly as it would be impossible

after it is together. Better also if you recess the T-nuts flush to avoid catching your slide. Any 2x2-in. stock would make the slides, but I used some left over maple as it will be more durable and dent less from the thumbscrew end. The slides should obviously move easily in their tunnels.

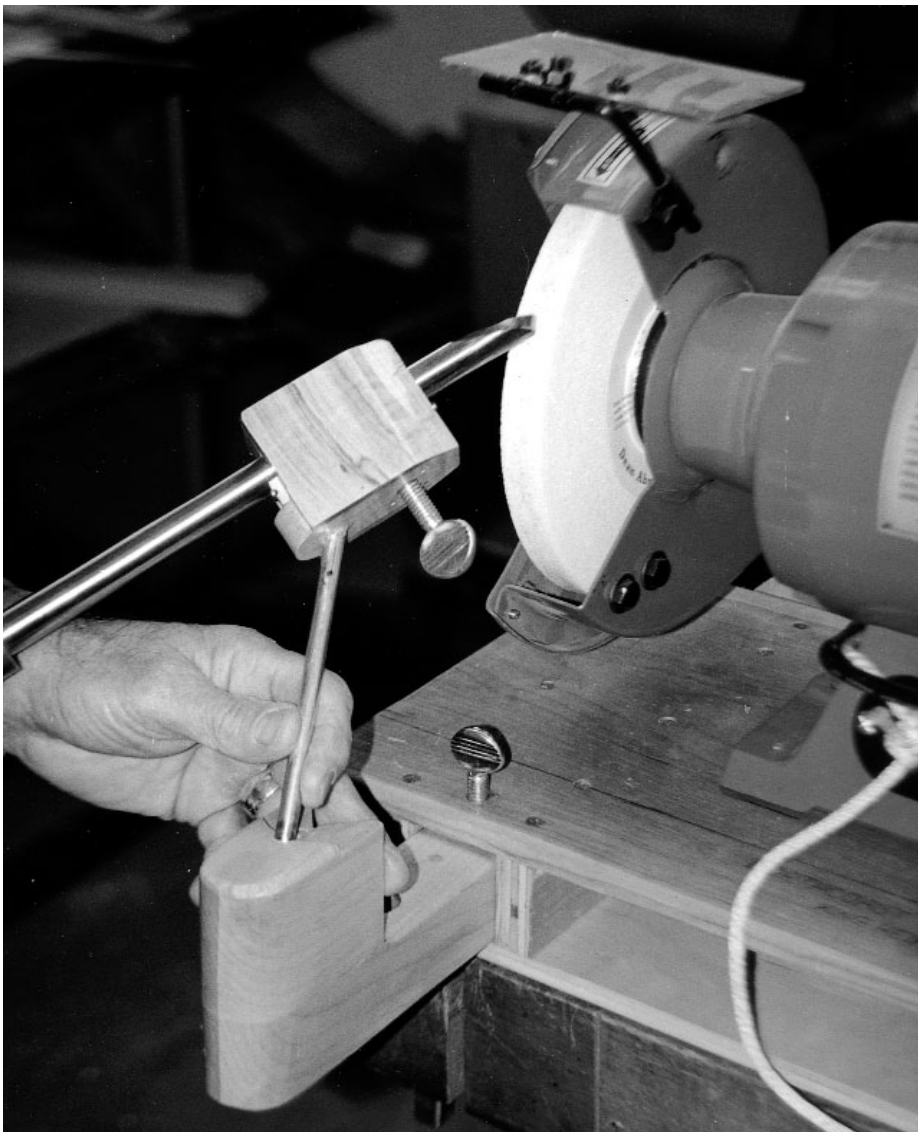
If you put the grinder at the front edge of your base you will have trouble using the thumb screws. Keep its base 3-in. back from the front edge of your base. Figures 1 and 2 are otherwise mostly self explanatory.

The Gouge Holding Jig

The various components of Figure 3 on the next page detail my Gouge Holding jig. Note that the figure has a dimensional scale along its top edge, as the dimensions of this need to be fairly accurate. If the scale lines are not 1-in. (dots = $^1/_4$ in.) apart on the illustration, enlarge (or reduce) on a photocopier for a more accurate copy.

This jig requires one $^5/_{16}$-in. T-nut and matching $1^1/_2$-in. thumbscrew and 6-in. of $^5/_{16}$-in. metal rod (which could even be from an 8-in. carriage bolt). Use any fine-grained hard wood for this. Trim to $^1/_2$-in.-thickness. Note that the grain is run vertically on the sides, as it must resist tension in this direction. While you're at it, cut yourself enough pieces to make 3-to-4 jigs at once. You probably will spoil one or more and may want to have an extra one besides.

Cut the strips for the bottom first, and drill for the pivot rod and T-nut. Put in the T-nut before assembly as it will be buried and impossible to reach after everything is assembled. Again, it should be flush with the wood. The angle for the pivot rod needs to be fairly close to 130° from the horizontal (or 50° measured the other way) If the angle is off significantly, ream out its hole a bit and epoxy or thick super-glue it in at the correct angle. The lower end of the pivot should be rounded and smooth and make sure the upper end does not protrude into the center opening.

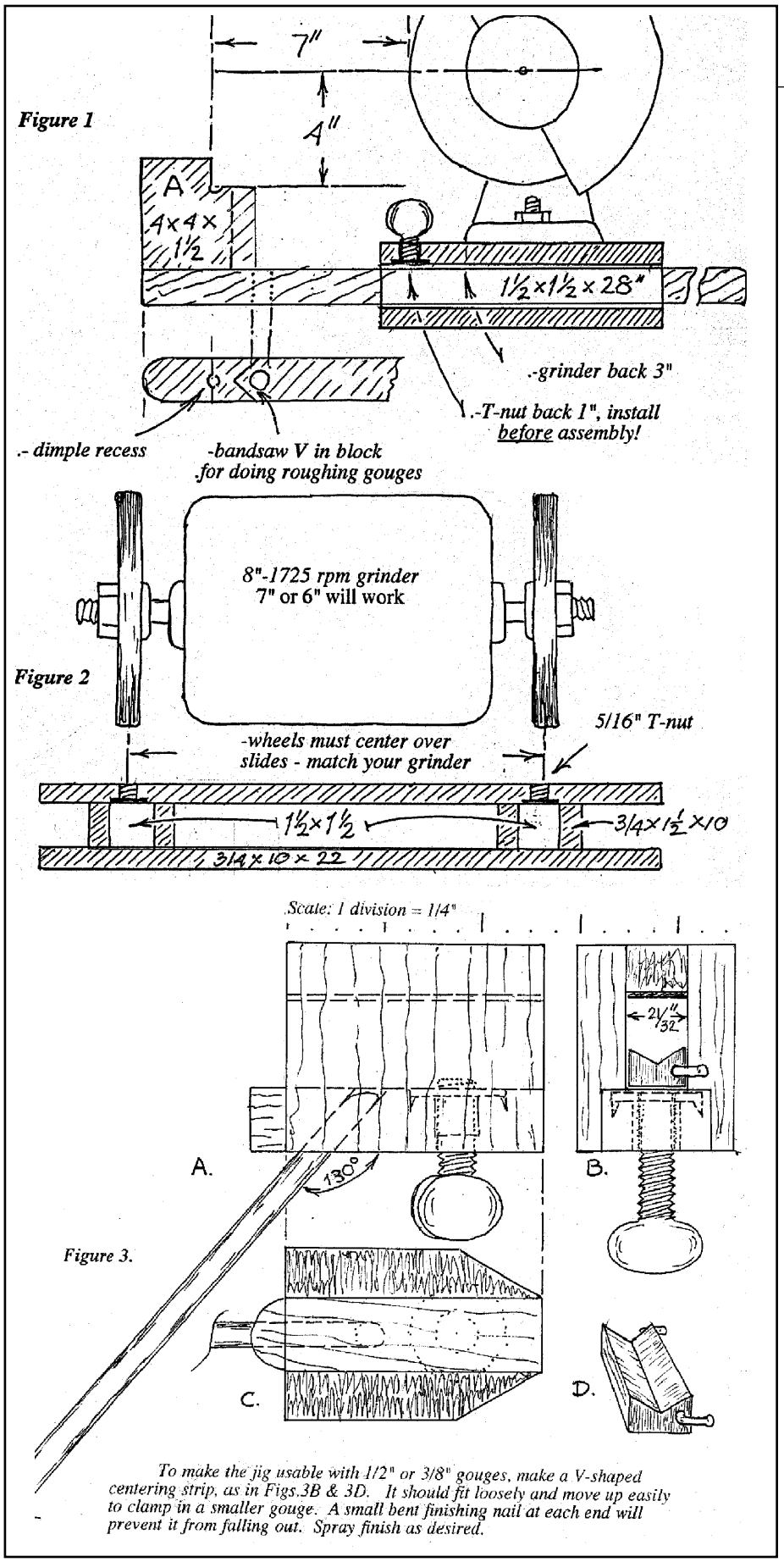


The author's simple jig, used in conjunction with his shop-built support arm makes it possible for anyone to obtain consistently perfect results when grinding the fingernail profile favored by many contemporary turners.

The side pieces (Figure 3 B) need to be carefully shouldered until the center opening is just a bit ($^1/_{32}$-in.) wider than the widest gouge you will need to sharpen, (i.e. $^{21}/_{32}$-in. for a $^5/_8$-in. gouge). And then you can cut the top strip to match this spacing.

A metal strip of any kind cemented into the top of the opening, as shown in Fig. 3B, will prevent your gouge edges from eroding your jig. When the unit has been completely assembled and aligned, and the glue is dry, trim it on a disk sander and taper the end as is shown in Fig. 3C , so that the corners of the jig do not hit the stone.

To make the jig usable with $^1/_2$-in. diameter or smaller gouges, make a 30° V-shaped centering strip, as shown in Figs. 3B & 3D. It should fit loosely and move up easily to clamp



in a smaller gouge. A small bent finishing nail at each end will prevent it from falling out.

Although this jig is primarily designed for bowl gouges, it does work quite well on spindle gouges. You may not wish to bring the grind back quite so far for spindle gouges. Take one of the several jigs you made and increase the angle between the gouge and rod to 145° (or 35° measured the other way) to produce a shorter side bevel.

My entire grinding system was finished with water-based polyurethane. It's a simple-to-apply, durable, and easy-to-clean finish.

Scraper Or Freehand Rest

For sharpening a scraper, cut-off tool or performing some other semi-freehand sharpening job, some sort of steady rest is very helpful. The one in in the drawing on the first page of this article offers many possibilities. Go back and add a vertical $^{3}/_{4}$-in. hole in each of your slides, $1^{1}/_{4}$-in. ahead of the V. (Shown in Fig. 1)

Cut a support block $1^{1}/_{2}$-in. X $2^{1}/_{4}$-in. X 8-in.-long and put a V on one edge to match the V on your slides. With it in place snugly in the V, mark the end through the hole in the slide for drilling (a dowel center is handy for this). Drill a vertical $^{3}/_{4}$-in. hole in the end and glue in a 4-to-5-in. length of $^{3}/_{4}$-in. dowel or turning.

Now trim and sand the piece until it is a snug knock in fit. Leave the dowel long enough to make it easy to knock out.

Pick the angle you like to grind scrapers at (mine are about 15°) and mark the block to be trimmed for your platform so that the front edge of your rest platform is at the mid-point of your wheel.

The essentials of this rest are shown in the drawing on the first page. A similar one with just a round rod for a platform is also handy.

Try it: Forming Medium-To-Long Fingernail Grind On a Bowl Gouge

If you are starting out with a conventional "standard" grind, the kind you might expect straight-from-the-factory, as shown above in Fig. 1A (or even squarer), begin by putting a 65° nose angle on it as in Fig. 2A, unless it already has one of this angle.

Fig. 1A

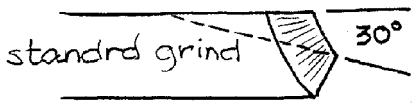
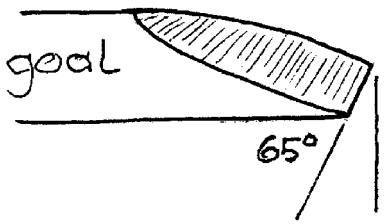
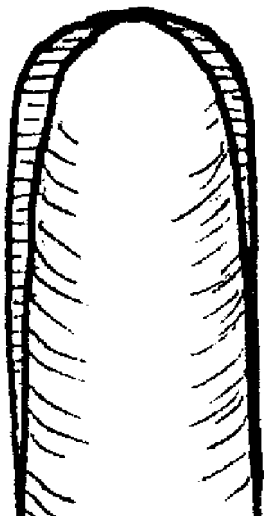


Fig. 2A



Then turn the tool face down on the wheel and grind off the face of the top at about a 30° angle to the long axis as indicated in the drawings. Continue cautiously until the complete outline of the desired fingernail is seen as in Figure 3A. The face will now have flats on each side of the fingernail. These will need to be totally ground away before the tool will be sharp. Note that the sides have much more metal to be ground away than the tip.

Fig. 3A

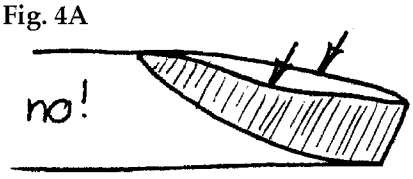


Mount your gouge in the 130° (50°) sharpening jig. The tool should protrude about 2-in. from the face of the jig. It is not necessary to be excessively exact here, but the distance should be the same every time. Put a distance mark or stop on your base to set it the same every time!

Set your slide pivot point about 7-in. from the face of the wheel and visually check the nose angle. Adjust to about 65° (or the angle of your choice). It should be fairly obvious that as your wheel wears away, you will have to move the slide in slightly to keep your nose bevel grind close to 65°. You can't ignore this factor. I just touch the nose to the stopped wheel and check visually that it is in complete contact with the wheel before starting.

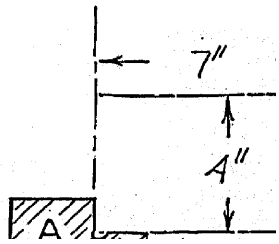
At least 95% of your grinding with a bowl gouge will be on the two sides of the gouge. Skip the tip entirely until the very last pass or two and then keep a light touch as you swing the tip over the wheel. Initially you will not swing your tool handle through enough arc to get the wings ground back properly. The tool handle will have to go through greater than a 180° arc, from over 90° left to over 90° right to get the sides of the grind back as in Figure 2A. Keep looking at the grind from the side. The two "wings" should have the same height and contour, and should either be flat or slightly convex in profile, not unequal or concave as the near edge of the tool in Figs. 4A.

Fig. 4A



In addition, unless you just barely touch the tip of the tool to the wheel as you swing past the midpoint of the arc, the tip will grind back too far and leave two "cheeks" sticking out ahead of the "nose," as shown in Figure 4B. If this happens you will have to further grind back the wings to eliminate them as they will produce gouges and catch in use!

Figure 1



Finally, the jig will also do equally well on a spindle gouge with slight changes in technique. Still leave the tool protrude 2" from the face of the jig. but move the slide in until the nose angle is about 45° (or your choice). You do not need to grind the top face at all, just start the tool through its full swing on the wheel. The major difference is, in a complete reverse of the bowl gouge, that you will now seem to have to spend most of your grinding time on the tip rather than the sides to avoid having an excessively sharp pointed tool. One smaller $^{3}/_{8}$-in. spindle gouge ground this way, however, so that it has a rather pointed fingernail, makes an excellent fine detailing gouge.

King Heiple is a turner and retired orthopedic surgeon in Pepper Pike, OH. He is a member of the Northcoast Woodturners chapter in Cleveland

FOLLOW YOUR INSTINCTS

Master Turning, Master the Good life

DARRELL DAVIS

IN LIFE MOST PEOPLE ACCEPT THE inevitability of death and taxes, but they often ignore two equally important facts of life — **Follow your gut instincts and Never stop learning.** Some may laugh at this philosophy, but I have never met a person who went wrong by heeding it.

Since exiting the small business world, (a sort of retirement) to care for my father in his time of need, I have been experiencing living beyond conventional wisdom, the rat race and stress of daily life. Life is way too short. Enter woodturning. I have been turning now for a little over two years and have two very strong goals: First, to learn everything I can about turning, and Second, to not do the same things that everyone else does, in short I want to be different.

I read an ad in this journal for a symposium at Qualicum Beach on Vancouver Island, BC. The three presenters were Bonnie Klein, whom I have met in the past and enjoy, Jason Marlow that I had heard and read about, and a man that I knew very little about except that he was one of Canada's leading turners, Frank Sudol. I don't know why, but my gut instincts were telling me that I needed to attend this symposium, and I have learned to always listen to and obey my instincts. So off I went to Vancouver Island. At the welcoming reception while viewing the pieces in the instant gallery I spotted this gentleman talking with a couple of the attendees. This man, small in stature and wearing work pants and shirt, didn't have a name badge, yet I knew he had to be Frank Sudol. Intimidated by the whole event and not knowing anyone there, I left early without introducing myself. But I felt a connection on a whole different level like nothing that I have ever experienced before. By the end of the first morning I had introduced myself to Mr. Sudol and felt as though he was the reason that I attended. His demonstration had sent my head spinning with ideas and possibilities. Wow! I thought, I have got to get more of this out of the normal, traditional mold type of expression. What surprised me most was my coming right out and asking Sudol if I could come and study with him. He paused and said he would enjoy having me come to visit and learn.

Frank Sudol and Lois Laycraft at their home/studio in Saskatchewan.

Frank and I started writing back and forth. He suggested that I would probably enjoy it more if I could find one other person to join me on this endeavor. And I did.

So what in the world could cause two stable, middle-aged, fairly sane men to drive 1550 miles across four states and two provinces to Northern Saskatchewan in late January when temperatures could reach –40ºC. People thought we were absolutely crazy. But my instincts were driving me and I knew that they were right and I was excited. Frank and I had had several lengthy phone conversations about what was to come of this trip. From his Thanksgiving-time letter (American Thanksgiving) I quote "Bring your tools, your dreams, and your desire to explore the unknown. This excursion may well be the beginning of an exciting third or fourth life. It has for me." There was no stopping me.

When you live in a place like Portland, Oregon, as I do, you sometimes forget how beautiful things are around you: trees, mountains, rivers, lakes, and the coast. I was reminded of this as we drove across Eastern Washington, Northern Montana, Southern Alberta & Southern Saskatchewan. Oil rigs, wheat fields and virtually no trees. It was like this all the way to Saskatoon. I kept wondering what in the world does Frank use for turning. I had heard birch, but there weren't any in sight, only an occasional fence post. After leaving Saskatoon hope began to grow, and by the time we got to Prince Albert or as they say (PA) there were actually small forests; now only 35 miles to go.

Have you ever worked with a Turner who changed your life?

Share your experience with us. Take us to the shop or studio, so we can also appreciate this person and learn.

The Sudol library, which offers solace and learning beyond the shop.

I had seen a slide of the Log House that Frank had built and knew when we drove up that we were in the right place, amidst 160 acres of forest. Frank and his partner, Lois Laycraft, welcomed us to this home, which looks more like the proverbial hunting lodge than a log home. After all, it only took them 14 years to build it from some of the trees from their forest. Once inside you can't do anything but relax and admire the beauty: 2,800 square feet on the ground level, 1,500 feet in the loft for the photo studio, 2 spacious guest bedrooms and a full bath. Then to the basement where the shop is located. Well equipped and spacious with plenty of storage room , so you don't have to go outside for fire or turning wood.

There is about 10-in. of dry powder snow, this magnificent structure, a library better than some schools, a collection of turnings from numerous well-known turners from all parts of the world, inspiration everywhere, a totally relaxing environment, and I haven't even gotten to the good parts yet. Now that you get the picture of a totally relaxed atmosphere away from all the trappings of everyday distractions and stress, you find that you have just become a huge learning sponge. In fact it would take every effort and then some to not learn something about a number of subjects: life, philosophy, art, turning, decoration, finishing, and creativity. Most people that have been exposed to this place find that after a day and a half, their minds are over loaded. Not to worry, you can take a day off and walk the trails through the woods, cross country ski, ride the snowmobile, drive to the nearby lakes for some fishing, or just pull a good book from the shelves and read.

The mystique of this experience is created from two equal parts. First, there is Frank's partner Lois Laycraft. Lois provides you with comfortable beds, towels and anything else you need to feel at home. Next comes Lois's passion, she loves to cook. Starting with their home grown vegetables like Yukon Gold potatoes to carrots and even watermelons. Next add in her 201 cookbooks, a passion to prepare dishes from around the world, a trip that she and Frank have taken, and to quote Lois," Too many recipes, not enough meals." Lois will even make sure that you take any medications on time, if needed. This is one special lady.

Now for Frank. First, I guess that you better make sure that your head is cleared out and fastened on tight, because it is going to spin. Frank is passionate about teaching. Frank teaches on two different levels at the same time. The first level is almost overwhelming, but the second level (listening between the lines) is likened to speed-reading or kicking in the turbo charger. A man of many talents, he likes to combine those talents to bring into being new and exciting creations. From beginner to advanced, he knows just what you need and when. We each started off turning a piece of green birch, pith included into a hollow vessel in a shape of our own design with wall thickness of $^{1}/_{16}$-in. or less. I was elated to accomplish this on my own, with only an occasional tip from Frank. I guess that I should tell you that I have never even finished a bowl before, only some pens and bottle stoppers. Before the day was done I had turned, dried and sanded this vessel inside and out. We learned to airbrush, carve, pierce and use epoxies, different finishes and WHY. We learned what determined a good piece of green wood. Creativity takes on a whole new meaning. You are limited only by your self imposed barriers of the mind.

Frank teaches at Arrowmont and other locations each year, as do a lot of other fine teachers. But try as he may, there is no way for Frank to take everything with him when he travels. While he probably would never admit it, my personal observation is that this applies constraints on the true creative process.

When you are at Frank's shop you have virtually anything you can imagine at you finger tips or at least within a short walk to one of his many out buildings that are filled with surprises and ideas waiting to develop. If you want to get out of the bowls and platters mold, dare to be different, and let the creative juices flow and learn like you have never learned before, you owe it to yourself to take the time to Go North.

Frank and I have formed a special bond. If you really want an experience that you will never forget, to be in a place like no other, and to learn as you have never learned before, call Frank Sudol at (306) 989-4621 in Paddockwood, Saskatchewan, Canada. It changed my life forever.

Darrell Davis is a turner and writer in Portland, OR.

THE CLASSIC GAVEL

For the authority figure in your life

WILLARD BAXTER

I WAS SURPRISED TO NOTE THAT throughout the issues of our journal, there were no articles on gavel turning. Since this is a classic project in the repertoires of novice and advanced turners alike, I decided to remedy the situation right away.

Having been invited to be the premier demonstrator at the newly formed Palmetto Woodturners Chapter in Columbia, SC, I decided to kill two birds with one stone.

With members whose talents run the gamut from beginner to highly skilled turners, it made not only for an interesting demonstration, but a fine gift for South Carolina's first AAW chapter. And having conducted the AAW auctions for a number of years, the gavel stands as a symbol which is dear to my heart.

It's a project that can be as simple or as intricate as the turner's imagination and skill allows.

Contrary to Truman's admonition to "walk softly and carry a big stick," I subscribe to the theory that to get a woodturner's attention you have to talk loud and wield a small, but well-turned gavel.

The one shown here is fashioned from two blocks of cocobolo, but any nicely figured hardwood will do. Traditionally the gavel is made of the darker hardwoods such as walnut, cherry or mahogany.

I turn the head first since it requires a bit more attention to detail and sets the style for the rest of the project. I start with a 4-in. by $2^{1}/_{4}$-in. block and rough it to a cylinder with the $^{3}/_{4}$-in. roughing gouge.

With the cylinder formed and trued, I turn to the bedan tool, which has sides that slope from the cutting edge to the bottom of the tool, which allows for clearance as the cut is made. I find it a useful tool for rolling small beads, sizing tenons and smoothing cuts on small spindles.

It's also just the tool for cutting the wide flat space in the center of the gavel. (See drawing) I made this area 1-in. wide, but that's a matter of taste. I happen to like the proportions in this design, but vary them to suit your own taste.

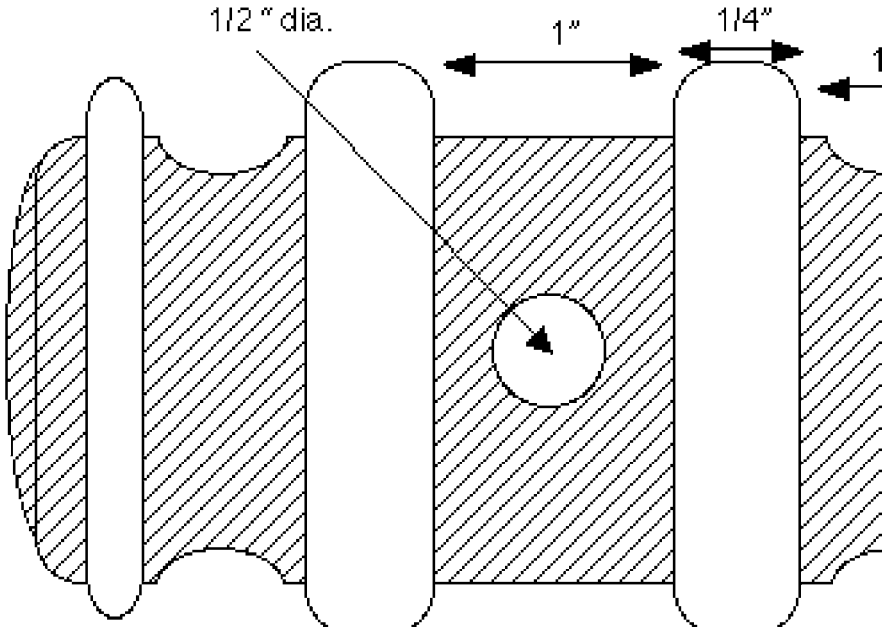
You'll note that this design features two $^{1}/_{4}$-in. large beads at either side of the 1-in. center space. As a general rule, it is good design to make beads stand proud of the flat area and for the flat to continue from the other side of the bead at the same level. In other words, it should look as though the beads were rings slipped onto the main body of the barrel with the barrel projecting out on both sides.

If one side of the barrel is higher than the other, in most cases the viewer will find it distracting.

If the two sides projecting from the base of the bead are even, it seems to reflect a sharpness and gives clarity to the design. This rule works for bowls as well as spindles.

In the project at hand, this means leaving a small shoulder to the outside of each bead, before proceeding to hollow the coves.

Again, practice makes perfect when it comes to making coves. I use a $^{1}/_{4}$-in. shallow gouge. The important thing to remember is to go slow



Author Willard Baxter makes a point during a demonstration of turning the classic gavel. "Keep the design simple and your tools sharp" was Baxter's advice to members of the newly formed AAW chapter, Palmetto Woodturners of South Carolina.

and keep both coves the same depth.

Working outward on both ends, turn another bead. In the example, I have made this a narrower bead than the previous one. Again, pay close attention to keep the shoulders on both sides of the bead even, so that it looks as though the bead is a ring that has been slipped onto the core of the barrel.

If care is taken with your cuts, the project will require little sanding. I usually start with 120 grit and work up to 400 grit, being sure to remove all scratches before moving to the higher grits.

For finishing this project, I wanted a high gloss that would really show off the grain, while at the same time providing a long lasting finish, since the gavel gets a lot of handling. For this I applied Mylands High Build Friction Polish, followed with a couple of coats of Mylands Clear Wax.

Handle turning

With the head of the gavel completed, I mounted a 1-in.-square x 10-in. long blank between centers and roughed it to a cylinder, just as I had done with the head. In fact, both pieces are turned between centers from beginning to end.

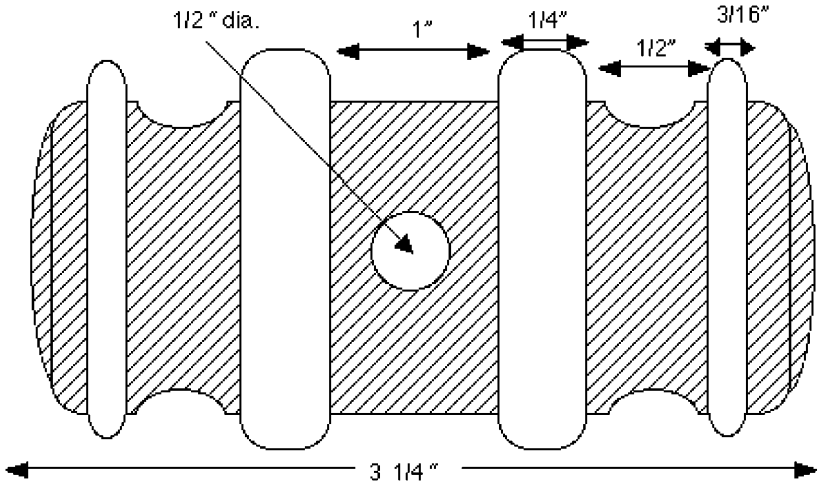
While the handle may be decorated to suit your own design tastes, I think most turners would agree that simpler is better. I got the basic design for this gavel from Nick Cook, but feel free to experiment with the design. That's one of the joys of woodturning.

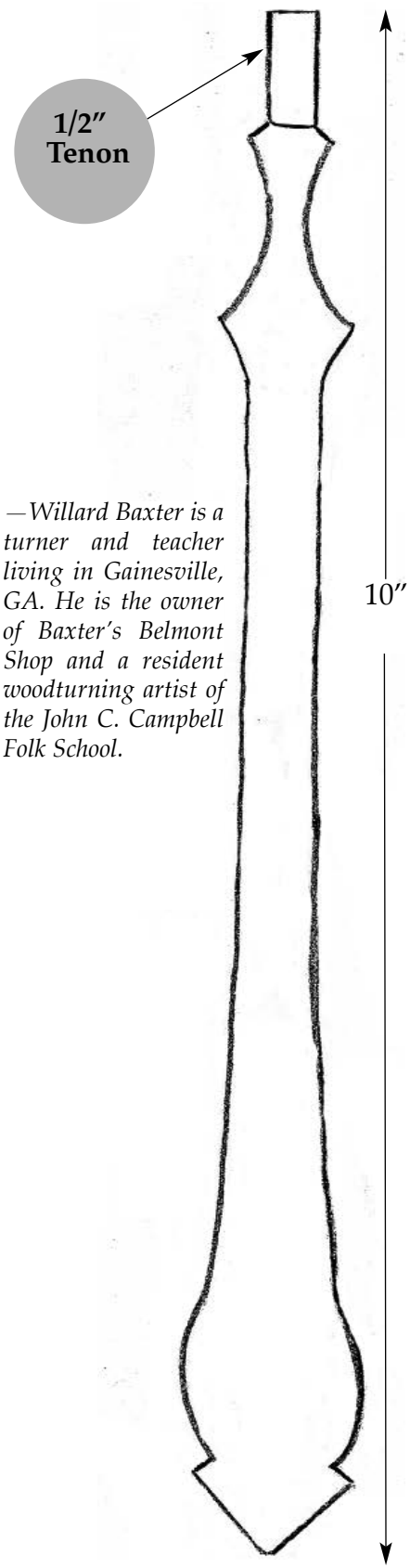
Here, I've turned a $^1/_2$-in. tenon to fit into the $^1/_2$-in. hole in the barrel. I've made a small bead and lengthened the cove just past the tenon. Leaving this area thicker provides strength at the business end of the gavel as well as provides some interest to contrast with the long gradual slope of the rest of the handle . I usually leave a small finial at the large end of the handle, which serves as a nice signature finish for the piece.

Face it! If we reduce spindle turning to the very basics, we would find that it is made up of beads, coves and flats of various widths, lengths, depths and elevations. For this reason alone, it makes good sense to practice these techniques until you are proficient at all of them.

I often go to my shop in the evenings after dinner and chuck a piece of scrap and just practice. It's a lot like a piano player practicing his scales. These are the techniques that form the foundation of spindle turning, and you never get too good to stray far from the basics in my opinion.

The gavel presents a good project for such practice and an excellent gift for the authority figure in your life.





—Willard Baxter is a turner and teacher living in Gainesville, GA. He is the owner of Baxter's Belmont Shop and a resident woodturning artist of the John C. Campbell Folk School.

WOODTURNING FOR YOUTHS

Community classes turn them on at Arrowmont

JERRY DROWN

THIRTEEN-YEAR-OLD MICAH WARD is diligently shaping a long straight stick into something round and smooth. In the business-like manner of a veteran he guides his gouge carefully along the stick. I observe his skill and wonder how long he's been doing this. "It's awesome," he says, adding this is his first time working on a lathe. "It's going to be a small boy's walking stick," he adds, and I am too impressed by his serious demeanor to ask why a small boy needs a walking stick.

Across the room April Sullivan, shown above right, an 11th grader, studies an evolving vase form as she coaxes it from a piece of box elder. April is a budding artist who has won awards in watercolor and also uses pastels and acrylics in her art. She has turned wood before but has never faced as difficult a challenge as the vase. Instructor Max Posey gives her tips on tool selection and handling, and meanwhile keeps an eye on the other students in the room.

We are in the lathe room of Arrowmont's wood studio in Gatlinburg, TN. It is a cold Saturday morning in January but the room is warm with the students' energy, enthusiasm and excitement. They are all seventh to twelfth graders from the local Sevier County school system, participating in Arrowmont's Children's and Young Adult classes that are offered every year at this time. The plan is the brainchild of Assistant Director Bill Griffith, who started the program in 1988 with just three classes, none of them in wood. But let Bill tell you about it.

"When I came here in 1987 I taught community classes, which were for adults only,..., but a lot of parents called and said 'Could my kids come too?' Some of the kids were under 13 and I just felt that community classes were for adults."

Arrowmont had offered a few classes for children but only on a casual basis. "We started the first children's classes as they are now in 1988, with 30 kids and three classes. Jim Coffelt taught sculpture, we had a basketry class and a pottery class. It was for five consecutive Saturdays but this year we expanded it to six consecutive Saturdays. It's been very successful, and this year we offer 11 classes and we have 125 kids here, which is pretty well 100 percent enrollment. These kids are anxious; sometimes they get here 45 minutes early. So giving up your Saturday and wanting to be here is a real compliment to the program and to the staff."

Corey Codeno works in the Arrowmont shop.

Woodturning is a relative newcomer to the program, since there were some reservations about dangers to the young students.

"I know that when faculty was here teaching -- our national faculty like Michael Hosaluk and Mark Sfirri -- I was inquiring of them as to what age they felt kids could turn and they gave me a little bit of history of some of their experiences teaching children," Bill continues. "After consulting with them and some other woodshop teachers in the public schools and junior high that I spoke with they all felt that seventh grade was a good cut-off point."

In addition to woodturning, a class in furniture making has been added, with emphasis on small items that 14 year olds might like to make for themselves. The state-of-the-art facilities at Arrowmont promise even greater opportunities as the school expands its curriculum into wood carving as well as furniture making. Arrowmont's year round programs for both adults and children stretch the schools facilities almost to the limit, but Bill remains optimistic: "I've got my eye on some ideas on how to expand the program a little bit."

The youngsters are getting a kick out of the class but they aren't the only ones. The Smoky Mountain Woodturners, a chapter of the AAW, had scheduled a meeting for this same Saturday. Griffith suggested that this was a great opportunity for the Smokies group to be mentors, to help the kids, especially the first day, when they would be faced with the strange intricacies of how to set up a lathe, how to hold a tool, how to get started in actually forming something from a block of wood. The Smokies turners were delighted for a chance to offer guidance to the kids and lead them down the sawdust path to wood-chip glory. And where else would a bunch of old guys get a chance to tell teenagers what to do --

and have them listen?

So here we are in this noisy bustling room, all the lathes bursting with their discordant music, the chatter of the students being drowned by the crisp scream of gouges on reluctant wood, the whine of the bandsaw adding to the concert. It is interesting to look around and observe that seven of the 10 students present are girls, and they are intensely focused on their projects. Two of the girls are repeaters from last year.

Instructor Max Posey moves from one lathe to the next, checking each kid's progress, sharpening tools, adjusting tool rests, giving quick demonstrations of cutting techniques, offering encouragement and advice. Max is passionate about helping the youngsters. "Years ago I had a wood teacher who spent a lot of patient time with me to get me started," he tells me, "and it kinda stuck with me. Over the years I watched a lot of other turners and it got me interested in wanting to pass on the trade and just give everybody the chance that I had."

Bill O'Donnell, the president of the Smokies group, is busy at the other end of the room showing Chris Merritt the difference between cutting and scraping. Bill says this is a learning experience for the teachers as well as for the students. And award-winning woodturner Tom Kyte is counseling Jamie Turner on how to make a shear cut with her gouge as she shapes a cherry bowl. "I think these kids are pretty flexible; they want to learn," Tom says. "Their attention is there and they listen when you show them how to do something, and I think that's great. They've got a long way to go in design form but the fact that they know how to use the tools and they feel comfortable with them, that's the important thing. I think it's great that Arrowmont is able to provide this to the community."

April Sullivan turns a vase from box elder. Photo by Jerry Drown

Good teachers inspire good students, but it works both ways. Good students inspire their teachers, and they learn from each other.

This is not a watered-down program. The kids are using the big General lathes, the Woodfasts and the One-Ways just like the more experienced turners do, although on this first day they aren't attempting anything too ambitious. Chelsea Heck is turning a small shallow bowl from a block of seasoned cherry. Predictably her cuts are tentative at first, but she has a definite form in mind and I watch it develop minute by minute as she gains confidence in handling the tool. Chelsea has never turned wood before but she has been coming to Arrowmont's children's classes since kindergarten. Already she says she likes woodturning and pottery the best of all the classes she has taken. Corey Codeno was late arriving this morning because of the treacherous January weather, but the bowl he's turning shows that he's right up there with the others, even though this is his first time on a lathe.

April Sullivan is enthusiastic. She is one of the repeaters, and also had a summer class last year with Ron Kent. As her vase takes shape she pauses to say, "I really like making a bowl. The part where we actually dig out the inside. This is more active. You can see the results a lot faster and just the idea of changing a big chunk of wood into a delicate little bowl or to some unusual shape -- it's amazing! And then you get all these details in the wood that are already there."

This is industry in action, excellence on display. You can't tell me that teenagers are lazy, that they don't care about anything except drugs and sex. I see interest and effort and boundless energy put to creative use in this busy room. I see a generation of young artists and craftsmen who are learning to work with their hands to produce what is conceived in their minds.

Micah Ward has finished his small boy's walking stick and says it turned out "pretty good."

"Micah," I ask, "I'm curious. Why does a small boy need a walking stick?" Right away I can tell it's a dumb question. Micah's reply is straightforward. "He likes to hike and he couldn't find a walking stick anywhere that was his size."

"Is he pretty small?"

"Yes. He's only four. He loves to hike."

Jerry Drown is a founding member of the AAW and lives in Gatlinburg TN.

CLARO WALNUT

Beautiful, intriguing and misunderstood

BILL HASKELL

Within the woodworking community, confusion intermixed with interesting stories surrounds the beautiful wood known as "Claro Walnut." I'll admit my understanding of claro walnut was not only confused, but wrong. Realizing this, I did some research to get the "facts," which I think are worth sharing.

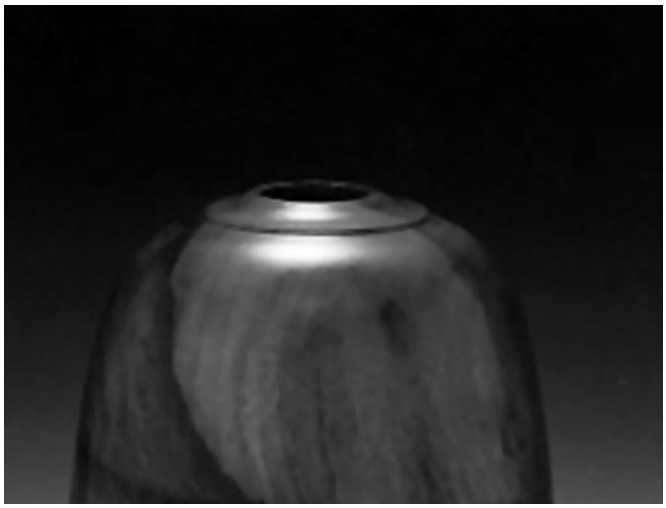
Some claim that claro walnut is a tree native to the West Coast. Others believe it is either European walnut or American black walnut, the result of the grafting one of these species to the other, or even that claro walnut is the graft line itself. As best I can determine, only one of the above is correct and another partially true. First though, a little background on walnut species is helpful.

The U.S. native walnuts

I was amazed to find there are five indigenous species of black walnut in the United States, which are widely distributed throughout the country. The most common is Juglans negra. This species is commonly referred to as eastern black walnut but is also called American walnut and black walnut. This tree grows throughout the United States, but principally in the eastern and midwest sections. However, there is a sprinkling of this walnut in the arid west, and there is a moderate amount found along the West Coast. This is the walnut that most of us are familiar with and the only one that is commercially harvested and commonly used for items like furniture and factory-issue firearm stocks.

Another black walnut species is called Juglans hindsii, which is more commonly referred to as claro walnut. It is thought that the name claro probably comes from early California Spanish history when the Franciscan Fathers were building the West Coast missions. Claro is a Spanish word meaning clear, light, or bright. Claro walnut is noted for its rich color and figure. It may have wavy grain with prominent, lighter colored stripes. It often produces a fiddleback, burl, crotch, and swirl pattern and often has mineral streaks of various colors.

Old records show Claro walnut was discovered growing in three California localities: the valley of Walnut Creek in Contra Costa County; the banks of the Sacramento River, particularly at Walnut Grove; and the Wooden Valley, east of Napa. One school of thought holds that California Indians planted claro trees around their villages. Settlers reported that these aboriginal trees were very fine, with single trunks up to 6-ft. in diameter, the boles straight and clear of branches for 50 feet. Unfortunately, the finest trees were felled for lumber by pioneers from the eastern states who, familiar with the valuable black walnut there, knew its value. Only a few great specimens still remain.



The author's claro walnut hollow vessel with free-form carved design is 16-in. wide.

Beauty leads to preservation

Fortunately, as the beauty and the value of this rare hardwood became recognized, communities began to preserve the groves and even added to them. Today, as you drive through the flickering light and shade of Highway 21 through the Walnut Creek area just east of Berkeley, the native walnut, more than any other tree, provides shade from the blazing summer sun and gives an eastern air to this region.

In addition to the eastern and claro walnuts, there are three other U.S. species that are primarily native to the areas for which they are named: Arizona walnut (Juglans major), Texas black walnut (Juglans rupestris), and Southern California walnut (Juglans californica).

The thin-shelled walnut that provides the delicious meat that we eat, is the English or Persian walnut (Juglans regia). Regia is the Latin word for royal. This walnut tree is also known as European, French and

MORE INFORMATION

If you have Internet access, you can obtain additional information, as well as sources for buying walnut blanks and blocks at the following web sites:

- www.woodnut.com
- www.gunstocks.com

These web sites provided much of the information contained for this article.

Hollow vessel, left, is English walnut grafted to claro walnut stock. The graft line is visible in the middle of the 8-in.-tall vessel. The 12-in. winged bowl, above, is a collaborative piece.: turned by Bill Haskell and carved by Nikolai Ossipov.

Italian walnut. The French and Italian walnuts may have different coloration due to climate and soil conditions, but they are the same species as the English walnut. This species probably originated in the Far East or Asia Minor, and was brought to Persia centuries ago. It is believed to have been imported to Greece by Alexander The Great (300 BC), then carried to Italy and France by the armies of Julius Caesar (200 BC – 100 AD). It probably came to America with Christopher Columbus around 1500, but was not cultivated here until 1850.

The $2,000 gunstock

English walnut is the most highly prized and sought after gunstock wood - it also is the most expensive. A rare after coloring, called "marblecake" by stockmakers, occurs in English walnut once in several thousand trees. A single "marblecake" gunstock blank can cost $2,000.

Claro walnut is a peculiar tree in one important respect. For some reason, it is far more resistant than the English walnut to the root borer and fungus and more immune to drought and gophers. Because of this immunity, and its affinity for the West coast soil and climate, claro walnut has been used for agricultural root stock. In the past, claro trees were planted and allowed to grow into a sprout, and then they were cut, or "topped off" and a live sprig of English walnut was grafted to it. Most old California walnut orchards have claro rootstock with English grafts. In fact, 95% of California's 3,000,000 English walnut trees are grafted to claro walnut rootstock. A typical high graft tree, over seventy years old, may have a claro butt log three feet or more in diameter, with a length of 2-to-6 ft., and an English walnut graft 3-ft. in diameter at the transition. Despite its claro rootstock, this tree is considered a Juglans Regia, or variously known as English, California English, California French walnut, and prized for edible nuts.

The burls from these trees, growing in orchards up and down Central and Northern California, have become extremely valuable in recent years. Depending on their size, weight, and texture, they can be worth as much as $5,000-to-$25,000 each, sometimes even more to end buyers. With this kind of value, thefts have become a significant problem to ranchers. One county sheriff was quoted as saying that he responds on average to one new walnut burl theft every three days.

In order to develop claro rootstock, nuts of a claro walnut tree are planted and raised to proper size for setting out. At an early date, it was discovered that once in perhaps one hundred times, strange looking rootlings appeared, different in all respects. Old timers promptly called these peculiar looking strangers, "paradox" trees. The famous botanist, Luther Burbank, determined that "paradox" was a hybrid, a result of cross-pollination between English and claro. The resultant tree is like neither parent. The rootstock from this hybrid is now being used as graft stock for English walnut because it has been found to be more disease and pest resistant rootstock than claro. Unfortunately, it does not have near the desirable qualities that claro has, from a coloration or figure standpoint. Hence, without the planting of new claro rootstock, its supply is limited and dwindling. It can only become more valuable and expensive in the future.

So, what is Claro Walnut? It is first, a black walnut tree species native to California; second, it is a tree whose rootstock has been used for most of the older California orchard trees that give us delicious, edible, walnut fruit.

Bill Haskell is a woodturner in Placentia, CA, and a member of the Glendale Woodturners Guild, an AAW chapter in the greater Los Angeles metropolitan area.

BIRDHOUSE ORNAMENTS

A gem for the holidays and year-round profits

RON HAMPTON

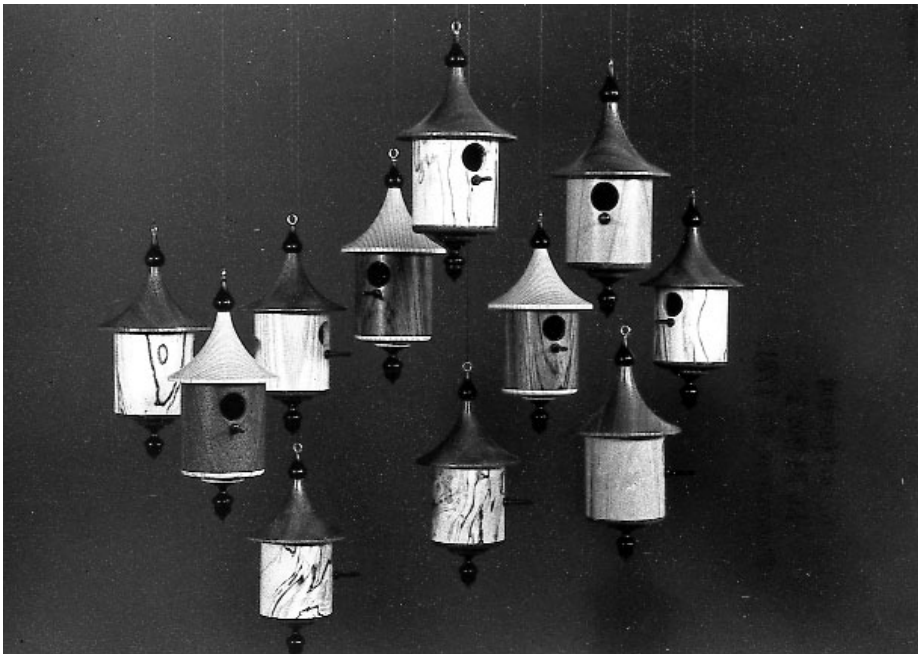
HOLIDAY ORNAMENTS MAKE wonderful gifts. This year why not impress your friends and relatives with something new – a birdhouse ornament!

I learned how to make them from one of the best, and most prolific, ornament turners in the country, Robert Rosand. Bob has been turning these little gems for a number of years now. He was inspired by Andy Barnum of Carmel, NY, who makes beautiful full-size birdhouses (see the back-cover of American Woodturner 6:1) Bob at first made the full-sized version, but they are fairly complicated and expensive. He found that he could not consistently sell them at the craft fairs he does each year.

His solution was to shrink down the birdhouses, so they could be used as ornaments!

The ornament-size birdhouses are good sellers, enjoyable to make and involve numerous turning skills. Bob makes these ornaments in under an hour each. Given a little time and practice, you should be able to make one in an afternoon. As your cuts and other basic skills improve, you should be able to pick up the pace a bit.

For his birdhouse ornaments, Bob favors maple burl for the roof and bottom. The main body of the birdhouse is generally a straight-grained hardwood, such as walnut, maple or cherry. The decorative accents – finial, acorn and perch – are usually made from scraps of ebony.



A covey of decorations to delight any holiday celebration. Photo above: Bob Rosand. All other photos in this article by Ron Hampton.

Making the body of the house

Bob starts with a block of wood 1 $^{1}/_{2}$-in.-square by about 4-in.-long. The centers are marked on the ends, as is typical with most spindle projects. Prior to turning, he also bores a $^{5}/_{16}$-in. hole along the longitudinal center line of the blank, toward what will be the top of the birdhouse body. He also drills a smaller $^{1}/_{16}$-in. diameter hole slightly below the first hole. This smaller hole will be for the perch. The stock is then secured between centers, with the end that will be the top, toward the headstock. Turn the blank to a cylinder with the roughing-out gouge, as shown below.

Next, the cylinder is secured in a four-jaw chuck (in this case, a OneWay Stronghold chuck with spigot jaws). If you do not have a chuck, simply turn a tenon on the bottom of the body of the block (tailstock end) and glue it into a 1-in. diameter hole drilled into a waste block screwed to your faceplate. A good fit is essential. This method is slower,

Bored -out birdhouse opening is visible at the tailstock end during rough out.

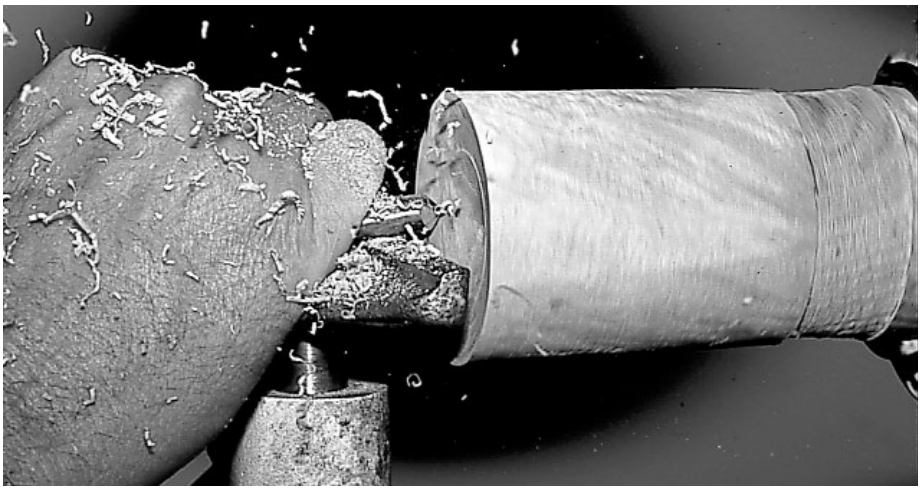
but works just as well. The cylinder is trued up again with the roughing-out gouge, then the skew. The final cylinder should be about 1 3/8-to-1 1/4-in. in diameter.

Part off any excess wood from the top of the bird house. The remaining distance between the top of the body and the 5/16-in. hole you previously bored is a bit subjective, but Rosand usually sets it at about 1/4-to-3/8-in. Use a 1-in. Forstner bit to drill about 2-in. into the block. Then use a square-nose scraper to clean up the walls. Since you bored past what will be the bottom of the birdhouse. it should be easy to clean up the wall without catching at the bottom. The walls should end up about 1/8-in.-thick. Use inside calipers to check the consistency of the wall thickness. This is important to ensure that the ornament will not be too heavy. Sand to about 400-grit and apply sanding sealer. Bob likes to uses a 50-50 mixture of sealer and turpentine, both to start the finish and ensure cleanest possible cuts.

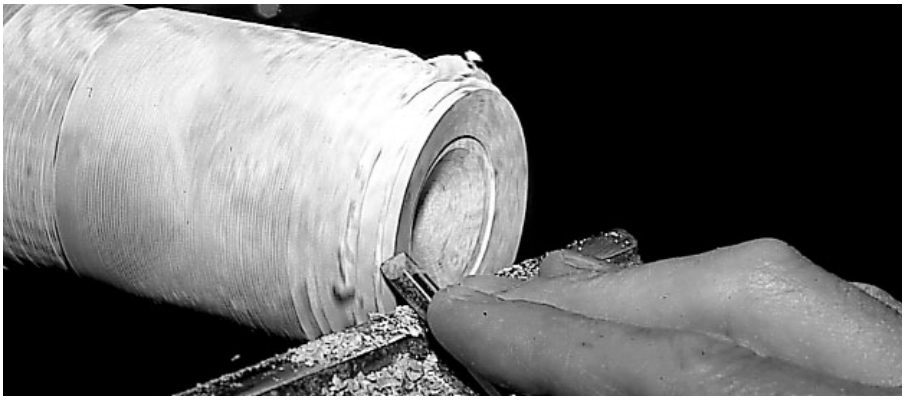
Now you can part the body of the bird house off with a thin parting tool like the Chris Stott parting tool available from most turning supply houses. The length of the body should be slightly greater than the width. The ratio Bob uses is about 1-to-1.1.

Turning the roof

The roof of the birdhouse is made from a contrasting wood, usually maple burl. The roof stock (2 1/2-in.-dia. x about 3-in. long) is glued to a waste block held in a chuck or screwed to a faceplate, then trued up. Bob shapes the concave bottom of the roof first, then cuts a rabbet to accept the birdhouse body, as shown in the photos at right. To size the rabbet he uses his calipers to mark the width of the birdhouse body. A small square-nosed scraper is used to make a recess in which the body of the birdhouse will fit. The fit needs to be just a bit



Begin the birdhouse roof by turning a concave area on the underside.



A small skew is used to shape the rim of the roof. Note the rabbet cut into the concave area to accept the birdhouse body.

Next, turn the delicate tapering top of the roof. The rabbet for the roof also serves to fasten the roof to a scrap wood block, so the taper can be completed and bored for the top finial.

loose. A "perfect" fit may turn out to be too tight when the wood dries out and shrinks a bit.

The tail center is now brought up to steady the piece so that the rest of the roof can be formed. Bob generally uses a 1/2-in. spindle gouge for this. The cuts need to be somewhat delicate since you end up with a 1/4-in. diameter or less at the top of the ornament. When sanded, the roof is parted off with a thin parting tool.

Next, a hole has to be drilled in the top of the birdhouse roof to accept a finial. This is accomplished by friction fitting the bottom of the roof into a waste block of pine (so that it does not damage the roof). Once the hole is drilled, use thick CA glue to glue the roof to the birdhouse body.

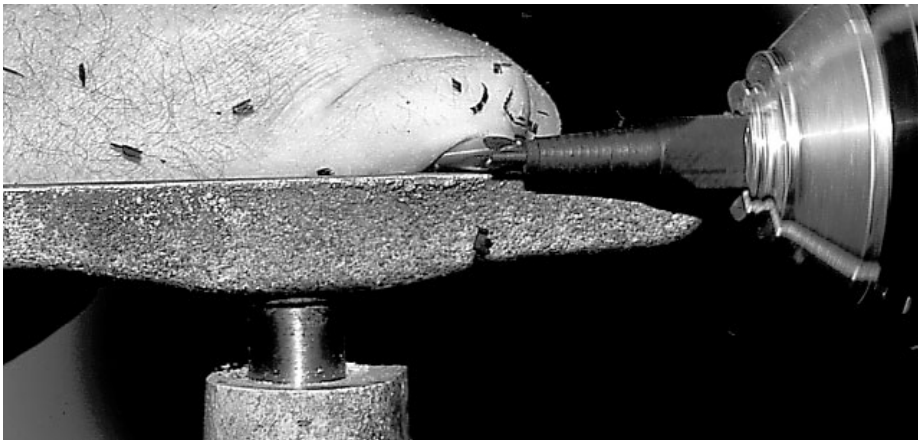
Sizing the bottom

The bottom of the birdhouse is made out of the wood left after the roof is cut off. Bob trues up the remaining stock, then uses his calipers to mark the diameter of the bottom of the birdhouse. A skew is used to make a few decorative cuts. The bottom can be as ornate or as simple as you like. Drill a small hole in the bottom, so that you can later add the decorative acorn.

Finally, use the calipers to lay out a short tenon (about 1/8-in.) that will fit inside the bottom of the birdhouse. Part the bottom of the birdhouse from the waste block. If the tenon is a bit snug, sand lightly inside the body of the birdhouse to ease the fit. Use CA glue to fasten the bottom in place.

Making finial, acorn and perch

The finial, acorn and perch are all made out of contrasting woods, mostly small bits of ebony. Bob cuts up the small bits of ebony into 1/2in. squares about 5-to-6-in.-long, which can be held in a chuck. The finial is turned first. The stock is turned down to about 3/8-in. diameter and a small hole is bored to accept a screw eye.



Rosand turns the final and other decorative elements from ebony scraps. Sharp tools and careful cuts are the rule here.

The rest of the finial is turned, along with a small tenon to fit into the top of the birdhouse. It is parted from the lathe and glued into place. The acorn is turned in the same way and is glued into the bottom of the birdhouse.

All that remains is to turn the perch. The perch is turned using a series of peeling and scraping cuts with a small 1/4-in. diameter round skew. There are two things that Bob stresses here. The first is the necessity of using an Optivisor or some other visual aid, so that you can see what you are doing. The second consideration is proportion. Stop occasionally and see if the pieces you are making are in proportion to the rest of the ornament. Once the pieces are all turned and assembled, all that remains is to spray the ornament with a semi-gloss lacquer. If you don't have a spray outfit, Deft can be purchased in aerosol cans at most hardware and home supply stores.

A memorable demonstration

Bob Rosand is a great teacher and demonstrator – I consider him one of the great treasures in the American woodturning community and the AAW. In addition to demonstrating around the Country and in Canada, he also teaches workshops at his home in Bloomsburg, PA. Also, Bob is a hard working member of the board of directors of the AAW.

To my eye, he does some of the most beautiful small turnings that I have seen. I expect to see his miniature turnings showing up in many collections and galleries. Do not miss his demonstration if you ever get the opportunity to see him.

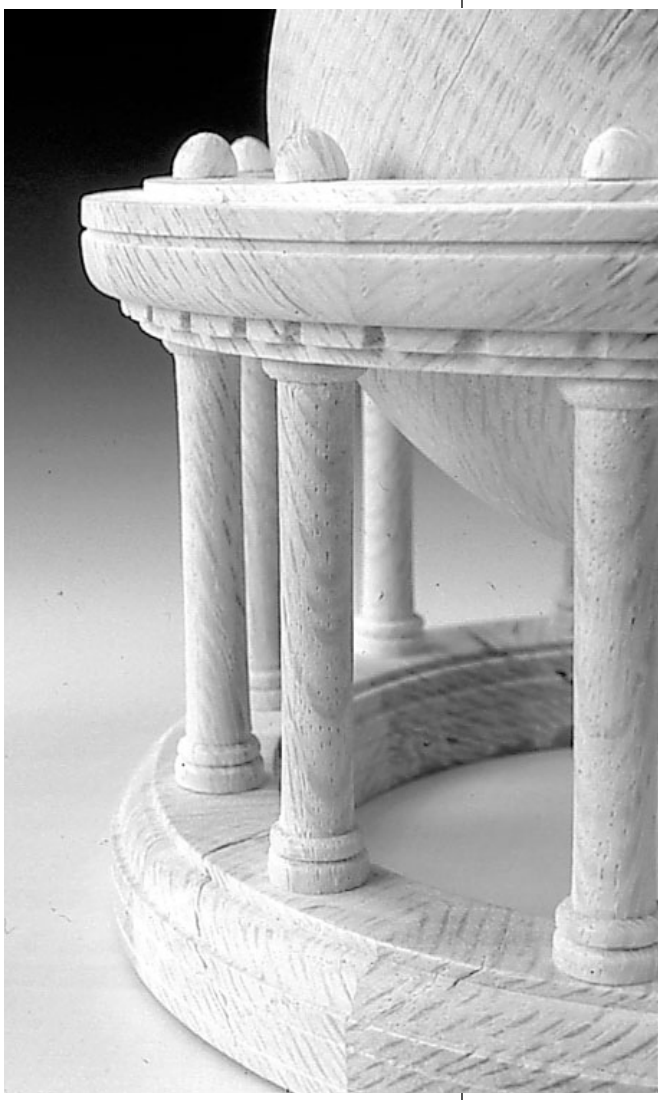
Making birdhouse ornaments can be a fun and rewarding project. Your turning skills will improve as you practice making smooth, controlled cuts. Your bird house ornaments will give you and your loved ones pleasure for many years.

To learn more about making birdhouses and other small projects I highly recommend the video, *Turning Projects From Scrap by Robert Rosand,* which can be ordered from AAW headquarters in Shoreview, MN.

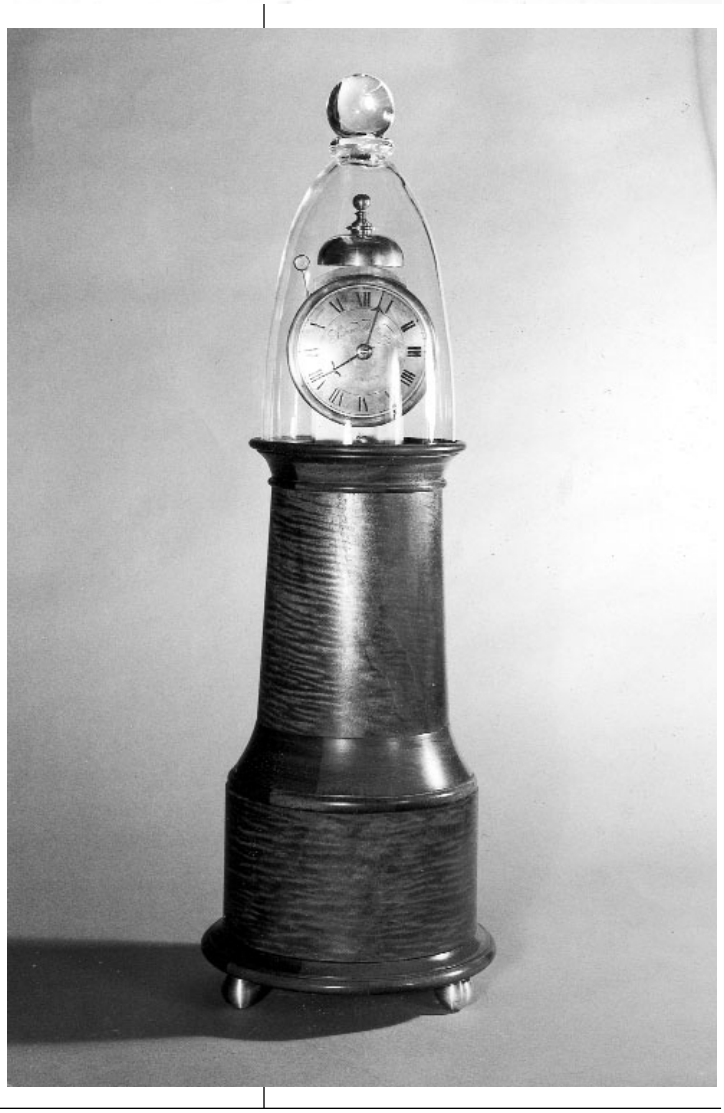
An order form is in the back of this Journal. It is an excellent video and all proceeds go to the AAW.

Ron Hampton is a dentist, as well as a turner and writer in Texarkana, TX. He attended one of Bob Rosand's demonstrations at Texas Turn or Two #8. For more information about that annual event contact: Butch and Pat Titus PO Box 142, Adkins, TX 78101. (210-649-2166)

PHOTOS FROM THE MAILBAG



Two bleached oak pieces, above and top right, are by Dewey Garrett, Livermore, CA. The Colonnade bowl, above right is $5^{1}/_{2}$ X 10 X 10-in. The templed orb above is 8-in. high and 8 in. in diameter.

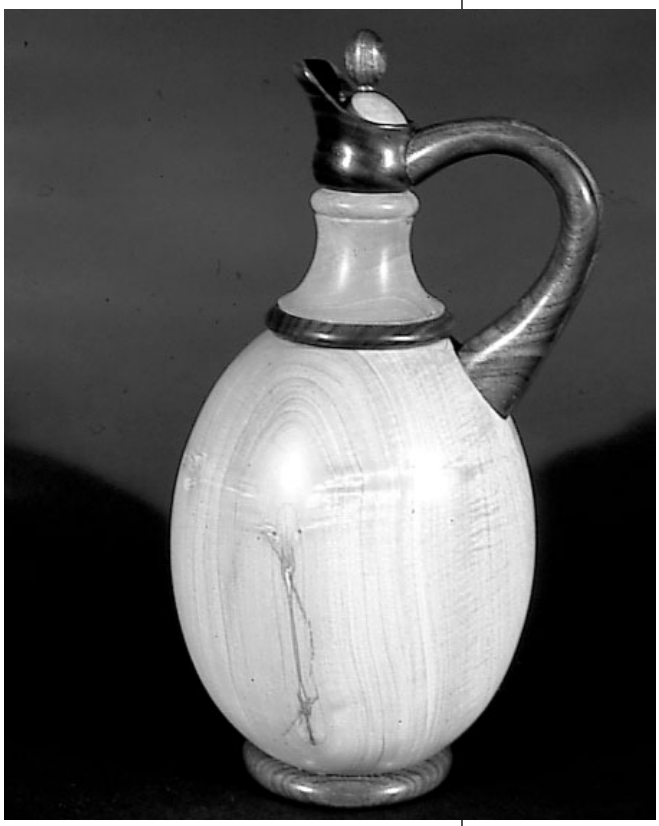


The near replica of the 1820 Simon Willard clock is by Raymond S. Rio of Poughkeepsie, NY. The base is 8-in. in diameter and consists of eight mahogany staves that are glued into an octagon and then turned round. Raymond said clock makers of the past often used lathes to develop their designs. The moldings here are 16 pieces bricklaid together and turned to an ogee shape. The mold for the dome on the $28^{1}/_{2}$-in. clock was also turned, he said. For clock makers "turning was straight forward and is a good example of what can be done with simple lines."

PHOTOS FROM THE MAILBAG

Spalted Box Elder vessel by Larry Walton of Utopia, TX. Piece is 11-in. wide and 6 in. high. Larry is a member of the Hill Country Turners.

"Tucay Ceremonial Sextet" by Ken Keoughan of Mt. Dora, FL. and Friendship, ME. The mahogany-and-pine needle piece measures 21-in. X 4-in.



Please send submissions for the Gallery to Editor, 929 Maynard Ave. Knoxville, TN 37917. Color slides or color prints are preferred, but we can work with other media, as well.

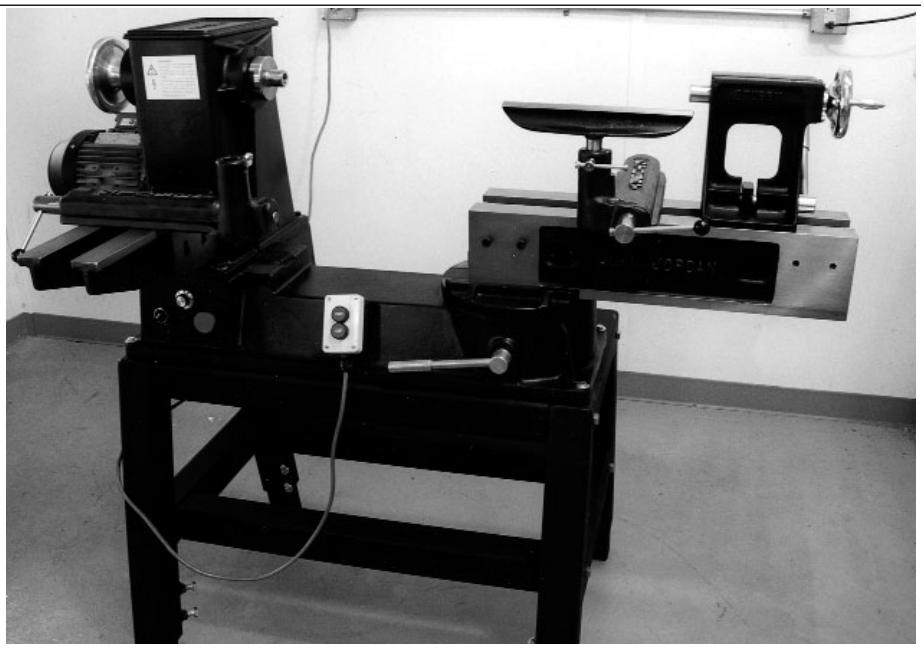
Red maple pot with carved rim, above, is by Michael Kornblum of Mountain Home, AR. The vessel, 6-in. high and 8-in. diameter, was one of the pieces he completed while studying on an AAW grant at the Arrowmont School of Crafts.

The 13-in. high wine decanter of Jacaranda and Black walnut, at left, is by Joe Neri of San Bernardino, CA. The finish is tung oil. Joe says that for the past three years he has been a student of Leo Doyle.

The Stubby S750

Anybody shopping for a high-end lathe these days is in for a number of pleasant surprises compared to just a few years ago.

There are some fairly high-quality lathes in the $2,000 to $4,000 price range. Many of the older lathes such as General and Woodfast have been enhanced and provide even higher quality than in the past, but there's a new player that has significantly increased the level of competition through pure innovation. Omega Tool & Engineering is a small company from Victoria, Australia, which has been shipping Stubby lathes for just a few years, only recently to the US. These lathes are exceptionally versatile due to a pioneering approach to lathe design.



The Stubby S750 with the bed extended. Photo: John Jordan

Stubby lathes use a massive base upon which the headstock and bed are mounted. The base of their bench mounted lathe, the S750, sits well below the usual bed height at 27-in. above the ground. Consequently, the headstock is relatively tall (20-in.) and shaped as an asymmetrical trapezoid with the sloping sides providing extremely stable support for the rotating spindle. The main bed is a completely separate and removable piece. It also slides on a turntable, which can rotate on the base. The rotating part of the bed has a locking pin for securing the bed in the conventional up-against the head stock configuration. There is also a locking plate by the headstock to lock the main bed down on the left. This makes extremely accurate center point-to-center point alignments possible. The floating, rotating bed design allows for an incredible range of capacities and tool rest support positions.

Thanks to the sliding bed, an S750 with a fully extended bed can support spindle turnings with a maximum of 16" center diameter by 35" long. While the bed is extended, the distance from the center point to the base is about 14.5-in., allowing a 29-in. swing over the base from the headstock to the edge of the turntable. This distance translates to a 16-in. length. So, when the bed is extended you have a 29-in. swing at 16-in. length with tailstock support! Since there is a gap between the left end of the main bed and the headstock, you still need someplace to mount the tool rest banjo. Omega solves this by providing an auxiliary bed that mounts onto the headstock or either end (or side) of the main bed. Omega also provides a second banjo with the lock-down handle in the back of the banjo to allow closer positioning of the tool rest. The turner can position the tool rest along any part of the turning without restrictions due to the lathe's design. Additionally when using the auxiliary bed, the banjo does not impede the swing over the bed (as with conventional lathe designs) so for longer turnings the swing is a true 16". When the bed is fully retracted and locked, the turner can enjoy the virtues of a short bed lathe by standing at the tailstock end to get the most comfortable and accessible standing position. You get the best of both worlds: short bed access, long bed capacity in one lathe. The S750's footprint is a compact 32- x -27-in., a good thing for very small shops!

The Stubby lathe's turntable allows for an unbounded variety of applications. My favorite use is with my homebrew, Jamieson-style hollowing tool. By rotating the bed with the secondary, slotted tool holder I can very quickly change the cutter's angle without removing the tool and readjusting. The turntable can also allow for even more varied and extreme tool rest positions.

All these innovations would be wasted if Omega did not provide the quality expected in a higher-end lathe, with fit and finish as close to perfect as is physically (and financially) possible. Omega uses CNC milling systems to cut the parts for their lathes. The result is a perfect fit and no welding blobs. The seam between the headstock and the base is so perfect it's airtight!

The lock downs on the tailstock, turntable and main bed all use spring loaded plates with extremely large surface contact areas. Each plate is about 4-in. long and is

shaped to fit onto and into the surfaces and openings of the beds. Between each plate are small springs recessed into hollows. These springs push the plate away when the locking plate is released. Each plate is attached via a large bolt and a non-slip aircraft nut. The result is a simple switch of a lockdown lever and the part is either locked down tight or unlocked completely. The Stubby banjos completely release or lock tight on each try, every time. The surface contact area between the tailstock and the main bed is quite large, providing enough holding power to break or crack the turning blank before anything slips while cranking the tailstock. The Stubby's banjos move easily and freely when unlocked.

All of the lathe components are cast iron with machined steel parts. Each piece is quite heavy. Thankfully due to its heft, the tailstock is shaped for easy handhold during removal. The rate of the screw on the tailstock center shaft allows for both drilling and for quick motion. The motion is so smooth at the handwheel that I can "throw" the handwheel spinning to send the tailstock center backward or forward. The S750, which is actually a benchtop design, weighs in at 500 lbs. before it's mounted on a stand. Add a stand such as the high quality 200+lb stand sold by the US distributor and you get 700 pounds of vibration absorbing mass. The larger S1000 incorporates the base into the stand to get an even greater swing over the bed and a 39-in. length. The S1000 headstock shape extends to the floor to provide hard to match stability and even greater mass than the S750, but it is priced above $4,000.

The Stubby spindle is $1\frac{1}{4}$-in. diameter at 8 TPI with MT2 in the spindle and tailstock. The spindle also has 36-position indexing. The bearings used are called angular bearings and they provide extremely smooth and solid spindle movement. The drive interface is a v-belt with two-step sheaves for high-speed spindle turning or high-torque bowl turning. The power plant is a 2hp AC motor with the phase converter inconspicuously shoehorned into the S750 base. The motor controls are very simple; green for start, red to stop, a rotating 2-position switch for forward/reverse and an easy to read numbered knob for speed. The power switch for the converter is behind the headstock. The US distributor includes a remote switch box which consists of a simple pair of buttons, green and red, mounted on a lightweight box. The box is easily Velcro-or-magnet mounted to wherever the turner wants. The remote switch is both useful and a significant safety factor, particularly if you turn at the tail end of the lathe.

Speed/Torque matching by the converter is very subtle and hard to notice. Speed up is quick, but safe. Motor noise is very low. When a rough blank is mounted and spun, the sound from the air moved by the blank is louder than the motor!

The strength of this lathe is yet another remarkable aspect of its capabilities. After I installed mine, fellow local turner Julian Shaw came over with an off-balanced slice of Myrtle burl to turn into a platter. I mounted the auxiliary bed on the headstock and installed the reversed banjo and a tool rest and put the standard banjo with tool rest on the left end of the extended bed. The blank was a full 29-in. along one axis. I brought up the tailstock for support and we both turned the platter at the same time. Julian turned the bottom of the platter by the headstock while I turned the surface. With two streams of wood flying off in opposite directions from the unbalanced blank, the S750 maintained a constant speed, without faltering.

Yet another of the innovations in Stubby lathes is the integrated spindle/headstock vacuum port. It is meant to replace a bearing mount attachment on the back end of the spindle. The idea is that the turner plugs the hole in the handwheel and attaches a shop vacuum to the port in the back of the headstock. The vacuum travels through the spindle and to the side port, eliminating the need for setup beyond the handwheel plug. Due to safety reasons (Omega is trying to prevent the use of drill chucks without bolt through support) the spindle has a narrower hole, which in turn makes for less depth for MT arbors with tabs for drill presses. This means that one has to cut off the square tab or shorten the taper length to get some MT2 accessories like spur drives to fit in the spindle. I cut the ends off all my MT arbors using a cut-off wheel in my hand grinder to get a good clean fit on my accessories.

That kinda reminds me, I guess the only thing negative I would say about the Stubby lathes is the name "Stubby". Imagine how many times I have had to refrain from telling the wife I was going out to my shop to work on my…never mind! I always refer to mine as the "S750".

The S750 Stubby lathe is one impressive machine. It provides a small footprint, yet can allow respectable length. It can easily handle big bowl turning along with demanding tools like coring tools and boring bars. It will also provide the point-to-point accuracy needed for turning spindles such as candlesticks and pens. With a Stubby the turner only needs one lathe.

Stubby lathes are available in the US through John Jordan in Antioch TN, (615) 941-1247 or e-mail him at johnjordan@mindspring.com.

— Andy Cohen is a hobby turner in Santa Rosa CA. and newsletter editor for the Redwood Empire Woodturners.

CONTEMPORARY TURNED WOOD

CONTEMPORARY TURNED WOOD, new perspectives in a rich tradition. 128 pgs. Written by Ray Leier, Jan Peters, Kevin Wallace. $27.99 from Handbooks Press; Distributed by Popular Woodworking Books, Cincinnati, OH (800-289-0963) .

If you would like a brief, enjoyable history of contemporary wood art beginning with James Prestini and extending through today, you can 't afford to miss *Contemporary Turned Wood*.

If you would like to see beautiful examples of the wood art being turned today by the most highly regarded contemporary artists, you can't afford to miss *Contemporary Turned Wood*.

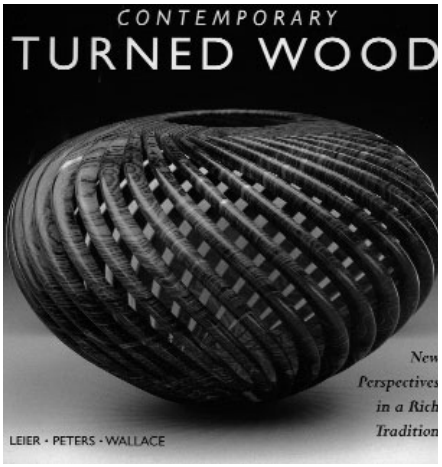
If you would like to see the caliber of photography that it takes to market this work, you can't afford to miss *Contemporary Turned Wood*.

If you would like to read about a farm boy whose parents didn't have electricity and who turned table legs using a gasoline powered washing machine engine, you can't afford to miss *Contemporary Turned Wood*.

It's all here. An appreciation of the history of turned wood was reflected in a comment Kevin Wallace made in discussing this book with me. " Much of the work we show in this book would not have been possible without the early efforts of the Bob Stocksdales, Dale Nishs, Del Stubbs, Rude Osolniks and James Prestinis. Their pioneering provided the impetus and much of the influence reflected in the best of today's contemporary works."

One of the first chapters deals with " The Purist Aesthetic", that accepts as art the beauty of wood, the magnetism of a perfectly crafted form. "Wood offers a manuscript of its life, echoing its joy and hardship with every grain...."

The next chapter, "The Vessel Transformed, Carving and Surface



Treatments", suggests that "Woodturners present us with work that forces a reconsideration of craft as art: the vessel that does not hold water, or the bowl obviously never intended for use." As a painting creates dialog between artist and viewer, "when it comes to the medium of wood, the voice of nature is included and the dialog becomes a conversation between nature, artist and viewer." This book offers a rich commentary, thoughtful and intense.

"The Constructed Vessel", another chapter, pays appropriate homage to the incredible skill and complexity that today's constructed vessel artists bring to their work. The photographs that follow illustrating this work do the pieces justice, if that is possible.

"Woodturning as Sculpture", a relatively new phenomenon is treated respectfully and optimistically. Multi-axis turning is discussed as a means of creating art and as a means of going beyond "round". The lathe as a starting point is also discussed.

The final chapter "Small Treasures" treats "the increased sensitivity" needed to appreciate small objects in a "bigger-is-better, dollar-per-inch-world".

This book is 128 pages long. Of these over 100 are full-page photographic plates. But lest I mislead, this is not a cocktail table book. This book is meant to be read, studied, reviewed at leisure and enjoyed.

A lot went into this book. It is a collaboration between the principals of the del Mano Gallery (Leier, Peters, Wallace), editor Katie Kazan, producer Toni Sykes, and the design team at Handbooks Press.

You really can't afford to miss *Contemporary Turned Wood* if you are involved with or toying with the idea of being involved with turning wood.

So if you've got a lick of sense, give yourself this book as a Christmas present. It's only $27.99 from HandbooksPress. Your local bookseller can get it for you.

— *Ken Keoughan, Friendship, ME*

Make Plans For The AAW Symposium Charlotte, NC June 30 - July 2

Our featured demonstrators are among the best in the world:

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- **Michael Lee, Kapolei, HI**
- **David Ellsworth, Quakertown, PA**
- **Allan Batty, England**
- **Kurt Johansson, Sweden**
- **Irene Gafert, Denmark**

Plus the Instant Gallery, a trade show devoted to woodturning, a banquet and auction to benefit the AAW Educational Programs and much more. For more information, call the AAW office 651-484-9094 or the Conference Coordinators Butch and Pat Titus at 210-649-2166.

EAST MEETS WEST

Tacoma, WA to Narugo, Japan

The East Meets West show which opened during the last AAW Symposium and later traveled to Japan featured a dazzling array of tradition and innovation. Among the delights were the Kokeshi dolls from Japan, above, which some say can reflect the mood of the viewer, and clever toys, like the top below. Among the western objects presented were the stunning metal-and-wood box by Leon LaCoursiere of Saskatchewan, Canada, shown in the photo at left.; the inlaid vessel by Dale Nish of Provo, UT; above left; and the pierced and carved Chicago scene on the vessel by Binh Pho of Maple Park, IL. American Woodturner Contributing Editor Alan Lacer went to Japan for the opening of the show. His report on the show is on Page 22. ***Photos: Larry Mart***