

■ Turned Wall Sculpture ■ Jane and Arthur Mason ■ Inlaid Platters ■ Tops by 1000s ■

American Woodturner

The Journal of the American Association of Woodturners

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MINNESOTA'S DUANE GEMELKE



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

SETTING CHALLENGING GOALS FOR WOODTURNING, AND FOR LIFE

IS YOUR LIFE GUIDED BY GOALS?

I think most people would say their lives are affected to a great extent by goals, but perhaps not as much as they should be. I'm not referring to an almost instantaneous goal, like scoring in a basketball game, which gives a moment of satisfaction and then is quickly overshadowed by another score, but rather the goals defined by Webster as "the result or achievement toward which effort is directed."

These goals can be short-term or long-term. A short-term goal might be to finish a particular project on the lathe, or to buy a certain tool. It might be to buy a new lathe. For some of us a financial venture like that has to be a long-term goal.

We should all set these goals for ourselves. Buying a tool might be easy to accomplish and give us quick satisfaction. That satisfaction might last for years or it may be put on a shelf and be forgotten. Careful planning can save us both money and space in the shop. Of course, if our goal is to "die with the most toys" -- or tools, then we may look at it differently.

I have found the AAW to be an immeasurable help in determining what tools to buy, as well as lathes and other large purchases. Articles in this Journal can help you decide whether a tool is right for you or not. And we are always looking for articles or letters from you about your experiences with products that turners use.

There is no better place to see and touch all of these tools than in a trade show at national or regional symposiums. They also give you a chance to talk to other turners who have worked with the item that interests you. In fact, you can probably talk with the designer and maker of the tool. It sounds like a good reason for an organization.

Selecting tools should never be our final objective; it's just another step

toward achieving our bigger goals in terms of what we want to turn. Achieving these other goals might take a little longer, but usually the level of satisfaction is commensurate to the time and effort that is put into the project.

Our goals for turning are as different as our genetic backgrounds. I think an important premise for the structuring of turning goals should be satisfaction: What do you want to accomplish that will give you the greatest satisfaction? Of course, this may be tempered by our time, money and skills. Several people have told me that turning has saved their sanity. Willard Baxter tells me that the lathe was invented to replace psychiatrists. In the 1600's the lathe (treadle-powered) was known as the aristocrat's tool because they were so much fun to use that a laborer was prohibited from using one. Today, whenever we are turning, we should feel like aristocracy. If you only want to turn occasionally and not be stressed, that is fine and I hope the AAW is offering you the support you want.

I think most of us like a challenge and should set a goal that will stretch our capabilities. Never set your goals too low. They should always be challenging, near or just beyond the upper limits of your conceived level of competence.

One thing I especially like about turning is the fact that we don't have to follow a blueprint. We are free to use our minds and to come up with our own designs and variations. I consider woodturning as "The Jazz of Woodworking." We can set our goals at a level that requires us to expand our minds to the limits and improvise the way a good Jazz musician does. When we swing into that realm of creativity and involvement, we can reach the greatest levels of gratification.

There is nothing more rewarding and self-fulfilling than to complete a piece which is your own design and required your best efforts to overcome

challenges in technique and material. The feeling of accomplishment can be great whether the object you've created is going to be a gift for a loved one or an object to be sold to put food on the table.

Like a basketball player planning on a pro career, we should have life-long goals for our woodturning. These goals should be obtainable, but definitely challenging. So how do we develop these goals? How do we stretch our imagination? Do you think any of us do it all on our own? I don't think so.

I think our work is an expression of our life experiences and guided by our education, and exposure to other artists, as well as what tools we have or can afford to buy. Our goals should constantly be developing as we absorb new ideas. Can the AAW play a roll in this process? If you look at what has happened in the last 14 years, how can there be any doubt?

Does the AAW itself have a goal? You bet it does! If you will look at the Purposes and Benefits of Members in the bylaws, you'll see these guidelines indicate that the goal of this organization is to offer support to everyone who is interested in turning, whether by producing objects, by selling tools, by buying woodturnings or just by appreciating fine work.

The major part of this goal is accomplished through education. It's a very ambitious goal and I am sure we fall short in a few places, but the Board of Directors tries hard to cover the court. I hope the AAW goals mesh with your goals. If they don't, let us know and we will try harder.

Do I have my own personal goals? I certainly do, but they are mostly on hold while I and our other board members work to help you fulfill your goals. So set your sights high and together, as a team, we can all be winners.

—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: Duane Gemelke of Brooklyn Park, MN, has come up with a way to turn fairly ordinary wood, cut the turning apart and reassemble the pieces to create the look and texture of exotics and burls. Read more about his method on Page 12. COVER PHOTO by Dick Burrows.

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

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Tea Lights

I read with interest the article by Bob Rosand regarding Tea Lights.

I have a great deal of respect for Bob and what he has done for the AAW, plus he has helped me on several occasions with problems I've had. However, I must take exception to his recommendation of Tea Lights.

Three of our members from the Clearwater, Florida area - Larry Hasiak, one of the board members; John Mascoll, a turner who has demonstrated at many conferences and I have all discontinued selling these items.

This decision came from two lamps, in my case, which completely burned up, and one in John's case, in which a lady put a candle in place of the metal container. Although it was wrong of her to do this, if the house burns down, that's pretty hard to prove.

In my case, both parties involved allowed the candles to burn too low, and the holders which I turned were completely destroyed by fire. All rules had been followed, but we have determined that if these lights are permitted to burn down to the bottom of the metal container, they will get too hot and actually burn the wood. In one instance, I saw the table where the candleholder had been, and it is not exaggerating to say that it could have burned the entire table.

I hope that Bob understands my concern over this matter. It was in fact very frightening for all of us, and none of us sells these items anymore. The confetti oil lamps make an excellent substitute, and I feel strongly that they are much safer.

— Roger Bouchard
Woodturners of Placida, Florida

Bob Rosand Replies:

I couldn't agree more with

Roger's response concerning my use of Tea Lights in place of the confetti oil lamps. The Tea Lights were suggested to me by another turner and I personally have never had a problem with them. That being said, we recently lost a small house next to ours due to a fire and I am extremely conscious of the devastation and heartbreak that a fire can cause. I've already switched back to the confetti oil lamps and would recommend that others do so. Many thanks to Roger for bringing this potential problem to the attention of the membership.

— Bob Rosand
Bloomsburg, PA

Kudos for Ornaments

I wish to compliment Jim Bliss on his article in the Fall 1998 edition of the AAW Journal wherein Jim described his approach on making Christmas ornaments. I found the article very interesting and the process resulted in a very nicely designed ornament.

I did not have the electric motor and saw blade that Jim used in his article and they, at least here, are quite expensive for just the making of ornaments. I therefore bought myself a 3-in. circular saw that was made to fit into a small electric drill. The saw blade cost me less than \$5.00.

I then made a cradle for the drill that sat on an alternate tool rest post. The cradle is designed so that it operates just like Jim's with the use of a piano hinge so that you can lower it into the ornament to make the desired cut.

The drill sits in the cradle upside down, pistol grip up, and is held into the cradle by a metal strap that has a strip of black inner-tube rubber between the strap and the drill so that the pressure on the drill will not be excessive, but will still hold the

drill solid in the cradle.

I found the set-up to work very well and all that I had to purchase was the 3-in. circular saw. I already had the extra tool rest post. This kept the necessary set-up tools, and the cost, to a minimum.

With the drill-saw and some black walnut and other woods that were just asking to be used, I made some 55 ornaments which I gave away to friends and family as Christmas presents. They were all a bit different in size and shape and were all well received.

Thank you Jim Bliss for the article and suggestion.

— Jim Hall
Cascade Woodturners Association

Dr. Waddell Responds

I have received several heartwarming telephone calls about woodturners with extreme disabilities and how they have coped with them. There have also been letters to me as well as to the Journal.

This is precisely what I had hoped would happen. Please continue to share your experiences and send our Editor, Dick Burrows, a copy for his files.

This type of feedback serves to encourage all of us to appreciate what we have and to be more careful woodturners.

— Robert Waddell, MD
Virginia Beach, VA

Beware Silky Oak

I learned an early lesson within a month of owning my new lathe. I was turning a piece of Silky Oak, I didn't know its name at the time but Wayne Shipman later helped me confirm it.

It got under my watch. I'm allergic to poison oak and I reacted just the same to this reddish colored oak. It was tough losing two weeks of a new toy but it set a deep resolve to

learn what I'm turning before I turn it. I thought you might like to add it to your list of wood to handle with special care.

— John Breen

Need help on allergic reactions

I am trying to find out information on woodturning allergic reactions. The doctors in the Roseburg area of Oregon don't seem to have a clue. I work with redwood burl, maple burl, myrtlewood and black walnut generally 4 days a week. I have dust collection and wear a double vapor and dust respirator at all times. I need to find out what kind of respiratory problems are associated with these woods. I have been working with these woods for 5 years and am developing serious asthma like symptoms and a nose that will not stop running. Any books, articles, or individuals that

can be recommended will be appreciated. Thank you. Frederic L. Uggle 1020 N.E. Division St. Myrtle Creek, Or, 97457; 541 863-7119; fuggle@wanweb.net

—Frederic Uggle
Myrtle Creek, OR

Protect chisel edges

Saw the pictures of Ted Fink's lathe modifications. One thing I have learned is that sharp edges on chisels etc. are best protected and not exposed porcupine like as he has shown his carousel to be. This is easily done by reversing the chisels, etc. and with cuts in the plastic pipe allowing the item to be seen for identification and with the handles exposed and not dangerous in case of falls or other mishaps.

While I am not permitted to do any work with tools or machinery due to my vertigo and other such problems, I always arranged sharp items so

that any contact was not potentially a danger. I looked at Fink's shop with envy and a great desire to do work. This is not intended to be nit picking but purely in the interest of preventing injury. Care and not getting hurt is always uppermost in mind.

Keep turning — hope to see you in Charlotte.

— Henry Ellis, Melbourne, FL

How to starting teaching

Is anyone aware of a class, a symposium, or a book to teach woodturning teachers?

I am an experienced turner but have been reluctant to follow up on requests for instruction because I am not sure I can adequately express my actions and thoughts to a student. Even a suggested outline for a one or two day class would be appreciated.

—David Mayfield, Athens, TN
kalikoka@usit.net

Remembering Denver Ulery

With the death of Denver Ulery at the age of 74 on November 3, 1999 we have lost one of the pioneers in organizing the world of woodturning.

Denver was the president of the Seattle AAW chapter for its first five years. The Seattle club was the second chapter to join the AAW in 1986.

Denver was the physics and shop teacher at the Overlake School campus in Seattle from 1967 until he retired in 1995. He was one of the founding teachers of this school, recognized as one of the premier private middle/high schools in the Seattle area. Because of his connection with the school, the third AAW national symposium was held at Overlake in 1989, and Denver was heavily involved in organizing it. The

Seattle chapter still meets at Overlake, again thanks to Denver's influence.

Denver designed and marketed the DJ bowl lathe and accessories. If you have seen or used a DJ lathe, then you know something about Denver.

Like Denver, they are sturdy and practical with the emphasis on functionality and value. At his memorial service, one of his sons-in-law said he had borrowed one of Denver's ties for an ugly tie contest (the son-in-law won). When he returned the tie, Denver said, "Thanks! I've been looking for it!"

Where Denver really excelled was in teaching, whether it was science or turning. Denver was the first turning teacher for many of the early members of the club, several of which have gone on to make

woodturning their full time career. Although in the last year he was slowed by cancer, he remained active in turning.

He demonstrated at the Tacoma AAW symposium in June and attended the October Seattle chapter AAW meeting.

He is survived by his wife Jean, their four daughters, eight grandchildren and one sister. For 45 years, Denver was an active member of Olympic View Community Church of the Brethren in Seattle.

The family requests that memorials go to Habitat for Humanity, with checks signed to and mailed to Olympic View Church, 425 NE 95th, Seattle, WA 98115.

— John Shrader, 1999 President,
Seattle AAW Chapter

WOOD PRIDE WEST — A DAY OF JUDGEMENT

A warm day in October, 1995. Members of Nor-Cal Woodturners were gathered in the main gallery room of the Crimson Raven Gallery in Elk Grove, CA. Each had a critical eye focused intently upon a turning. "Hmm.... should I give it 7 or 8 for technical correctness, and how much for degree of difficulty?"

These judges were applying their newly developed, and diligently practiced, skills in rating levels of woodturning and artistic perfection at the first annual Wood Pride West. All but two or three of the turnings being appraised were the work of the local chapter, Nor-Cal Woodturners. This year the fifth annual judged event was held at the end of November and the work was displayed till Jan. 3 at the A.R.T.S. Gallery, 808 Lincoln Way, Auburn CA.

The judges invest much planning and hard work before the event. Setting workable dates for the participants, scheduling practice sessions for judges, evaluating the existing rules and revamping, if necessary, the criteria and methods used by the judges are just a few of the details that must be worked out in advance. Local gallery owners are contacted to find an appropriate venue that will benefit everyone.

Judging guidelines

The judging itself is straightforward and not terribly complicated. Ten factors, five concerned with artistry and five with mechanical and technical factors, are each graded on a scale of one to ten. The submitted pieces are separated into the various categories, such as open vessels, hollow turnings, spindle turnings, etc., before judging. Participants submit their work at the novice, advanced or expert skill level. It is the participant's choice, except anyone winning three first place ribbons in either the novice or



Turned bicycle by Bruce Freiderich of Auburn, CA.

advanced levels moves into the next higher level. Three judge rate each piece on its own merits, regardless of the maker's skill level or the category. After the scores are tabulated, entries are sorted out according to categories to determine who won what. There are minimum required scores for winners in each level. Of those meeting or exceeding the minimum, those with the highest scores receive the first, the second, etc. Although most of the judges are also participants, no judge is allowed to judge a category in which he or she has submitted a piece.

Quality up each year

Each year the quality of entries improves, as one would expect. This year 31 pieces were submitted, some from as far away as Los Angeles, and were graded by nine judges. Three alternate judges were on hand should they be needed. As in past years, all entries were for sale with a percentage of sales going to the gallery to help cover the cost of pro-

viding display space.

Of particular interest this year was a piece submitted by Bruce Freiderich of Auburn, CA. The idea for his piece did not occur to him suddenly but rather grew and matured over time. Several years ago he developed an interest in bicycling. In 1996 he bicycled across the U.S. After seeing the Chicago Woodturners' bicycle entry in the 1998 Chapter Collaborative on the Journal cover, he became intrigued with the thought of doing something similar. Having seen a photo of a motorcycle assembled of carved wood parts on the cover of Woodworker West he decided to 'turn a bicycle.'

When I first saw it, I wondered why a bicycle had been brought into the gallery. On closer inspection, very close, I realized it was wood. The tires are Wenge and are mounted on Baltic Birch rims with Gabon Ebony valve stems and Purple Heart valve caps. The fork is Maple and Purple Heart. The Maple handlebar has Gabon Ebony drops.

EDUCATIONAL GRANTS AND BOARD NOMINATIONS

The gooseneck is turned in Baltic Birch and is attached to the fork by a Lignum Vitae bolt through the stave constructed Purple Heart head tube which has Lignum Vitae bearing inserts. The top tube, seat tube and down tube are all stave constructed of Maple and Purple Heart.

The Maple hubs, with Baltic Birch flanges and Lignum Vitae bearings, are fastened to the rims with $\frac{1}{8}$ -in. Oak dowel spokes. The seat stays and chain stays are laminated Maple and Purple Heart with Baltic Birch rear dropouts.

The bottom bracket is Lignum Vitae to provide a hard bearing surface for the Lignum Vitae crank to which is fastened laminated Maple and Purple Heart crank arms and pedals of Maple, Purple Heart and Ebony.

106-link wood chain

The free-wheel and chain ring cogs are Baltic Birch ply with a Purple Heart crank spider. The chain, containing 106 links, is composed of Baltic Birch ply spans with Oak dowel rollers. The saddle, of laminated Gabon Ebony and Maple, was turned on two centers and carved. The detail and finish of this piece is simply amazing.

When I saw Bruce rotating the rear wheel by rotating the crank I wasn't sure whether to believe it or not.

The judges working the 'open' category, into which the bicycle fell, had an abundance of details to check and critique in order to assign proper numeric values to the various factors when judging this piece. No one in attendance was surprised when it received a score placing it in first place in that category at the 'expert' level. Nor was there any great surprise when it was also awarded Best of Show from among all of the first place winners.

—Norm Hinman
Yuba City, CA

AAW announces winners Of Educational Opportunity Grants

The AAW Educational Opportunity Grant Committee is pleased to announce 26 scholarships for the year 2000 are being granted, totalling more than \$20,000.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE RECIPIENTS!

- Robert Adams - Nor Cal Woodturners
- Raymond Bleeker — Spokane Lathe Artists
- Howard Borer
- Christian Burchard
- Mickey Charlton
- Judy Ditmer
- Steveanna Gonzales — Osolnik Scholarship
- Conrad Kubiak
- Art Leistman
- Francis Long — Lehigh Valley Woodturners
- Hershel Miller — Mid South Woodturners Guild
- Arthur Paul
- Bob Petithomme
- Prince Albert Wood turners Guild
- Richard Preston

- Robert Pruitt — North Florida Woodturners Assn.
- Pat Reddemann
- Avelino Samuel
- Julian Shaw
- Carol Sipes
- Brenda Stein
- Don Sterchi
- Duncan Warren — Dakota Woodturners
- Karen Warren
- Curtis Williams
- Amanda Wollney — Osolnik Scholarship

A special thanks to Rude Osolnik for his interest and involvement in the selection process.

Applications for next year's EOG grants will be published in the Summer issue of *American Woodturner*. For more information, contact the AAW office in Shoreview, MN or your Board representative.

—Larry Hasiak, Educational Committee Chair

Interested in Serving on the AAW Board of Directors?

The AAW depends upon an active, working Board of Directors. Each year, three of the nine positions on the Board come up for election. Each position is for a three-year term. The deadline to announce your interest in running for one of these positions this year is May 15. To qualify, you:

- Must be a member in good standing for the past three years
- Must be approved by the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee this year consists of the following: Larry Hasiak (chairman), plus a former board member and a general member to be named later.

If you have questions about serving on the Board, you are invited to discuss them with a current or former Board Member. If you are interested in serving on the Board, please send the

following to the Administrator, postmarked no later than May 15.

- A statement of intent, including qualifications and reasons for applying (Please review statements published in last September's AAW journal for style and length.)

- Letters of recommendation from two individuals who can affirm your organizational and leadership abilities.

- A photograph of yourself.

The Nominating Committee will review this application material and schedule interviews in late May and early June. Candidates will be announced in the Fall issue, ballots will be sent out before the end of September, and election results will be announced in the Winter issue.

—Larry Hasiak, Nomination Committee Chair.

ON-LINE WOODTURNING RESOURCES

Woodturning Newsgroup: Some of you are aware that there is an active Usenet newsgroup on woodturning called:

rec.crafts.woodturning.

This newsgroup allows people to have conversations similar to e-mail threads. The group is very active and offers users a good mechanism for sharing information and asking questions about our craft.

AAW Web Space Changes: We have secure processing of membership applications and renewals on the AAW web site. We also have a system for AAW members to post want ads on the site at \$25 per 90 days. We are using this as a way to defer costs for the web site.

We are now finalizing on-line ordering of our publications, videos, and logo items. A couple of points for using these forms:

- 1) All payments on the web site are credit card only.
- 2) Please make sure to complete all the fields in the on-line forms.
- 3) Please review your information before submitting it.

Also in the design stage are resource pages for local chapters. This will be a place for the collection of information on local chapter issues and problems. Look for it in the next few months.

Secure Processing: January 1, 2000 was stressful to a lot of computer workers. Things look as if the Y2K bug was resolved before it could do any damage. One issue that has come up is the problem of web surfers using old browser software and trying to use secure credit card sites.

Some people have gotten error messages saying that the certificate has expired when ordering on-line. This is not the server certificate, but the certificate in your microcomputer's browser. It is very important to upgrade your web browser to the newest version of Netscape Commu-

nicator or Microsoft Internet Explorer since many old browsers have outdated certificates. The new browsers have updated certificates that can process secure pages correctly after 1/1/2000. Below is a reference to review for more information on the issue.

<http://www.verisign.com/server/cus/rootcert/webmaster.html>

Cyberturners: We look forward to another cyberturners meeting at the Charlotte symposium. It will probably be combined with the editors meeting as in Tacoma. This combination worked out very well since the cyberturners and chapter editors are normally the same people. We hope to see you there.

Anti-Virus Software: Many of you don't like to upgrade your software. It is sometimes a pain, and most of you want to know why this is necessary. In many cases like word processors, you may have a program that does all you want it to do and there isn't need to upgrade. Anti-virus software is one tool where upgrading is essential. Current anti-virus engines and up-to-date anti-virus data files are absolutely necessary if you download files or receive files via e-mail attachments. Most businesses require automated updates of these types of products for employees transmitting and receiving messages over the Internet. The data file updates are normally free from the vendor of your anti-virus software.

My advice is "Purchase or upgrade your anti-virus software, and update your anti-virus data files monthly."

AAW does not recommend software, but there are only a couple of manufacturers after the latest acquisitions. NAI and Symantec are two of the leading vendors. Check out this U.S. government site for some non-commercial information on anti-virus issues:

<http://www.fedcirc.gov/>

You can also search most meta sites like yahoo:

(<http://www.yahoo.com/>)

for more information on anti-virus software.

Virus Hoaxes: Many of you have received extreme warnings from friends or colleagues about a virus like "Join the Crew." They usually say that some nefarious e-mail attachment will format your hard drive or delete all your files. The messages almost always say for you to forward the warning to everyone you know and love. This is usually the tip off for a hoax. In fact, the proliferation of the e-mail warning messages IS the virus since it just clogs up the net with extraneous messages.

But how would a non-geek know a hoax from the real thing? There are some reputable and informative sites available where you can look up known hoaxes so you don't panic and send the message to a lot of your woodturning friends. A short list to bookmark is below. Most will let you search on a string to find the hoax.

NAI/McAfee:

http://www.nai.com/asp_set/anti_virus/library/hoaxes.asp

Symantec:

<http://www.symantec.com/av-center/hoax.html>

Datafellows:

<http://www.datafellows.fi:80/news/hoax/>

Kumite:

<http://kumite.com/myths/myths/>

CIAC:

<http://ciac.llnl.gov/ciac/CIA-CHoaxes.html>

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

WOOD AS ART IN CHARLOTTE AND BEYOND

Momentum continues to build for the next annual AAW symposium, June 30-July 2, at the Charlotte, NC, Convention Center. Charlotte is a lovely city, rich in cultural and historical resources, plus all the shopping, restaurants and amenities found in a flourishing city.

The city is located in the state's Piedmont area and has some excellent fishing lakes nearby, and is just a couple of hours drive to the North Carolina Mountains, the Blue Ridge Parkway and other attractions.

Featured demonstrators at the symposium, 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, and a banquet and auction to benefit the AAW Educational Programs.

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 + Design.

The Masons are turning 120 woodturnings from their collection over to the museum, and our AAW Symposium will offer a great opportunity to visit this magnificent collection in its new home.

A catalog: *Turning Wood into Art; the Jane and Arthur Mason Collection* will also be available.

For more information contact the AAW office, 3499 Lexington Ave North, Suite 103, Shoreview, MN (651-484-9094).

e-mail: AAW@citilink.com

2000: A Banner Year For Wood As Art

The year 2000 will be a watershed year for the "Wood Art" or "Studio Turner" movement. Wood has been accepted unequivocally as an art medium. Acceptance is no longer the issue. During this year at least four museums/universities will be receiving and /or fostering long-term exhibitions of Wood Art:

— The Mint Museum of Craft + Design, Charlotte, North Carolina;

— The Detroit Institute of Art, Detroit, Michigan;

— The Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, California;

— The Yale University/Woodturning Center Retrospective, New Haven, Connecticut. While the latter two will come to full fruition in the year 2001, the planning and initial phases are already in progress and have been for some time.

These are not the only such institutions to have accepted wood art as an art form.

Some of the others include the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C.; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City; the Museum of Modern Art in New York City; the Museum of

Fine Art in Boston and the Fine Art Museum of the South in Mobile, Alabama.

Possibly the first was the Museum of Art at Arizona State University in Tempe, Arizona. This was the first venue in which the "Bud" Jacobson Collection was displayed in 1985. While this collection is not on display at the present time, Heather Lineberry, Senior Curator at the ASU Museum of Art, told me that the collection can be viewed by appointment. Call the Museum at (480) 965-2787.

So what's the big deal about these four institutions at this time?

First, to our knowledge, there has never been a single moment in time when four institutions of this stature have been featuring or focusing on wood, much less accepting it for permanent exhibition. These activities constitute not so much "acceptance" as "ratification" of the "acceptance" of wood as Art.

Second, their activities are very much dependent upon "collectors," who have been very important in promoting woodturning as an art form.

— Ken Keoughan
Mt Dora, FL

Woodturning Exhibition 2001: First notice

The AAW will hold its next major show at the prestigious Minnesota Museum of American Art in St. Paul, MN from May through July of 2001. This will overlap with the AAW symposium in St. Paul on July 6-8, 2001. The theme and title of the show will be *Nature Takes a Turn, Woodturnings Inspired From the Natural World*. Plans are underway to locate other venues for this show.

Works by David Pye, Virginia Dotson, Ron Fleming, Bill Hunter, Michael Peterson, Frank Sudol, Richard Raffan, Del Stubbs, Clay Foster and many others have drawn inspiration from the natural world — forms, patterns, textures, coloring schemes — from landscapes, human torsos, flower forms, shells, eggs, weathered stones, mushrooms, leaves, bird feathers to fish scales.

The source of your idea need not be obvious to the viewer, but should be conveyed to the jurors with text. This will be a combined invitational (less than 20%) and juried show of approximately 50 pieces. Specific dates and details will appear in the summer issue of *American Woodturner*.

— Alan Lacer, Shoreview, MN

CENTRAL CT TURNERS HELP OUTFIT THE AMISTAD

Perhaps the biggest rush for an artist is when he or she sells that first piece of art work. It represents recognition, value and acceptance. Once in a great while an opportunity presents itself that will eclipse even the thrill of that first sale. The Central Connecticut Woodturners chapter of AAW experienced just such an opportunity last Fall.

The members of the CCW had a rare honor to participate in the recreation of a very important part of American history. Thanks to the efforts of member Dick Sharpe, the Mystic Seaport staff asked us to turn the belaying pins for the reconstruction of the Freedom Schooner Amistad.

Mystic Seaport, The Museum of America and the Sea, is the nation's leading maritime museum. Located on the Connecticut shore, the living history museum houses a number of exhibits and historical recreations depicting early American whaling, merchant marine activities and the supporting village economy.

In 1839 forty-nine Africans captured into the North American slave trade were forced onto a Spanish vessel called Amistad. One of them, a man named "Cinque," escaped from his chains and led a shipboard revolt.

The victorious Africans ordered the two surviving crew members to sail them back to Africa, but instead, were tricked and the Amistad ended up in the harbor at New Haven, CT. Spain's demand for the return of "Spanish property" led to one of the most important Supreme Court cases in U.S. history. Ultimately, under a legal defense headed by the former president John Quincy Adams, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the freedom of the Africans and, more importantly, their right to self-determination. The decision and its surrounding publicity did much to fuel the developing abolitionist



The Amistad Belaying Pin crew of the Central Connecticut Woodturners chapter of AAW. Photo by Priscilla Bakke.

movement. In January of 1842 the thirty-five Amistad Africans who had survived the ordeal were returned to their homelands.

Using traditional skills, tools and materials, Mystic Seaport's shipyard staff is constructing a working replica of the 85-foot sailing vessel, Amistad, as a permanent symbol of the struggle for equality and human rights. The ship will be a floating educational resource to ensure this very important part of American history is never again lost to a footnote in the history books.

A belaying pin is a handled wooden dowel that fits in a rack, known as a fife rail, attached to the sailing ship's masts and stanchions. The pins act like cleats that secure the ropes to haul the sails. The shipyard provided the angelique lumber, a species traditionally used in a variety of shipboard construction applications due to its natural decay and insect resistance. The pins were a fairly straight forward spindle turning exercise; about 17-in. long and 1 3/4-in. in diameter. The shipyard requested that we produce at least 90 pretty close duplicates.

We distributed the 2-by-2 angelique turning blanks and one of our members who is an architectural

turner provided measured drawings. Any dues paying member could participate. The following month folks displayed their expertise. For some, this was their first try at spindle turning and the results were impressive. Upon delivery to the shipyard the pins were placed in a vat of diluted linseed oil and allowed to soak for a month. This will help to maintain dimensional stability. Then they were stacked to dry before being installed on the ship.

In recognition of our contribution to the re-creation of the schooner, officials of the Mystic Seaport provided CCW members and their guests an extensive guided tour of the Amistad facility and access to a huge accumulated pile of iroko hull and deck planking cut-offs.

The ship will be launched in March 25, 2000. Once afloat, the shipyard crew will install masts, rigging and sails. Commissioning will take place in June 2000 and her maiden voyage will be in the tall ships parade, "Operation Sail 2000," in New York Harbor on Independence Day, July 4, 2000.

If you find yourself in southern New England this spring, be sure to make a point of visiting Mystic

(Continued next page)

NEW LIFE FOR OLDEST MAHOGANY TREE IN US

Last July Dr. Robin Brown of Fort Myers, FL, called to tell me that a large mahogany tree was being cut down on Bay Street. He thought the tree might have some historical significance.

That evening I drove downtown and talked with the tree cutter, who said everything was headed to the landfill. I told him I'd like to buy some to turn. Four days later he delivered the mammoth tree trunk to my house in four sections. A neighbor let me store the wood on a vacant building lot.

Several days later I went to the Fort Myers Historical Museum to do a little research on the tree. Mildred Santiago, the museum curator, said she was familiar with the tree and knew that it had been cut down. She said that if the Historical Society had known about the tree cutting they would have tried to prevent it.

She showed me where I would find old newspaper articles about the Royal Palm Hotel, which in 1898 was at the corner of Fowler and First Streets, and included a botanical garden. My mahogany tree was part of that garden. The hotel flourished until the 1940s, when it was sold and some of the buildings torn down. The mahogany tree survived.

Robin Brown's research showed that in 1990 the tree was recognized as "The Oldest Mahogany Tree in North America".

It decided that I should turn a "piece" from this historically significant wood and present it to the Historical Museum. I turned a 12-in. diameter bowl for the museum.

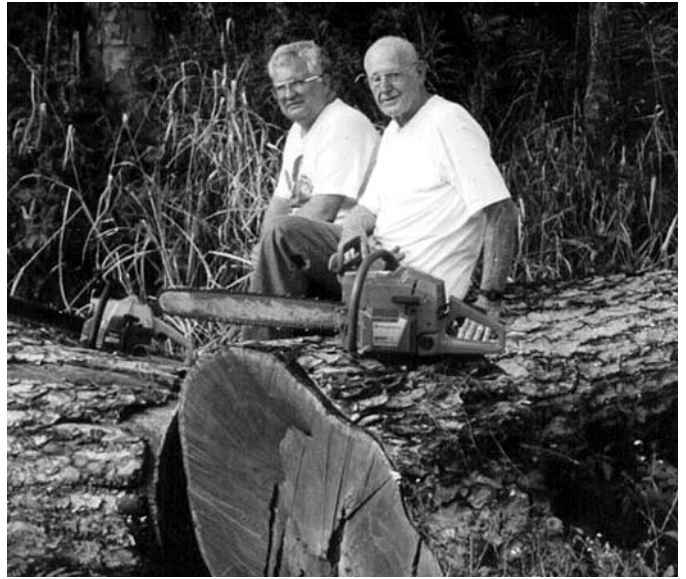
Larry Hasiak, a professional woodturner in Clearwater, FL, also bought three large pieces of this grand tree.

My friend and colleague, Paula Nicks, also told photographer and woodturner Bob Hawks about the tree and he got several large pieces. Bob will no doubt turn many beautiful hollow form bowls and vessels using the historical old mahogany.

I have been turning Christmas tree ornaments from the Bay Street Mahogany. Larry Hasiak provided the inspiration for the ornaments. He was kind enough to do a demonstration for our club, Woodturners of Southwest Florida, and shared his technique of hollowing the globes with us.

I was very impressed with the beauty of his ornaments and could not wait to try the technique. Larry made it look easy. I asked him if he minded if I did some. He said he didn't mind but I should try to use the technique while finding my own style.

What looked easy was anything but. After breaking four in a row, I finally produced a reasonable facsimile of an ornament. I turn mine with a different shape of globe



Bill Sullivan and Bob Hawks with the giant mahogany. Photo by Jan Hawks

and "icicle." My wife, Patty, sews pull string bags for them and I include a tag with my name and a brief history of the wood, along with my hopes that "This magnificent tree lives on in this beautiful ornament."

The wood itself is unlike any mahogany I have turned before. It is darker and denser. Even the pith is turnable with the aid of a little CA glue. The diameter just below the first crotch is 31½-ft., most of which is heartwood. Before the trunk was cut down it stood about 14-ft.. The crotch measures 4-ft. at the base.

It was almost bug free and a very healthy tree. Some pitted areas inside near the pith have a white film, which adds character to the turnings, but is a bit more difficult to turn though.

Turning historically significant wood is special. It's satisfying knowing that a small part of history lives in the work. It certainly made me aware of the difference in younger trees compared to old growth trees. My customers buy my ornaments because they like them, but the history of the wood sells them.

— Bill Sullivan, Orlando, FL

(Continued from Previous Page)

Seaport. The Central Connecticut Woodturners' banner flies with honor over the Amistad and, you can see our belaying pins along the rails.

The Seaport officials estimate the cost of constructing the Amistad replica at about \$2.8 million. Our pride in the knowledge that the Central Connecticut Woodturners made a small contribution to this very important floating monument to humanity is priceless.

— John Lorch, Central Connecticut Woodturners



Jerry Fant, Tips Editor

One thing I've learned is that we're never too old to learn. I've learned from my teachers, my students and my fellow turners. Here are a few tips to illustrate what I mean:

Developing Curves

In teaching novice woodturners I've noticed a trend — square bottom bowls. A curved bowl is much more pleasing to the eye and is actually easier to turn and sand. As the cut is being made, remember to move the end of the handle in an arc. In trying to visualize this, take a curved bowl of some type, turned or not, and place the bevel of the tool against the bowl as if you were

turning it. Follow the curve around, keeping the bevel in contact. Watch the end of the handle as it moves around the form. The handle arcs as it makes the curve. Now take this to the lathe and watch it work, it will form a curve every time. The amount of curve depends on the amount of arc you put into it.

—Jerry Fant, Wimberley, TX

Sanding Pore Filler

Something I learned about sanding while taking a week-long class from Ray Key.

When you get to 150-grit, dip the sandpaper into a paste wax like Briwax or Minwax Finishing Wax. It helps hold down the dust and gathers the fine dust to fill in the pores of the wood. After finishing it covers up mistakes wonderfully.

We are interested in sketches, photos and ideas that you think would make work easier and more fun for other turners.

Send Turner's Tips to:

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Note on Sharpening

From the words of John Jordan "You don't sharpen a tool because it is dull — you sharpen a tool because the tool is not as sharp as it could be." In other words never let your tools get dull!

—John Jordan, Antioch, TN

Tear Out Problems

When turning a project and tear out is occurring close to the finishing stage, try putting a little paste wax on the damaged area. Then lightly re-turn the area until it is cleaned up or the tear out is minimal.

Sometimes it will take more than one application, if the tear out is deep.

This will save countless hours sanding.

—Jerry Fant, Wimberley, TX

Sandpaper Substitute

There are other things that can be used to sand besides sandpaper. I use a mill bastard file to smooth and size the long necks of my bobbins. I use a 1/8-in. chain saw file to smooth out the coves. For really delicate work, I use a sapphire nail file. To clean these files I use a copper brush meant for pots and pans — it does a great job of

declogging without dulling.

—Judy Williams, Austin, TX

Substitute Bone

For those who want to experiment with turning bone instead of going thru a lengthy process of preparation, go to the local pet store and check out the bones for dogs. You can sort thru the bone bin and find lengths of heavy white bone. These can be very carefully cut on the band saw or more safely held in a vice and sawn with a new hacksaw. Depending on the bone, pieces up to 3/8- by-6-in. can be obtained. These make great finials for boxes or mini goblets. Since most people don't have chucks with pin jaws, these bone pieces can be used in a shopmade cup chuck with a little CA glue for security. Turning bone will quickly dull tools, so have the sharpening equipment nearby. Use breathing protection as the bone dust is not only very fine, but the turning can be a little smelly. I have found that scraping cuts work marginally better than shearing cuts. Use very fine sandpaper and buffing for a finish.

—Judy Williams, Austin, TX

Seeing Scratches

How many times have you put a finish on a completed piece only to find sanding marks not seen before. A common procedure for seeing scratches before a finish is applied is to rub mineral spirits on the work piece.

While the mineral spirits are still wet, scratches will show up just as they do when the finish is applied. All you need to do then is wait a couple of minutes for the spirits to dry, then sand and apply your finish as normal.

—Jerry Fant, Wimberley, TX

Quick Finish

A very quick and can't-go-wrong

Mystery Wood

So a fellow comes into your shop and admires a little vessel or what-not that you have turned and wants to know what the wood is and you haven't a clue. Here's some handy woods to fill in:

FOG wood — ie found on the ground.

FIB wood — ie found in a bin (usually someone else's trash bin).

Donna wood— ie don't have an idea.

Wonda wood — ie wonder what in the Sam Hill that is.

Palle' wood — ie pallet wood.

Make it up such as: Mount Bonnell spindly pine; Crum Marsh maple; East Texas Mountain Sage (no mountains in East Texas?? then make it West no...Southwest....or Flatlands)

—Judy Williams, Austin, TX

finish that I use a lot, mainly on bowls is: apply a good rub down with Tung Oil; this is done while the lathe is off. Then turn on the lathe to heat up or drive the oil in. Turn off the lathe again and rub on a paste wax, then turn on the lathe again and buff the wax dry. This works great in my dusty shop, as the paste wax has dried to the touch and the dust is not sticking to the bowls.

—Jerry Fant, Wimberley, TX

Sanding Tip

To make those stubborn cross-grain scratches that just seem to show up when you apply the finish disappear, try this: once you have sanded up to 180-grit, after sanding with each grit, turn off the lathe and sand WITH the grain by hand until the scratches are gone. Clean the dust off of the piece with a lint free cloth, use good lighting and look for the rings. If you can still see the scratches at that point, you will really see them when the finish is applied, so never hesitate to drop back a grit size to clean them up. It only takes a few moments to take them out and your end product will have a much better finish.

—S. Gary Roberts, Austin, TX

Spindle Protector

An empty plastic pill bottle with an internal diameter equal to the diameter of your lathe spindle can be used to protect your lathe's outboard spindle from nicks and bruises. Cut

a plastic pill bottle of appropriate diameter to a length about one inch longer than your lathe's outboard spindle. Fit the bottle over the spindle and you have a quick spindle protector. If the fit is just a wee bit too loose, a ring or two of tape inside the bottle will size it up nicely.

Not only will the bottle protect the spindle from nicks, but the covered spindle is less likely to engage and wrap a loose article of clothing or long hair which might accidentally

come into contact with it.

A "ring" cut from the same pill bottle can protect the inboard spindle and still allow the Morse taper drive spur to be used. Both protectors would have to be removed to use a faceplate

—Kenneth Evans, Valley Falls, NY

Wood Hardener

When working with spalted or very soft wood that tends to tear out, try soaking the wood in a solution of 50% white glue and 50% water. Soak for several hours or even over night. Let dry, then turn as normal. The water helps the glue soak deeper than normal to stabilize the wood. This also helps cure end grain cracks in some woods. Soaking them overnight or longer in the solution might be necessary. In many instances the water swells the cracks closed and the glue keeps them from opening back up.

—S. Gary Roberts, Austin, TX



Carolina Symposium: Alan Leland was among the demonstrators for the Carolina Woodturning Symposium at Mitchell Community College in Statesville, NC. The event featured local and regional talent and was designed to promote the craft of woodturning as well as renew the goodwill of woodturners and prospective woodturners throughout the region.

TURNING ON TO SCULPTURE

Shape, slice and reassemble to trick the eye

DUANE GEMELKE

A FEW YEARS AGO, I WAS SEARCHING for a design for a wall sculpture for my home. I had long admired the work of the masters in turning wall pieces, using burls with their unique shapes and textures, but I wasn't ready to purchase or to hunt for that wood. Instead, I began developing sculptures that appeared to have been made from burls and other exotics, whose variations in shadow and figure were created by turning, cutting, and reassembling fairly plain pieces of wood. The result is presented in the pieces featured here. The following article discusses how I design and create the work.

Design process.

The general shape of these pieces can be explored on paper before going to the lathe. Your skills learned in kindergarten will serve you well here. A circular disk can be cut from paper or cardboard and a trial saw pattern drawn on the disk, and cut with scissors. At that point you can rearrange the pieces and experiment with various shapes. You may find that you will get some surprises once you do the same in wood. The first of my experiments was to work up a generally oval shape using rectangular strips. The paper disk was cut into rectangular strips, and slid into an oval shape. In the final wood piece the oval shape was attained, but an interesting swirl also appeared on its face. Further experimentation found that the form of the swirl could be varied by the spacing of the beads and coves cut into the blank prior to cutting the turning into strips.

The experimentation with the triangular shaped segments was an effort to create a heart shape. The triangular shapes were cut on paper and the exterior form worked. When the final piece was assembled, a



Template to sculpture: Fun with paper cutouts, like the one above, can lead to surprisingly distinctive wall pieces. And the possibilities, as shown on the next page, are probably limitless.

weird set of eyes appeared. I would have never found this on paper unless I would have drawn in all of the features of the turning. The various other shapes were all found by simply experimenting.

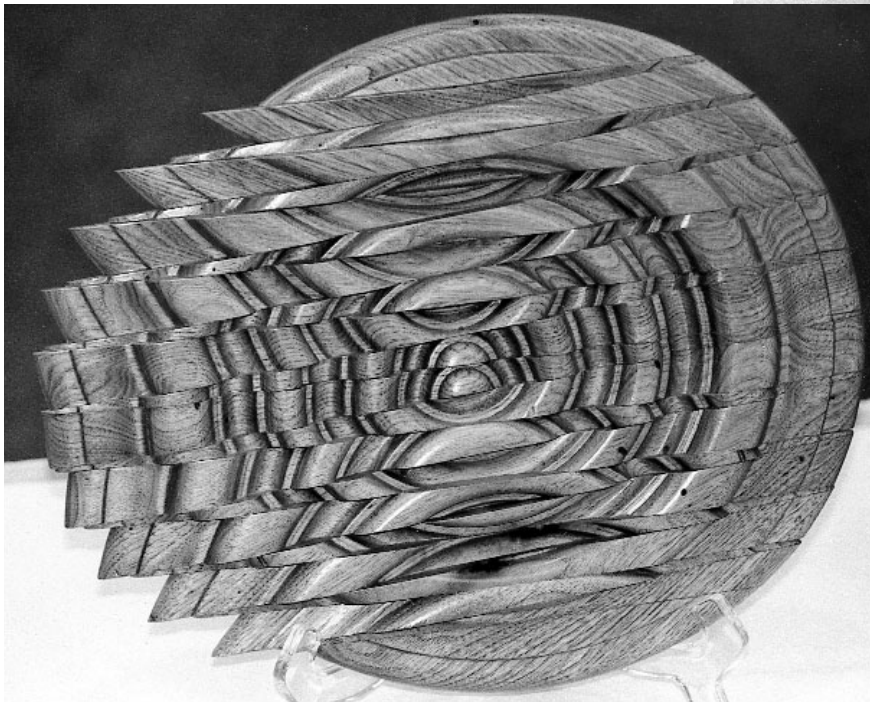
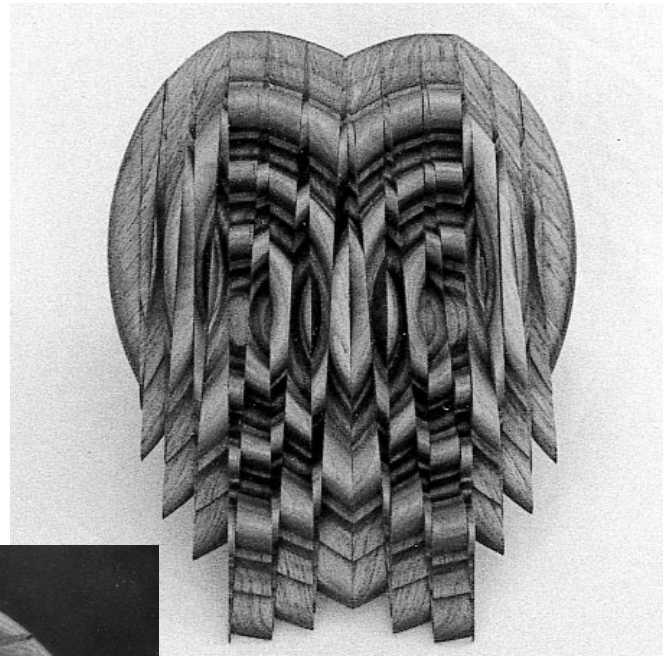
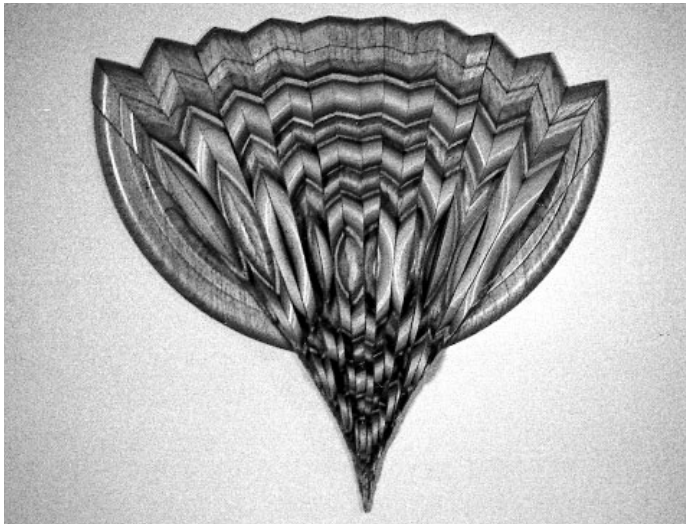
Preparing the blank

The wood chosen for this work does not need to be highly figured, in fact the simpler grain is preferred. I used butternut for most of these pieces because its color blends nicely with the color of woodwork used in many homes. It turns, cuts, and sands nicely and is relatively inexpensive.

These pieces can be made from a single piece of wood, although, since they will later be cut in half, they can be made from pieces as narrow as one half the diameter of the turning. These narrower pieces are much eas-

ier to obtain. Two pieces are edge-glued together to form the initial turning blank. Sixteen-inch diameter pieces have been made from $\frac{8}{4}$ (that's lumber talk for 2 in. thick) rough-cut lumber. An 8-inch wide plank was cut into two 16-inch lengths and edge planed and glued into a 16-inch square blank. Eleven inch diameter pieces have been made from $\frac{4}{4}$ rough cut lumber and cut into 11 inch lengths for gluing into 11-inch square blanks.

The glued up blank should be made from the same piece of lumber with the direction of the grain running the same direction for both halves. The glue joint should be firm, but does not need to be visually perfect, as we will later cut down the center of this joint. I normally use yellow wood glue. The blank is cut roughly



The vision of the artist can cut and recombine the elements of each turning into a variety of shapes and textures, as shown in the photos above and left. Each of the pieces began as a shaped platter like the butternut turning shown on the previous page. The author's method for rearranging pieces, along with a couple of sample patterns, is illustrated on the next two pages.

round on the band saw.

Mounting process

The method of attaching the blank to your lathe will largely depend on the accessories you prefer. I have used a dovetail compression chuck, but I would rather glue the blank to a scrap wood faceplate with a paper-glue joint. The joint is strong enough to hold the blank to the faceplate, but weak enough to be broken apart later with a wood chisel. It leaves no evidence of how the piece was held to the lathe.

Screw a scrap wood block to a faceplate and turn it to 6-to-8-in. diameter and turn the face flat. Cut a circle of

brown paper (I use a grocery bag) the same size as your scrap wood faceplate. The easy way to cut out the paper disc is to temporarily tape a larger piece of paper to the faceplate with a few small pieces of double-face tape. Turn on the lathe and cut off the excess paper at the outer edge of the faceplate with the tip of a skew chisel, long point down. My son told me that I have the most expensive paper cutter in the neighborhood. Take off the paper and the tape and set the paper aside for later.

For the initial turning, the blank is sandwiched between the faceplate and a live tailstock center. Tighten the tail stock firmly, as pressure is the

only thing holding the blank in place. Place the live tailstock center on the center joint in the blank, as we want the center joint to be in the center of the turning. I recommend a cup center, rather than a cone center, to avoid prying apart the glue joint. True up and flatten the face of the blank taking only very light cuts. Mark a few circles on the blank, a little larger than the size of the faceplate. Take the blank off the lathe and sand down the small nubbin that remained beneath the tail center. Apply yellow wood glue to the faceplate, put on the paper, apply glue to the paper and roughly center the blank using the circles drawn earlier. Check the center-

ing of the blank by running the tailstock center against the center joint in the blank. Clamp and let stand until the paper-glue joint has set.

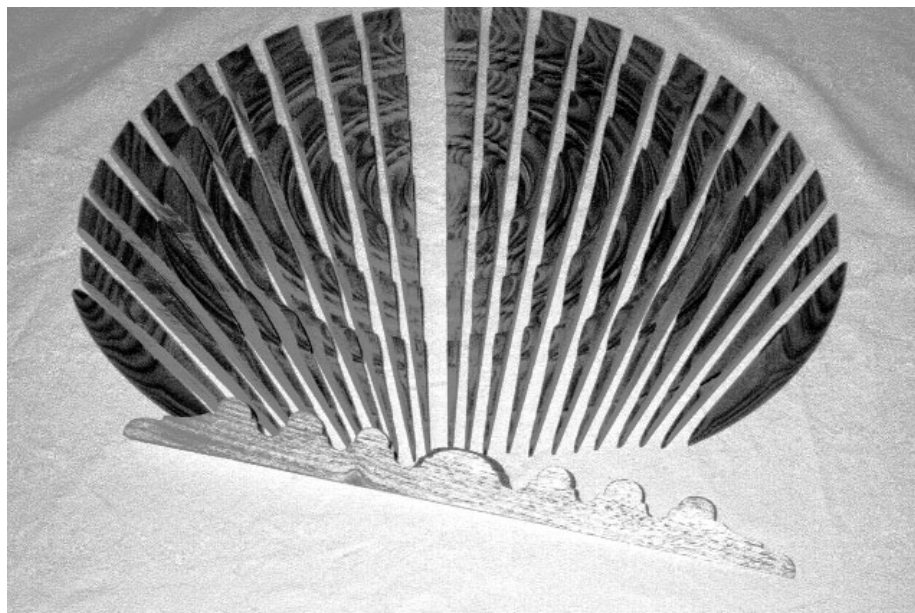
Turning process.

Return to the lathe and true up both the rear and front faces and turn the piece to round. The selection of the turning pattern is largely a matter of choice. The photograph at right indicates the turning profile that was used. The goal is to obtain a depth of form and create shadow and texture. A study of spindle turning forms will assist in picking the turning profile. I normally use a gouge, a small square nose scraper, and a small round nose scraper to turn the forms. The finishing cuts are normally made with a shear scraping cut. The pieces are sanded and a sealer applied to prevent the glue from marking the face during the final assembly. The sealer should be compatible with the final finish that you select. These pieces were sealed with a tung-oil-polyurethane sealer. Later, a spray urethane final finish will be applied. Take a wood chisel and gently separate the turning from the faceplate and sand the back flat.

Cutting process

Caution – keep safety in mind throughout your work, but especially while cutting these small segments. A jig or hold-down device should be used to assure uniform and safe cuts.

A sample of the triangular shaped cut segments are represented in the photograph above. The longest of these pieces is 11-in. long and tapers from $\frac{3}{4}$ -in. to $\frac{1}{32}$ -in. The cutting process depends on your tools. Remember that the thicker the blade, the more of the turning that will be lost to sawdust. Most of these pieces have more than 20 cuts in 11 in. They were cut with an ultra-thin $8\frac{1}{2}$ -in. diameter circular saw blade on a compound sliding miter saw. Even with this very



A basic pattern and a disassembled turning, ready to be sculpted.

thin blade, 15-to-20% of the turned piece is lost. A full thickness blade would yield even more waste. A bandsaw would produce the least waste, provided that you can get a straight cut. Additional sanding may be necessary to produce quality joints. Number the cut pieces in pencil on the back to aid in reassembly.

Reassembly

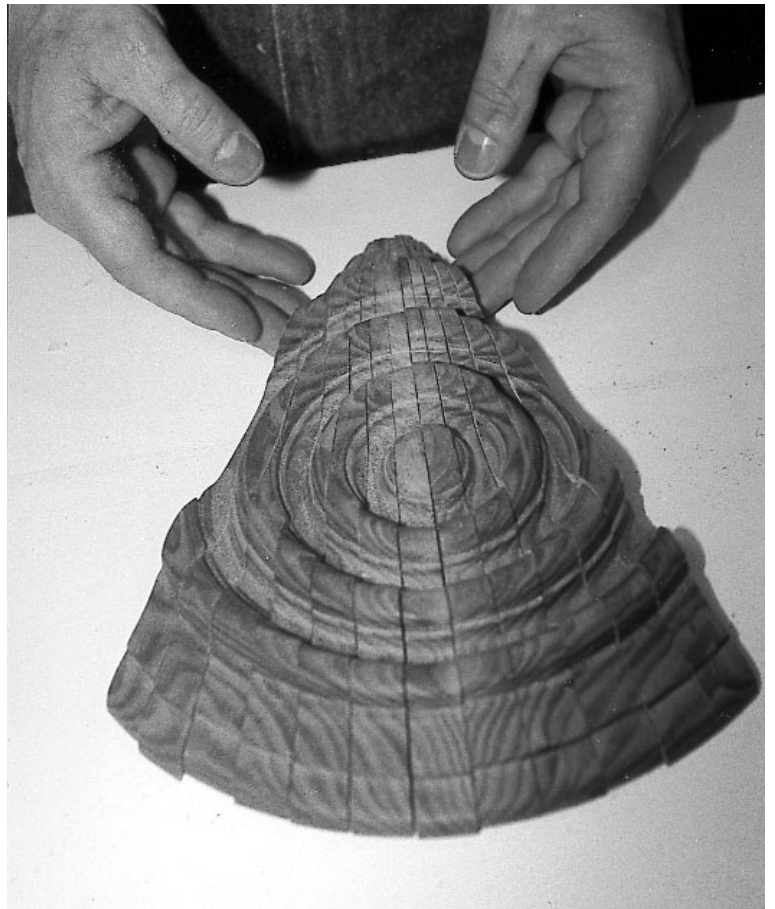
Now is the time to put your creative energy to work. Put all of the puzzle pieces on the table, relax, get a cup of your favorite beverage, and start playing with arrangement of the pieces. Start with the form that you made in paper, but try others. A white background on the table helps to see the resulting forms. Step back, admire, critique, rearrange, and have another sip. Don't stop until you have tried all of the reasonable options. Once you have decided on the form, make a record of the sequence of the pieces and start gluing it up. I normally glue up 2 pieces at a time using white PVA wood glue that dries clear. While the glue is setting, clean off as much of the excess adhesive from the front face as you can. What you see is what you get; you can't sand it off later. The tapered pieces may tend to

slip as clamping pressure is applied. You may be able to prevent the slipping by driving a small staple into the surface to be glued and cutting it off, leaving two small points sticking out. This is usually enough to keep the piece from wandering. When all of the glue is set, sand the back flat, taking off the excess dried glue and the pencil markings. Since the surface is irregular, a spray finish is the most practical, one that is compatible with the sealer used earlier.

A keyhole slot in the back for hanging is a nice touch, and don't forget to sign your work.

There are, obviously, many variations on this concept that can be made. One way of accentuating the turning design is to use two different woods. This can be done by making the blank from a $\frac{3}{4}$ -in. thick piece of wood, and laminating a $\frac{1}{4}$ -in. piece of another wood on the front face. As the design is turned, much of the front face wood is turned away, revealing the second wood in the deeper areas of the design.

Duane Gemelke is an amateur woodturner and lives in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He is also an officer of the Minnesota Woodturners.



Sawn turning, above, resembles original blank. At this stage, the author says, the fun starts as he begins to rearrange, realign and twist pieces to create the sculptural effects he had envisioned. Just simple rearrangements create a variety of eyes and other textures, as shown below, left and right.



JANE AND ARTHUR MASON

A passion for art, and for the people that create it **KEN KEOUGHAN**

JANE AND ARTHUR MASON ARE PASSIONATE about turned wood. The pieces they have collected; the friends they have come to know along the way; the artists whose work, vision and lives have joined with theirs — all of it grew from a deep and enduring passion. At the risk of sounding overly sentimental, I'd say that we are all very fortunate that Jane and Arthur Mason inadvertently wandered into the world of turned wood.

You'll see why this spring at the May 18 opening of *Turning Wood Into Art: the Jane and Arthur Mason Collection* at the Mint Museum of Craft + Design in Charlotte, NC, when the Masons turn a major portion of their personal collection of turned wood over to the Museum.

This exhibition is the expression of their passion for turned wood. They promote it to the public in any and every way that they can. "We need to generate increasing awareness of wood as art," they say. Why? "Because the work is so beautiful, the artists need to be known better, they deserve our help."

It began by accident for the Masons. They had attended a wedding in Washington, D.C. in June 1986 that was "so boring that our mouths had turned to concrete from all the smiling," Jane recalls. Their escape route led to the National Gallery, but lack of parking prevented a sojourn there, so they went on to the prestigious Renwick Gallery, which was hosting a Frank Lloyd Wright exhibition. A docent at the desk urged them to see the Edward Jacobson turned wood collection upstairs. They nodded pleasantly and went on in to the Wright exhibit. As they began to edge past the docent on the way out, she spotted them and again urged them to go upstairs and see the Jacobson turned wood collection. Resigned, they went upstairs.



Jane and Arthur Mason at the Mint Museum of Craft + Design in Charlotte, NC, with Museum director Mark Leach.

And that, as they say, was that. The Masons were in love with woodturning.

Today Arthur picks up the catalog from the Jacobson show and states, "This was the first. This was the start. This was the footprint we began to follow." And follow it they did. Of the 22 artists included in Edward (Bud) Jacobson's collection, the Masons have collected work by 21. The catalog of the Jacobson exhibition was called *The Art of Turned Wood Bowls: A Gallery of Contemporary Masters*. And indeed it was an excellent reflection of the Master Woodturners in the United States at that time.

Beginning in 1976 a wood turning conference in Newtown, PA, fostered

by Albert LeCoff, his brother, Alan, and Palmer Sharpless brought together woodturners from various regions of the country. Ten similar conferences were held between 1976 and 1986. Momentum was gathering. Turners were finding out that they weren't alone; that they had lots to share — in fact, they loved doing it. These conferences were precursors to the AAW, as well as to the Wood Turning Center.

The heretofore scattered turners, craftsmen and wood artists were beginning to unite in spirit and from time-to-time in person. Organization and structure were coming into play. In 1986 the AAW and the Wood Turning Center were formed. Wood-

Mason Collection Preview



Clockwise from top left, Frank Cummings, Citric-Citrine; Christian Burchard, baskets; Mark Lindquist, Totem; and Hans Joachim Weissflog, Broken Through Ball Box.

turning was included in the curriculum at the Arrowmont School of Crafts. And in the wake of this decade of churning activity emerged the need, the ability and the opportunity to present this first exquisite exhibition of "Contemporary Masters" at the Renwick. Jane and Arthur Mason have gone forward since then. Far forward. Fast forward. They have collected the work of some 120 woodturners. At the time the Jacobson collection was assembled, all the exhibitors were white males, and all from the U.S. Today in the field, as well as in their collection, minorities are represented. Furthermore, their collection is genuinely international. I think they are especially proud of the contributions that they encouraged from many women artists. "What's important here isn't just the inclusion, it is the acceptance that really matters," Arthur says.

What are the dimensions of their collection? How does their collection stand apart from others? First, their collection is alive. It continues to grow and will continue to grow. At the present it numbers in the neighborhood of 700 pieces by 120 artists.

Of these, about 120 pieces will be featured at the opening at the Mint Museum of Craft + Design. The contributions are being donated in three tiers: Outright Gift; Promised Gift; On Loan. About 50% are in the Outright Gift category; four to five pieces are "On Loan" from their children and institutions.

Why do they collect? What motivates collectors? Jane Mason chooses her words carefully and speaks with precision. "I've always wondered what motivates collectors. I'm not sure ... it becomes addictive, you know." For Jane and Arthur Mason, collecting encompasses the entire world of turned wood: the beauty they find in the art itself and in the people who populate that world; the joy they experience in supporting the



THE OFFICE: Jane in her office, complete with balky computer and assorted decorative elements.

turned wood movement and sharing their collection.

"It's changed our lives." Arthur is vigorous, emphatic, a little ruffled. There is a pervasive friendliness about Arthur. His very presence says, "Hi, I'm Arthur. This is it. There's no one else in here with me. What you see is what you get." There's a smile in all this whether he's smiling or not. "It's changed our lives. What we do. Whom we associate with. Where we go. What we appreciate." By now he's nodding in affirmation of his own words. "Whom and what we support in terms of morale, encouragement, financial backing and investing."

How does their collection stand apart from others? I haven't seen the others, but my guess and my information is that it is bigger than most. Further, their collection is "a function of our 'vision,'" Jane says. And their 'vision', for now, is mainly focused on traditional turned wood. They have not until recently been very much interested in embellishment or coloration. But this is not rigid and their 'vision' expands, shifts, re-focuses, as they continue to explore and as the visions of the artists shift and change.

What about when an artist goes from one mode to another, from one form of expression to another? No equivocation here. "It's the artist's risk, his vision, his expression. Sometimes collectors and others are responsive and they buy. Sometimes they don't. There are several artists whose work we have collected and still do who have gone in directions that we didn't choose to purchase. This can be very difficult, particularly if one is close to the artist."

At one point Arthur said "ITOS, you know about ITOS, don't you Ken?" Well no, I didn't. ITOS is the acronym for International Turned Objects Show. "This was a seminal show. It took place in 1989." At this point Arthur sat down and took up the book *Lathe-Turned Objects*. This was the title of the catalog of the show. It was seminal because of many things, including: First international show; Invited artists and juried artists; Minorities and women represented; Curated by Albert LeCoff; Most of the "invited" artists are still major names in wood turning; Many of the "juried" artists are also at the top; the AAW, The Wood Turning Center and others cooperated to bring it to

fruition; It is well-documented through the catalog, privately funded by a blue-ribbon group of private collectors who today are responsible members of the Collectors of Wood Art.

Arthur stressed four points.

1. This was an important event marking the recognition and acceptance of women and minorities.

2. It was international for the first time.

3. There had had been real expansion in the number of qualified artists and the mushrooming variety of work being done.

4. You can learn a lot from the catalogs. They are not just information. They document history in progress.

And that is another facet of the Masons. They love what they are doing enough to invest time, energy, thought and money in educating people about woodturning. (Arthur gave me the ITOS catalog before I left.)

The Masons have learned and indeed know a lot about woodturning. After the Renwick Exhibition, they began casting about for more information, more exposure to woodturning. They came up with David Ellsworth's name. In fact, next to his name in the Jacobson catalog David's home phone number is penciled in.

"We invited ourselves up to Quakertown, PA for the weekend," Arthur says, "and lived turned wood." They know all about thin walls and 'twice-turned'. Jane continues, "we watched him turn, saw how pieces were made, how wood has to dry for many months... is turned again, dried again, and finally put through the process of finishing."

Today they have 75 pieces by David Ellsworth, maybe more. The Masons and Ellsworths enjoy a very close friendship. I asked Jane, "why 75 pieces from one artist?" A big smile crossed her face, reflecting warm recollections. "We have followed his career forward and... back-

wards. Every piece we have of his is beautiful." Arthur has stated, "I think David has influenced more young turners than anyone else by constantly exploring new ways to express himself."

Ellsworth has been quoted as saying, "There's a difference between a 'collector' and a 'buyer'. Arthur and Jane reflect that. It is not a question of resources but of their desire to

learn and eventually be able to trust their own instincts." For him, David says, "it is wonderful to know that the energy and joy a piece gives to an artist can also be there for the collector. The Masons are among the pioneer collectors in turned wood."

The Masons searched out other turners. Visited their studios. "You could buy a Chagall," Jane says. She knows because she's done it. "But you could never talk with him. We talk to the artists we collect. They tell us where the wood is from, what they are planning to work on next, and where the excitement for them is in each piece." Arthur chuckles and asks, "Can you imagine having called Andy Warhol and saying 'Hi, Andy I'd like to pop up for the weekend and see how you do your painting'".

They have visited the Moulthrop in Georgia, the Lindquists in Florida; the Kents in Hawaii, and the Hunters in Californian. These are just a few of the artists that they know and care



AND THE CLOSET: Arthur checks out some of his favorite pieces, tucked away in a special closet.

about.

They have two wonderful recent pieces by Todd Hoyer. Both are tactile. One with his trademark rough wire tight-wrapped vertically around and the center of a vertical piece demarking two separate sides. Horizontally around it are shallow gentle coves. Adjacent to it is another piece the same size with a warmer tone, wire wrapped horizontally, smooth texture, without coves or roughness. "Engagement" and "Marriage" Jane points out. Later she said, "One of the nicest things to come out of International Turning Exchange of the Wood Turning Center is the marriage of Todd and Haley."

The Lindquists, Mel and Mark, are both close to the Masons. Talking about them Arthur smiles and says, "Technique is a pre-occupation with other turners. But for Mark and Mel Lindquist it is simply a means to an end. For them it's not the 'how' but the 'why' that matters." Both artists

are prominently represented in their collection; both are considered family friends

Mark Lindquist says this. "The Masons have been extremely responsible in their collecting. They have assembled a collection that documents the development of many of the critical aspects of the evolution of the field of wood as art. Within their collection can be found pieces, carefully selected, that reflect what Jane and I call 'the Golden Years'. These are the years between 1980 and 1990. The years when Bob Stocksdales, Rude Osolnik, Dale Nish, David Ellsworth, Ed Moulthrop, my father Mel Lindquist, and I were blazing the trails. These turners, many of them, were at their peak at that time. The Masons have frozen a moment in time out of those Golden Years, capturing their work at its best." This is of extreme importance with regard to their contribution to the Mint Museum.

Obviously, Mark Lindquist feels that Arthur and Jane Mason are very special people. Others prominent in this field concur. Michael Monroe, former Curator-in-Charge of the Renwick Gallery told me that the Masons "have been methodical, not acting on impulse, in setting up their collection. They structured a plan of action with goals in mind. They would select extraordinary pieces representing major turners, turners who have set themselves and their work apart with a particular style. That of course is the language of art. Each piece that they selected was integrated with this goal. They have been very cognizant of how each would fit into and help to fill out their collection. Within this collection the depth and diversity of the recent development of wood art has been recorded. This is a very thoughtful collection. These are extraordinary people."

The Masons, starting with Michael Monroe's tenure at the Renwick, have given 20 pieces to this Gallery. The

**"The Masons are the best. Absolutely the best. Their knowledge, taste, judgement ... their generosity and determination to increase the public's knowledge, understanding and acceptance of turned wood ... they are simply the best."
— Mark Leach**

means by which these pieces were selected and given is important. Monroe was told, at one point, that they would like to give a piece to the Renwick. He was invited to the townhouse, where they agreed he would put a red sticker on several pieces, any one of which the Renwick would be pleased to have. He would come back several days later and happily collect whatever piece they had decided to give to the Renwick. A similar procedure was used for subsequent donations, 19 additional pieces. I point this out, because it is a temptation to assume that possibly a collector is "cleaning out" his or her collection when he donates a part of it to an institution. I suspect that this is seldom the case, but it most assuredly has never been the case with the Masons.

Michael Monroe has a wonderful perspective; he was Curator-in-Charge at the Renwick when the Jacobson collection went on display. He is the man who organized the "White House Collection of American Craft." He told me this: "Wood is starting to create the same kind of excitement that glass did in the '60s. But wood has no baggage, no elementary basic history that must be observed. So today's wood artists can break new ground unfettered by history and are trying to do so with great energy, great enthusiasm... and with no holds barred." Of the Masons he concluded by saying, "Now they are ready to

share their legacy, their vision, to place it in the public realm. They (as other collectors) act as a custodian for time. Then as they pass their collection down it becomes not just a collection... but a wonderful self-portrait."

Ray Leier, president of the del Mano Gallery and co-author of *Contemporary Turned Wood, New Perspectives in a Rich Tradition* said this, "The Masons have built their collection from knowledge gained by getting to know the artists, their ideas and their working methods. Due to their support and enthusiasm, the Masons have been an important part of the public's growing awareness of wood as an art form."

Why the Mint Museum? Why put your collection there? Jane answered without hesitation. "Mark Leach is the reason for the Mint Museum. He has the personality, the warmth and the knowledge to make our collection important, to show it to advantage, to help it receive the respect that we feel it deserves. That coupled with the fact that the Museum is new and that it can accept a large collection led us to the selection of the Mint as the place for our collection."

Mark Leach says, "The Masons are the best. Absolutely the best. Their knowledge, taste, judgement... their generosity and determination to increase the public's knowledge, understanding and acceptance of turned wood... they are simply the best."

In addition to the Mint and the Renwick they plan to give 80 pieces in time to the Wustum Museum in Racine, WI. They have already given pieces to the American Craft Museum, the Fine Arts Museum of the South, the Chicago Art Institute and to the Detroit Institute of Art.

But they have done more. They have curated shows, spoken at AAW Symposiums, juried shows. They were instrumental in the founding of the Collectors of Wood Art. And in generating an opportunity for CWA

to participate in SOFA this past fall. Now here's the thing. To say "generate an opportunity...etc." is just a few words. Read it fast and it's gone. It doesn't mean much. While just a few words appear in a magazine article, the truth is that mountains may have been moved. SOFA is the acronym for Sculptural Objects and Functional Art. It is the premier retail event of its type each year, featuring the finest one-of-a-kind pieces in three-dimensional art in the world. Only galleries display and sell at the show, along with one or two appropriate non-profit organizations.

Mark Lyman, CEO of SOFA, Robyn Horn and the Masons over a period of months worked out an arrangement whereby the CWA was given a booth as a non-profit organization at the 1999 show at Navy Pier in Chicago. Arthur Mason tells of the results. "The show was an outstanding success in every way. It accomplished its major objective of bringing more Wood Art and collectors to SOFA than ever before. Del Mano was there with four booths, representing a majority of the 24 artists (selected by a vote of the CWA membership). Many other galleries participated: Tersera Gallery of San Francisco, Blue Spiral Gallery of Asheville, R. Duane Reed of St. Louis and Chicago, Heller Gallery of New York, Katie Gingrass of Milwaukee and the Zimmer Gallery from California were showing and selling works by woodturners. Through these galleries nine out of 23 works in the CWA booth were sold with proceeds of over \$55,000. Wood was a real presence. Many of the galleries featuring other media told us that everybody was talking about how wood had finally arrived at SOFA."

As Jane and I went from floor to floor in their townhouse we came to a closed door in the corner of the living room. "That's Arthur's closet. I could show it to you but it's... oh here! I'll



THE COLLECTOR'S ART: Sculpture by Jane Mason.

just open it for second so you can look inside. Arthur will tell you about it when he gets home."

Inside, were pieces by almost any woodturner you can think of. It's an awkward and tightly packed facility, this closet. It is here that pieces go when they are rotated off the display shelves for temporary rest. This is not Elba. These pieces haven't been banished and are not even in disfavor — just resting for a while.

Arthur loves it. He had a hard time closing it and moving on when he and I visited it. "Look, here's a Mary Redig before she became Mary Lacer: everybody's here you know."

The woods captivate Arthur, the grains, the natural colors. His father was a forester. Jane, a trained artist

and painter, ceramist and sculptor is more drawn to form and textures.

When I arrived at the townhouse she smiled broadly and asked, "Can we go to my office for a minute? My computer is experiencing an attack and I need to try to relieve the problem. You can look over how I log in the collection while I work on the computer, if you don't mind." Her office looks like mine.

The Mason's favorite new piece is the Ferris wheel built by the Chicago Woodturners as their 1999 Collaborative Piece for the AAW Symposium. Although the piece was voluntarily taken out of the competition because of a technical rules infraction, it is a tour de force of wood turning skills and collaboration. Most men love toys and this is one of Arthur's. He and Jane are intensely proud of it and of the appreciation the Chicago turners gave them when they purchased it.

As we moved from room to room throughout the house I kept seeing these live plants rising out of pairs of ceramic legs... full-sized legs. Every time I saw one I had to smile. There was a wonderful whimsical touch, a delightful sense of the amusing. Finally I had to ask. "I make those," Jane replied. What a wonderful touch.

As I look back on my visit, I smile thinking of Arthur wedged into his closet or fawning over his Ferris wheel; Jane with her planters and besieged computer. These are more than collectors, people of means, benefactors, brilliant connoisseurs of art and artists. They are down-to-earth human beings, just like you and me, who infuse their lives and the lives of those around them with warmth and joy and beauty. We are indeed fortunate that they wandered into our world in June of 1986, the wonderful world of turned wood.

Ken Keoughan is a turner, writer and contributing editor of American Woodturner.

EYE-POPPING DESIGNS

A serving tray inlaid with epoxy resin

DAN BRANIFF

WHEN I WAS A YOUNG BOY, MY father delighted me by bringing home samples of a two-part adhesive. He used the greenish mix to assemble parts at Electohome Industries where they built wooden, military-training aircraft during WWII. I developed a life-long attachment to this miracle substance, now known as epoxy resin.

Seen as almost indestructible, epoxy resins are used today for shaping boats, sports equipment and other assemblies where form and durability are paramount. I used it back then for model building.

Not until I experienced Marilyn Campbell's presentation for creating magnificent turnings did I discover epoxy's great potential for creative woodworking. For me, she opened up new ideas for furniture and turning designs. Our applications are different but the concept is similar.

Still, nothing is really new. For thousands of years, Wood-artists have created incredible beauty by employing marquetry to enhance furnishings. Today, master woodturners capture this art form in turning segmented forms.

What can epoxy add?

FLUIDITY: Wood segments tend to produce discontinuity, spoiling the overall image. The masters of inlay techniques overcome this by sticking to designs that blend the grain and tint of contrasting woods.

However, even well executed designs hit a discord where contrasting grain patterns meet. The outcome is reminiscent of paint-by-number effects of the Fifties.

CREATIVE OPPORTUNITY: Pigmented epoxy inlays blend opposing segments. More importantly, the technique opens up creative opportunities



The author's inlaid epoxy Poacher serving tray won the People's Choice Award at the 1999 Ontario Open Competition in Toronto. Photos by the author.

without demanding extraordinary artistic or execution skills.

MIRROR IMAGE: Unlike traditional marquetry, patterns penetrate through the work, portraying a reverse image on the opposite side of the object. Viewers turning the work over are fascinated to see a mirror image. On furniture, it offers a pleasant surprise to open a door or a lid.

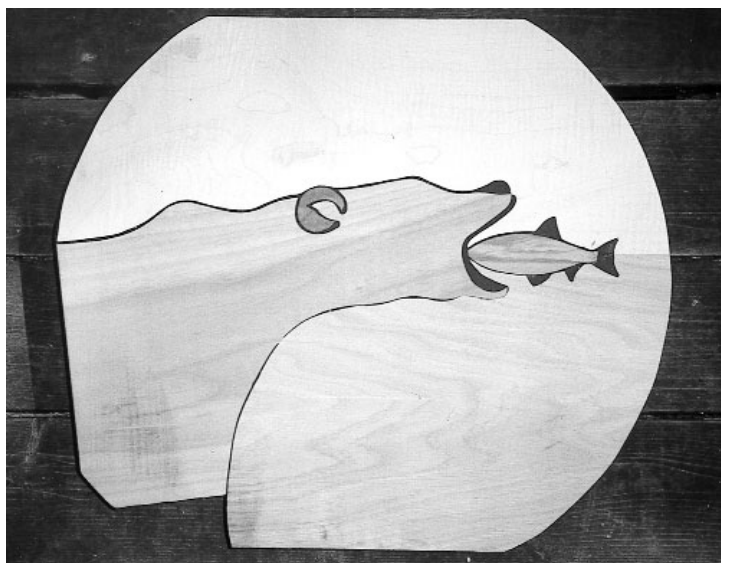
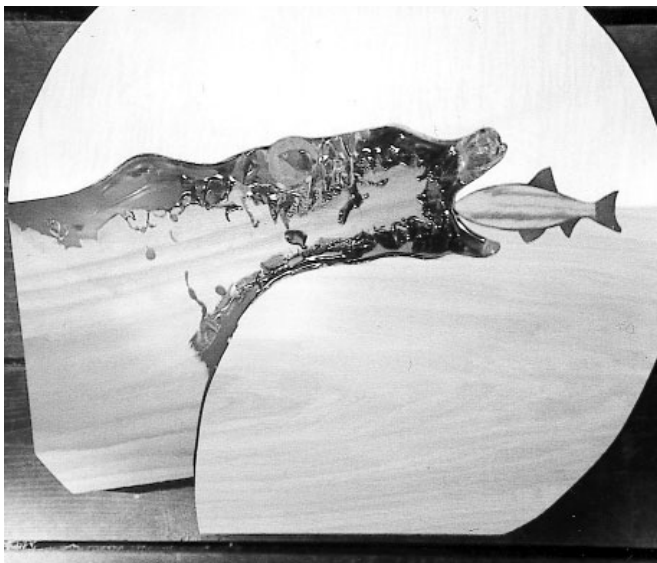
NEW PERSPECTIVE: My first attempt at this epoxy technique was a plate inlaid with the image of a diving loon about to claim a fleeing fish. Sad to say, my first two endeavors missed their mark. I had not broken free of old marquetry concepts. A design seminar at the 1998 AAW Symposium in Akron, OH, helped me discover my problem. It also helped me discover an entirely new perspective

for design.

I will never forget the rather blunt critique of my loon slide, "Your piece looks constrained, the fish appears dead." "...But, the loon is beautiful." Thank you, Gene Kangas and Steve Loar for those very constructive thoughts. The subsequent loon plate won many awards and was accepted in the East Meets West exhibition in Tacoma, WA, last year.

SIMPLE PROCESS: The epoxy inlay process is relatively simple. You cut out a pattern from a wood blank, fill it with wood inlays, pour colored epoxy into the voids and turn it on a lathe.

As with any serious effort, the end result depends on good design. Spend lots of time drawing and making models. A three-dimensional



Bandsaw out the outline of figures traced onto glued-up pieces, top left. Then put pigmented epoxy into the spaces between wood segments. Dam the bottom and sides of the cuts with duct tape, top right. Next sand the top side of the cured epoxy, bottom photos, until the lamination is level and true, to fit a face plate or vacuum chuck.

turning is very different from a table top or door.

I test ideas on uncompleted turnings or discards. I like dynamic, interesting actions, especially with animal and bird scenes.

Pictorial images are relatively easy to do and are almost always interesting. Abstracts that break across the piece in exciting patterns are also easy with epoxy. I avoid the sometimes tedious symmetrical designs with which we turners are often type cast. With imagination we can become the Picassos of woodturning!

TEST YOUR LIMITS: Keep it simple, but don't be timid. Release the inner self: the horizons are unlimited. Let those repressed exciting ideas blast off your lathe!

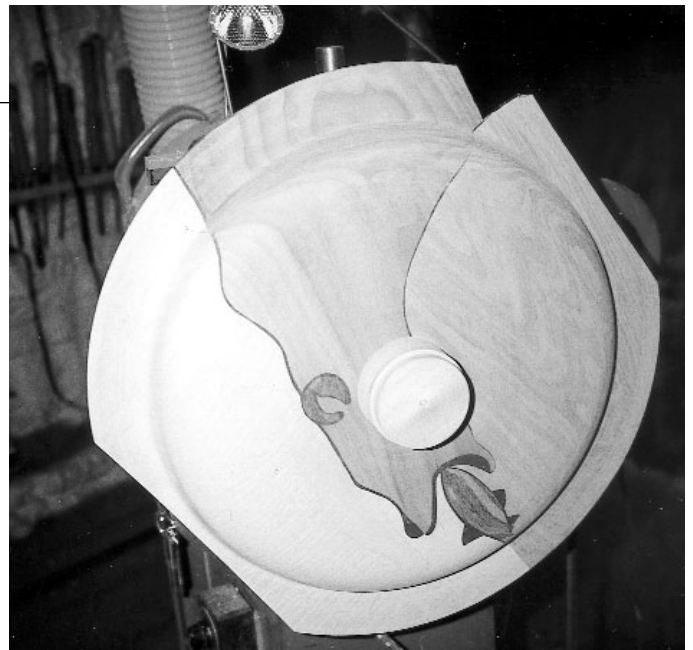
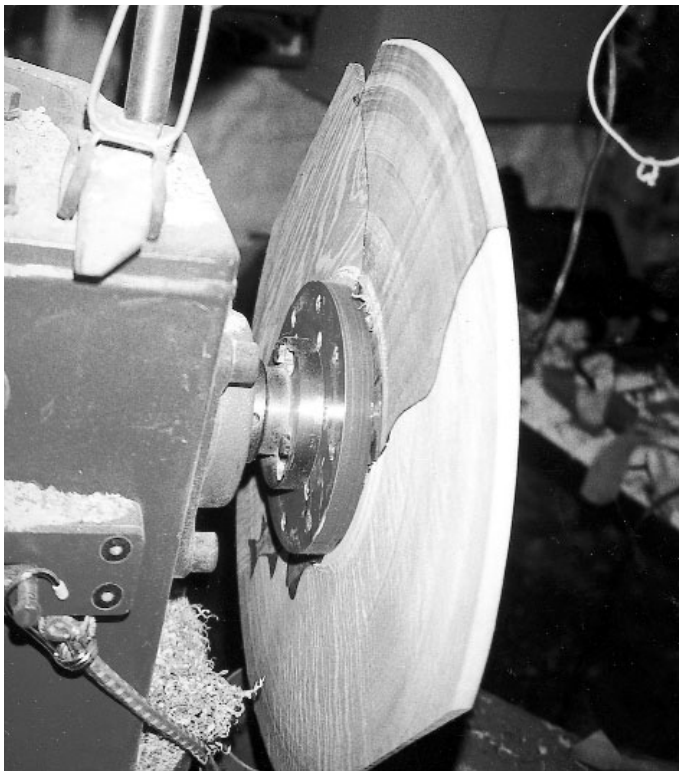
Begin with the background

Glue the background pieces of your design together. In my example, I used a piece of oak joined to figured maple to form a horizon where water and sky meet. I drew several versions of bear and fish before selecting a black bear catching a spawning salmon. I played with sizes and spatial dimensions, using transparent tracing paper and a photo copier with enlarging capabilities. I traced the final selection onto the 2-in.-thick background, positioning the bear to hide one horizon and create an illusion of an animal plunging into the serving tray to catch his prey. I wanted to express the no-return fate of the unfortunate spawning salmon.

Also, consider the main image neg-

ative space that you will later fill with epoxy-and-wood inlays. It will become the main focal point of the work.

I cut out the negative with a band saw because it is fast, accurate and produces flowing curves. I plan most of my cut lines to start at the edge of the work, to take advantage of the bandsaw's flexibility. I used a Rotozip Spiral Saw, available at many home and tool suppliers, for cutting out the opening for the handle. This router-like tool was fast, but scary — Read the owner's manual and use extreme caution if you take this approach. I normally prefer a jeweler's saw, which resembles a coping saw, for fine inside cuts. It is more laborious than the power tools, but provides



Mount the sanded blank on a faceplate, left, to turn the bottom and outer perimeter of the top. Next glue a temporary block on the bottom and shape it to fit your favorite chuck.

better accuracy and control.

Epoxy is forgiving

It is more important to achieve well-defined curves than religiously sticking to the traced lines. Epoxy is very forgiving and hides minor deviations extremely well.

Smooth out jagged saw irregularities by sanding to 120-grit. Delta's B.O.S.S. oscillating spindle sander is ideal for this particular pattern, but you can use a drum sander. The trailing edge of fish fins and tail can be left jagged for a more authentic effect.

Use the smoothed negative outline as a template to sketch the bear and fish images onto black walnut and zebra wood blanks, respectively. Adjust the space to form black epoxy profiles for details like the inside of the bear's mouth. Trace the bear's ear from the original drawing. When sawing the 2-in. inlay, I cut about $\frac{1}{8}$ -in. inside the template line to leave room for black epoxy. After sanding, this will produce a black border of about $\frac{3}{16}$ -in. wide. A border that's too wide distorts the image; one that's too narrow makes the inlay resemble marquetry, losing the flowing effect.

I glued the ebony fish tail directly to the zebra wood fish with black

epoxy, with no space at the joint.

Airbrushing options

I used an airbrush between finishes to create other details including the bear's eye shadow, the water splashes, the fish's eye and gill. If I do not specifically need a wood inlay, I paint it. I found it is almost impossible to distinguish between ebony, black epoxy and air-brushed lacquer.

The level of difficulty for the airbrushing option is about equal to the epoxy technique, but epoxy develops voids caused by air bubbles. The fish's tail is ebony wood, protruding as it does through the space in the handle. The bear's ear is maple burl.

I could have added trees, a second bear or some birds, but I wanted to keep it simple. More importantly, I did not want to distract from my central theme.

Take your time

Next, I laid out all components to make sure everything fit and was in balance. Take your time. **Avoid rushing; you cannot spend too much time on the final preparation step. Once you apply epoxy, it is too late.**

It is imperative to seal all the edges surfacing against pigmented epoxy.

Without a barrier, pigments will bleed into any end-grain, leaving ugly permanent stains. I use a brush to apply clear two-part epoxy as sealer. The sealer should cure for about 2-to-3 hours before you pour the pigmented epoxy into the mold, but never longer than 4-hours for West System products that I use (517-684-7286). Once epoxy cures, it does not bond well to itself.

Curing times for epoxy products vary. Read directions carefully and consult with suppliers. Most will be pleased to offer assistance. I get my epoxy from local building suppliers and marine merchants.

Health cautions

Be careful with epoxy and filler products. Fumes, dust and contact can be hazardous. I use surgical gloves and an approved respirator face mask.

Be careful not to touch or spill material on completed work. Stains will not come off and have a habit of suddenly emerging under a finish. Lacquer reducer will remove uncured epoxy, but not all pigment.

Seal the bottom of the background piece and damn the side openings with duct tape. Clamp the piece to a

flat surface. Once pouring is complete, weigh down or clamp components to the work surface to prevent floating. Otherwise you might find globs of epoxy at the bottom.

I used earth pigments to color the two-part epoxy. Earth pigments are available in many colors from Lee Valley (1-800-871-8158; www.leevalley.com) and other specialty suppliers. For a black resembling ebony, I mix one part vegetable black pigment to two parts of epoxy. I blend in micro-bubble filler to make turning and sanding easier. Equal parts of filler and epoxy provide a free flowing mixture. Stirring very slowly minimizes air bubbles in the cured work.

Popping bubbles

Pour the pigmented epoxy into the space(s) between wood segments. I vibrate the curing epoxy by running an electric motor on the work table immediately after pouring. Vibration brings bubbles to the surface where they can be "popped" by carefully passing a butane flame over the surface. Add more epoxy as the mixture settles. Cure overnight before going to the next step.

Sand the top side of the cured epoxy until level and true, to accept a face plate or vacuum chuck. I used a stroke sander with 80 grit. A thickness sander works equally well, but takes more time. Hand sanding works if you secure the abrasive to a backing board whose length is at least $\frac{3}{4}$ the diameter of the piece. The backing board helps keep the piece level and true as you sand.

Screw a face plate to the top of the piece for mounting on a lathe. Turn the bottom of the tray and outer perimeter of top.

Sharpen tools often

Turning epoxy-inlaid wood requires skills not much different than other multiple-wood blanks. However, epoxy takes the edge off cutting



Turning mounted on a chuck can be finish turned. Fill any air bubble voids in the inlay with pigmented epoxy or colored modeling paste before scraping and sanding to 400-grit.

tools about four times faster. Just be prepared to sharpen turning tools much more frequently.

Glue a temporary block onto the completed bottom of the serving tray, shaping it to accept your favorite expandable chuck. Mount on the chuck to finish turning top and bottom. Fill remaining epoxy air-bubble voids with pigmented epoxy or colored modeling paste.

I like modeling paste for filling gaps. Liquitex is available from most art suppliers. It provides an excellent working surface and is non toxic.

Scrape and sand to 400-grit, then part the temporary block from lathe. I used a 3-in.-thick temporary block enabling me to work both top and bottom without reverse chucking.

Vacuum chuck option

A vacuum chucking system greatly simplifies the turning of plates, trays and platters. It also facilitates returning work to the lathe for finish sanding, as required.

Band-saw the serving tray into its final shape and cut the handles. If you like, you could fill the open grain with modeling paste colored with acrylic paint. I used black colored paste on walnut, light brown on oak

and darker brown on zebra wood.

I glued and shaped two pieces of ebony to the bottom of the handles to improve the balance and feel of the tray.

Finally, touch up voids caused by sanding through epoxy bubbles with colored modeling paste or black epoxy. Hand sand to 600-grit before applying finish.

Between the coats

I spray finish with 5-to-6 coats of Deft Clear Wood Finish, rubbed to uniform smoothness and buffed with BEALL system (Beall Tool Co., 541 Swans Road NE, Newark, OH 43055 (800-331-4718). Brush-on lacquer dries more slowly making it flow better and is less susceptible to variable humidity conditions.

I airbrushed splashes and other details with black lacquer between the first and second lacquer coats. One could also add India ink details using a fine brush or 005-005 artist's pen. Verify that the ink or paint is compatible with the selected finish. Avoid using thick paint unless the build up is intentional.

Dan Braniff, is a woodturner in Collingwood, Ontario, Canada.

THE LOST WOOD PROCESS

Shapes materialize as the stock disappears

LOWELL CONVERSE

WHENEVER THE OHIO VALLEY Woodturners Guild runs its semi-annual contests, the competitive spirit of the 130 OVWG members produces a flood of exceptional and unique entries. Past contests have included turnings made from 2-x-2-x-18-in. walnut, anything egg-shaped, any kind of box, and anything under 2 in. Last year in the under 2-in. contest, I entered the small tulipwood lidded "pot" shown at right.

This piece was made by a process which probably has been used before, but which I have not seen anywhere in the literature. It's a method which I have dubbed the "lost wood process."

Lost wood is a lamination process with a twist. You not only dispose of all the shavings, but you also throw away half, more or less, of the turning before final finishing.

Inspiration for the process came from an OVWG demonstration by Michael Hosaluk. After seeing Michael make one of his well-known fish by removing a section from a basic hollow form, I wondered if I couldn't remove more than one section to get a four-or-six-or-more-sided



Author's tulipwood lidded pot

object. Michael's method of bandsawing the center section out and then sanding each sawn side before gluing the sections back together would work, but if you had to glue up more than two pieces, it would be very difficult to keep the segments symmetrical.

I decided to cut everything apart before turning. If the pieces to be discarded are put into the assembly before its turned, and then removed afterwards, the remaining segments would have a built in symmetry, because of the way they were fit together originally and could be recombined much more easily. Thus the "lost wood" approach to making a multi-sided segmented piece.

For this year's contest I made a vase; there were two categories: under 8-in. and over 8-in. Since I was fortunate enough to win last year with a little pot, I decided to try the process on a larger piece.

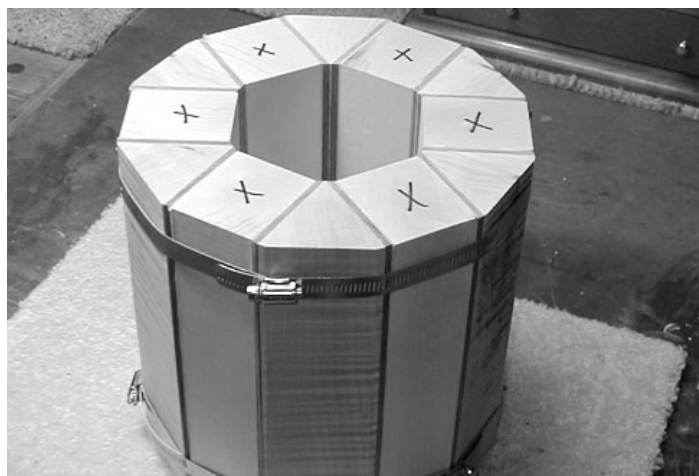
To make an 8-

in. high vase with a nominal 4 1/2-in. diameter, I started with the configuration, shown below left. The six pieces with the X's are discarded after turning; they are 2 1/2-x-2-x-9-in. and for this project were from basswood, although any scrap wood will work. The other six triangular pieces, which will become the vase, are 2 1/4-in. curly maple ripped at 30° (for a 60° corner) and then laminated on each of two sides with 1/8-in. thick walnut and a piece of birch veneer. The walnut and birch offer contrast, but not surprisingly make the project more difficult. Without those pieces, a little disk sanding of the edges makes re-assembly easier. With them, any sanding would destroy the symmetry.

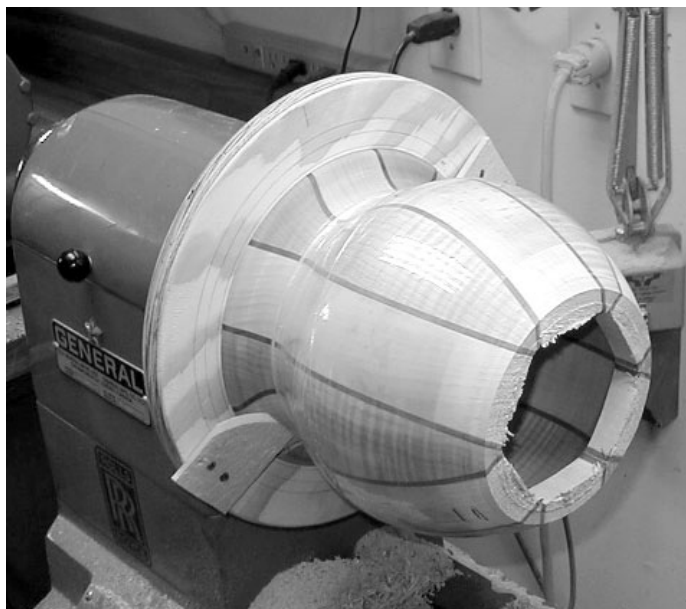
It is important that the inside "point" of each triangular segment be identical, as when these are assembled with the rectangular pieces they define a circumference for centering the large piece on the faceplate. It is well worthwhile to preassemble the triangular segments dry to assure a good fit. Each segment should be numbered in a place the number will remain intact throughout the process. This is important for final assembly.

The trick to removing the lost wood is to assemble the pieces shown in the photo using double-sided tape between the rectangular and the triangular pieces. Where the segments come together on the inside and on the bottom must match up as accurately as possible. This relatively large segmented piece is then very carefully centered and mounted on a faceplate. I used a 3/4-in. plywood faceplate which would also be used as a jam chuck for reversing the piece to turn the bottom.

During rough turning, although the double-sided tape might be enough, two hose clamps were used



Square scrap wood pieces marked with an X will be discarded after the cylinder is turned.



Assembly is jam fit onto a plywood chuck, left, for reverse turning. At right, the new assembly, the shaped components comprising the lost wood and a scrap piece from the bottom..

to make sure nothing came apart. Once the rough outside profile was finished, moving the hose clamps as required, the clamps were removed and fiberglass reinforced tape or shrink wrap was used as safety reinforcement. The final outside profile was then completed. It is very helpful during this process to have a drawing of the vase profile for reference as the turned piece can be a bit deceiving. After completing the outside profile, turn the inside to the desired thickness, in this case $1/4$ -in. One nice thing is there is plenty of room to get at the inside; most of this piece was done with a $1/2$ -in. spindle gouge. Now finish sand the outside and inside; the inside of the vase will have the same quality finish as the outside. On this vase I used thinned lacquer as sanding sealer and sanded to 600-grit.

The piece can now be parted off and reversed into a jam chuck made from the plywood faceplate. It can be clamped as shown above left. Hind-sight tells me screws through the lost wood would work as well. Once the bottom is turned, remove the piece and carefully pull apart the double-sided tape joints. If all went well the six segments should fit together nicely. What you will then have will be the scrap piece from the bottom, an almost finished vase, and the lost wood shown above right. The prac-

tice assembly shown is held together by the remaining double-sided tape.

Before gluing the six segments together, I carved the top of each segment in the manner shown on the finished piece and also finished the inside of each segment, in this case by polishing the wood. Next, glue two sets of two adjoining segments together. Here's how Michael Hosaluk does it: some yellow glue on each edge, rub them together to assure a uniform joint, then hold them together tightly till you're comfortable the joint is good (1-3 minutes.) When this joint is cured, add the third segment to each of the two pieces (watch the numbers!) and let dry. Make sure to clean off all the glue squeeze-out,

especially on the inside. When dry the two 3 segment sides can be joined the same way, although a little clamping force may be helpful here. Small discontinuities in the joints of the finished piece can be cleaned up with sand paper before final finishing. (Note: If made without the accent wood, the two sides can be sanded on a disk sander to get a perfect glue joint.) The outside of this vase was finished the same as the inside with thinned lacquer sanding sealer, hand sanded to 600 grit and polished.

For this vase, a final detail. If accent pieces are used, there will be a small six-sided hole in the bottom of the vase. A small turned plug for both the outside and inside to fill this hole adds a finished touch.

The vase, shown at left, turned out to be $8\frac{1}{8}$ -in. tall, and it indeed won in the over 8-in. category. The competition is fierce, and even if this little vase hadn't beat out any of the bigger ones, it was still a lot of fun, and quite a challenge to make.



Lowell Converse is from Beavercreek, Ohio (outside of Dayton). He is retired from the US Air Force and currently represents an aircraft engine manufacturer. He has been turning seriously a little over two years. Some of his work can be found at the Village Artisans in Yellow Springs, Ohio.

An adventure in eccentric turning

IT'S PROBABLY NO ACCIDENT THAT the first dictionary definition of the word eccentric is "deviating from the accepted or customary character, practice, etc.; unconventional; peculiar; odd."

But the arrival on the scene of the Escoulen Eccentric Turning Chuck has done much to gain acceptance for unconventional, peculiar, and odd wood-turnings.

Often referred to as off-center turnings, eccentric turning is finding a loyal following among a growing number of turners.

I met Jean-Francois Escoulen, inventor of the chuck, at the 1997 AAW symposium in San Antonio, Texas. In August of 1998 he returned to demonstrate at our Central Texas Woodturners chapter

meeting where I purchased my eccentric chuck. And the evolution of the Texas Big Bug began.

Big Bug's overall dimensions are 16-in. long, 10 1/4-in. wide, and stands, 10-in. high at the top of the antennae.

The three
main

The main body is turned from walnut and the tail section is made from Osage orange.

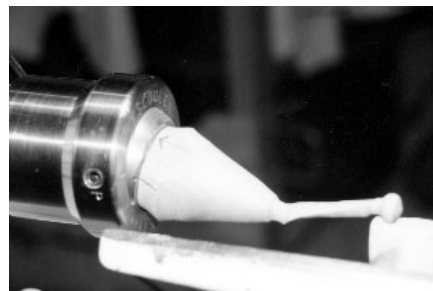
Each box was reverse chucked, body top and/or bottom using $3/4$ -in. plywood attached to a face plate. This setup allowed me to finish turning the top and bottom of each body piece smoothly.

After a 1/8-in. wall thickness was achieved, each body part received a heavy brushed on mixture of 50/50 Dekt and lacquer thinner. Each piece was sanded with 220 through 400 grit sandpaper.

A final coat of Mylands High Gloss friction finish was applied and buffed while each part was still on the lathe. After removal from the lathe, each part received a final buffing. This was started with brown tripoli; next, white diamond compound, and a final coat of hard carnauba wax was applied to complete each box.

The head box had a crack in the wood which I filled with CA glue during the turning process. The crack, as I tell folks, is representative of a splitting headache.

Each of the eyes is made from tulipwood which gives each eye a



Johnny Tolly illustrates the sequence for chucking and turning the legs for his Texas Big Bug. Note the “P” mark on the work-piece used as the pivot point reference with the Escoulen Eccentric Turning Chuck.

blood shot appearance.

Both antennae are made from Texas mesquite which were turned using the Escoulen chuck. The head and body are joined with a piece of spalted pecan.

The body and tail sections are joined with a piece of Texas brown ebony. Both of these sections have a $\frac{1}{4}$ -in. X $\frac{1}{4}$ -in. long tenon at each end. The tenons are for attaching all body parts together.

I used E6000 industrial-strength clear, self-leveling adhesive to attach all parts together. E6000 takes 12 to 24 hours to dry but has superior holding abilities for this type of project. Judy Ditmer from Ohio introduced this product to members of our club during her visit in August 1998.

All leg assemblies were made from cherry and each leg was turned using the Escoulen chuck.

For those unfamiliar with the chuck, it is sometimes more descriptively referred to as a "ball and socket" chuck. It consists of a body and three "balls" or inserts that are drilled through the center in different diameters. These are used to hold your workpiece by way of a tenon.

The balls have six shallow holes at 60 degree intervals that define the six rotational positions of the chuck, and which are used to accept the pivot set screw and lock your work in place for turning. On top of the balls are six

"tick marks" corresponding to the placement of the set screw holes.

The body of the chuck has two set screws, one in a hole marked "P" for the pivot point of the ball. The

other safety

screw is used to lock the ball in place. The pivot screw

has a

pointed end, while the safety screw does not.

Around the

end of each ball are four lines each indicating 4 degrees of axial movement. The second line is heavier than the first and corresponds to the center position of the chuck. Use these lines during turnings to estimate the degree of inclination and to help re-center the piece if necessary.

I first turned a tenon to fit one of the balls with a 2 degree taper from the head stock end to the wood stock.

This taper is important for security to the eccentric chuck. It is easier to form a tenon on one end of six equal pieces of wood. Prepare at least six wood blanks $1\frac{5}{8}$ X2X5 $\frac{1}{2}$ -in. before starting to turn the first leg. This step will help insure all legs will come out the same.

Place the eccentric chuck on a wooden block on the floor. Using a 2-pound hammer, drive the

tenon into the eccentric

chuck ball socket completely. For the six legs, I used cherry, but any good dense hard wood would work as well.

CAUTION: Do not use soft woods, the grain is not strong enough to support eccentric turning. Insure that there are no cracks or voids in the wood selected.

This could cause problems while turning later. I laid out two extra blanks for the outer leg and top leg section just in case an error occurred along the way.

Mark the same corner on each tenon end with a pencil, marked "P". This mark will be the reference mark to align with the "P" mark on the Es-

coulen chuck.

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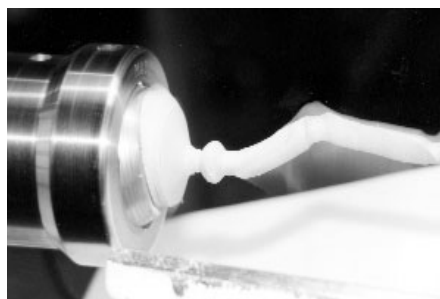
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The author places a contrasting colored piece of paper on the bed of his lathe to better see the outline of a workpiece being turned off-center. The sequence above shows the piece nearing completion and being parted off the lathe. Shown at right are the two leg pieces completed and ready for assembly.

Let creativity be your guide

As with any turning project, those turned on the eccentric chuck can be modified to suit your own tastes. In fact, that's part of the fun of woodturning. I'll try to give you a roadmap for the Big Bug project, but feel free to take a side road or two if it suits your fancy.

A couple of tips:

If you are turning matching pieces like the legs, **take careful notes** and plenty of them. This is to ensure that whatever you do on one piece is exactly duplicated on the others so that they match.

Placing either black or white paper to contrast with the color of your wood on the bed

ways will help make it easier to see the workpiece and the cutting area on the leg.

Following are the steps I went through in creating legs for Big Bug:

1. First securely screw the eccentric chuck and wood onto the headstock. Loosen the marker line setscrew, then the "P" setscrew. Offset the wood to the 4th line or 16 degrees down.

2. Tighten both the "P" setscrew and marker line setscrew tightly before starting to turn the leg. **CAUTION:** Rotate the chuck a full 360 degrees to ensure the tool rest clears the wood before turning on the lathe.

3. Set lathe speed slow, increase speed until vibration is experienced. Decrease lathe speed until vibration disappears.

4. Start turning from the center, work out towards the tailstock end. Turn the leg down to the desired

thickness. Leave a round foot at the outer end about 12 mm in diameter.

5. Turn a cylinder of 50 mm x 50 mm. Taper the cylinder to form the leg along a length of 40 mm to a diameter of 26 mm.

6. Next, loosen the marker line setscrew, then the "P" setscrew. Rotate the piece back to the second

marker line, which is zero. Tighten both setscrews. Rotate the piece by hand 360 degrees checking for toolrest clearance.

7. Carefully turn the outer leg down to the desired thickness. Form the remaining leg section by tapering the wood from the chuck to the center of the leg joint.

8. Loosen both the marker line, then the "P" setscrew. Rotate the leg to the 6th marker line, or 20 degrees down.

9. Tighten both setscrews, turn the upper outer leg section to the desired thickness, then form the upper ball joint.

10. Part off the outer leg section using a small skew, a steady hand, nerves of steel and loose fingers around the leg. Repeat the above procedures for each additional leg needed.

The top leg section is fashioned in a similar manner as the outer leg, but require some additional settings.

A $\frac{3}{16}$ -in. X $\frac{1}{4}$ -in. long tenon and cup at the outer end will be used for attaching the outer leg section and top leg section together. The inner $\frac{1}{4}$ -in. long tenon will be used for attaching the leg assembly to the main body.



coulén chuck. This alignment mark will insure that all legs are turned about the same.

Each lidded box making up the main body parts are turned like any other lidded box. I turned both the top and bottom of each box from the same piece of wood so they would match. You might decide to mix colors of wood. I used a $\frac{3}{4}$ -in. plywood jam chuck to reverse chuck the box pieces.

Using the index system on your lathe, position the head box top onto the $\frac{3}{4}$ -in. plywood jam chuck. Index the box to the lathe indexing system for proper orientation. Bring up the tail stock with the live center. It works best with a large cone cup attached. Place a soft pad between the body and the cone of the live center to prevent damage to the finished surface.

Each of the eyes' $\frac{3}{16}$ -in. holes were drilled 300 mm from the edge, and spaced about 300 mm or an equal distance from the center line of the head.

Each antenna was positioned 350 mm from the edge and 400 mm or an equal distance from the head center line. This was more or less a calculated guess on the exact drilling angle as I used a hand drill. I more or less attempted to obtain the same drilling angle. Guess I got the holes rather close as Big Bug's eyes and antennae look good.

Each $\frac{1}{4}$ -in. tenon hole was indexed and drilled on the body center line front and back. Each hole was positioned $\frac{1}{4}$ -in. from the box edge. All leg tenon holes were drilled in the same manner. Both head and tail bottom sections were drilled using the same procedure.

For assembly, all three main body sections were aligned and leveled using spacers under the head and tail to obtain correct alignment with the larger center body section. E6000 adhesive was applied to the $\frac{1}{4}$ -in. tenon only along the bottom half.

All three body sections were



Tolly's figurative eccentric turnings take on an other-worldly appearance, although turned from down-to-earth woods such as walnut, oak, tulipwood, mesquite and bloodwood.

brought together and clamped using 3-in. hand spring clamps. The glued up body assembly was allowed to cure 24 hours. All legs, eyes, and antennae were glued and allowed to dry during the same time.

Final assembly was accomplished by placing a length of a 2 X 4 X 20-in.

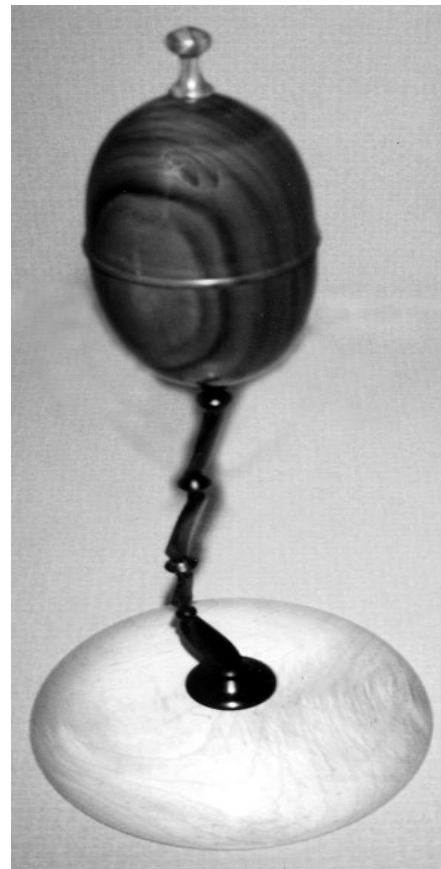
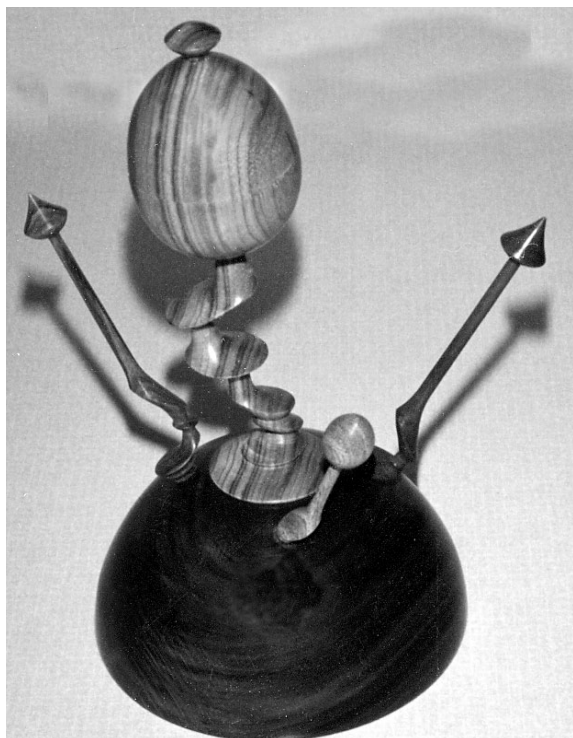
flat board under the main body section. Additional wooden shims were placed as needed under the head and tail sections for correct alignment. All legs were attached using E6000 adhesive.

Each leg assembly was clamped using 1-in. spring hand clamps. This was allowed to cure 24 hours before removing all blocking pads. Some E6000 adhesive squeeze out was removed where needed for clean up.

Each body top, head, main body, and tail was placed onto the bottom section. Big Bug was now complete.

Having mastered the techniques shown here, it is a natural progression to create other eccentric turnings as shown here.

Johnny Tolly is a demonstrator and turner from Austin, TX and a member of the Central Texas Woodturners Club.



ED MOULTHROP

Masters video celebrates a woodturning pioneer **GARY C. DICKEY**



Moulthrop begins roughing a bowl for the camera during taping of a new *Masters Series* tape available now from the American Association of Woodturners.

ED MOULTHROP PURCHASED HIS first lathe from a mail order house through an advertisement in the back of a magazine when he was 15 years old.

"I remember that it came with no instructions and no tools," he recalls.

Having set up that first lathe, attached a motor, and fashioned some tools from scrap metal, Ed was hooked on turning. He has been making up his own instructions and blacksmithing his own tools ever since.

Long known for his giant bowls, some 40-in diameter or larger, Ed recently became the second woodturner to be featured in the American Association of Woodturners *Masters Video Series*, available now through the AAW office.

"Some of my earliest memories of woodturning center around an article I read that was written by Bob Stocks-dale. It was almost 20 years before I saw another article on woodturning in a magazine. We simply did not

have the books, articles and videotapes that are available today," he said. There was very little interaction among American woodturners in those early years. We worked mostly in isolation on homebuilt lathes with handmade tools," he recalls.

"Finally, Albert LeCoff began a series of seminars in Philadelphia that brought many of us together for the first time. That was where I met Rude (Osolnik) and Bob Stocks-dale."

As videographer Phil Pratt and I worked on the Moulthrop tape recently, we also had the opportunity and privilege of spending several days in Moulthrop's home and shop.

To visit the Atlanta home of Ed and Mae Moulthrop is to emerge oneself in an art environment accented heavily in wood.

A far cry from the original placid, white clapboard structure, the house today is a reflection of Ed's skills as an architect and Mae's natural interior design talents. The home and studio is as much a response to the tranquil

wooded setting as it is to the Moulthrops' personal tastes and personalities.

"When architects have nothing else to do, they sit around designing additions to their homes. My problem is that I tried to build every addition I designed," he quipped.

Having practiced actively as both an architect and a woodturner for more than half a century, it is difficult to pinpoint where one career leaves off and the other begins.

Suffice it to say that his training as an architect served him equally as well as a woodturner and as an artist.

A tour of his home and studio is like a visual who's who of woodturning and woodworking. Chairs designed by Frank Lloyd Wright share space with furniture built by Sam Maloof, Wendell Castle and George Nakashima.

As he ushered us into his shop, Ed pointed to a large bowl lathe in one corner.

"That's my roughing lathe," he said. "It's really just a bunch of junk. Come to think of it, all of my lathes are junk. We're really blessed to have a wonderful salvage yard nearby," he added.

Donald Pearce of Atlanta's High Museum noted that as Moulthrop began to advance as a turner, he faced the same problems that pioneers in any profession would face.

"The tools that Ed needed were not readily available so he created his own."

Even today Ed does not use the traditional tools that other turners have come to rely on. His consist of three main tools: the lance, the loop, and the cutoff tool.

The lance, used for exterior cutting and roughing, is never used as a scraping tool. In roughing out the shape of a bowl, the tool proves a

most efficient cutting tool with the blade on the tip held either at a 90 degree angle to the work for initial roughing, or at no less than 45 degrees for finer cuts. A pin inserted into the top edge of the tool rest serves as a fulcrum to gain leverage in cutting.

Ed's other main tool is the loop tool which he uses for interior hollowing. Even though he's attacking end grain primarily when hollowing his full-log vessels, the loop is actually a gouge profile used to hollow the grain from the side. Some of his loop tools weigh up to 100 pounds and are fully 9 feet long. Sharpened with a conical stone, the cutting edge is sometimes as much as three feet off the tool rest inside a bowl.

"I used to hang over the tool using my weight to hold it down. One day the tool caught in a knot in the bowl and lifted me off the floor and threw me about 10 feet across the room. Fortunately I landed on my back against the wall. I realized then that I needed help in holding the tool down, so I built a stand with added weight and I haven't had that problem anymore," he said.

"I try to exploit the inherent beauty in the grain. I don't think you can do that using only half the log. That's why I use the full diameter of the log to show the full radiating pattern of the piece," he said.

To reduce chances of wood cracking, his vessels are submerged in Polyethylene Glycol (PEG) and soaked for various lengths of time. In periods of full production, he has had up to a dozen large vats filled with wood.

Some of his workpieces have weighed in excess of a ton and a half and require an electric hoist to lift them to be mounted onto the lathe.

For the most part I don't use any foreign woods and by that I mean I use nothing from West of the Mississippi or North of the Mason-Dixon

line," he said. Among his favorites are ash leaf maple, persimmon, tulip poplar, sweet gum, magnolia and long leaf pine.

"Notice this piece turned from a Georgia long leaf pine. It has as many as 50 annual rings per inch. They grow very slowly," he noted holding a small donut-shaped piece.

Moulthrop is well known for the pictures of his grandchildren peeking out from the top of some of his larger vessels. The idea came from having caught them playing hide and seek using the bowls for hiding places. He decided that it would make a good photo to illustrate the scale of the bowls.

"Since they've grown up and are bigger than I am now, I tell them they're lousy grandchildren for having grown up because now I can't use them as models anymore," he said, smiling.

Carr McCuiston, owner of the Signature Shop and Gallery which has featured Moulthrop's work since the early 1960s, recalls that Moulthrop was among the first to have a solo show at the gallery.

"From that initial show, the Moulthrop craze began. In that first

show, we ended up with collectors playing tug-of-war with Ed's pieces. This led to our actually locking the doors in subsequent shows and only allowing one patron at a time to enter," she said.

"From then on, Ed worked hand-in-hand with the gallery in pioneering the acceptance of woodturning as art," she added.

The High Museum acquired a Moulthrop bowl in 1970, marking the beginning of the museum's collection of turned wood.

But Moulthrop had predicted almost 40 years ago that wood would be the next material to be recognized by museums, galleries and collectors of fine art.

"Even 20 years ago wood had not gained popularity. Almost no museum ever showed wood unless it was period furniture. They now show wood all the time," he said.

Moulthrop is the second turning pioneer to be chosen for the AAW Masters Video Series which began with Rude Osolnik last year.

Gary Dickey is assistant editor of American Woodturner and president of the Palmetto Woodturners in Lexington, SC



"I try to exploit the inherent beauty in the grain... to show the full ...pattern."

KEYSTONE TURNERS' TOP-A-THON

Spinning a ton of wood into a million smiles

KIM B. BLATT

SOMETIMES AN IDEA CLICKS AND takes off. Occasionally, the idea grows from something you really enjoy doing. And rarer still, the idea benefits many deserving people. Recently, it all came together for the Keystone Turners AAW chapter.

It began in fall of 1998, with a few members of our Southeastern Pennsylvania-based chapter kicking around ideas for building public awareness of our craft. It turned into the "Keystone Turners' Top-a-Thon," an event that drew wide media attention and helped brighten Christmases for more than 2000 needy children in our area. Here's how it happened.

During one of our weekend turning sessions, Dave Souza and I were talking about ways to improve upon the typical mall-demo approach to getting our craft out into the public eye. To get the attention of the news media and appeal to the local community, we knew we had to tie in turning with a genuinely newsworthy endeavor. In the spirit of enlightened self interest, we came up with the idea of turning wooden tops. The concept met all of the criteria. Tops are fun for kids. Wooden tops are fast and easy-to-make, and in fact something that we could show children and novices how to do. And the real beauty was virtually all of our members could participate. The challenge: how could we turn this into a public event that would benefit children?

With the initial spark of an idea and a tremendous amount of enthusiasm, we talked with various friends and associates in the public and private sectors for recommendations to possible charitable causes, and found the perfect fit. A charitable organization, whose members were committed to bringing Christ-



Dave Souza wows the crowd with his top-turning mastery.

mas joy to thousands of the area's neediest kids. The Junior Service League of Pottstown, PA, has been sponsoring an annual Christmas Toy Drive for more than 50 years. Members collect and refurbish donated items and sponsor fund-raising events. With whatever funds they can muster and their connections with retail stores and toy manufacturers, this 65-year-old, non-profit organization purchases toys, coats, hats and gloves at wholesale prices. At their annual Christmas Toy Display they distribute all the items to other community-based, non-profit groups who are in direct contact with needy families and kids. We bounced the idea off Mrs. Alex Nasuti, Toy Clinic Corporate Contact Chairperson. She loved it. We now had the beginnings of a great event (an easy project to turn the public on and a sponsor who could benefit from our efforts). But where do you hold such an event? How do we get

our members involved? Do we hold an event at a local mall or festival? Should we do it at a craft show? How do you make money for the charity? We knew we had a great idea, but the execution seemed impossible. After all the brainstorming sessions, phone calls and meetings, it turned out the answer was right in front of us all along. We realized we had the perfect venue in the same county: The American Woodworker Show, held every November in nearby Fort Washington. We had exhibit space reserved, members had already signed up to demonstrate and man the booth, and virtually all preparations for the show had been made.

Now, on to the last nagging questions: how do we use this event to raise money for the kids, and what do we call it? We elected to dedicate our booth to the event. The idea: turn as many tops as you can in three days, solicit pledges from local busi-

nesses for each top made, and sell tops at the event for \$5. We named the event the Keystone Turners' Top-A-Thon. It was six hectic weeks from the first contact with the charity until the event. We sent out mailings to corporate contacts asking them to support the event, gathered our members to explain the concept and ask them to get involved. We developed simple brochures, a PR release and produced a booth floor plan and show signage. Our goal: turn 500 tops during the 3-day event, and through sales and corporate support, donate \$2,000 and any unsold tops to the Toy Drive. Between the soaring spirits, whirring lathes, generous sponsors, and excited show attendees, we managed to turn 500 tops and raise \$2,285 for the charity drive. The Junior Service League was ecstatic. "These kids are the neediest of the needy," commented Nasuti. "Some don't own a single crayon or a pair of scissors. Through our contacts with other community groups, we know who most of these kids are. These woodturners and the supporters of the Top-A-Thon truly turned wishes into reality, and gave us the chance to make the holidays brighter for nearly two thousand kids."

A Turn for the Better

The success of the first event proved to be a powerful springboard for the 2nd Annual Top-A-Thon. American Woodworker Magazine offered to donate a 30-ft.x30-ft. space at the show, held this past November at the Ft. Washington, PA, Expo Center. Once again, we dedicated the entire booth to the Top-A-Thon, working at a circle of lathes to produce a constant flow of handcrafted toy tops. A lot of them — this year's goal was to produce 1000 tops and garner at least \$5,000 for the drive. The Top-A-Thon turned out to be one of the highlights of the show. Our booth was located in prime real



Norris White demonstrates his expertise on an old treadle lathe.

estate, a highly visible and trafficked area adjacent to the show's food service area. Joined by Bucks Wood Turners, from Bucks County, PA, our booth also featured a "Kid's Corner" to introduce and promote the ancient craft of woodturning to a new generation of woodworking enthusiasts. Manned by volunteers from both chapters, the kids were shown the fundamentals of turning and encouraged to decorate their own top on a manual lathe.

As an added bonus Judy Ditmer volunteered to attempt to break her own record for the most tops turned in an hour. Working with her trusted ShopSmith, Judy turned 66 tops on her first attempt. Unhappy with her effort, Judy returned the next day to turn 72 tops in one hour! By the time the sawdust settled, we had created more than 1000 tops, and contributed just under \$6,000 to the Junior Service League's Annual Toy Drive. And a truck load of product from Binney & Smith, the makers of Crayola Crayons. In today's terms \$6,000

is not a lot of money. But because of the JSL's buying power, that \$6,000 purchased 7800 gifts. The Top-A-Thon was an exhausting event for our group, but seeing the smiles on the kids' faces made the effort worthwhile. I wish to express my deepest heart-felt gratitude to all the members of both Keystone and Bucks Wood Turners for all their hard work and dedication; to Alex Nasuti and the volunteers from the Junior Service League, who helped us to plan and run the event; to the American Woodworker Magazine for donating the space and assisting with our Public Relations efforts; and to all the corporate and individual sponsors, whose contributions helped to make this event a great success.

There are many ways that AAW chapters can contribute to the community and promote our craft. Be creative, it's really worth the effort.

— Kim Blatt is a turner in Fleetwood, PA. He shows how he makes his tops on the following page.

A spin on technique from the Top-a-thon crew

There are as many ways to make tops as there are turners. I craft mine in a similar fashion to Bonnie Klein's. I sell them by the hundreds at craft shows, so I want to make them as fast as possible. When I started to make tops, I thought what a great item to sell to kids that go to the shows with their parents. What I learned was, most of my tops are purchased by adults that love the colors and have fond memories of playing with them when they were younger.

I make my tops from sugar maple. I prefer to use $10/4$ stock, but $8/4$ will do. I cut the stock into squares roughly $2\frac{1}{2}$ -in.x $2\frac{1}{2}$ -in.x 9-in. I use a cup center for a drive, round the piece and add a spigot at the end with a parting tool to fit the maple blank into the jaws of my Stronghold chuck. I usually get 6 tops from a piece this size.

I turn my tops on a Oneway lathe, running wide open. I shape the outside (bottom) of the top first using a $3/8$ -in. spindle gouge, as shown below in Figure 1.

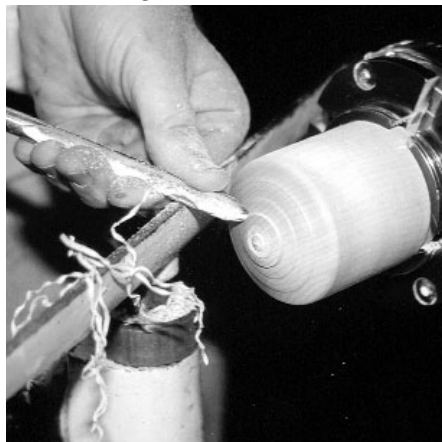


Figure 1

I start about $3/4$ -in. in from the end and make a series of cuts toward the center of the piece to form a point. On the last cut I like to add a series of steps as a decorative element. This also gives me division points to add chatter and color when I'm finishing

the top. I finish the bottom by creating a bead on the top, outside edge.

Forming the handle

I begin to form the handle and shape the top edge of the top with a diamond-shaped parting tool, as shown below in Figure 2.

After I have relieved the top edge,



Figure 2

I make a final pass with a spindle gouge to create steps and clean up the surface. I make several more passes with the parting tool of $1/4$ -in. to $1/2$ -in. each until I have the handle to about a $3/16$ -in. diameter, as shown in Figure 3 below.

I begin the decorating process by "chattering" both the top and bottom



Figure 3

of the top. I add a "ring" of chatter between each step that I created in

Figure 1. I slow the lathe to about 400-500 RPM and lightly touch the work surface below center with the tool, as shown below in Figure 4. I drag the tool across the surface to the end of the stepped area.

The final step is to add color. I use brush tip markers in a large variety of colors. I usually start with a very



Figure 4

light color and cover the entire bottom and top of the top, but not the handle. I add subsequently darker colors to highlight the steps and rings of chatter and several thin rings of color on the handle. The last step is to use a very dark color to add accent strips to highlight the steps and chatter. When coloring the top, be sure to keep the marker below center and apply as little pressure as possible. A heavy hand or coloring above center will quickly destroy your markers.



Finished top — Kim Blatt

WOOD SPHERES

A finishing touch from a honed hole saw

F. ROBERT BRUECKMANN

In the past I have made wooden balls for various reasons. The first was to see if I could do it as well as my father, who made one in his high school woodshop class in 1910. I found that it looked easy, but was hard to get the ball round in all quadrants.

The Akron, OH, symposium two years ago gave me a chance to see master turner Christian Burchard demonstrate "turning spheres." Again the demo was so skilled that it looked easy, but when I came home and tried it I failed.

After a little experimentation I came up with a simple inexpensive way for making the surfaces perfectly round, after almost any gouge was used to get the piece almost spherical.

Here's my basic method, which is detailed in Burchard's article in the June 1995 *American Woodturner* (Vol 10, #2). I turn the wood green, then cook it in an oven for 2 hours at 500°. After that I rechuck the balls in a greenwood faceplate spherical chuck for recutting and sanding. all this worked fine.

Now comes the hole cutting saw, which is available in a variety of diameters in hardware and home supply stores. I use a 2 1/2-in hole saw. The quality of the metal in the hole saw seems to be the determining factor in how many spheres you can make with the saw.

To prepare the saw, first grind off the teeth on a grinder or belt sander. Keep the metal cool by frequently quenching it in water. The process is a little easier if you first fashion a wooden handle and secure the hole saw with nuts and bolts.

Work carefully so the cutting edge will be square and even. Then use 400-grit wet/dry paper to hand polish an edge, so that the inside and outside edges of the hole saw have sharp



Set the tool rest slightly below center and gently put the entire cutting edge on the wood, so all sides are cutting. Move the handle back and forth on the tool rest and empty the cuttings from the hole saw occasionally. The wet wood usually keeps the metal cool enough not to dull rapidly.



The ends of the ball are cut off on the bandsaw and the rough sphere is rechucked in a greenwood chuck on the faceplate. I made a wooden cover for the tailstock center so it would not leave a mark. The hole saw is then used again and the ball is rotated until it looks round and calipers show it to be uniform size in several planes.

corners for shaving the wood.

For smaller balls, use smaller hole saws. I generally find that the 2 1/2-in. hole saw is good for spheres in the 4-to-7 in. range. Experience will show

you which works best for you.

F. Robert Brueckmann turns wood in Zionsville, IN, and is a member of the Central Indiana Chapter of the AAW.

WOODTURNING IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Collectors and arts takeover Chicago

ALAN LACER

EVERYONE NOTICED THAT WOODturning was in the spotlight at the 1999 Chicago SOFA (Sculpture Objects and Functional Art) — they had little choice.

As the more than 30,000 visitors entered the great hall on Chicago's Navy Pier, they were met by two special exhibits, Collectors' Choice (24 artists selected by the membership of the Collectors of Wood Art organization) and Museums' Choice (8 pieces selected from the collections of four museums). Most of the work in these two displays incorporated woodturning as a central element. And that was just the beginning of the dazzling display.

First a little background. SOFA Chicago is a yearly three-day event (late October or early November) that has been around since the 1994 (and its predecessor "New Art Forms" since the late 80's) as an international exhibit of 3-D work. It includes 80 or so galleries representing more than 1000 artists working in clay, metal, fiber, glass and wood. The event's lecture series featured approximately 30 presentations over the three days. Outside about 100 large sculptures were scattered around the grounds.

As you moved through the hall — following your initial soaking in wood — you found the work of more than 50 turners in the different galleries. Well-known turners such as Bill Hunter, David Ellsworth, Michelle Holzapfel, Michael Hosaluk, Rude Osolnik, Hans Weisflog, Stoney Lamar, Virginia Dotson, James Prestini, Bob Stocksdale, Mel Lindquist and others were well represented.

The lecture series had its share of woodturning events. Philip Moulthrop discussed his development and the process he uses to create his unique work. Michelle and David Holzapfel gave a fascinating slide



Turning Blitz: Wood art, especially turned wood like the objects shown in the Collectors' Choice above, was one of the hottest items of this year's SOFA show.

show and discussion of both the sculptural work, as well as functional work they have produced over several decades. A blitz of 24 woodworkers, mainly turners, gave a short slide presentation of their work. Local art critic John Brunetti gave a talk on the history of sculptural activities and how contemporary turned wood fits into that development.

Museums take notice

A panel of luminaries from around the country — representing the Detroit Institute of Art, Yale University, the Mint Museum, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art — presented a panel discussion on the emergence of contemporary woodturning in America as a fine craft or art form.

Occurring in conjunction with SOFA, the Collectors of Wood Art held its annual meeting. Although

only into its second year, the organization appears solid and full of ideas and energy. Board meetings, planning sessions, a banquet with keynote speaker Jonathan Fairbanks from Boston's Museum of Fine Arts, energized the group's very visible role at SOFA. The mission and vision of this young organization is still evolving, but it appears that it will continue to assist both collectors and artists by providing forums, information for maintaining or creating a collection, and exhibition opportunities, as well as promoting and encouraging established and up-and-coming woodworkers. Also, continuing the activities at SOFA, the group will probably expand a third role in educating the public, galleries, museums, and critics about wood as a respectable medium for serious work — a genuine stumbling block in the past.

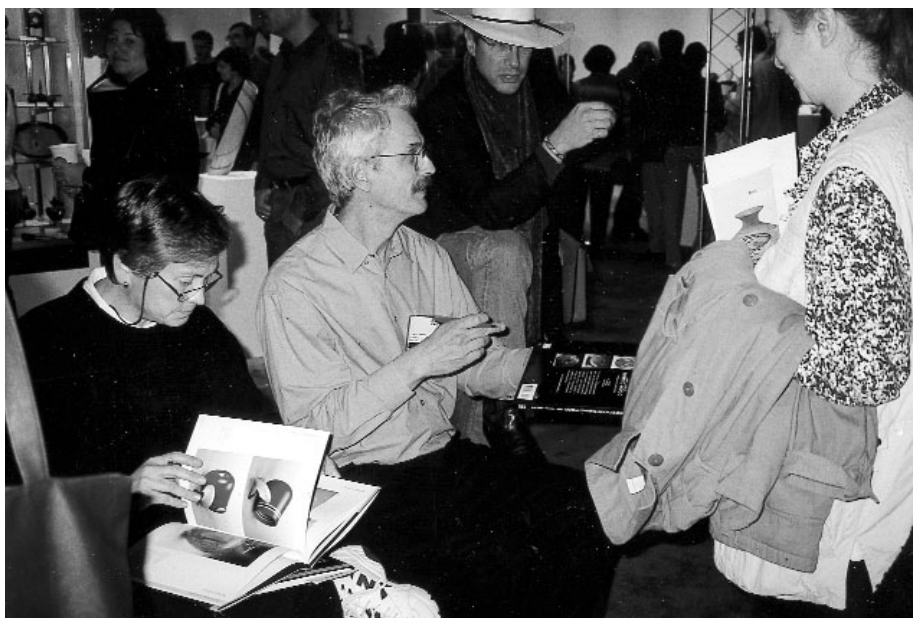
Across town the Chicago Design

Show was in full swing. An overwhelming amount of contemporary designs in home furnishings awaited the visitor. Furniture, lighting, textiles, kitchen and bath cabinetry and accessories were present. Incorporated into the exhibition was the Italian Design Furniture Show. Yes, turning was also present in the CDS, although not to the extent found at SOFA. If you see turning as being more than bowls and vessels, the CDS will open your eyes to the limitless possibilities for turned objects.

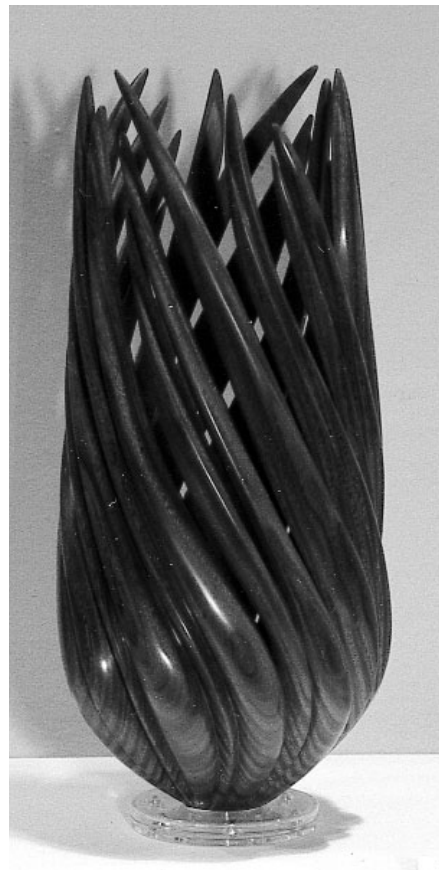
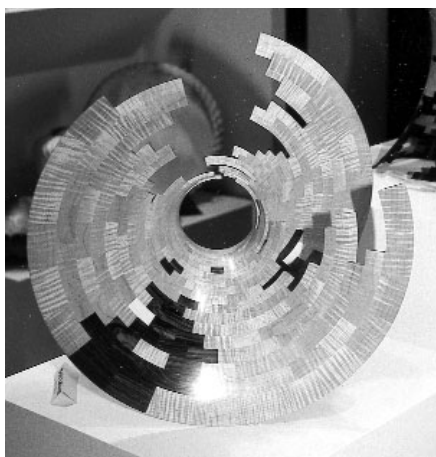
What does all this mean? Just a few years ago wood — and especially woodturning—was hardly noticeable at SOFA. Studio glass seemed to dominate the event—and it still has a commanding presence. However, wood was the buzz of SOFA this year with its front and center presence. Partly due to the initiatives of the Collectors of Wood Art and galleries like del Mano, woodturning is rapidly gaining ground at these major events in terms of respect, as well as better sales and higher prices.

Good news for all turners

Does any of this matter to the average woodturner, especially someone who could care less about selling their work or the “artsy side” of woodturning? You bet it does! Take a look at the work in the AAW Instant Gallery, a woodturning club meeting or a craft show. How many natural-edged bowls, green-turned bowls or goblets, hollow turnings, thin-walled pieces, carved, colored, spalted, bleached work are shown these days? Most of these ideas were pioneered (or at least rediscovered) by turners who were crossing traditional boundaries and doing creative and experimental woodturning. Our tools have changed dramatically both in terms of quality and types available because the higher-end turners needed and pushed for new tools (Did you ever try to buy a bowl gouge, especially



Celebrity Turners: Robyn Horn, left, and Stoney Lamar sign copies of “Contemporary Turned Wood,” which includes their work. Other artists displaying pieces included, clockwise from top left below: Ron Fleming, William Hunter and Bud Latven. Top photo by Iona Elliott.



Ferris Wheel Draws A Crowd In Chicago

SOFA is an event that comes annually to Chicago, but to the Mason family and our local Chicago Woodturners chapter, it was something special this year. After purchasing the Ferris wheel at the Banquet Auction in Tacoma, Jane and Arthur Mason asked us to bring it back to Chicago and present it to them during SOFA. They were very anxious to meet all of the chapter members at this event, and we were introduced to their daughter, Dr. Peggy Mason, who resides on Chicago's south side.

I know our members were also excited about the event — I have never seen our president, Dan Anderson dressed up before. I almost didn't recognize him!

There was also another very important person in the audience, Mr. Jonathan Fairbanks, Curator Emeritus of American Decorative Arts and Sculpture at the Museum of Fine Art in Boston, MA. He said that he has seen a lot of art pieces and sculptures, but has never seen anything like the Ferris wheel, especially since it



Binh Pho, left foreground, checks the wheel with Arthur and Jane Mason. Other members of the Chicago Woodturners joined in the presentation.

was the collaborative effort of 49 artists.

The event went very well. There was a good-sized crowd that produced a lot of "oohing" and "ahhing". On behalf of the Chicago Woodturners, we would like to

thank Jane and Arthur for the opportunity. We are all proud to have our work included in your collection. We know it's headed to one of the best homes in the country.

— Binh Pho, Chicago Woodturners

one made by an American company, back in the early 80's?). The chucks and face plates are better and more versatile than ever, to say nothing about the ramping up in quality, capacities and stability of many lathes—and even many lower-end lathes are far beefier to accommodate green woodturning and larger capacities. And the avalanche of articles, books, videos and classes (often by "off-the-wall" turners) to assist new and experienced woodturners alike continues to grow.

Even the AAW was an outcome of turners outside the tradition — it was not started by shop teachers (early board members Rude Osolnik, Dale Nish, and Palmer Sharpless excepted)

or tradesmen, but from turners coming to the craft with quite a different approach to the wood lathe. The quality of the work done by amateurs and professionals alike has been steadily pushed upward, both in workmanship and design.

And finally, as the market widens for turned objects and higher prices at the top end, this may have a real benefit to those turners who do supplement their income or seriously depend on income from woodturning — a rising tide lifts all boats.

And when work by Bill Hunter is displayed next to work by Chagall in a major museum, we should all take pride in how far work from the lathe has traveled — from a means of mass

production for furniture and architectural pieces to objects that reside in permanent museum collections.

When next year rolls around for SOFA and CDS (and both will probably again be accented by a strong presence from the CWA), I highly recommend every serious turner make the journey to Chicago to experience the event, take in all the wood, and draw inspiration and design ideas from the many different media that will be represented.

Alan Lacer is a professional turner, teacher and writer in Shoreview, MN, and a contributing editor to American Woodturner. Photos by the author unless otherwise noted.

SMOKING POTS

Fire clouds and other signs of the ancients

PHIL BRENNION

The Pueblo Indians of the Southwest have made pottery for over two thousand years. Tempered in open fires, many fine examples of this durable, low-fired pottery still exist today. Closely viewed, one of these ancient Pueblo pots conjures thoughts of times past when communal families shared these vessels as one of the central tools of their existence.

Prehistoric Southwest pottery forms offer the woodturner many wonderful opportunities to create unique and timeless pieces in wood. The forms can be found in reference books or studied in exhibits and museums. One of my favorite books is *Historic Pueblo Indian Pottery* by Francis Harlow.

These ancient Pueblo pots wonderfully blend utility and art. In addition, their patinas seem to emit the strongest feeling of time. The subtle earth tones, which include many shades of reds and browns along with the marks of fire spread across the surface, emit that remarkable feel. Many pots also exhibit fire clouds giving evidence to the primitive methods in which the pots were fired. Fire clouds, like the ones shown above, appear as either dark or light blotches on the vessel's surface. These attractive imperfections are formed when the surface of the vessel touches another vessel or a supporting stone while the pots are being engulfed in the smoke and heat of a fire.

Until now, that same ancient patina - complete with fire clouds - has been difficult, if not impossible to emulate in wood. But I recently started experimenting with methods that would give my pre-historic style vessels that ancient look. I found that some of the same methods that Pueblo Indians used centuries ago for firing their pottery can actually be



A group of the author's cottonwood vessels exhibiting the subtle fire cloud pattern and other textures created by flame and smoke.

adapted to create that ancient patina on certain types of wood.

To produce this time-honored coloration on my vessels, I start by turning my bowls from a light-colored wood. Due to its availability in our area, north central Arizona, I usually use cottonwood, but sycamore, ash and box elder also work for this method.

Using light-colored woods allows me to better control the coloration of the vessel's surface. Fire clouds can also be more dramatic on the surface of these lighter woods. I'm able to see the effects of smoke to the lighter wood more quickly and accurately than if I were using darker woods.

I turn the walls of my vessels quite thick, about $\frac{3}{8}$ -in. Much of the ancient Pueblo pottery had a wall thickness in this range. In addition, this thickness reduces the chances that my turnings will crack during the smoking or smudging process. I try to produce a surface with a minimum of

tool marks by making light cuts with a gouge or shear-scraping with a round-nose scraper. I sand any remaining marks from the surface, usually starting with 120 grit, but never proceeding above 180 grit. I don't want the pores of the wood closed too tightly, or the smoke may not color deep enough into the wood. With the vessel turned and the sanding complete, I'm now ready to start the coloring process.

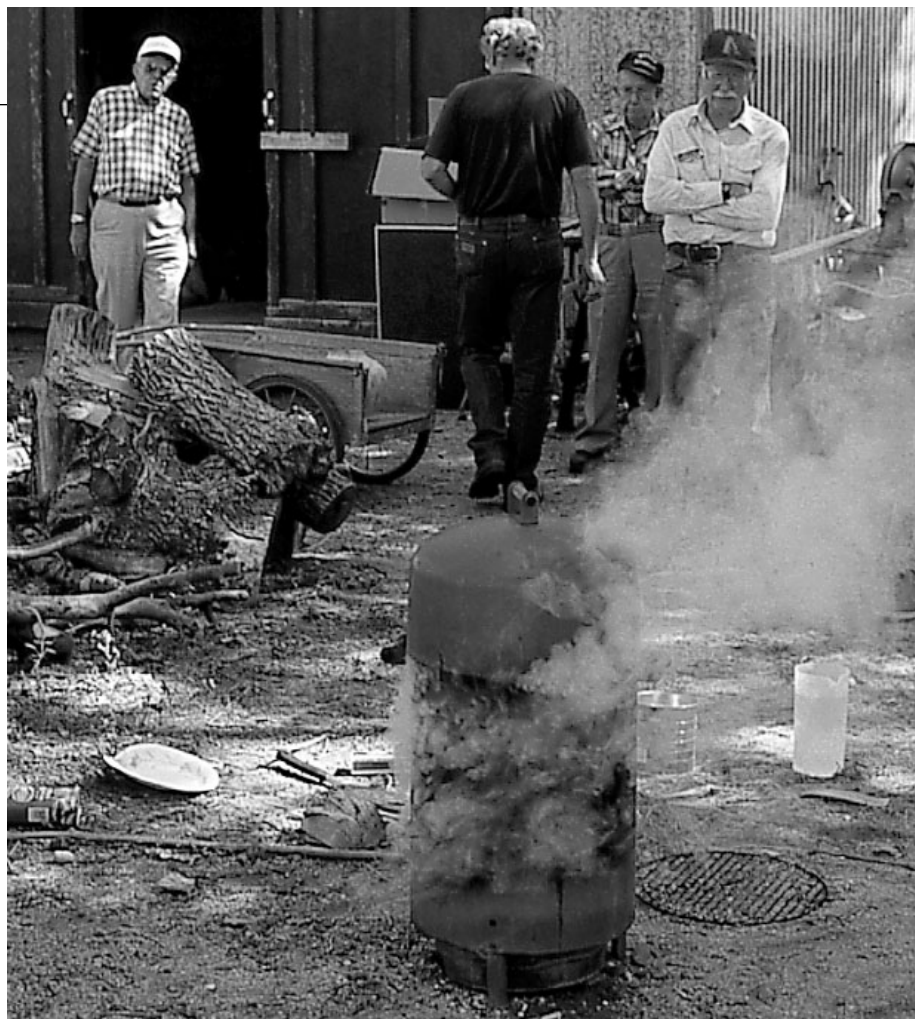
I use a vertical, barrel-type smoker, the kind used for smoking meats and fish. These three-legged cylinders stand about three feet tall and are available at most stores that sell grills and outdoor accessories. The smokers come with two trays, one for holding wood or charcoal for the fuel, and a secondary tray which holds the soaked chips. Grates that are placed above these give easy access to whatever is being smoked. This easy access is a must, because stopping the process by immediately removing the

vessel from the smoke becomes critical to achieving optimum color effect.

I build a fire in the bottom tray using a few pounds of scrap wood from my shop. In the second tray, I place a mixture of one half woodchips that I've soaked in water overnight and one half wood slurry I make the slurry by pouring water into a bucket of sawdust or fine shavings until it has the consistency of oatmeal. I use the sawdust and fine shavings generated from turning the bowl. When the fire in the fuel tray burns down a little, I place the tray with the chips and slurry mixture a few inches above it. There are tabs inside the smoker that hold each tray in place. About 10 inches above the second tray I place the grate that comes with the smoker. This will hold the rocks and my pot. When the wet chips and slurry start to burn, a dense smoke will appear. This may take 10 or 15 minutes, depending upon how wet the mixture is. The intensity of the smoke depends upon such factors as the amount of heat, the type of chips, and the amount of moisture present within the sawdust and soaked chips.

Trial and error are the best way of learning how to regulate the smoke as well as the heat. Since I might have to add fuel to the fire to keep it going, I keep a pitcher of water handy, should the fire become too intense. If this happens, I quench the fire with a little water by pouring it down the inside of the smoker into the fuel tray. I cool it down; I don't put the fire out. Creating a lot of smoke with minimal heat is important, since too much heat may crack even the thickest of bowls. I do my smoking in a very open area, well away from my house and shop. To protect my hands while working in and around the smoker, I wear welding gloves. I use all the normal precautions one would employ while working with a smoker. A safety pamphlet comes with most smokers.

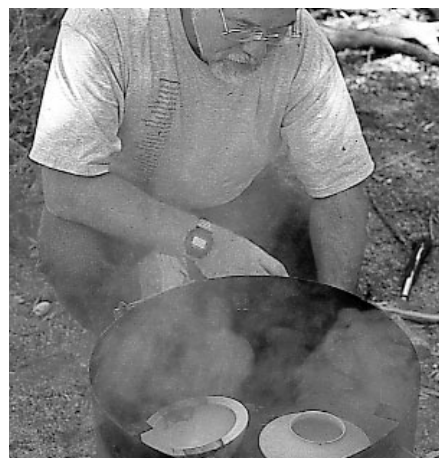
Once an obvious stream of smoke



Cooking up some pots, above, with the Prescott Area Woodturners AAW chapter. At right, AAW member Wayne Wolfe feeds the smoker. Below right, large cottonwood vessel being smoked

starts to appear, I place a few lava rocks, the kind used in a gas barbecue, on the grate. These rocks will support the vessel and help form the fire clouds where they touch the pot's surface. I set my vessel's bottom down on the rocks as shown at right, and put the cover on the smoker. The size of the smoker will dictate how many pots can be smoked at once. The average size smoker (about 14-in. diameter) will accommodate one 12-in. or about three 5-in. vessels.

Once the smoker is smoking steadily for a couple of minutes with the pot inside, I'm ready to add dry-powdered horse or cow manure to the top tray (the one with the slurry.) The manure I use has been aged at





least a year; it's bone dry (the consistency of sawdust) and has no offensive smell. Manure is still used today as one of the main components for firing black Pueblo pottery, most notably the San Ildefonso and Santa Clara types.

When the smoke is coming out steadily around the top of the smoker, I know that the sawdust and soaked chips are starting to burn and it's time to add the manure. I take the top off the smoker and make sure there are no visible flames coming from the fuel tray. Now, I carefully shake the dry manure down the sides of the bowls and through the grate into the smoker tray, to mix with the wet chips and sawdust. A large coffee can about three fourths full is about how much I use. You can shake it from the can easily. I don't worry if a little of the powdered manure gets on the surface of the pots. It can add some interesting effects during the smoking. With the manure added, I put the smoker lid back on and watch the smoke bellow out. I check the pot every few minutes by taking the top off the smoker, as shown on the previous page. It's easy to over-color the pot, as the dense smoke quickly darkens the wood. Once the manure has been added, the smoking process usually takes no more than about 25 minutes. I'm careful not to move the pot until I've attained the desired color. If the pot shifts on the rocks, I might not create the "fire clouds."

When I'm ready to remove the pot from the smoker, I take great care not to touch the surface to avoid smudging the color. To accomplish this, I insert a strong stick into the vessel's

Pine needles, left, are stuffed into a turned pot and then lit, above center. The flames and later the smoke left after the flames die down transform the cottonwood vessel, etching it with delicate patterns and an ancient looking patina.

The finished vessel is shown at right, before being sprayed with Krylon Clear finish to protect the piece and enhance the look of the fire textures.



mouth, usually a two foot branch, about 1-in. diameter is perfect. Then I carefully lift the smoked vessel off the grate and place it on a board to cool. This is the same method the Pueblo Indians have been using for centuries to remove their pots from their kiln fires.

When the vessel has cooled for at least an hour, I'm ready to protect the smoked surface with Krylon Matte Finish. This clear finish is available in a spray can from most art supply stores. It is a clear spray coating used to protect artwork, like pastel drawings, from smudging. Using the stick to lift the pots, I then hold the can of Krylon about 12 inches from the vessel and apply two or three coats over the entire surface. I apply enough coats of Krylon on the surface to reduce the smoke odor and allow the finish to be burnished without marring the patina. This usually takes three or four coats. There will always be a slight smoke odor to the pot, but it seems to dissipate over time.

I don't sand or do anything to the pot's surface between coats of Krylon. When the matte finish is dry, the surface should be smudge-proof. I then lightly burnish the pot with 4/0 steel

wool.

My final step in producing these ancient-looking turnings is to smudge or blacken the interior of the pots. Again, I use a method Native Americans found successful centuries ago to fire their pottery. I completely fill the interior of my pot with pine needles. Packing them in somewhat firmly, I light the pine needles on fire and allow them to burn and char the inside of the vessel as shown above. The flames can be quite intimidating but the fire burns quickly and will usually not crack the pot. After the pine needles have completely burned out (which only takes a couple of minutes), I shake out any loose residue (a little compressed air works wonders) and allow the interior to cool. A final few coats of Krylon on the inside of the vessel seals my smudged pot.

Using this process has allowed me to give collectors bowls with a little bit more of the past.

Phil Brennon has sculpted and turned wood for galleries for the past 16 years from his farm in Chino Valley, AZ. Before woodturning he built custom furniture.

KNOW HOW THE KNOTS GROW

A perfect star pattern every time

KEN HAGER

I had never touched a lathe until I retired, after 42 years in health care administration. At which point I started looking for a new challenge, something totally different from the committee meetings and mediating employing conflicts whereby I'd made a living. I wanted something I could do on my own, something that would provide tangible results by which I could gauge my progress.

One day my wife came home, discouraged after spending several hours shopping for a small entry hall table. It appeared that a 10-in. wide oak table of the height she wanted didn't exist.

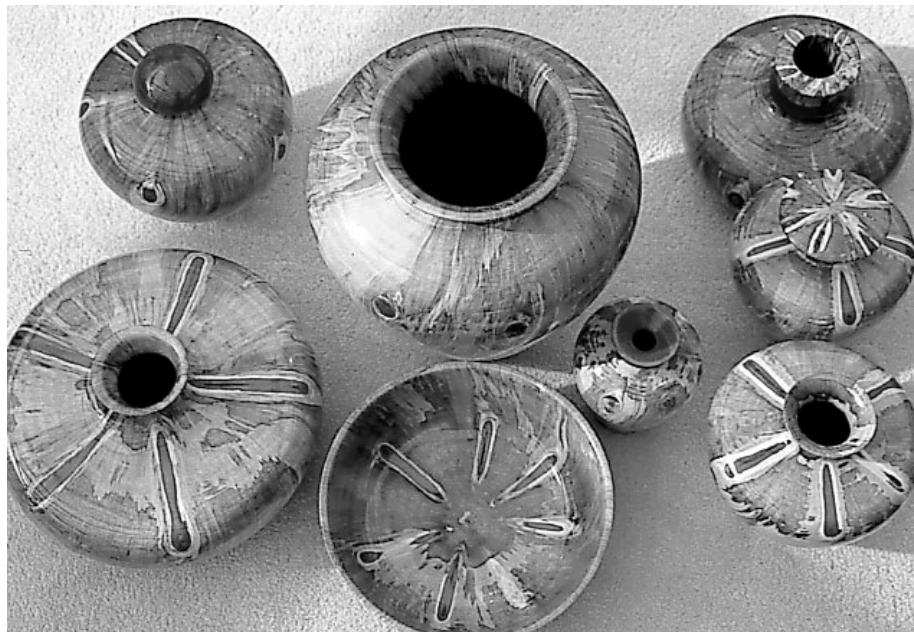
That's when I remembered the semester of woodworking I'd had in the eighth grade, a class I recalled with fondness. "I'll make the table," I said. I enrolled in beginning woodworking class at a local vocational school, where I was introduced to the tools I needed to make the table, as well as being instructed in shop safety. The project required turning the table legs on a lathe.

After building a small shop behind my house, I bought a Delta lathe, walked into a local Paxton's store and asked the clerk what type of cutting tool I'd need to turn something on a lathe. As it happened, the man I spoke to was president of the Northeast Oklahoma Woodturners club, and he invited me to a meeting.

That was my introduction to what is the most cooperative, friendly and giving group of men and women I've ever been around. The president even invited me to his shop for some one-on-one instruction.

That did it. I was hooked.

At one of the club meetings, I heard about Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts in Gatlinburg, TN. A fellow woodturner suggested I take a course from Ray Key. The next day I



A family of Norfolk pine vessels by the author, displaying the characteristic star pattern of rich reds and yellows. Photos by Ken Hager.

called the school. Key had a woodturning class scheduled in two weeks and a spot had just opened because somebody had cancelled. By that time I'd been turning only a few weeks, and I showed up at Arrowmont with no tools and having no idea what to expect. David Wahl, the man on the lathe next to mine, graciously took me under his wing—it was his third trip to Arrowmont.

I had found what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. Like most woodturners, I guess, I turned out some pretty amateur stuff the first year or so, but fortunately I learned a lot about form from Ray Key. I'd been turning a couple of years before I had the courage to offer any of my pieces for sale. By that time, there was no room in the house to display my work!

In 1997, I attended my first AAW symposium and brought home a new Powermatic 3520 lathe. I now spend 40-50 hours a week in the shop.

Since turning doesn't have to provide my livelihood, my initial goal was to sell enough to pay for my tools and supplies.

One of my favorite woods to turn is Norfolk Island Pine (*Araucaria heterophylla*), which flourishes in southern Florida, some 1500 miles from Tulsa, Oklahoma, where I live. I wanted to make a family of pieces from the wood. To get the stock I needed, I called Mitch Wolok, president of the woodturning club in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, to see if his club would be interested in trading some Florida wood, including Norfolk Pine, for wood indigenous to Oklahoma. The answer was a resounding yes.

So I loaded my truck with 3,000 pounds of hackberry, mulberry, elm, bois d'arc and box elder, drove to Fort Lauderdale, and made the trade.

I've learned a lot about Norfolk pine since then. It can be the basis of beautiful turnings, but there are a



This Norfolk pine vase is 9-in. high and 14-in. in diameter and features a star on top. This required locating the top end of the log at the base of the vase.



To locate the star pattern in the bottom, the author had to mount the blank on the lathe with the lower end of the log at its base. The fruit bowl is 5-in. high and 13-in. in diameter

couple of things you have to keep in mind when working with this particular species, because of its distinctive knots and the way those knots add to the beauty of the finished piece.

One of the most important tricks is also fairly simple, and I'd like to share it with my fellow turners. It made a difference in my work, once I learned about it, and I hope you will find it valuable too.

When planning to turn a piece of Norfolk Pine, you must not only decide on form and size, but how you will display the dark reddish-brown knots.

Paula Nicks, of Fort Myers, FL showed me a method she devised to determine the growth direction of the tree. This is critical because the limbs grow at a slight angle upward toward the sky. To determine which end of a log was closer to the top of the tree, you simply remove the bark and look for the typical "v" shaped indentation just below the knot. The lower end of the "v" points toward the ground.

Knowing how the knots grow gives you the option of displaying a "star" effect on a piece, which is why the wood is sometimes called the "star pine."

Once you figure out how the knots grow, you can use your own eye and creative sense for aligning the log section on the lathe to create an effect you find pleasing.

I like to finish my pieces with clear automotive lacquer available at auto supply stores. I spray the finish on with a small touch-up gun. Usually I spray on 6-to-7 coats, buffing with fine steel wool between coats.

The lacquer is not only a good finish, but it is easy to fix mistakes. Once I got an orange-peel texture from an improperly set gun; I just washed the piece with a cloth and lacquer thinner and smoothed everything out.

Ken Hager enjoys turning Norfolk Pine by the ton in Tulsa, OK.

CANADIAN TURNINGS SHINE

A look at the best, coast to coast

STEVE HANSEN AND MURRAY WEBBER

SOME OF MY FONDEST MEMORIES AS a woodworking journalist involve trips to Canada, where I worked with some top-notch carvers and furniture makers. The work was among the best, the design insights of the makers were intriguing, and their energy and personalities were infectious. In the last two years I've been delighted to meet some Canadian turners and find them as fascinating as the woodworkers I'd previously visited. Some of their work is shown on the back cover of this issue and along with this article about two recent events.

Third Canadian Woodturning Competition

The 1999 Canadian Woodturning Competition brought together excellent turnings from across Canada to the British Columbia (B.C.) Woodworking show last October. From British Columbia to Nova Scotia we received 76 entries for the Novice; Intermediate and Master class events.

The entries were exceptionally well done and demonstrated how wood-

turning as a whole has advanced several notches from only a few years ago. Of particular note were the strong entries for the Novice and Intermediate classes.

Starting with the Novice category, first and second place were awarded to Cornelius Regher of B.C. Cornelius' pieces were a very well executed closed hollow-form fashioned from curly maple and an open form of frost-checked maple burl. Third place went to Nancy Anderson, also of B.C., for a small bowl highlighted with dyed and woven pine needles, which was certainly one of the more innovative items on display.

Top honors in the Intermediate class went to Robert Shiell of Alberta. Robert's work was a beautifully finished covered plate made from wormy dogwood and yellow cedar burl. Second place went to Murray Sluys of B.C. who produced an elegant tall lidded vase. Third place went to James Kealy, of B.C. Another innovative piece, the piece by James was a small bowl fashioned from monkey-puzzle and featured a reversible stand.

First place in the Master Class went to Steve Hansen of B.C. for a small decorative turning in an Oriental style. It featured a six-sided container that was built-up from pre-turned and mitered segments. Second place was awarded to Marilyn Campbell for her innovative and inlaid sculpture titled: "Plutonic Intrusion". Third place was awarded to Bob Rollings for his spectacular "tea service" featuring intricate inlay and precision turning.

The very popular "Peoples Choice" was won by Bob Rollings for his Tea Service. Coming in second was a stunning large vase done by Herman VandenBroek of B.C. And Marco Berera of B.C. took third place with a

treadle lathe turned from a single "two by four". Although a miniature, it is fully operational. You may have seen it in the Tacoma, WA, symposium's Instant Gallery last June.

Rounding things up were the Canadian Woodturning Associations Award for "Excellence in Originality" won by Marilyn Campbell for her "Plutonic Intrusion".

Photos of the competition winners can be viewed at: <http://www.bc-alter.net/shansen>. \$3100 in cash and prizes were awarded to the lucky winners. Thanks to the Fraser Valley Woodturners of B.C. for hosting the competition and thanks also to our competent panel of judges: Jason Marlow, Jo Darts, and Corelee Triance for having to make some tough choices from a worthy field of woodturnings. Thank you also to our many corporate donors for their contribution. Special gratitude goes to John Cryderman, for without his generosity and tremendous support the event would not be possible.

— Steve Hansen
Surrey, BC

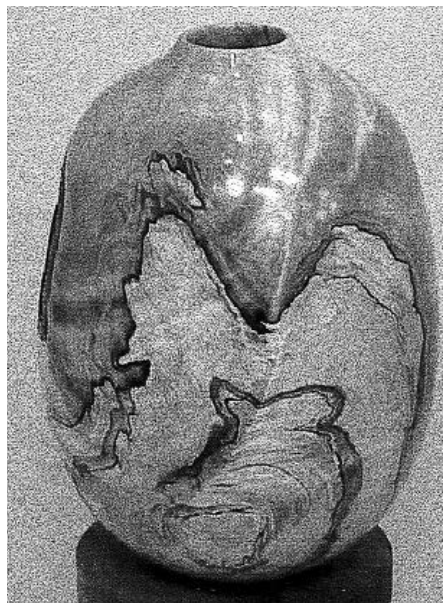
The Ontario Open

The Ontario Open Woodturning competition and exhibition, sponsored by the Woodturners Guild of Ontario and Lee Valley Tools Ltd. last October was a huge success.

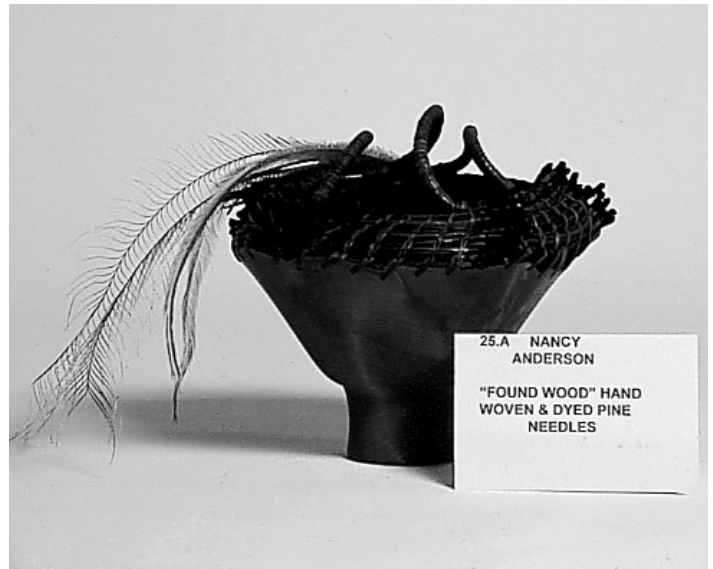
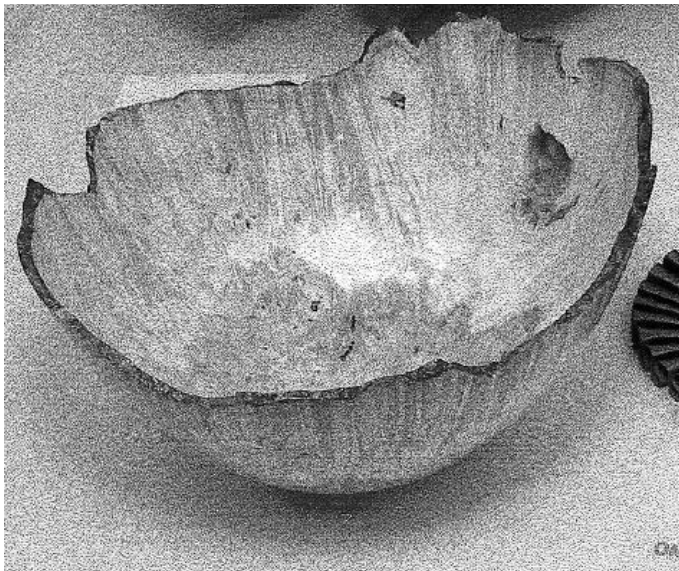
This was the fourth annual event sponsored by the two organizations and appears to have been the largest competition in Canada to date.

The call for entries was made six months ago and the response was remarkable. One hundred twenty two turnings were submitted for the four categories of competition. While most entries were from across Southern Ontario, some were received from the United States.

Judging took place on October 20



Prize winning vessel by Vince Wayne of Peterborough, ON



Natural edge form, above left, by Rick Biggs of Aurora, ON, won a 2nd in the Novice Class in the Ontario Open. Nancy Anderson, of B.C., won a 3rd as a novice in the Canadian competition with a bowl highlighted with dyed and pine needles.

by renowned professional woodturner Ted Hodgitts and Emma Quinn, Manager of Marketing and Merchandising for the Ontario Crafts' Council.

It must have been a daunting task for the judges to choose the winning objects for each category. Every woodturner who submitted his or her work appears to have chosen the very best that they had to offer. The quality and variety of the entries, both in form and finish, was of the highest caliber in the show's existence. This was enthusiastically endorsed by both judges.

Written critiques were provided by the judges for each piece entered in Novice and Intermediate, providing positive reinforcement and helpful suggestions for improvement.

There seem to be as many ways of working turned forms as there are craftspersons attempting the art. The unifying factor for the show was that every piece had been submitted to the lathe. It is quite extraordinary the variations that turned form can achieve under the direction of a well controlled chisel. Throughout the three days of the presentation, mem-

bers of the guild and other Southern Ontario clubs exhibited some of this skill upon the two lathes near the show entrance.

The turnings on display could be categorized as either functional or decorative. Many of the pieces contained elements of decorative ideas imposed upon functional forms; a few might be placed in a category of sculpture. However, these were not the differentiating categories requested by the organizers. Those had everything to do with the turners degree of expertise and body of experience. The level of excellence exhibited here has no doubt raised the sights of any woodturner fortunate enough to have attended the show.

The winners in each category were as follows: (see pictures)

Novice class: 1st Eric Dalrymple, Toronto; 2nd Rick Biggs, Aurora; 3rd Vince Lebert, Markham.

Intermediate class: 1st Frank Ciccarelli, St. Catharines; 2nd Malcolm Cummings, Stoney Creek; 3rd Dan Braniff, Elmwood.

Open class: 1st Mark Salusbury, Peterborough; 2nd Vince Way-Nee, Peterborough; 3rd Ray Prince,

Toronto.

Special class: 1st Marilyn Campbell, Kincardine; 2nd Bob Rollings, Scarborough.

Peoples Choice: Dan Braniff, Collingwood.

C.W.A. Award of Excellence: Bob Rollings, Scarborough.

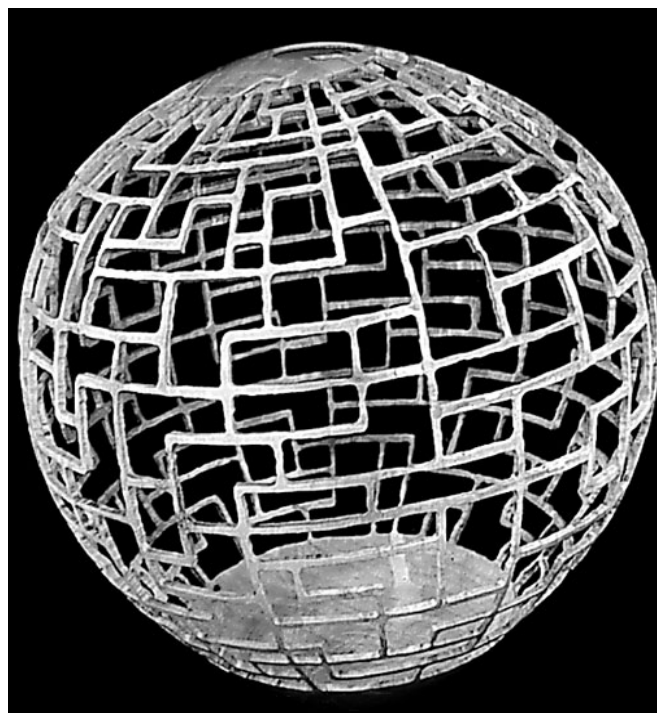
The show was well attended with visitors coming from as far as Montreal, Quebec and Pittsburg, PA. Over 400 people voted for the Peoples Choice Award and interestingly enough, their choice was not among the pieces awarded prizes by the judges.

The C.W.A. Award of Excellence in Originality was awarded for the turning which best demonstrated originality in design concept along with the finest execution.

Planning is underway for next year's competition. This will be our fifth annual event and once again our co-sponsor will be Lee Valley Tools Ltd. The dates will be Tuesday, October 17 through Saturday, October 21, 2000; see the W.G.O. website: <http://members.home.net/bobanne/home.html>.

— Murray Webber, Toronto, ON

PHOTOS FROM THE MAILBAG



The cedar crotch piece above left entitled "Flames I" stands a full 30 in. tall and was turned by Dale R. Olsen of Vale, NC. At top right, Ron Pessolano of Brimfield, MA takes piercing of hollow forms to a new level with his piece entitled "Barely There." At $9\frac{7}{8}$ in. high x $9\frac{1}{2}$ in. wide x $\frac{1}{8}$ in. wall thickness the vessel weighs in at 2 ounces. Above right is a hollow turned vessel by Todd Bowen of Arvada, CO. Todd notes that "living in Colorado has forced me to learn to make the most out of aspen." The piece also features cocobolo and turquoise inlay.

PHOTOS FROM THE MAILBAG



"Orbs on the Run" by Gary P. Weiermiller of Cheboygan, MI is from his recent solo show, "Nature Takes a Turn." The piece features birdseye maple, graphite inlay, maple burl, black bean and nara, multi axis turned legs.



Above left is "Six Pack" by Pennsylvanian Dick Tuttle from his "Junk Can Series." The piece is $6\frac{1}{4} \times 7 \times 10\frac{1}{2}$ -in. At left is "Hopi Bowl" by Ed Zbik of San Diego, CA measuring 18×7 -in. featuring curved segments on a curved surface. Above is a persimmon and pecan vessel by Dale Brobst of Gulf Shores, AL.

WOODTURNING COMEBACK AT PINKERTON ACADEMY

AAW BOOSTS SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

As automation de-emphasizes our handmade heritage, it has a two-fold effect on woodworking programs in our schools. Not only is there less demand for the skills of woodworking, but budgets are reallocated to find computer systems training. Some schools still have technology education programs eliminating hands on experience, in favor of interactive modules, and perhaps some model building.

Other schools may outsource woodworking to regional vocational schools, or in the worst case, eliminate these programs outright. This was the situation 10 years ago, at Pinkerton Academy. Facing such pressures, the woodworking program was close to extinction. This was the scene which Jack Grube faced when he returned to teach woodworking courses at Pinkerton.

Now 184 years old, Pinkerton Academy is a privately operated, nonprofit school with contracts to provide ninth through twelfth grade classes for five communities in New Hampshire. It is considered the largest high school in the state.

Today, as the students are anxiously awaiting delivery of their 17th lathe (a One Way 1016), the program has been completely revitalized. This year 320 students are taking woodworking classes and the school had to cap enrollment, proof that there is still a place for woodturning in our educational institutions.

One factor in the growth of the program is that courses offered satisfy state requirements as an art course, a prerequisite to graduation. With busy schedules and few elective openings, students find this recognition important.

During the past decade female enrollment in the woodworking courses increased from zero to 20% and an increasing number of A and B students are enrolling.

Grube noted that the AAW has been a vital partner to the resurgence of the program. AAW grants directly



Pinkerton Academy students turn wood into art during classes.

funded the purchase of four lathes - a direct grant funded Pinkerton's second lathe and a youth outreach grant purchased three others.

AAW also helps in other ways. Grube cites the video library as a good resource.

"Although I don't show the tapes during class, they are a great take-home aid, to help individual students focus on a particular problem or technique," he said.

Local AAW chapters also provide direct help. As a self-taught woodturner, Grube is a member of the Central New England Woodturners and the Granite State Woodturners (GSWT). He vividly recalls his first turning project, a walnut bowl turned as a senior in high school. His interest in turning simmered for 20 years before he turned to the local AAW chapter to learn more about turning. He joined the AAW, reading each page of the Journal over and over, watching videotapes as he practiced on the lathe and asking every New Hampshire turner a question when he saw them. This arrangement between the local AAW chapters and Pinkerton Academy is reciprocal.

Pinkerton typically hosts at least one of the GSWT's meetings each year. In May, 1999, Pinkerton hosted

that chapter's woodturning symposium, drawing close to 300 turners. Some of Grube's students have even joined the local chapter. Thus, the information that Grube gets from the AAW can be shared with 300 more people each year.

In another ingenious way to tap into the AAW's talents, Grube enlisted local AAW members to help present a Woodturning Day program. He scheduled four turners to do both a shop demonstration, and a speaking presentation in other classes.

"Our drafting teacher had his students watch a demonstration on turning a baluster. The students had no idea how it was done. To them, you simply cut and paste the one you like from AutoCAD" he said.

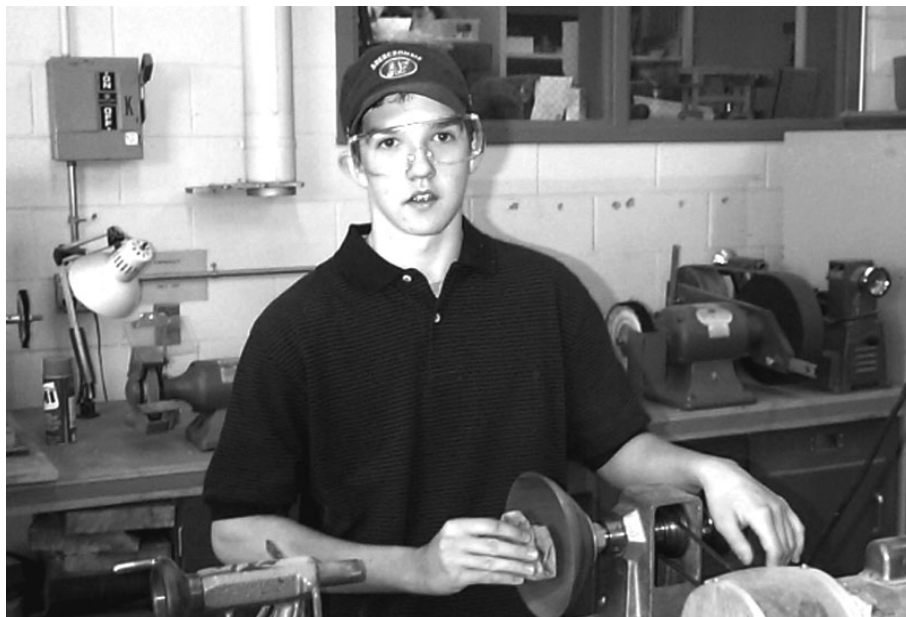
"Another turner talked to the art students about his focus on turning as an art, discussing why, in his 40's, he was returning to art school. Yet another turner worked with the forestry program to turn green wood. Many of the forestry students had no idea about turning. At the end of the day, there were more than 150 students in and outside of my room. Many of the other programs on my floor had to 'shut down' as the students went to watch. It brought a lot of attention to our program," Grube

said.

Despite multiple sections of classes, next year's courses are filled—a total of 320 students. Unfortunately, 60 students had to be turned away. The shop, which holds classes of about 20 each, is a full featured-woodshop; it now has 17 lathes. Purchasing equipment as the opportunity arises, Pinkerton has acquired a wide selection of lathes. A Vega bowl lathe with a 24" swing, and a Nova lathe with a 48" bed represent the large end, complementing 7 miniature lathes, and a new Oneway 1018. The table-top mini-lathes are attractive from a size and budget aspect, and sometimes receive room and board at student's homes for the summer. One standard that Grube tries to adhere to, is a 1" x 8 thread, or 1-1/4" x 8 thread, so that pieces in process, and expensive accessories like a Nova chuck are not tied to a specific lathe. The shop is open during study periods, and one or two days a week after classes.

Asked for examples of memorable students, Grube recalls Marc Celona, who graduated last year. Marc sold the cherry burl bowl in the photo below, that he turned his senior year, but more impressively, Marc was accepted at the North Bennet Street School (NBSS) in Boston - the oldest trade school in the country. NBSS has a 20-month program focusing on traditional furniture design and construction. Marc has decided to first pursue an engineering degree at the University of New Hampshire. But, he's put the woodworking experience to good use, getting a job at the local Woodcraft store to help fund his college education. And, Marc came back to help the Business of Woodworking class with a production run of Shaker tables, featuring 3 legs, a turned center support, and a round top. While a student, Marc applied for an AAW student outreach grant, which helped purchase three lathes for the school.

And, Grube learned something



Turning student at Pinkerton Academy.

from Marc as well: "Previously, I targeted seniors for my lab assistants. Marc's 8th grade teacher advised him of Pinkerton's program, coincidentally the last year for Junior High shop courses. I had some reservations about a freshman as a lab assistant, but halfway through the first class, Marc's personality, work ethic and intrinsic drive started emerging."

So it is not surprising that Grube also mentions other underclassmen — Brian Cook and Chris Lumb — who also benefited from the AAW outreach grant. Both have bought their own lathes to continue their interest in turning. Also enrolled is a junior, Mark Saindon, whose freshman younger brother, Matt, has joined the program, showing that turning is either hereditary or contagious. Zach Saunders led the Produc-

tion class through a run of Shaker tables last fall.

Many of the attributes of woodturning fueling the AAW's growth are evident at the Pinkerton program. Roy Noyes, Pinkerton trustee and a founding member of the Guild of New Hampshire Woodworkers, offers this perspective:

"Students love woodturning for a variety of reasons. We believe the primary reason is 'immediate gratification and self esteem,' because the range of products, from wooden pens to original art objects, provides an opportunity for all to succeed. Another reason is the wide choice of materials that are available for turning on the lathe and turning is now more than woodturning. The materials that we use include scraps of domestic and exotic wood, plastic, talc, and non-ferrous metals. Finally, the cost of equipping a wood studio with lathes is low. The recent improvements to mini-lathes make them affordable and useful for programs like this," he said.

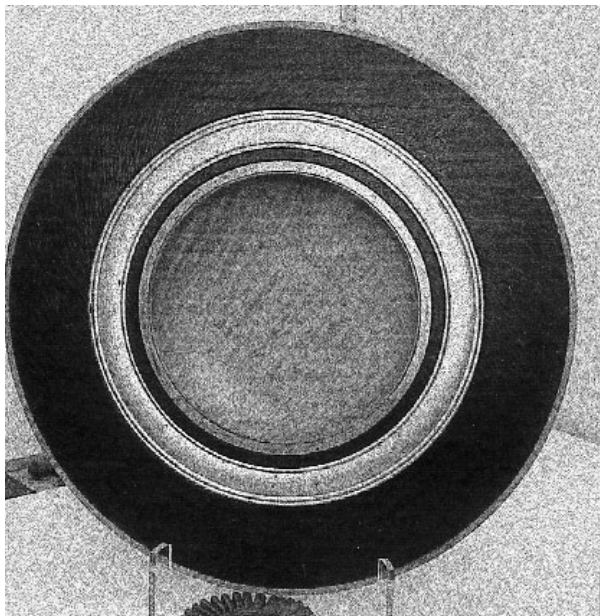
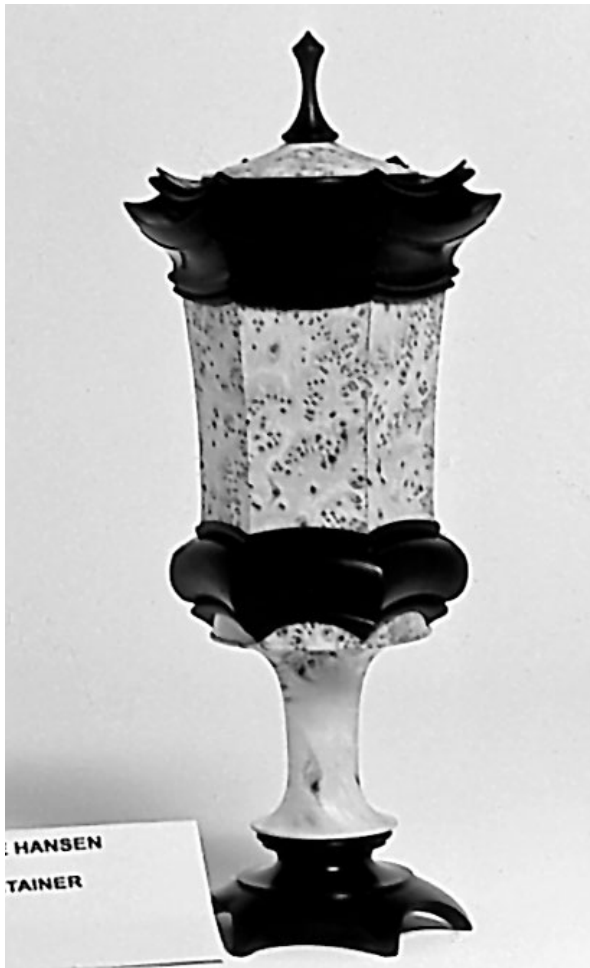
Thaddeus Badowski is a woodturner in Solon, OH.



Cherry burl bowl by Marc Celona.

Shining Northern Lights

A dazzling display by Canadian turners



The enthusiasm for turning continues to surge in Canada, and the work just gets better and better, as shown in these examples from two recent shows: The Ontario Open Woodturning Competition and The third Canadian Woodturning Competition.

Among the prize winners were: clockwise from top left: An Oriental style six-sided container by Steve Hansen of British Columbia; a first-prize winning turning by Marilyn Campbell of Kincardine, ON; Inlaid "Tea Set" by Bob Rollings of Scarborough, ON; Platter by Mark Salusbury of Peterborough, ON.