

SLOWLY DOES IT • USING SILICA DESICCANT TO DRY ROUGH-TURNED BOWLS • ELEGANT LETTER OPENER

AMERICAN WOODTURNER

Journal of the American Association of Woodturners

April 2022 vol 37, no 2 • woodturner.org

CONNECTIONS:
THE INSPIRED
ART OF
**ANDI
WOLFE**

AN ENDURING
DONATION

.....

THE ART-AND-CRAFT
SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

.....

REMEMBERING
**CIARÁN FORBES AND
STEPHEN HOGBIN**



Molly Goodfellow

Winton Washington State

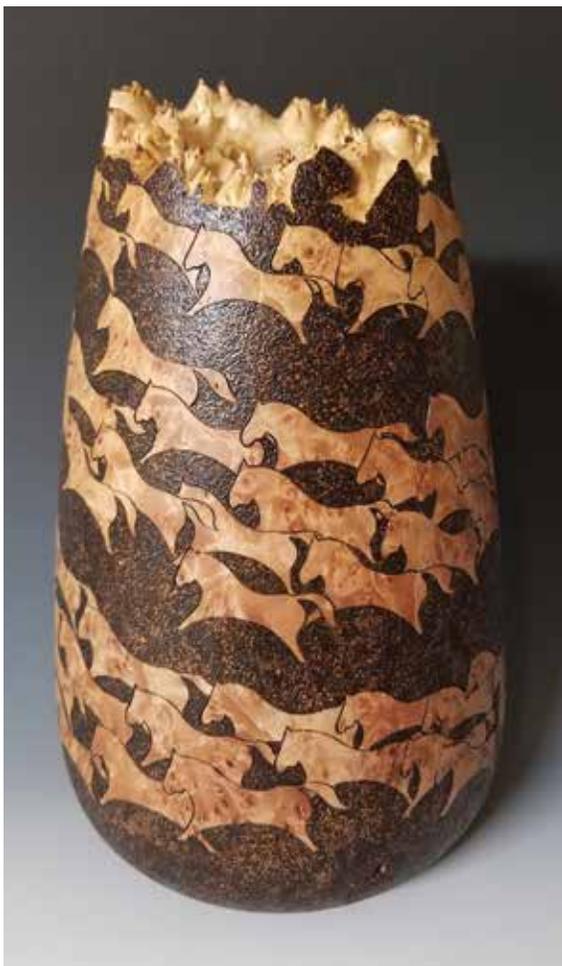
Creating art was never a conscious goal as I grew up and attended school and university, so I didn't study and earn degrees in this field. For me, creating art happened by accident. I began woodworking in high school because I didn't want to take home economics, as my female peers were doing. I discovered I loved working with wood. Many years later, I resumed woodworking through woodturning as a

way to relax while raising my children. I found I possessed a talent for creating aesthetically pleasing forms, and my passion grew.

Refining my work and striving to create unique designs led me to express my fascination with primitive and prehistoric imagery. My embellishments reflect my love and admiration for primitive culture, as expressed in cave art and archeological

finds, reflected through imagery and symbols. My designs are carved, burned, or branded into the surface of my forms. On occasion, these designs are further enhanced through the use of metallic paste.

While my work is *inspired* by prehistoric and indigenous people's art, I don't *copy* cultural designs out of respect for the specific context (often spiritual) in which their work was made. ■



Caballos Ascendentes, 2017, Maple burl, 11" x 6½" (28cm x 17cm)



Gilded Series, 2016, Cherry, Gilders paste, 8" x 5½" (20cm x 14cm)



Caballos Negros, 2013, Maple, leather dye, 6" x 4" (15cm x 10cm)



Gilded Minis, 2016,
Cherry, Gilders
paste, largest:
2" x 1½"
(5cm x 38mm)



Gilded Series, 2016,
Cherry, Gilders paste,
8" x 3" (20cm x 8cm)



Mask Series, 2016,
Cherry, Gilders
paste, 8" x 4½"
(20cm x 11cm)



Mustang Series, 2017,
Eucalyptus burl, 4" x 4½"
(10cm x 11cm)

Dedicated to providing education,
information, and organization to those
interested in woodturning

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The AAW strives to cultivate an organization built on mentorship, encouragement, tolerance, and mutual respect, thereby engendering a welcoming environment for all. To read AAW's full Diversity Statement, visit tiny.cc/AAWDiversity*

A NOTE ABOUT SAFETY

An accident at the lathe can happen with blinding suddenness; respiratory and other problems can build over years.

Take appropriate precautions when you turn. Safety guidelines are published online at tiny.cc/turnsafe*. Following them will help you continue to enjoy woodturning.

*Web address is case sensitive.

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Elizabeth and James York Collection
Photo: Jerry Anthony Photography

Back cover – Rick Crawford



Editor's Note



Some of the articles in this issue of *American Woodturner* bring to mind the word *legacy*. The global woodturning community recently lost two influential, impactful members—Brother Ciarán Forbes of Ireland and Stephen Hogbin of Canada. Our remembrances of them (pages 12 and 16, respectively) convey a sense of the men, but also a sense of what they have given us. Sometimes a legacy is formed just by being who you are for the people you meet. I never met Ciarán, the irreverent monk, but stories of his personality linger in my consciousness. Stephen Hogbin was a pioneer of design and a dedicated educator. While quite different, both men left legacies true to their souls.

In a more tangible way, collectors Jeffrey Bernstein and Judy Chernoff are establishing their legacy by way of a generous donation of forty-three works in wood to The Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum. Part of their legacy is sharing their love of wood art with the world.

Sharing knowledge and experience by way of publishing is yet another way to create a legacy. All issues of *American Woodturner* and *Woodturning FUNDamentals* are kept in the searchable AAW archives in perpetuity. So if you have written for our publications, you have contributed to the legacy of a spirited and generous community.

Still others create their legacy by serving in leadership roles. A legacy can take many forms, each a gift for current and future explorers.

Joshua Friend —Joshua Friend

From the President



Updates

This is the time of year when the AAW staff and Board wrap up our review of 2021 and look forward to 2022.

Everyone is focused on returning to “normal” in our woodturning activities in a safe manner. We have weathered the storm of over two years of a pandemic and have continued to make shavings and sawdust, but our universal hope is that we can continue to normalize our in-person club, class, and shop interactions, as well as symposium gatherings.

The AAW finished last year in a good financial position, despite having to cancel the in-person Annual Symposium due once again to the pandemic. We were able to negotiate fair settlements with the event venue and hotels, and close attention to costs on the part of the AAW staff kept us on a solid financial footing. In addition, donations to the AAW general and donor-designated funds in 2021 totaled \$120k, helping us to continue to provide a breadth of services to our membership and the woodturning community. Thank you to all who contributed to our annual giving

program; see pages 8-9 of this issue for our donor-recognition spread.

While we are planning more in-person activities this year, we recognize that “virtual” demonstrations and meetings are not going away. Our online programming is quite active and continues to attract viewers. We will continue to offer a breadth of programs through the year, in addition to the Chattanooga Symposium (our first in-person event in three years!). This all keeps the Symposium Committee, Demonstrator Selection Committee, the Board, and the staff extremely busy.

Collaboration

We are blessed with a number of woodturners, chapters, and organizations who share the AAW mission of “Teaching the World to Turn.” In recent months, we have found ways to collaborate with a few of those in co-marketing events. At the chapter level, I hope a focus on teaching and mentoring will spark a growth in membership and activity.

Please take advantage of the resources on the AAW website, including various curricula for beginning woodturners. These resources include access to all AAW publications going back to our inception, as well as curated videos that have been

reviewed for quality and safe practices. The ability to search by topic or author can quickly provide information across the spectrum of our avocation.

Leadership opportunities

By the time you read this, our Nominating Committee will be starting to process applications to our Board. As you know, each year we fill three vacancies on the Board (two elected by the membership, one chosen by the current Board). The Nominating Committee is one of our most important and has the responsibility of ensuring that our organization’s leadership has the right mix of skills and experience to continue moving the AAW forward. If you feel you are qualified and are interested in serving the AAW as a Board member, please check out the application process outlined in the journal and on the website (see page 10 of this issue for our call for nominees). If you are interested in serving on one of our committees, please contact the AAW staff or any Board member.

Stay healthy and keep turning,

Mike Summerer

Mike Summerer
President, AAW Board of Directors



AAW'S 36TH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

Chattanooga, Tennessee • June 23-26, 2022



Photo: Andi Wolfe

Symposium Venue

Chattanooga Convention Center
One Carter Plaza
Chattanooga, TN 37402

Hotels

Visit woodturner.org for updated information and preferred group rates for all official AAW Symposium hotels.

DETAILS AND REGISTRATION



For the latest information and to register for the event, visit our Chattanooga Symposium webpage, tiny.cc/AAW2022!

DEMONSTRATORS AND PANELISTS

Donna Zils Banfield
Stuart Batty
John Beaver
Dennis Belcher
Trent Bosch
Kip Christensen
Jason Clark
Rebecca DeGroot
Barbara Dill
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Cindy Drozda

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Paul Russell

Merryll Saylan
Betty Scarpino
Peggy Schmid
Doug Schneiter
Jason Swanson
Kimberly Winkle
Hans Weissflog
Alan Zenreich

Demonstrators and panelists are subject to change. See woodturner.org for updates.

POP SHOWCASE ARTISTS



Each year, the Professional Outreach Program (POP) showcases artists with great promise or experienced artists whose work and contributions to the field have been under-recognized. The POP Artist Showcase includes exhibition pieces, demonstrations by each artist, and a presentation of work moderated by David Ellsworth. This year, the POP Showcase Artists are Melissa Engler and Eli Polite.

Melissa Engler

- ▶ Non-Traditional Spoon Carving
- ▶ Embellishment – Discovering Your Patterns



Eli Polite

- ▶ Herringbone Construction
- ▶ Segmented Finials



THURSDAY WELCOME EVENTS

TRADESHOW



Shop at the largest woodturning tradeshow experience in the world – featuring state-of-the-art lathes, tools, accessories, finishing supplies, and wood. Take in a range of ongoing live demonstrations and take new tools home! Bring an empty suitcase or even an empty truck!

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Thompson Lathe Tools
Tom's Tools
Trent Bosch Studios, Inc.
Turningwood.com, LLC
UC Coatings
VincesWoodNWonders.com



Photo: Andi Wolfe

Woodcraft of Chattanooga
Woodturners Wonders
Woodturning Tool Store
Woodturning with Tim Yoder

*Exhibitors as of February 14, 2022.
See woodturner.org for updates.*

TRADESHOW PREVIEW RECEPTION AND SPECIAL EXHIBITION OPENING THURSDAY, JUNE 23, 6:00-8:00 P.M.

Come back together for the opening night Tradeshow Preview and Exhibition Opening. Mingle during the reception with light appetizers and cash bar and take advantage of early shopping in the Tradeshow.

PANEL DISCUSSIONS

Photography: John Beaver, Rudolph Lopez

Remote Demonstrations: Rebecca DeGroot, Alan Zenreich, Cindy Drozda

Finding Your Voice: Kimberly Winkle, Donna Zils Banfield, Roberto Ferrer, Rebecca DeGroot

Selling your Work Online: Keith Gotschall, Carol Vander Dussen Hall, Mark Hall, Greg Gallegos

Earning a Living from Woodturning: Mike Mahoney, Cindy Drozda, Ashley Harwood

Who Says? Asking for, Accepting, and Evaluating a Critique of Your Work: Betty Scarpino, Kimberly Winkle, Melissa Engler

Ask Us Anything: David Ellsworth, John Jordan, Merryll Saylan, John Beaver

CALL FOR SYMPOSIUM VOLUNTEERS



Symposium volunteers say they have the most fun at the Symposium. Meet other turners and help make the Symposium run smoothly by volunteering a shift or two during the event. Spouses and companions are welcome to volunteer, too! Sign up online at woodturner.org.

WHAT'S ON TAP?

Don't miss Opening Night, June 23!
Plan your travel accordingly!

- 4:30-5:30 p.m. – New Member/
First-Time Symposium Attendee
Orientation
- 5:30-6:00 p.m. – Opening Remarks
- 6:00-8:00 p.m. – Tradeshow
Preview Reception and Special
Exhibition Opening
- 7:00-8:00 p.m. – Special Interest
Sessions



Photo: Andi Wolfe

NEW

NEW MEMBER/FIRST-TIME SYMPOSIUM ORIENTATION

Learn Tips and Tricks to successfully navigate your first AAW Symposium. Connect with other woodturners and learn how to use the Symposium event app and Handout Book to take advantage of all the Symposium has to offer!

SPECIAL INTEREST SESSIONS

Start the Symposium by gathering with woodturners who share your interests:

- **Gizmos & Gadgets** – Love finding solutions to problems you didn't even know you had? Back by popular demand, learn about gadgets, gizmos, and other woodturning solutions created by your peers.
- **Principally Pens** – Meet other penturners and learn their methods.
- **Segmented Woodturners** – Interested in segmenting? Meet others who are, too, and learn how to stay connected as you try it out.
- **Women in Turning (WIT)** – Help grow and support women who turn through WIT programs and networking.
- **Rethinking Demonstrations and Meetings** – Come back together to continue the conversation about this evolving topic.

EXHIBITIONS

2022 AAW Member Exhibition: *Bridging the Gap: The Craft and Art of Turning*

This year's theme draws from Chattanooga's many bridges as well as the continuum of work being created by our members, from primarily functional to completely sculptural and all points in between.



Photo: Andi Wolfe

2022 POP Exhibition and Auction: *The Space Between*

The POP's annual exhibition and auction features small-scale work by an international roster of emerging and established artists. All work will be auctioned live during the Symposium. Can't make it in person? Bid online! To sign up to be notified via email when the online preview is available, visit tinyurl.com/notifymeAAW2022. Proceeds support POP programs, including discussion panels, Instant Gallery awards, grants, and the Artist Showcase.

INSTANT GALLERY

Don't miss the "oohs and aahs" from the Instant Gallery, the largest display of turned-wood objects under one roof.

- Attendees may bring up to three pieces to display (items can be for sale).
- Awards given in Youth, Collegian, and Adult categories. Awarded pieces will be featured in *American Woodturner*.

YOUTH WOODTURNING EXPERIENCE



AAW invites the next generation of woodturners to learn from some of our best instructors. Youth ages 10-18 attending the Symposium with a registered adult are welcome to sign up for hands-on turning classes free of charge. Expert instructors include Sally Ault, Kailee Bosch, Nick Cook, Katie Stofel, and Andi Sullivan. Visit tiny.cc/YouthTurning to register your youth participant.



Photo: Andi Wolfe

Your Generosity Matters

We want to express our deep appreciation for the generosity of supporters and AAW chapters who gave to AAW during 2021. Your donations fund our charitable nonprofit mission, including Women in Turning, Educational Opportunity Grants, and so many other programs.

Also, a gracious thank you to members who contributed artwork to support the AAW Live Benefit Auction and POP Auction during the year.

And finally, we are grateful to all of our volunteers, whose collective

contributions of thousands of hours are essential to the fulfillment of AAW's educational mission.

AAW membership dues cover only a portion of the expenses for member programs and services, and your contributions matter immensely. Thank you for your personal expressions of support for the AAW and our nonprofit mission.

—Mike Summerer, President, AAW Board of Directors

—Phil McDonald, AAW Executive Director

AAW Live Benefit Auction Contributing Artists

| | | | | | |
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—Lisa Salvatore

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| Candice Chaloupka | | Bruce Jones* | Felicia Merkson* | | | |

*Supported AAW's future with a gift of \$10 or more when renewing their annual AAW membership.

Call for Demonstrators: AAW Symposium 2023

The AAW's 37th Annual International Symposium will be held in Louisville, Kentucky, June 1-4, 2023. To apply to be a demonstrator, visit tiny.cc/Calls between May 1 and August 1, 2022. For more information, call the AAW office in Saint Paul, 877-595-9094 or 651-484-9094, or email memberservices@woodturner.org.



Photo: Andi Wolfe
Dennis Fuge demonstrates at the 2019 AAW Symposium, Raleigh, North Carolina.

AAW Board of Directors Call for Nominees

The AAW offers much to its members, and we are looking for a few good people who can contribute something in return. Do you have the leadership experience, time, energy, and ideas to be a part of AAW's operations, as well as a willingness to help make it a better organization? Be a part of moving the AAW forward—run for a position on the AAW Board of Directors.

The AAW has a volunteer nine-member Board to represent the membership and move the organization forward. If you have been a member in good standing for the past three years, you are eligible to apply. The Board is most effective with a diversity of skills represented. Members with experience such as working with nonprofit organizations, especially in the areas of finance, strategic planning, nonprofit governance, or legal matters, are especially encouraged to apply. After a review of application materials and conducting phone interviews, the Nominating Committee will select six highly qualified candidates from the applicants. From these six, members will elect two candidates, and the Board will appoint the third candidate, to serve a three-year term beginning the following January.

For information on the duties of Board members, call any current Board member or visit the AAW website at tiny.cc/Board for details.

—Linda Britt, Chair, Nominating Committee

If you are interested in serving on the board, please email the following to the executive director (phil@woodturner.org), no later than May 1, 2022:

- A statement of intent, 300 words or less, including qualifications and reasons for applying. Applications demonstrating past nonprofit organization experience and leadership are highly desirable.
- Current resume
- Letters of recommendation from two individuals who can attest to your organizational and leadership abilities
- A high-resolution head-and-shoulders photograph of yourself

A statement by each of the six candidates, along with photos, will be published in the August issue of *American Woodturner*. The AAW will assist the six candidates in producing a brief individual video statement posted to the AAW website. Voting will occur during the month of August. Election results will be announced by mid-September.

Call for Online Presentations: “AAW Presents”

Are you demonstrating online? If you have experience creating high-quality, effective, and interesting demonstrations, have access to the technical capability for a live interactive presentation, and would like to reach a large and enthusiastic audience, we want to hear from you. Consider applying to be part of the AAW's online series, AAW Presents. For full details and application, visit tiny.cc/Calls. Questions? Contact Tib Shaw, tib@woodturner.org.

Sponsor a Demonstration Room in Chattanooga

We are offering the opportunity to express your support of AAW by sponsoring a demonstration room or event activity during the 2022 Chattanooga Symposium. Whether as an individual member, an AAW vendor, or as a local chapter, this is a way to visibly display your support of the AAW and our programs. We especially want to thank all the individuals and organizations that have sponsored rooms and Symposium events in previous years.

Opportunities to participate in this fundraising program remain. For more information, please contact Phil McDonald, Executive Director, at 877-595-9094 or phil@woodturner.org.

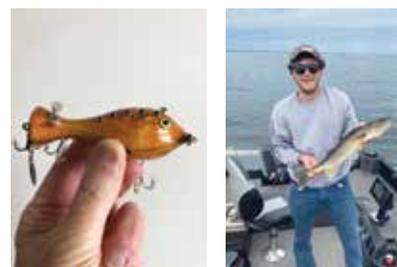


In September 2021, we were finally able to un-crate the lathes we were awarded in an AAW educational grant, just as the pandemic hit. Those new JET lathes, along with four other used models, have enabled us to offer a woodturning class as a high school elective at the Chicago Waldorf School. The class has become so popular that we now offer two after-school Woodturning Club meetings per week (the only club at the school that meets more than once a week).

Traditionally, fourth-grade Waldorf students are given fountain pens when they begin learning cursive. Now, our eighth-grade students use the lathes to make those fountain pens. Thank you, AAW.
—Tom Albrecht, Chicago Woodturners

I was looking through the AAW archives and came across Mark Palma's March 2015 article, "Turning Fishing Lures" (*Woodturning FUNDamentals*, vol 4, no 2). Mark's article launched me into making several lures of my own. It is a great project with lots of design options, and I found it easy to find hooks and other parts online to complete the lures.

And yes, the lures work great! Last fall, my nephew Cody caught this



26" (66cm) Walleye on Mille Lacs Lake (Minnesota) using one of my turned lures.

—Tim Heil, Minnesota



Book Review: *The Wisdom of Our Hands: Crafting, a Life*, by Doug Stowe, Linden Publishing, 2022, 180 pages, paperback

Doug Stowe is a man of many parts: furniture builder, box-maker, erstwhile potter, prolific author, blogger, Arkansas Living Treasure, and—above all—educator. Twenty years ago, he began teaching woodworking at his daughter's school, but not merely as shop class. Stowe found a way to integrate woodworking into the entire curriculum. When kindergarteners learn about dinosaurs, for example, they also saw up a 2x4 to shape a T-Rex, complete with fierce dowel teeth. When older students study wind and water, they make sailboats. Stowe calls this approach to teaching *The Wisdom of the Hands*.

Stowe's goal is to "revise American education to make better use of our hands." He adds, "The use of the hands is essential to learning, and parents, teachers,

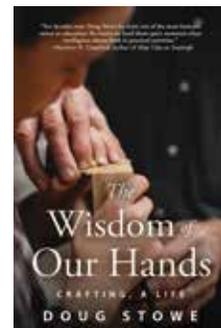
and schools that choose to ignore that put severe limits on their effectiveness and their children's futures."

Those words come from his new book, *The Wisdom of Our Hands: Crafting, a Life*. It is a thoughtful, erudite exploration of how our hands and the objects that we shape with our hands have the power to shape our lives and give meaning to our selves, our families, and our communities. Writing in an easygoing, calming voice, Stowe quotes an amazingly wide range of sources—from Zen koans to German philosophers to ancient Greek thinkers to James Krenov and Woodrow Wilson. It all goes down as easily as a cup of warm cocoa. Along the way, you learn about Stowe's own growth from young

hippie to seasoned artisan. And you share in Stowe's dismay over how play, surprise, and the need for everyone to engage in some tangible activity have come to be ignored and devalued these days.

Readers of this journal already understand the value of one's hands and the wisdom they possess. *The Wisdom of Our Hands* explains it for everyone else. Stowe's book presents important lessons, taught with patience and grace. It merits everyone's attention. ■

—David Heim



In Memoriam: Brother Ciarán Forbes, 1942-2022

The passing of Brother Ciarán Forbes on January 1, 2022, was a significant blow to the woodturning community, both in Ireland and here in the U.S. A resident monk at Glenstal Abbey in Co. Limerick, Ireland, Ciarán demonstrated at the AAW Symposium in Pasadena, California (2003), and other venues, including Dale Nish's Utah symposium in Provo. Ciarán was not only a great production salad bowl turner, he was a poet and humorist and was heavily involved in both classical and contemporary music. He enjoyed close friendships with Sinead O'Connor, Nóirín Ní Riain (Ireland's most notable singer of religious music), and Cecilia Bartoli, the Italian coloratura mezzo-soprano.

—David Ellsworth

I first met Ciarán when he was demonstrating at the Irish Woodturners Guild national seminar in 1993. I remember being mesmerized by the controlled ease of his turning and enthralled by the poise and elegance of the bowl on his lathe. I still have my notes from that demo, full of invaluable tips delivered clearly and vividly—how to “float the scraper to and fro,” how to oil the wood before scraping so that “the fibres will stand up like when you use shaving cream.” It was the Hallowe'en weekend and, holding up a clump of impossibly fine shavings, Ciarán told us that this should be our goal, to make shavings “as fine as witches' hair.”

Ciarán was a master, a maker of breathtakingly beautiful bowls. He set the standard. His selection of woods was unerring, the proportions were perfect. A purist, he eschewed surface decoration. His love of music informed his aesthetic: he repeatedly referred



Photo: Frank Miller, courtesy of *The Irish Times*.

to song, especially to Schubert, which he said “conjoins what I hear as a listener and what I endeavour to achieve as a bowl maker: the production of a sustained, unbroken line from rim to base. Legato singing in the Western art tradition and the flowing line of a wooden bowl mirror one another.”

It was such a privilege to get to know Ciarán over the years. He was wonderful company, whether meeting him in person or in long entertaining phone calls—roguishly irreverent, spirited, spiritual. He was always interested in other turners' work, always generous and encouraging whenever he saw promise and quality. Glenstal Abbey was a place of pilgrimage for woodturners, even in recent years when he was no longer able to work.

Ciarán Forbes (a.k.a. Ciarán Bede, Cecil Bartoli), how he will be missed by his many friends in the woodturning community.

—Roger Bennett

Ciarán Forbes' work was always surprisingly light. His elegant large

works were always made to perfection, and wall thickness was given great attention. I feel so lucky to have had many discussions with him and Liam Flynn about woodturning. We three met on many occasions at or near Glenstal Abbey, meetings that at the time I so casually took for granted. For Ciarán, craftsmanship was never about the technicalities of woodturning, but always about the end result—form and beauty, or “the flowing line,” as Ciarán so often said.

Ciarán's thoughtfulness and interest in other people and their well-being are evident from the incredible outpouring of affection that has appeared in newspapers and on social media since his passing. His close connection with dogs was a fellowship he shared with many who met his beloved Bede and Blixen. And their loss to him was ours, too, so deep was that bond.

What I will miss most about Ciarán is our long evening chats. After a working day, we would often chat on the phone and discuss world

affairs, big and small. Our own highs and lows. I miss his sense of humor and his ability to see the positive in so many situations. I think how he would greet me when I answered the phone or when I phoned him, particularly as he was considerably my senior: “Glenn, my auld pal.” Rest in peace, Ciarán, my auld pal.

—Glenn Lucas

I first visited Ciarán in his workshop at the Benedictine monastery and school for boys at Glenstal Abbey in 1973, when we were both in the early stages of our woodturning journey. In 1980, we both attended the Parnham house seminar in England, which featured David Ellsworth, Bob Stocksdale, and Richard Raffan, among others. It was a truly groundbreaking experience for us both.

When I got the idea of founding the world’s first national woodturning association in 1983, Ciarán was amongst the first to respond. He sat with me on the committee of The Irish Woodturners Guild for the first five years or so and became a regular demonstrator at Guild events. In everything we did together, he was always a cheerful presence and was universally loved by all who came in contact with him. Even though he was a man of the cloth, he had a mischievously irreverent streak, which ensured that none of us who served with him could take ourselves too seriously.

Ciarán was chiefly known for his bowls, which were among the best turned by anyone, anywhere. He spoke often about seeking to achieve “the rightness of the curve,” and this he did, making some of the most sublimely beautiful, yet functional pieces. Maybe it was because he sought to emulate the founder of his order, Saint Benedict, who famously



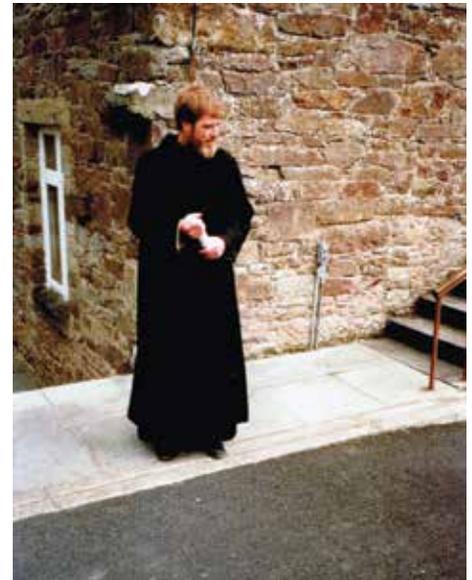
Ciarán with his beloved dog Bede.

Photo: Glenn Lucas

equated work with service to God, and because his work would be sold to contribute to the livelihood of the monastery, that he took such care with his work. In any case, this quote from Proverbs, Chapter 22, verse 29, seems fitting: “Do you see a man who excels in his work? He will stand before kings; He will not stand before unknown men.”

—Liam O’Neill

In June 1980, at the first British woodturning symposium at Parnham, I was told an Irish monk was looking for me. I was looking for a quasi-medieval monk’s habit when up bounced Ciarán, all Irish tweed, cavalry twills, and roll-neck shirt—way better dressed than the rest of us. He was intent on persuading me to take him on as a student, and a few months later came to me in Devon with a substantial grant from the Irish Crafts Council. Whilst with me, Ciarán rented a cottage across the street but didn’t enjoy the isolation and lack of community, so only slept



Brother Ciarán Forbes at Glenstal Abbey.

Photo: Wendy Ellsworth

there. As a monk, he was hopeless in any kitchen, happy for me to cook, and keen that we shouldn’t stint on groceries, which included bottles of Irish whisky. Working and eating together for three months, we got to know each other quite well. We rarely talked woodturning, but when we did it was mostly to do with the business of turning wood for a living because his income from that would be his contribution to the Glenstal Abbey coffers.

Ciarán was a pleasure to work alongside, except for the morning I heard, “Jaysus! Me bloody fag’s just gone up the chute!” Ciarán had just learnt not to leave a lit cigarette near the dust extractor intake.

Being a monk allowed him to get away with quite a lot. At closing session of the 1999 Utah Symposium at Brigham Young University, Dale Nish handed the microphone to Ciarán, asking him to say a few words. Caught unawares, Ciarán bemoaned the fact that alcohol and tobacco are banned on the BYU campus and apologized for the track ▶



(Left) Ciarán with Liam Flynn in Ciarán's workshop, Glenstal Abbey, 2008.

Photo: Glenn Lucas



(Right) From left: Glenn Lucas, Ciarán Forbes, Mike Mahoney, and Liam O'Neill pose in Glenn's workshop, Co. Carlow, Ireland, 2010.

Photo: Harry Reid

he'd beaten to the nearest point off campus where he could have a smoke and the pile of cigarette butts by the lamp post. He'd started to wonder what Mormons got up to if they couldn't drink or smoke—then he realized they all seemed to have very large families.

Turning wood was not Ciarán's major preoccupation in life. Before that came music and poetry, and for too few years, the love of his life was his dog Bede. As a long-term chain-smoker and lover of Irish whisky, Ciarán was surprised to reach his 70th birthday—which he marked by paragliding in France with a determination not to die before his death. As a friend, he was always interesting and interested, amusing, insightful, and often mischievous.

—Richard Raffan

When I first met Ciarán, his reputation as the bowl-turning Irish monk preceded him. He was an intelligent, gifted turner who visited England on a regular basis for woodworking shows and demonstrations. We worked together and he became a friend of the family.

My late wife Linda and I traveled together during our visits abroad, and we looked forward to working with Ciarán. On occasion, we would stay with him at Glenstal Abbey,

which was a great treat. We saw Ciarán as having two personalities. When he donned his habit, we saw him as a pious monk with his brothers. At other times, we saw him as a master woodturner who could captivate an audience.

I looked at his turning tools once and saw there were flats, or facets, all over the bevels. He asked me what was wrong, and I told him, "You make these wonderful bowls with these tools?" He replied, "You sharpen them." So I did, and he agreed they looked wonderful. When I returned at a later date, I saw that the facets were all over the bevels again, and he explained, "They were far too posh for me." I never touched his tools again.

During the early 1990s, we were demonstrating at Wembley Stadium. When I visited Ciarán's stand, we noticed an elegant young woman admiring one of his beautiful bowls made of English yew. She looked at Ciarán and said, "I do love yew." Ciarán quickly replied, "I love you, too," and smiled at her. The woman didn't buy the bowl.

Ciarán was a dear friend who will be sadly missed.

—Stuart Mortimer

I met Ciarán Forbes in 1984 at a woodturning event in Western Ireland.

I was there as a *Fine Woodworking* magazine editor to learn more about the newly founded Irish Woodturners Guild, which had organized the event. That meeting was the beginning of a friendship that lasted until Ciarán's death.

Ciarán was a talented turner. His wooden bowls have a sensual simplicity and are—like the man himself—completely devoid of artifice or pretense. When I was publisher of *American Woodworker* magazine in the 1990s, I invited Ciarán to demonstrate at The American Woodworker Show near Philadelphia. But woodturning was only one of his passions. He was a thoughtful and erudite person—a true Renaissance man. We shared a love of art, literature, whisky, and music. He sang with the choir at Glenstal Abbey, and we were both avid groupies of opera singer Cecilia Bartoli, sharing her music back and forth across the Atlantic. He was a good friend and an inspiration in so many ways.

—David Sloan

I met Ciarán Forbes in 1984 while accompanying my husband, David Sloan, on a business trip to Ireland. Although I did not realize it at the time, I was being introduced to the world of woodturning craftspeople—the top tier of that small but

wonderfully diverse group. (Ciarán might have modestly declined that he was among the best.) David and I kept up our friendship with Ciarán for decades afterward. Our paths crossed at conferences and workshops frequently. Surrounded by his colleagues, who naturally “talked shop,” Ciarán was kind enough to take time to converse with me about gardens, novels, poetry, and the art of contemplation.

On his last visit here, Ciarán gave us a beautiful salad bowl of Irish elm. It is something dinner guests notice and admire for its elegant simplicity and utility: nothing flashy about it, but clearly a masterful bit of woodturning by a craftsman of long experience. If an object can resonate with the spirit of its maker, this one surely does.

—Ann E. Michael

I met Ciarán at the 2003 AAW Symposium in Pasadena, and afterwards we spoke a couple times a month. We talked about his dog Bede, about music, about his childhood, and of course about woodturning. At the time, I was going to my workshop six days a week and turning four bowls a day. Ciarán thought that was funny, but he always took the time to ask me what I turned that day and give me comments on the bowls I made the week before: “That’s a mean little foot,” or “The rim needs to invite you in,” or other comments related to how it should feel in your hands. For Ciarán, a bowl was more than an object with shape and surface—it had come from a particular tree, and it had a relationship to the person who was going to use it.

A couple years later, I invited Ciarán to our house. We both thought it would be fun and neither of us considered that a Benedictine

monk at a Jewish technology executive’s house over Christmas sounded like the plot of a comedy movie. I’d seen him demonstrate, but watching him actually work was quite different. He didn’t believe in any of the “rules” or follow any authorities when it came to woodturning—an interesting position for someone who lived his life bound to the Benedictine vows of stability, obedience, and fidelity. When I was sharpening my bowl gouge, he asked how often I use the grinder. “Fairly often,” I answered. “How often do you sharpen your tools?” His reply: “Well, once a month Glenn Lucas comes over and sharpens for me.” Most of his work was done with a scraper and an oily rag, which served to lubricate the surface.

Most turners brag about how they start sanding with 240 grit. At one point, Ciarán asked if I had any coarse sandpaper. I handed him an 80-grit roll, and he said, “Do you have any 60 or, better yet, 45? When I laughed, he said, “Sandpaper is a tool, my boy.”

Ciarán didn’t leave us with a body of work in the hands of collectors, though his pieces are in the collection of many heads of state and even at the Vatican. There are no DVDs of him or collections of tools with his signature on them. Yet his

influence ripples like water from Ireland around the world.

—Myer Berlow and Deborah Barr

Before I met Ciarán Forbes, I knew his reputation as a chain-smoking, plain-speaking woodturner, unusual as monks go because of his charming irreverence. But when Glenn Lucas took me to meet Ciarán at Glenstal Abbey, I was delighted to find that there was so much more to him. When he showed me his workshop, I was moved by the flowing lines of his sublimely simple bowls. I still have an image of him holding a platter he had made, his thumb caressing the rim over and over while he enthusiastically talked about music. When I mentioned that Cecilia Bartoli was my favorite singer, Ciarán’s face lit up with joy at the mere mention of her name, and our conversation turned to the many things that filled his life with joy—music, teaching, and best of all for me, dogs. Much can be written about his turning, but the impression I retain most strongly is that woodturning brings together people who might otherwise never have met. Brother Forbes was a man I would have happily spoken to every day since that first meeting.

—Terry Martin



“I still have an image of him holding a platter he had made, his thumb caressing the rim over and over while he enthusiastically talked about music.”
—Terry Martin

Photo: Terry Martin

In Memoriam: Stephen Hogbin, 1942-2022



(Left) Stephen Hogbin was always pushing the envelope, pictured here with his truck-axle lathe, 1978. For stability when working with huge pieces of wood, the lathe was attached to the building by lally column at the tailstock and bolted to the floor joists at the headstock.

Stephen Hogbin, noted wood artist, design innovator, sculptor, craftsman, and educator, died on January 13, 2022. As a woodturner, he was known to cut apart large turned elements to create unexpected forms. He was also known to expose the inner profiles of multi-part spindles and recombine them in surprising ways, many times for functional architectural projects. Following

his death, the word *hero* was frequently heard. He was a hero to me, as well, but I have come to think of him more specifically as an explorer and researcher.

If Stephen had fears, he didn't communicate them. His work burst on the scene as both physically huge and imaginatively immense, far beyond anything that had been considered. For me, his creativity and audacity are best seen in *Psyche and*

Mercury, 1990, which radically extends the strategies of his *Walking Bowls*. While bold graphics have become common in the turning field, no one to my knowledge has matched the compositional complexity of *Psyche and Mercury* or the direct application of the artistic drawing process. The scope of Stephen's endeavors, and their lack of precedence, is what has informed and inspired my own practice.

Stephen worked as an industrial designer in England before emigrating to Canada where, early on, he taught college. He then established a private woodworking practice grounded in the concepts of sustainability and conservation. He was a noted author and had an uncommon commitment to nurturing his local community. Stephen's final legacy will be the metamorphosis of his Intersections Wood Gallery & Studio in Owen Sound, Canada, into a new non-profit, Intersections Wood Collaborative, which will carry on and extend his interests and beliefs with a gallery, workshop, and educational programs. A few of Stephen's many colleagues pay tribute on the following pages.

—Steve Loar



A Stephen Hogbin *Walking Bowl* (Object #676), Zebrawood, 11" (28cm) tall, 1985



The December 1990 issue of *American Woodturner* featured Hogbin's avant-garde *Psyche and Mercury*.

Stephen probably never understood the profound influence he had on my career in magazine and book publishing, and on my own work in wood.

We met in 1974 and were friends and occasional colleagues ever since. Stephen was living in Toronto and had organized a gallery exhibition to coincide with a World Craft Council congress. The event was saturated with Stephen's black-and-white postcard showing six turned pieces.

I was living in Cleveland, working as a newspaper editor, raising little kids, and making furniture in my basement shop. I was building toward quitting my job to become a woodworker. An acquaintance who'd attended the congress showed me that postcard. I was utterly blown away. Flabbergasted. Amazed.



An exhibition poster showing Stephen Hogbin's work, 1974.

Photo: Mark Sfirri

That summer, I moved to Rochester to study woodworking and furniture design. And I drove to an industrial district of Toronto to meet this person. I found a skinny kid just a

VIDEOS ON STEPHEN HOGBIN

John Kelsey has made available some excellent videos about Stephen on his YouTube channel, John Kelsey, Artisan. The URLs are case sensitive:

- A narrated slideshow of Stephen's 2012 essay, "Today in the Workshop," along with 150 stunning images of his work. Visit tiny.cc/HogbinSlideshow.
- The Lancaster Woodturners one-hour celebration of memories. Visit tiny.cc/HogbinMemories.
- Information about Stephen's career, as presented at a Lancaster Woodturners online coffee hour. Visit tiny.cc/HogbinInfo.

couple years older than me, married with babies, teaching design while scraping out this incredible work. I had not understood turning as a vehicle for creative expression. I aspired to make stuff half as exciting as this.

Stephen introduced me to a holistic approach to designing and making. He didn't just make, he thought in a broad social and cultural context. His work and our conversations expanded my horizons at just the right moment to prepare me for my own career. For I didn't become a professional maker—instead I resumed journalism but now entirely focused on design, woodworking, and woodturning.

Stephen's 2012 book, *Hogbin on Woodturning*, was my last editorial project before retiring. Of all the projects in my long career, Stephen's was the most interesting, provocative, and pertinent. And today, in retirement, woodturning is mostly what I do. And for all of that, I'm profoundly grateful.

—John Kelsey

Stephen became known to me in several capacities—first as a maker, then as a thinker and writer, a teacher, then curator, and finally as a community activist. John Kelsey introduced me to him in 1975 and suggested that Stephen be invited to the George School Woodturning

Symposia, which I had started with my brother Alan and George School shop teacher Palmer Sharpless. Stephen agreed to be a presenter at the second symposium, held in March 1977. He was already demonstrating his split-turning approach, and I was intrigued by the way he cut turnings apart and reassembled them in totally new cross-sections that revealed negative space.

Stephen's technique soon influenced my approach to making objects. In 1978, I was commissioned to make a pedestal for a tzedakah box (a container to accept donations). The pedestal I designed required a large lathe to fabricate. Stephen invited me to his shop in Canada ▶



Stephen presenting at the second George School Woodturning Symposium, March 1977.

Photo: Albert LeCoff

to use his custom lathe, which utilized a truck axle as the spindle. I roughed out the piece, cut it apart, and reassembled it into a pedestal, creating a negative space in the interior. This was an early example of inside-outside turning, inspired by Stephen Hogbin.

Stephen's influence extended into my curation of exhibits and publications for the Wood Turning Center (now The Center for Art in Wood). He also inspired the Center and the Yale University Art Gallery to include Canadian artists in the 2001 book, *Wood Turning in North America Since 1930*. Hogbin wore so many hats and shared his skills in an enduring way.

—Albert LeCoff

I first met Stephen in 2005, when we were members of the Artists Around the Sound, a studio tour group near Owen Sound, Ontario. Stephen's home and studio at that time were on Lake Charles, but in 2016, he decided to move into Owen Sound. With a collection of friends, we moved his studio to his

new endeavor, Intersections Wood Gallery & Studio. Stephen grew Intersections to become a well-recognized institution, promoting wood-related art through gallery exhibits and studio classes, from tree to finished pieces, and always with a focus on conservation, for which he was passionate.

Stephen had been battling health problems for a number of months. Throughout his battle, he remained optimistic, even commencing to write a new book. He was already an author of many titles, and his most recent, the highly acclaimed *Hogbin on Woodturning*, is regarded as a pinnacle by many. Stephen remained a methodical and modest man. His favorite response perfectly sums up his life in one word—*brilliant*.

—Carl Durance

I first saw Stephen Hogbin's work in the 1970s. His biggest impact on me, however, was his 1980 book, *Woodturning: The Purpose of the Object*. It was based on his one-year residency at Melbourne State College (Australia), awarded in

1975. I remember going through the book and thinking about how he made each piece, and then I came to the page with his egg cup. It was magical. It is my favorite turned object ever. I asked him how he conceived of it, and he responded, "The symbolic idea of the egg was important as the start of something. Trying to get content into the work that had some depth and history. Craft has always been laden with symbolic content, which can be read as a collective experience. Craft was becoming preoccupied with personal expression from the individual. Objects were only self-referential. I was trying to balance self with a common symbolic language, a fresh interpretation, which seemed to carry more relevance."

When I asked about the risk of turning giant pieces of wood, he said, "Seldom do I risk for the sake of it; rather, I prefer to measure the experience, which means it is not really a risk. Having said that, all projects are a risk to varying degrees. If you are not pushing yourself, things have a way of feeling flat, dull, inconsequential."

The turning world is a richer place for having had Stephen Hogbin in it. In 2008, I published an article, "Hogbin: Reflecting," in *Woodwork* magazine; you can find it at marksfirri.com/articles.

—Mark Sfirri

It was a beautiful fall day in 1985 when, by complete fluke, I first met Stephen Hogbin at his Kemble, Ontario, home and studio. I'd been checking out turnings at a local craft shop when the proprietor decided I should meet Stephen. Everyone knew who Stephen Hogbin was—a celebrated woodworker of enormous talent

Stephen Hogbin, *Eggcup*, 1985, Silky brown oak, 4¼" × 8¼" × 2" (11cm × 21cm × 5cm)



and stature, and I, a lowly beginner, had no intention of bothering him. She promptly dialed his number and handed me the phone. Bless her.

Stephen was as warm and welcoming as if I'd been a client, and during the next two hours, he proceeded, in the vernacular of the day, to blow my mind. With his quiet, contemplative approach, he showed me what art was, that an object should carry the essence of the maker. As with so many others, he left me thinking about what I make and why.

To our community's great benefit, Stephen's focus was local. He was so involved at the community level that we considered him "ours." He periodically blessed our turning club with presentations of his slides, always delivered with his signature cerebral insight. We were all in awe of him.

Fast forward thirty-six years and I attended what turned out to be Stephen's last exhibition. I was delighted when I found, rummaging through a bin, two small plaques by Stephen. They are simple and beautiful. More to the point, they are quintessential Stephen. They remind me, as Stephen had intended, just how much the object carries the indelible essence of the maker.

—Marilyn Campbell

A Message to Stephen Hogbin

1. I took a walk and remembered your *Walking Bowl*: its wry humor and lilting, limping rhythm. Your *Throne*: the massive scale, the astonishing concept, the engineered beauty. Your *Screen*: the spindle turnings, cut, re-arranged within a syntax of functional enchantment for the public good. Your *Spoons* that engage the senses, attend to the present and add luster to life.

2. I looked for my first encounter in print, *Woodturning: The Purpose of the Object*. Page 5, "Overview—The working craftsman," shows a quadri-form diagram entitled, "Self-directed activity." At its nexus: "Needs of People."

3. At the Wood Turning Center's 1998 Conference—for Connie Mississippi's panel, "Expression and Content in the Lathe-Turned Object"—I wrote of your work:

Sometimes I think of our field as a body, each part with its own function and potential...within our larger collective creative efforts. ... The work of Stephen Hogbin represents the body discovering its environment—the fruitful dialectic of rural and urban, the generous extension of teaching, the meeting of minds, the nobility of usefulness, the duty to constantly conserve, reassemble and revitalize the meaning of community.

His work is the fruit of the tree which remembers and honors the soil that sustained it.

If our field is a body, his works are the firm supporting legs of a journeyman.

4. We shared the alphabetical kinship of "Ho-." Between catalog book-covers, I felt the support of your presence on the previous page. In my work, I felt the encouragement of your rigorous mind and of your vigorous forms. You leave a space.

—Michelle Chasse-Holzappel



I knew nothing about the larger turning world when I first met Stephen Hogbin. I had been teaching myself to use this thing called a lathe and was loving it. When I attended one of Stephen's demos, at the symposium for Albert LeCoff's North American Turned Object Show, I was floored. Stephen lent me his carousel of slides, and it took me several months and lots of head-scratching to figure out how to do what he was doing, without doing what he was doing. Stephen was working on his *Walking Bowl* series, and I thought, *I can make things walk!* I was inspired to come up with *Mother/Daughter*; *Hunter/Prey*, and my life has never been the same.

—Michael Brolly ▶

Michael Brolly's 1981/1984 *Mother/Daughter; Hunter/Prey* was directly inspired by Stephen Hogbin's cutting things apart after turning—and making them walk, larger piece: 6" x 14" x 14" (15cm x 36cm x 36cm)



When I was new to woodturning, I bought a lathe and was intoxicated by all the movement it had to offer. I had an insatiable hunger to master material and technique, loving the direction in life I had found. One of the people I was most intrigued by was Stephen Hogbin. His teachings opened doors to finding new pathways of exploration, how we interact in our lives, and how it is all reflected in our work. He opened new directions for me in object-making. It was essential to understand the technical aspects, but what inspired me was the idea of an object's content.

Stephen demonstrated the importance that *everything* counted—nature, architecture, our everyday encounters in life—all fueling/directing our actions in the making. My work became an exploration of new pathways that led me to show personal stories and expression, to expose myself to the world.

Our studios are our sanctuaries where we explore and grow new ideas that nurture and feed our creativity and the lives around us, or as Stephen would say, "our creative space, where imagination flows, applying reliable knowledge

to repeatable experiments. Object-making is where craft, design, art, science have fun with each other."

Stephen was paramount in what I make today. Our brief encounters had profound effects that will inspire me throughout my life.

—Michael Hosaluk

Stephen's iconic "screen" in the Toronto Public Library was my first introduction to his work. From then, Stephen has been an inspiration for much of what I have done and still attempt in woodturning. I met him several times at annual AAW Symposia. Quiet, thoughtful, generous, Stephen was an exceptionally good listener. It was his eclectic thoughts and practice on crafting and designing that got me into kinetic woodturning. We had many exciting exchanges about movement, and he constructively commented on my kinetic pieces.

I was prompted by Stephen's recent passing to reread his book, *Hogbin on Woodturning*, and was reminded how powerfully eclectic his thinking and work were. And I was also reminded of how liberating and convincing his teaching was, particularly of the value of thinking outside the box. Stephen

Hogbin's history of making iconic pieces, his extraordinary installations, his valuable writings, his example of the Intersections Gallery will continue to serve as inspiration for years to come.

—Peter Rand

It is difficult to record the impact that Stephen Hogbin has had on the field of woodturning, yet those of us who follow the careers of other turners recognize how thoroughly his ideas on design and process have influenced what we see in other turners' works, often without their even realizing it. Nonetheless, anyone who has even considered slicing up a bowl to reassemble it as a sculpture has done so under the influence of Stephen's 50-plus years as a maker in woodturning, woodworking, and architecture.

During Stephen's fellowship year in Australia, he introduced the importance of good design and the need to develop galleries where turners could make a living selling their work. Once the word got around, he became an inspiration for a whole country of woodturners. He was present here in the U.S. for the origins of the AAW at Arrowmont in 1985, and the accompanying *Vision and Concept* exhibition, where I purchased a *Walking Bowl* for our collection. Equally important were the number of private gatherings where his knowledge and insights were felt in late-night conversations, one of the best coming from a friend who said, "I heard what he said, it just didn't register until the next day."

Stephen Hogbin was a giant in our field, and his impact will be felt for generations to come.

—David Ellsworth

Calendar of Events

Send event info to editor@woodturner.org. June issue deadline: April 15.

See AAW's online Remote Demonstration Event Calendar at tiny.cc/IRDCalendar.

Colorado

CANCELLATION NOTICE: The Rocky Mountain Woodturning Symposium, The Ranch Larimer County Fairgrounds, Loveland, will not be held in 2022. "There are still too many uncertainties for us to ensure we can bring you the quality program we know you expect. We have not given up, just put things on hold a bit longer. We are still planning to return in September 2023." For more, visit rmwoodturningsymposium.com.

Illinois

July 29–31, 2022, Turn On! Chicago Woodturning Symposium, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Northbrook. Demonstrators to include Andy Cole, Cynthia Carden, Beth Ireland, Eric Lofstrom, Avelino Samuel, and Jacques Vesery. Event to feature fifty rotations from thirteen artists, instant gallery with People's Choice award, Women in Turning meeting, banquet/auction, tradeshow, and companion activities. Join us for hands-on pen turning, benefiting Pens for Troops, or bring Beads of Courage boxes (benefiting Chicago's Lurie Children's Hospital) and donations for Empty Bowls (benefiting local food pantries). For more, visit turnonchicago.com and follow us on Instagram, @turnonchicago.

September 22–25, 2022, The 7th Segmenting Symposium, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Northbrook. Demonstrators to include Malcolm Tibbetts, Jerry Bennett, Curt Theobald, Tom Lohman, Robin Costelle, Jim Rodgers, and Bob Behnke. Event to include instant gallery, companion activities, and tradeshow. For more, visit segmentedwoodturners.org.

Minnesota

Multiple 2022 exhibitions, AAW's Gallery of Wood Art, Landmark Center, Saint Paul:

- January 9-May 29: *She's Tops*, a selection of artist-made spinning tops
- March 27-May 29: *The Space Between* (17th annual POP exhibition featuring small-scale sculptures)
- September 4-December 28: *Bridging the Gap: The Craft and Art of Woodturning* (AAW member exhibition)

- Ongoing: *Touch This!; Around the Hus—Turning in Scandinavian Domestic Life*; vintage and historic lathes and turned items

For more, visit galleryofwoodart.org or email Tib Shaw at tib@woodturner.org.

Pennsylvania

September 23–25, 2022, The Mid Atlantic Woodturning Symposium, Lancaster Marriott Hotel and Convention Center, Lancaster. Featured demonstrators to include Nick Agar, Keith Tompkins, Rudolph Lopez, Mark Gardner, Kimberly Winkle, and Laurent Niclot. For more, visit mawts.com.

Tennessee

January 27, 28, 2023, Tennessee Association of Woodturners 34th Annual Woodturning Symposium, Marriott Hotel and Convention Center, Franklin. Featured demonstrators to include Rebecca DeGroot, Stuart Batty, Nick Cook, John Beaver, and Tom Wirsing; additional demonstrators to be named later. One of the longest-running and most successful regional symposia in the U.S., the 2023 symposium will feature a tradeshow, instant gallery, people's choice award, and Saturday night banquet with auction. For more, visit tnwoodturners.org or email David Sapp at symposium@tnwoodturners.org. Vendors, contact Grant Hitt at tawvendorinfo@gmail.com. Registration opens September 1, 2022.

Texas

August 26–28, 2022, SWAT (Southwest Association of Turners) annual symposium, Waco Convention Center, Waco. Event details are pending. For more, visit swaturners.org.

November 18–20, 2022, Gulf Coast Woodturners Annual Hands-On Retreat, Deer Park, Houston. Club members teach a variety of classes for beginners, intermediates, and masters. Two three-hour sessions on Saturday, one on Sunday. Each session offers eight choices of classes. Membership (\$25) required due to insurance concerns. Registration and details become available in July at gulfcoastwoodturners.org.

Virginia

November 2022, Virginia Woodturners Symposium. "As of now, dates and location have not been established." Demonstrators to include Bob Baucom, David Ellsworth, Joe Fleming, Barry Gross, Alan Lacer, JoHannes Michelsen, Bob Rotche, Scott Schlosser, Mike Sorge, and Charlie Wortman. For more, visit virginiawoodturners.com.



Photo: Tib Shaw/AAW

Clay Foster, *Fine Line Series*, 1996, Cottonwood, latex paint, lithographic ink, 14" (36cm) tall

AAW Permanent Collection, Gift of Lois Laycraft in honor of life partner Frank Sudol.



"It took me all spring to complete this hollow form!"

Tips

No-spill container for brush-on finishes



It is never a good idea to work directly from an original stock container of finish, but many of the containers we typically use have problems. Glass jars seal well but can be dangerous. They can become slippery and, if dropped and broken, can become a safety hazard and a mess. Recycled disposable containers may react with finishes, causing leaks or an altered finishing product.

I borrowed an idea from machinists—a no-spill cutting-oil container. They are available in a variety of styles and materials from any

machinist supply, and most are inexpensive. Being designed for oils, these containers have not reacted with any finish I've used. They do not break. They have a tight-fitting lid, so any finish remaining at the end of the day can be kept for the next day. Due to their design, they won't spill their contents if tipped over. And when the project is finished, they are easily cleaned for future use.

—John Tarpley, Tennessee

Improved handwheel handle

The handle on my tailstock handwheel came loose because of the extensive use of the lathe, and there was not enough thread to reseal the bolt securely. I decided to replace the metal handle with a more comfortable one. I used a skateboard wheel, a spacer, a nut, and a bolt 3½" (9cm) long and 5/16" (8mm) in diameter. The skateboard wheel has its own internal ball bearing. I find this replacement crank is easier to operate, given the arthritis in my hand.

—Bob Llewellyn, Tennessee



Stool-top storage

I used to lay the turning tools I was using on the lathe bed or under the bed on the stand, both hazardous locations for obvious reasons. I decided to try something different and safer—I transformed a simple stool into a convenient stand for my lathe tools.

To make the stand, I screwed three ¾" (19mm-) thick boards together, using two cleats on top. I added two more pieces underneath, cut to fit over the stool seat, thereby creating a custom-fitted shelf platform. I added some non-skid shelf-lining material on top, so the tools stay where I put them. It's not high class but works great and eliminates the hazard of rolling, unsecured tools.

—Don Jacobs, Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada



Berry containers hold small parts

To keep small project pieces together while in progress, I use plastic berry containers (e.g., strawberry cartons), which feature attached lids and vent holes. The vent holes allow air to enter, which helps stained or glued objects to dry. Since the lids to the containers are attached, they won't get lost. Plus, the cartons stack nicely inside each other when not in use.

As an example, I used berry containers to keep components of my carpet bowling set (an indoor version of lawn bowling) separate while I was making them. It also helped me organize the parts according to their stain color for each team.

—Ron Sanda, Tennessee



Give slippery floors some grit

Even with a dust collector, air filtration, and daily sweeping, I end up with very fine dust on my concrete shop floor. This can be extremely slippery, and I don't relish the thought of slipping and falling on the concrete. To eliminate the problem, I painted the floor with a very light-colored concrete paint and added an anti-skid paint additive. The new color reflects light better, and the additive definitely makes the floor safer to walk on. The brand I used calls for 1 lb. of additive per gallon of paint. On the downside, I had to wash the floor first to prep it, it is harder and takes longer to sweep, and brooms may wear out faster. But that's a small price to pay for safety!

—Kathleen Duncan, Washington



Setup blocks speed sharpening

CBN wheels, which maintain their circumference, allow for a speedy setup with the Wolverine sharpening jig. I accomplish this by first using traditional methods to carefully adjust the length of the Wolverine arm necessary for the desired bevel and lock it in place. Then I cut a block/gauge to fit between the frame and the V of the Wolverine arm and label the bevel (*Photo 1*). Now, when I want to sharpen to this angle, I just select the correct gauge, position it between the frame and V of the arm, and lock the arm in place. Within five seconds, the setup is complete and I am ready to sharpen. I hang the gauges for my favorite bowl and spindle bevels on the front of the sharpening system for quick access (*Photo 2*).

—Mark Heatwole, Virginia



Extensions for jumbo jaws

I recently turned a 13" (33cm-) diameter bowl and needed to reverse-mount it to complete the base.

Unfortunately, my larger set of Cole (jumbo) jaws will only accept bowls up to about 10" (25cm) in diameter. Not wishing to spend the money on a larger Longworth chuck, I decided to make extensions for the Cole jaws (*Photo 1*).

The extensions are made from 1/8" (3mm-) thick aluminum bar. I purchased a piece 3/4" (19mm) wide and 36" (91cm) long. I cut eight 3" (8cm-) long pieces using a stop on a woodworking miter saw with a carbide blade. I then drilled two holes 2 3/8" (6cm) apart. One was a 1/4" (6mm) hole to attach the bar to the Cole jaw, and the other was drilled and tapped to accept the 6mm button screw (*Photo 2*).

For safety, with the larger bowls, the maximum recommended speed should be reduced.

—Graham Dolby, Alberta, Canada



SKILL-BUILDING PROJECT

Elegant

LETTER OPENER

Scott Belway



Here is a project that allows you to transform a small piece of hardwood into something elegant and functional—the classic letter opener. Over the years, I have made and sold more than 1,500 of them, as they are a good production item. An effective story stick makes the process go faster; in an eight-hour day, I could make ten letter openers. But it is also good as a learning project. There are three elements that make a quality letter opener: beautiful wood, an elegant design, and a well-filed blade. I hope my design and this article inspire you to make one—or twenty.

Material prep

Consider that the harder the wood, the longer the letter opener edge will last. Dense, straight-grained woods with closed pores are the best choice for this project. Woods like oak and ash are poor choices because their open pores show up on the blade edge and weaken it. Here, I've chosen a piece of ornamental plum, harvested from a local tree.

Start with a piece 1¼" (32mm) square and 8½" (22cm) long. Mount the work securely between centers; I like to use a small spur drive and live center. With your lathe speed set around 1200 rpm, bring the wood to

round with a roughing gouge. Make sure to stop cutting the moment the piece is round. The finished diameter of the handle will be 1¾" (30mm), so there is not a lot of excess wood in the blank.

Story stick

If you want to make multiples, it's a good idea to make a story stick—a quick physical reference that eliminates the need for measuring key transitions repeatedly. See *Tips for a Good Story Stick* sidebar to learn how to make a good one.

With the toolrest close to the wood and the lathe running, use a story

Tips for a Good Story Stick

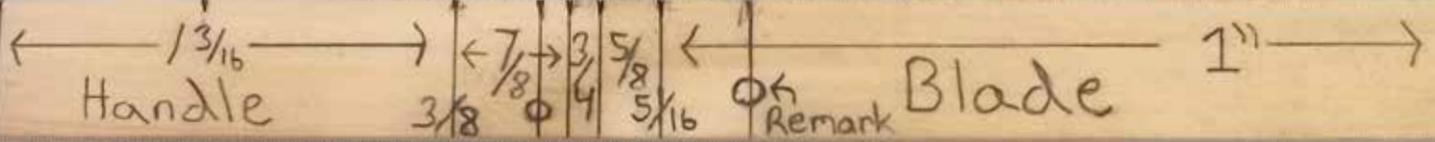
Here are a few tips for making a useful story stick:

- Use a thin strip of light-colored hardwood for your story stick, so numbers and lines stand out. I use ⅜" (3mm) holly, but light maple would also do nicely.
- Make it easier for your pencil to find the transition lines by filing a V-shaped slot at the edge at all pencil marks.
- Write numbers *between* the lines to designate "ledge" diameters.
- Write numbers *through* lines to represent the depth of parting cuts.
- Circle lines that need to be redrawn after initial sizing.
- Always mark the back of the story stick with basic information about the project, so you'll be able to identify it in the future.
- Sand the bottom of the front edge round; this makes it is less likely for the story stick to catch on the spinning wood as you are marking the workpiece.

Story stick = no measuring



A story stick is useful for quickly transferring transition lines to your rough-turned blank.



Expanded from *Photo 2* is a full-size image of the author's story stick. The top of this page will work as a guide in marking the transitions on your turning or to make a new story stick. Note: "Remark" refers to lines that will be cut away during the sizing cuts and therefore will need to be "remarked" before final shaping. The dimensions shown signify the diameter of the workpiece at various locations.

stick to mark the transition points on your rounded blank (*Photo 1*). If you don't want to make a story stick, you could use the expanded photo of the story stick in *Photo 2*. Just hold the edge of the page up to your workpiece and transfer the transition lines.

Form "ledges"

The way I copy a spindle is to first part in to make a series of "ledges" that represent each element's transition lines and maximum diameter. The diameters of these ledges, shown clearly in *Photo 2*, are recorded on the story stick and are the maximum diameter of any given element.

Start by paring down the scrap wood on both ends of your workpiece—the solid grey areas on the story stick. Stop this cut just as you get close to the spur drive and live center. This action will define the beginning and end of the letter opener's elements and is always a good place to start on any spindle that has a scrap area.

Set your caliper to 1" (25mm) and use a parting tool to make a series of cuts to that depth along the blade section (*Photo 3*). Remove the excess wood between the parting cuts to flatten this section to 1" and then remark the blade line that has just been cut away.

Now for the 5/8"- (16mm-) diameter ledge behind the blade, set your caliper and make two parting cuts to this depth, one on either side of the 5/8" section. Use your parting



Shape blade



After parting down to the desired diameter, the author begins to shape the blade section with a spindle-roughing gouge.

tool to remove any extra wood, and to level and clean the shelf you have just created.

Now set your caliper to 3/4" (19mm) and part the next section to this diameter. The full width of a 1/8" (3mm) parting tool should create the 1/8"-wide ledge. The last section that needs to be sized is 7/8" (22mm) diameter. Once this section is sized and the scrap removed, you will need to remark the line on the handle that has been cut away. It should be equal in width to the 3/4" section just to the right of it. Don't worry if everything is not exact; small variations are part of what it means to make something by hand. The letter open is now ready to have the final shapes cut into it.

Shape the elements

Before shaping any element, ask yourself, "Where does the majority of the wood need to be removed to make this shape?" Start cutting at that point. As you make several small cuts in the waste wood of any element, try to mimic what will become the final shape of that element.

When cutting shapes in a spindle, I prefer to start at the tailstock end and work toward the headstock, one element at a time. Start by defining the tip of the blade. I use a parting tool to make an angled cut to a diameter of about 3/8" (10mm). After turning, the blade section should end up as a long "cone," so use several sweeping, angled cuts with a roughing gouge to slowly define this shape (*Photo 4*). Use the remark line ►

Turn first cove



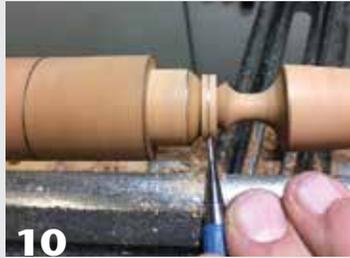
5 A spindle gouge is used to shape the right half of the cove under the blade.



6 A central line indicates the left edge of the cove and the right edge of an angled cut, which is formed with a skew.



Turn central bead



9 Left of the angled cut is a central bead. A central pencil mark aids in shaping first one side, then the other. The author uses a small skew, presented on its side as a scraper, to shape the bead.

on the blade as the end point for the top of the cone. Stop the lathe and confirm that the blade's taper is flat using a small ruler.

The next element is the cove directly behind the blade. Set your caliper to $\frac{5}{16}$ " (8mm) and make a parting cut to this depth right at the transition line between the 1" and $\frac{5}{8}$ " ledges. The bottom of

this part defines the bottom of the cove. I use a small gouge to create the cove. Start by making the half cove on the blade side (*Photo 5*), then halve what's left of the $\frac{5}{8}$ " ledge with a pencil line (*Photo 6*). The right side of this line is for the other half of the cove; the left side is an angled cut down into the $\frac{3}{4}$ " ledge. Cut the left side of the cove

(*Photo 7*). If you are using a gouge, don't cut "up" the walls of the cove; cut "downhill" (from larger diameter to smaller), stopping at the center to join both sides. I use a skew to make the angled cut from the top of the cove down to the start of the $\frac{3}{4}$ " ledge (*Photo 8*).

Before starting the $\frac{3}{4}$ " ledge, which will become the small central bead, cut another angle into it from the handle side (*Photo 9*). Use the first line on the handle side as a reference for the top of the angled cut. These two angled cuts will make the bead stand out and clearly define its boundaries.

Mark the center of the $\frac{3}{4}$ " ledge with a pencil (*Photo 10*); this reference mark will help keep the bead symmetrical during its shaping. I like to lay a small skew on its side and use it as a scraper to shape the

Turn second cove



12 Part down at the end of the handle, then form the right side of the second cove.

Shape the handle



14

Shaping the end of the handle aids in gauging its overall shape as you transition the upper end of the handle into the cove.



15



16



17

A small ball, or bead, at the end of the handle adds a nice touch.

bead (*Photo 11*). Shape one half of the bead to the pencil mark, then flip the skew over and shape the other half.

Now it's time to shape the handle. Set your caliper to $\frac{3}{8}$ " and make a parting cut to this depth at the end of the handle section (*Photo 12*). The bottom of this cut is the bottom of the handle's cove. First, cut the half cove at the top of the handle using a small gouge (*Photo 13*). The other half of the handle cove needs to make a smooth transition into the elongated bead of the handle. To make this transition easier to visualize, I start to make the elongated bead on the back of the handle first.

Start by shaping the left half of the elongated handle bead; I use a small skew for this (*Photo 14*). Carry this shape down into the scrap wood at the headstock. Now begin cutting the other half of the handle bead until it is in balance with the first half. The scrap wood that remains in the middle of the handle can now be gradually cut away to create a smooth transition to the top of the handle (*Photos 15, 16*).

The last element I like to add is a small ball, or bead, at the end of the handle (*Photo 17*).

See *Sanding Fine Details sidebar* for tips on how to avoid rounding ►

Sanding Fine Details

I have always told my students that good sanding can make a poorly cut piece shine, while bad sanding can make a crisply cut piece look brutal. Here are some tips for sanding those well-turned details without rounding them over:

- Good lighting is synonymous with good sanding. A movable, crane-neck light that can light up every crack and crevice is imperative.
- The higher the sanding grit, the lighter your pressure on the wood needs to be, or you will load the fine grit and end up polishing the wood instead of sanding it.
- Just because we start sanding with 120-grit paper doesn't mean every element gets sanded with 120. If any shape is cut so well you can't see tool marks or torn grain on it, leave it until you reach 150 or 220 grit.
- Notice how the color and texture of the wood changes precisely where the sandpaper touches the spinning wood. Use this as a gauge to make sure each grit of paper touches the entire surface area of each shape.
- If you pause the motion of sandpaper on the wood, you will create a series of sanding lines that appear as white rings. These rings are not easy to remove so try to always keep your paper in motion.
- To sand coves, roll the sandpaper onto a drill bit whose diameter conforms to the shape of the cove. Start sanding at the bottom of the cove and roll the drill bit between your fingers as you bring it up to the outside edges.
- To sand beads or short angled cuts, pinch the edge of the paper between your thumb and two fingers. This action makes the edge of the sandpaper rigid and is perfect for sanding right down to the bottom of curved or angled shapes. It is never a good idea to fold sandpaper if you want to maintain sharp lines between shapes. The folded paper will inadvertently sand the opposing shape and blur transition lines.



- When you reach 220 grit, stop and sand in the direction of the grain with the lathe off. Then continue sanding, using the same methods, until you reach 400 or 600 grit.

Mark center of blade



(18) Rotate the workpiece so its endgrain lines at the bottom of the blade run horizontal.

(19) Mark the centerline of the blade section. The author's shopmade jig holds a pencil at center height and can slide along the bed ways. You could also use the toolrest as a guide.

pressure to the top of the paper. This action produces an effective "belt sander" that quickly sands away any tool marks.

To start shaping the blade, I use a disk sander outfitted with a 60- or 80-grit disk (Photos 20, 21). The object is to sand away most of the unneeded wood without impacting the blade edges. Hold the letter opener tightly with both hands and use gentle pressure against the sanding disk. Referencing the letter opener against the sander's table adds an element of safety. Make sure the blade line is facing straight up.

Pause frequently and check that you are sanding evenly on both sides of the blade. Keep sanding until there is $\frac{1}{8}$ " to $\frac{3}{16}$ " of wood left on both sides of the pencil lines.

There is no doubt that the blade can be completely formed with only a sanding disk or belt sander. This method is much quicker than hand-filing, but I find hand-filing is a joy and not a chore. With the right files and a bit of practice, wonderfully crisp shapes can be made quickly and easily in wood.

Filing starts with a fine-toothed wood rasp; a piece of felt glued to the edge of my workbench protects the workpiece (Photo 22). I always hold the letter opener directly behind the blade, so my fingers prevent the file from accidentally impacting any of the other elements. Use your index finger on top of the file to produce a light downward pressure as you push it forward to cut. Take that pressure off when you pull the file back over the wood. If your file chatters over the wood, you are pressing too hard or moving too quickly.

Start filing the blade edges first and continue until the rasp is just



Sand blade flat

Using a disk or belt sander, flatten the blade section, leaving about $\frac{1}{8}$ " of material on both sides of the line.

over the crisply turned details on your letter opener during sanding. I start with 120-grit abrasive and sand up to 400 or 600 grit.

Shape the blade

After you have sanded the letter opener, it is time to shape the blade. I begin by drawing lines to mark the two blade edges. The good news is that you don't need an indexing head, just a jig that holds a pencil at center height and slides along the bed of your lathe. Start by standing at the headstock end of the lathe; now look into the cove behind the blade. Here you should clearly see the grain direction in the wood. Turn the lathe

by hand until the grain is horizontal (Photo 18). Using the pencil jig, make several gentle passes along the entire length of the cone, on both sides of blade, until the lines appear dark and defined (Photo 19).

With the opener removed from the lathe, I use a fine-tooth Japanese saw to remove the scrap pieces from the ends, then a sharp utility knife to roughly shape the outside half of the end bead. To refine this bead, I first cut a strip of 320-grit sandpaper. With the letter opener handle in one hand and the strip of paper in the other, pull the strip of paper over the top of the bead. At the same time, use your thumb to apply gentle

starting to touch the pencil line on both sides. Then pick one side of the blade and file the middle of that side until it joins the edges you just made. Remove all the marks of the sanding disk and then file some extra wood away from the middle and tip to thin the blade. As you file the second side, stop frequently and compare it to the side you just completed. When the two sides are reasonably close to matching each other, you are ready to move on to a finer file.

I use a coarse file made for metal to begin thinning the blade line even more, passing it over the wood with long, even strokes. Work both blade edges on both sides until just a wisp of pencil line is left. Now move to the middle of the blade and file away all the marks left by the rasp.

Finally, I use a fine mill file with long, even strokes on both sides of the blade to make the pencil line disappear and set the edges straight (*Photo 23*). No need to file the center of the blade, as a little 150-grit paper over the entire blade, followed by 220, will remove any remaining marks. Always sand in the direction of the grain on the blade.

Apply any finish you like. My preference is three or four coats of a hand-rubbed hardening oil, such as Minwax Antique Oil, as I like its appearance and durability. ■

Scott Belway is a woodturner based in British Columbia, Canada.

File blade edges



Final shaping is accomplished using a range of rasps and files. Note: A small section of felt, glued to the edge of the workbench, protects the letter opener blade during this process.

Advanced design—carved handles!



Advanced variations include the use of contrasting materials and routed, carved, or filed handles. From left: reeded, barley twist, spiral fluted, faceted with six sides.

SLOWLY DOES IT

Mike Darlow

Motor cars travel best at their cruising speeds, the speeds at which their engines run at peak efficiency. Unfortunately, when in top gear, the cruising speeds of most modern cars exceed the speed limits. Woodturning has an equivalent to motor-car cruising speeds—the speeds at which it is best to turn workpieces of a specific diameter. This best-to-turn speed has two components: the lathe speed and the speed at which the turner moves the active edge (the part of the

tool's edge which is actually cutting) along and/or into the wood. I'll call this movement of the active edge *traversing*.

Lathe speed

Safe lathe speeds can be illustrated in a graph such as that in *Figure 1*, taken from my book, *The Fundamentals of Woodturning*. This graph is based on the wood approaching the tool tip at a velocity of just under 8 meters/second.

Photo 1 shows a toupie-like foot. It has two beads, identical in cross

section but with maximum diameters in the ratio of 2:1. To turn such a foot, one sets the lathe speed according to the turning's maximum diameter. Because wood is such a considerate material, it is quite happy being cut at somewhat higher or significantly lower speeds; therefore, you wouldn't typically alter the lathe speed to turn different-diameter parts of the same workpiece.

Joseph Clement (1779-1844) was one of England's most important engineering innovators. *Photo 2* shows the mechanism for his constant-speed facing lathe, invented in 1827. This mechanism ensured that the speed of the metal being cut as it approached the tool was constant, irrespective of the diameter at which the tool was cutting. Now with advances in electronics, will it be long before your woodturning lathe's speed will be automatically and continuously varied according to the diameter at which you're turning? Until that introduction, many lathes have the next-best thing: electronic speed controllers with digital displays.

Traversing speed

Assume you turned each of the beads in *Photo 1* at its optimum lathe speed, about 750 rpm for the larger bead and about 1500 rpm for the smaller. When turning either bead, the velocity of the wood going past the active edge would be about the same. Therefore, if you performed a bead-rolling cut at the same traversing speed (the speed at which the active part of the cutting edge moves along the workpiece), the cut would take the same duration.

Lathe speed relative to workpiece diameter

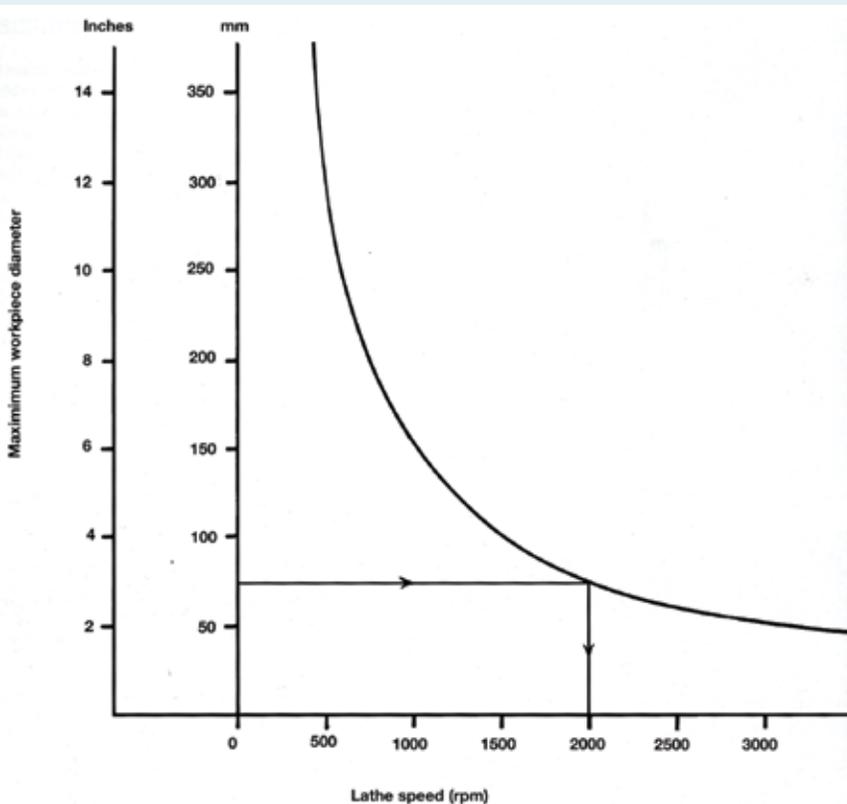
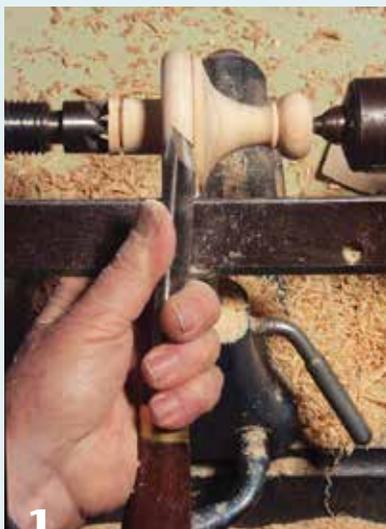


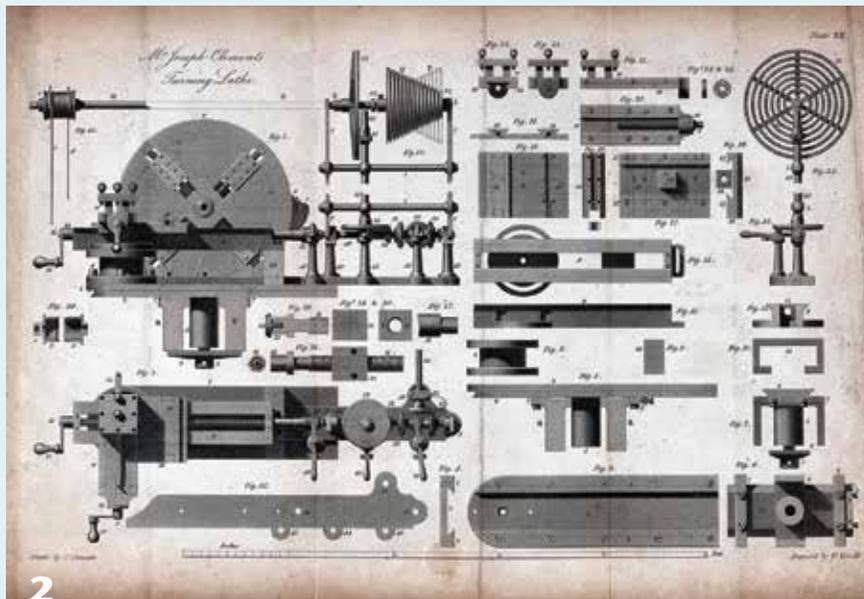
Figure 1. A graph showing how the optimal lathe speed increases as the maximum workpiece diameter decreases.

Slow your roll



Rolling a bead on a foot with a skew chisel. The varying diameters would call for different lathe speeds, but the turner can compensate by slowing the speed of tool traverse on the larger-diameter bead.

Constant-speed lathe



Joseph Clement's 1827 constant-speed metal lathe. Imagine a wood lathe able to adjust its own speed according to the changing diameter of the workpiece. Until such a machine is invented, woodturners can vary their speed of tool traverse.

Photo: Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

However, during that duration, the area cut for the larger bead would be double that of the smaller bead. The turner would have to apply approximately double the force to the tool to cut the larger bead. Such a difference between the magnitudes of the two forces is not desirable.

While I can't quote an optimum "cruising" formula that would enable you to select the perfect lathe and traversing speeds, it is true that the larger the diameter at which you're cutting, the slower you should traverse. Therefore, if after a period turning smaller-diameter workpieces you have to turn a large-diameter workpiece, you'll need to make a conscious effort to traverse more slowly, even much

more slowly, so that the combination of lathe speed and traversing speed is about optimal.

I recently advised a turner who was having great problems rolling beads. He would perform a rolling cut in less time than it takes to blink. Not surprisingly, the beads usually turned out badly. His problem is not uncommon: the turner fears getting a catch and so traverses faster, gets more catches, traverses even faster yet, and soon becomes so paranoid about the cut that the skew is relegated to being an expensive pencil sharpener.

Traversing too quickly creates two problems:

1. It doesn't allow time for the turner to traverse deliberately

and receive and act on the feedback experienced through the eyes, ears, and hands.

2. When a tool's traverse has a component parallel to the lathe axis, you cut a helix. The slower that traverse (and the faster the lathe speed), the shorter the pitch of the helix and the smoother the resulting surface.

What advice did I offer to solve the turner's rolling cut problem? "For a while, take a full five seconds to perform each rolling cut." Five seconds might seem a long time, even an eternity, but why not try it if you have a similar problem? ■

The larger the diameter at which you're cutting, the slower you should traverse.

Mike Darlow lives in the Southern Highlands of New South Wales, Australia. On woodturning, he's written seven books, about 150 magazine articles, and has produced three DVDs. His website is mikedarlow.com.

Using Silica Desiccant to Dry Rough-Turned Bowls

John Stiehler

Everyone who turns wet wood has, at some point, tried to find a faster way to complete the drying process. Generally, air-drying a rough-turned bowl is estimated to take one year for every inch of wall thickness. And new turners sometimes get discouraged when they learn it takes many months to dry bowl blanks in a paper bag with wood chips.

Jim Kilton, a Life Member of the Greenville Woodworkers Guild (South Carolina), obtained some industrial silica desiccant, and this has changed the game with regard to drying wood bowls. We have found that if you rough-turn a bowl and bury it in silica desiccant, it could be ready for final turning in as little as three days. Our experience showed that a silica-dried blank will also have less cracking and deformation than it would have had from other drying methods.

Weigh silica before and after use



1 Weigh a defined amount of the silica (in this case, 1 liter) prior to bowl drying. When continued use and weighing show the beads have reached their capacity, it is time to regenerate, or dry, them.

Silica does require some financial investment. Five gallons can cost up to \$200. However, the results are spectacular, and the silica can be reused indefinitely. For bowl drying, you will need 2½ to 5 gallons of silica, depending on the size of the bowls you want to dry. Silica desiccant is available from many outlets on the Internet.

This method may not be desirable for every blank because the process requires some management to have the silica ready when it is needed. And while there are many variables that need to be considered, such as the type of wood, moisture content of the wood, room temperature, etc., most silica desiccants will perform in similar ways. Still, it is important to understand how the material works.

What is silica?

The silica we have been using is a desiccant used to dry compressed air. The air-drying systems are sealed and have sophisticated temperature and air-control systems. Our wood-drying method is a basic application with no automatic controls. There are many silicas available that would perform just as well as the product we use.

In concept, our wood-drying method is similar to those little desiccant bags that come in boxes with electronics, where the silica desiccant absorbs the humidity in the sealed box. Prior to use, the silica must be stored in a sealed plastic bag or other

container, so it won't take on moisture before you want it to.

The silica we are using does not have a built-in indicator. Some silica changes color when the moisture level of the desiccant is high, showing when it must be regenerated (dried). You can purchase indicator beads that can be added to a non-indicating silica batch. The indicator we investigated included cobalt, and we decided not to add it. We learned that the best way to determine the moisture level of the silica is to weigh a 1-liter sample of it on a postal scale (*Photo 1*).

Before using any silica desiccant, it is important to know the product, so study the manufacturer's information and the safety data sheet (SDS), which can be found on the Internet. The important physical properties from the SDS include the following:

- Dry Density kg/liter (dry weight of 1 liter of silica)
- Desorption Temperature Range (temperature required to dry the silica)
- Equilibrium capacity for water vapor (percent weight increase when full)

How does it work?

Using silica is very different from putting wet wood blanks in a paper bag with wood chips. The paper bag process reduces the amount of air flow around the wood so it can dry uniformly, but the time to dry is typically months, depending on the bowl thickness and size, as well as the temperature and humidity. With silica desiccant, you

If you rough-turn a bowl and bury it in silica desiccant, it could be ready for final turning in as little as three days.

would immerse the bowl and silica in a plastic bag. When the bag is sealed, the silica desiccant immediately starts to reduce the humidity in the bag. This allows the water in the wood to evaporate into the vapor phase and be *adsorbed* onto the silica beads. The silica accumulates the moisture on its surface. This is different from *absorption*, which is when the substance remains a liquid, like water soaked up in a sponge.

It is important not to open the sealed bag and interrupt the drying process because the silica controls the humidity in the bag. When the bag is opened, the room humidity will enter the bag and the silica's control of the humidity must start again when the bag is resealed.

Before you dry a bowl blank, it is important to know the weight of the bowl blank and the silica desiccant. One liter of our silica weighed 660 grams, and 1 liter of fully adsorbed silica weighs 1,000 grams. This information is available from the manufacturer. I found a 1-liter container in our kitchen that I now use as my measurement standard. Technically, the silica has a capacity to adsorb almost 40 percent of its weight in moisture. However, while this wood-drying process is very efficient, it is not an exact science.

Dry a rough-turned bowl

A freshly cut log contains about 25 to 40 percent water by weight. Typically, we seal our freshly cut logs with an endgrain sealer and store them in a dry place. Even with endgrain sealer, these logs will lose some moisture over time. If the sealed log has been sitting in a dry place for several months, the free moisture will be lower. Before turning, it may be informative to check the moisture content with a meter to get a reference point. The moisture reading upon final turning should be 10 to 12 percent.

Rough-turn the bowl to a uniform wall thickness of 10 percent of the bowl's diameter, same as when drying in a paper bag with wood chips. Weigh

Place bowl and silica in a bag



The author uses a heavy yard-waste bag to hold the rough-turned bowl and silica beads. Seal the bag by twisting it and taping it closed. The sides of a large cardboard box prevent the silica beads from spreading out and losing contact with the bowl.

the rough-turned bowl and mark its weight on the bottom. Bowl weight is a key measurement in this process. If a bowl turned from a freshly cut log weighs 1,000 grams (2.2 pounds) and we want to lose 25 to 30 percent of the weight, we need to adsorb 250 to 300 grams of moisture onto the silica.

Place the rough-turned bowl in a heavy plastic bag on a layer of silica and then surround the blank with the desiccant (*Photo 2*). It is important to cover the bowl with the silica to ensure a fast drying time and to reduce cracking and deformation. Twist the bag closed and tape it to prevent it from reopening (*Photo 3*). It is okay to try to minimize the amount of air in the bag when you seal it, but do not evacuate the air completely. Some air is needed to allow the moisture to enter the vapor phase and transfer to the silica.

Leave the bowl in the sealed bag for 48 to 72 hours. It may help to rearrange the silica touching the bowl during this time, but do not open the bag, as this will change the humidity in the bag. In colder temperatures, the silica will require more time to dry the bowl.

After the initial drying period, remove the bowl from the bag and weigh it (*Photo 4*). If the expected amount of weight was not lost, put the bowl back in the bag and seal it for another day or two. When the drying process is complete, return the silica to

Weigh bowl before and after drying



Weighing the rough-turned bowl before and after drying will indicate the amount of moisture loss.

a sealed container. We use five-gallon paint buckets from a hardware store.

We have encountered a dried bowl re-gaining weight after being removed from the silica. This happens because all the variables were well aligned in the sealed bag, and the wood became drier in the bag than the humidity of the room. So we have learned to let the dry bowl sit for a day or so to reach an equilibrium with the shop environment. If the bowl maintains a consistent weight during this period, it is ready for final turning.

Regenerate (dry) the silica

Before using the silica, you will have weighed a 1-liter sample and recorded its weight. After drying a bowl, weigh a 1-liter sample of the silica from the ►

Regenerate, or dry, silica beads



5 Silica beads can be dried by baking them in an oven. They can be used and regenerated hundreds of times.

Drying results

| Wood Type | Starting Weight (grams) | Starting Moisture Meter Reading | Dried Weight (grams) | After Moisture Meter Reading | % Weight Loss |
|----------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|---------------|
| Black Walnut | 1075 | 35% | 795 | 10% | 26% |
| Bradford Pear | 500 | 25% | 400 | 12% | 20% |
| Beech | 1620 | 33% | 1260 | 12% | 22% |
| Maple | 500 | 35% | 390 | 10% | 22% |
| Holly | 340 | 40% | 240 | 14% | 29% |
| Cherry | 1320 | 25% | 985 | 10% | 25% |
| Tree of Heaven | 1085 | 35% | 910 | 10% | 16% |

Figure 1. Results of the author's experimentation in drying different woods using silica.

plastic bag. If the weight is approaching the weight of fully adsorbed silica (as given by the manufacturer), it is time to regenerate, or dry, the silica.

Spread the silica granules onto one or more aluminum foil roasting pans. A roasting pan measuring 3" × 21" × 13" (8cm × 53cm × 33cm) will hold about 4 liters of silica if it is 1½" (38mm) deep (*Photo 5*). Place the pan (or pans) in an oven or on a gas grill at 250° to 300°F for 2 to 2½ hours. The silica requires air in the heated space for the moisture to become water vapor and dissipate. Exercise caution when opening the oven door, as water vapor (steam) may come out. A gas grill outside works well, and a convection oven with a circulating fan works just as well. Note that the

"regeneration temperature" may be different for silicas with an indicator. Some indicators have a temperature limit that, if exceeded, could render them ineffective. Allow the silica beads to cool, then return them to their sealed container.

It does take some time to regenerate/dry the silica. A five-gallon bucket of silica holds 19 liters. If you dry the entire five gallons, as described above, it will take five drying batches, 10 to 12 hours. However, the dry silica can be used to dry four or five bowls before requiring regeneration.

The 1½" depth of the silica in the aluminum foil roasting pan seems to be a good compromise. A 1" (25mm) depth will dry it faster, but this would require more drying batches.

The silica can be regenerated hundreds of times.

Results

This silica drying process works well on all the local hardwoods here in South Carolina. The drying time for each of the samples shown in *Figure 1* was 48 to 72 hours. If the initial weight reduction was not adequate, the bowl was returned to the bag and sealed for another day or two.

Photo 6 shows three rough-turned bowls after being dried in the silica and allowed to sit in my shop for a couple of days to acclimate to the environment. They each lost about 1% more weight during this time and deformed somewhat but did not crack. I did apply cyanoacrylate (CA) glue to the bark inclusion to hold it in place. *Photo 7* shows the same bowls after finish-turning.

Using silica to dry turning blanks is simply another tool for us to apply to our craft. The process may not be desirable for every bowl. There is a cost to get started, and the drying process takes some time and needs to be managed. However, the fact that you can go from a freshly cut tree to a finished bowl in only a few days is amazing. ■

John Stiehler is a retired engineer living in Greer, South Carolina. He is a member of The Greenville Woodworkers Guild, the Carolina Mountain Woodturners, and the AAW.

Before and after



6 Three bowls that were successfully (and quickly) dried using silica desiccant beads. Far left: black walnut; right: Bradford pear; back: beech crotch.



7

EDUCATION BY IMMERSION

The Art-and-Craft School Experience

D Wood

Woodturners today have more choices than ever in how they get their woodturning instruction. Local chapters sometimes offer hands-on workshops and can be a good source of mentorship. And in today's digital world, opportunities abound to learn from articles and videos online. Yet an older modality, the dedicated art-and-craft school that offers woodturning, remains a popular choice. Craft schools around the U.S. offer something other modes of education don't: an opportunity to retreat from our daily lives and immerse ourselves in woodturning for an extended time—and benefit from the unique camaraderie engendered in this environment.

Facilities at many schools enable concurrent workshops in metal, glass, woodworking, ceramics, and fiber arts. They offer accommodations in any season and, in some cases, scholarships and work-study options. Carol Paster, whose day job is in childhood education, regularly attends workshops at Peters Valley School of Craft in New Jersey. She notes, "Once a year, sometimes twice, I find my way to Peters Valley to take a class in the woodshop. It is rare to find women or turners in general in my local community, but at Peters Valley, I find people just like me." She continues, "It's not just the wood classes. Breaking bread [with other students and teachers] allows for exchange of ideas across the mediums—blacksmiths and fiber

artists, metalsmiths and weavers, photographers and ceramicists—all levels of abilities or inabilities."

Woodturning is on the agenda at a number of art-and-craft schools. Inspired by observation of a one-week session taught by Betty Scarpino and Dixie Biggs at Arrowmont in November 2021, the following is a synopsis of venues, intended to encourage enrollment and participation in these valuable immersive experiences. Note that this list of schools is not meant to be exhaustive, but to provide several prominent options as a starting point in one's research. The absence from this article of any school that offers woodturning instruction is not a reflection of its quality.

Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts, Gatlinburg, Tennessee arrowmont.org

Established in 1912, Arrowmont declares that it "enriches lives by developing aesthetic appreciation and fostering self-expression through hands-on experiences in a variety of media, classes, conferences, and seminars." The School was founded by the Pi Beta Phi sorority as a settlement school in an impoverished rural area of the country. In 1915, crafts like quilting and weaving were integrated into the curriculum because they were abundant and of quality, as well as representing potential income for the school. The first summer school was

held in 1945, attracting fifty students from nineteen states.

Accommodation is available onsite, and excellent meals are served from Sunday evening to Friday lunch during one-week sessions. In 2021, classes were limited to six people and everyone was required to be double-vaccinated. Masks were worn by staff and students, except when eating.

The woodworking facilities at Arrowmont are outstanding, in a dedicated building with machine shop, bench room, and woodturning studio. The class taught by Betty Scarpino and Dixie Biggs, "Woodcarving: Power Play," was intended for intermediate-to-advanced turners who wished to learn ▶



Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts

how to use reciprocating and rotary carving tools. The idea of a joint teaching gig had developed as the friendship between the women grew. Betty says, “It’s fun to come here, it’s art camp, it’s play.” As the week progressed, each instructor demonstrated techniques from her repertoire and gave students one-on-one attention.

Morning break included calisthenics and yoga poses to break the literal tensions of non-stop hunching over a piece of wood. When questioned as to whether one week was sufficient, Betty and Dixie agreed that a week expands the skills and range of activities attendees might want to try. It is expected that the workshop is a “taster.” Adopting new sanding routines, adapting burrs and equipment, and practicing what has been preached is what happens away from Arrowmont.

Center for Furniture Craftsmanship, Rockport, Maine woodschoool.org

Peter Korn founded the Center for Furniture Craftsmanship (CFC) in 1993 as a summer workshop program in a barn behind his house. The barn was moved in 1996 to its present campus location. In 2001, a capital campaign allowed the Center to double its student body, expand curriculum and facilities, and inaugurate a permanent endowment. In 2005, the school added a state-of-the-art woodturning studio. The Center’s philosophy statement acknowledges the importance of craft to individuals and society: “At the

heart of the Center’s mission is the belief that design and craftsmanship are deeply meaningful expressions of the human spirit that contribute to individual fulfillment and inform the larger culture.”

The Center offers furniture and woodturning intensives during the winter months, while students taking summer courses on the campus’s eighteen bucolic acres can fully enjoy Maine’s more temperate marine climate. The woodturning intensive, from January to March, includes classes in architectural, production, and creative woodturning; instructors for 2022 were Beth Ireland, Dixie Biggs, and Mark Gardner. Workshops range from turning for beginners to multi-axis spindle turning.

Beth Ireland notes, “I teach at all the craft schools—Arrowmont, Center for Furniture Craftsmanship, Peters Valley, Port Townsend. They all offer a little different experience. Their commonality is that a student is immersed in turning without distraction. Focus and consistent practice in a short period allow repetition and a rhythm of work that is not possible one night a week. The camaraderie and collaborative atmosphere help students to resolve aesthetic and technical problems that they would not do on their own.” In a December 2021 email, Beth mentioned the coming months in Rockport: “I am heading out on Saturday [January 1] to teach my two-month turning intensive. It is a thrill to see the students arrive as novices and leave as skilled woodturners with the technical acumen to resolve any project in their

shop. That would not happen on one night a week.”

Ken Wise offers a compelling example of the merits of attendance: “I am a woodworker who has benefited greatly from taking classes at the Center for Furniture Craftsmanship over the last ten years. For most of my career, I have worked as a carpenter in residential construction. This has evolved into fine carpentry, cabinetry, furniture, wood carving, and woodturning. What started out as making gifts for friends and family turned into a hobby business of jewelry boxes, wildlife art carvings, spoons, and cutting boards. Much of my learning was by reading magazines, books, and experimentation in my shop. When I discovered CFC, I began taking weekend classes in woodturning, and then weeklong workshops, and in 2014, I enrolled in the twelve-week woodturning intensive with Beth Ireland and guest instructors Mark Gardner and Al Stirt. This gave me a wide range of skills, knowledge, and confidence to make the leap to call myself a professional woodturner.”

Ken also notes, “The intensive included the reproduction of an historic mansion balustrade, including design, estimating, bidding, and hands-on production of the pieces. We also did a wide range of creative work to explore possibilities of the lathe. I always enjoy time at the Center, visiting the Messler Gallery, attending talks and slideshows, and talking and sharing with other students and instructors. This place has a wonderful energy and has been a great inspiration to me!”



Center for Furniture Craftsmanship

“ [The schools’] commonality is that a student is immersed in turning without distraction. Focus and consistent practice in a short period allow repetition and a rhythm of work that is not possible one night a week.

— BETH IRELAND



Florida School of Woodwork

Florida School of Woodwork, Tampa, Florida

schoolofwoodwork.com

Kate Swann, Executive Director and instructor at the Florida School of Woodwork, provides this synopsis of opportunities: “Classes that focus on the fundamentals of turning from spindles to bowls. Equipped with Jet midi-lathes and a full set of turning tools at each bench, the student’s environment is beautifully appointed in a century-old building that has been fully renovated. The instructors have decades of experience.”

Kate founded the program in 2004, when it began as a one-on-one program in a borrowed space. In 2010, it moved to a 1920s national historic building on the edge of downtown Tampa. Classes are small, and the studios have large screens and camera projection, so details during instruction can be readily viewed. Kate notes that an outside courtyard provides an eating area (meals not provided) as well as a break space to stretch muscles and get the kinks out before returning to the bench. Pre-milled North American hardwoods are provided.

Michael Fortune, a furniture maker who, like Beth Ireland, teaches at a number of schools, offers his opinion about the atmosphere and assets of attendance: “These schools are amazing places to explore specific techniques and get acquainted with the surprisingly large and active community, whether it’s turning, furniture making, carving, decoration, or finishing. It’s a joy to work with a group of

keen and diverse individuals, from art school grads to retired engineers and everything in between. I value what the students take away and how they morph it in ways that I’ve never considered.” Michael goes on to mention: “The group make-up is changing for the better. More women! Women are often the first to jump in to try what has been demonstrated or discussed.”

John C. Campbell Folk School, Brasstown, North Carolina

folkschool.org

John Campbell and his wife Olive Dame were influenced by Danish traditions. They wanted to establish a *folkehøjskole*, or “folk high school,” in the United States, and in 1925 their dream came to fruition. The John C. Campbell Folk School is conducted on the same premise as its Danish and Swedish counterparts: non-competition, absence of grading or credits, and an egalitarian outlook towards each person’s handmade creations.

Classes in woodturning are offered year-round and run concurrently with courses that include the expected craft media as well as cooking, gardening, dance, music, and nature studies. Family-style meals and evening concerts provide opportunities to meet participants in all disciplines. Accommodation, ranging from dormitory to a room with private bath, plus a campground for tents, campers, and RVs, means that all pocket-books are catered to.

Alan Leland, a regular instructor in the school’s Willard Baxter Woodturning Studio, talks of his “magical and life-changing” experiences on campus. He took his first class in 2004, aiming to improve his turning skills, but also to gauge whether teaching at the School would be possible. He discovered

that his teaching style and the School’s emphasis on process rather than production was an ideal fit. Alan says, “I have been teaching on average two to three turning-skill and technique classes per year, geared towards beginners and students who wish to improve their turning. One of the things I find that helps make John C. Campbell stand out is the connection with the local community. I enjoy beginning each day attending Morning Song before breakfast, a 30-minute session of music or storytelling.” He also values the evening activities and notes that the week’s instruction ends with a show-and-tell followed by a closing ceremony, dinner, and a concert open to the public.

Alan adds his instructor’s point of view: “The turning studio is well equipped and maintained and is a pleasure to teach in. The lathes and workstations are laid out so it is easy to keep an eye on the students and still maintain a safe turning environment. The instructor’s lathe is equipped with updated video equipment and a large monitor to help students see the turning process.”

Alan also enjoys “walking the many trails on campus, refreshing my mind and body.” Furthermore, he relishes “the joy and pleasure” he feels when he’s aware it has dawned on his students “just how much their turning skills have improved and their understanding of turning techniques has been taken to a level they had not envisioned.” ▶



John C. Campbell Folk School



Marc Adams School of Woodworking



Marc Adams School of Woodworking, North Franklin, Indiana marcadams.com

In his introduction to the 2022 catalog, Marc Adams writes of the consequences of almost thirty years of classes at the Marc Adams School of Woodworking (MASW): “Hundreds of our alumni have gone on to start their own business. Others have submitted their work in local and national competitions; most winning top honors. Nearly every woodworking magazine, both in America and abroad, has featured articles by MASW family members.” This statement reflects the quality of instruction in addition to the benefit of this type of education, whereby a single focus in a supportive environment (by teachers and peers) encourages self-confidence and creative results.

Although MASW is mainly dedicated to woodwork, the agenda for 2022 features glassblowing, basket weaving, essential oils, and mastering chocolate. The calendar gives students unique exposure to the “greats” of woodturning, like Alan Lacer, J. Paul Fennell, Alan Stirt, and Hans Weissflog, who teach in a dedicated turning studio. Lunch is provided

during the week, and accommodation is mainly at nearby hotels/motels.

Full-week classes run Monday to Friday, and Super Weekends are Saturday and/or Sunday. MASW also offers the Alan Lacer Woodturning Fellowship, under the direction of Alan Lacer. The catalog states, “This is a chance to challenge yourself and certainly broaden your woodturning skills in exploring a wide array of different forms of woodturning.” Daily sessions run from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Tool lists are emailed to enrolled students, and wood can be shipped to the School or purchased onsite.

Peters Valley School of Craft, Layton, New Jersey petersvalley.org

The Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area (DEWA), overseen by



Peters Valley School of Craft

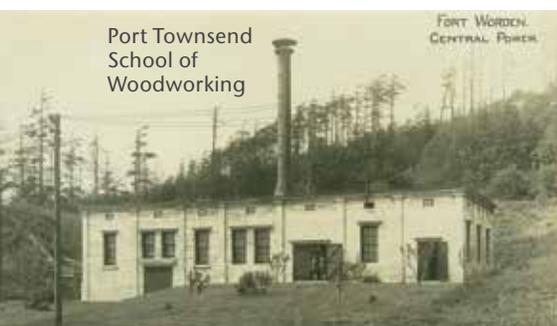
the National Parks Service (NPS), was the instigator of this craft school. To ensure appropriate use of DEWA, the NPS organized the Peters Valley Craft Fair in 1970, which led to the creation of Peters Valley Craftsmen. Now named the Peters Valley School of Craft, it is approaching its 50th anniversary. The historic structures onsite are still used for studios, housing, exhibition space, and administration.

Accommodation is basic in farmhouses on campus; the bathroom is shared. Attendees can purchase a meal plan or cook their own food in the kitchen facilities provided in dormitories. Weekend classes for young people, including blacksmithing and fundamentals of woodturning, introduce a new generation to skills that some contend are dying. For adults, woodturning workshops vary from one to five days in length, from May to October. The wood workshop has a full complement of power and hand tools and nine Oneway lathes.

Peters Valley attendee Daryl Gray, in addition to praising her session with Derek Weidman, tells of the advantages of this type of education: “Taking a course for several consecutive days where you can immerse yourself in the subject material, with the teacher present and hands-on, is an amazing experience. All kinds of things come up, questions along the way: *Am I remembering things correctly? What did we do next?* I have done one-day classes and, though these are good, they are not the same as immersing yourself in something for several days or even a couple of months.”

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— DARYL GRAY



Port Townsend School of Woodworking, Port Townsend, Washington

ptwoodschoo.org

A woodworking school in Port Townsend was the brainchild of John Marckworth, Tim Lawson, and Jim Tolpin. Tim, a new arrival on the West Coast and a graduate of the Center for Furniture Craftmanship, encountered John and Jim, who had yarned for many years about a woodworking school. Tim thought Port Townsend compared favorably with Rockport, and the school began to move from dream to reality. In 2007, eighty-six students enrolled in seven courses on design in classrooms at Fort Worden State Park. Following this enthusiastic response, it was decided to convert the Park's Powerhouse into the Port Townsend School of Woodworking and Preservation Trades. Park staff and volunteers pitched in to clean, paint, and outfit the building, which opened for business in March 2008.

The School's website declares, "Since our doors opened, we've seen an increase in younger students training for careers in woodworking, the next generation of skilled craftsmen. This includes an increase in women, who now comprise over 20% of our enrollment. Students have come from as far as India and France and as close as across the street." Accommodation and meals are the students' responsibility.

One of Port Townsend's instructors, Tim Lawson, states that anyone who wants to try turning could come empty-handed: the School supplies tools, prepared stock, and finishes. Tim then

describes the results: "The students in the classes I've taught come from a wide variety of backgrounds and turning experience. I think the greatest joy of teaching is watching a student, on the final day of class, leaving with a collection of turned pieces and a smile on their face. They've been through that journey, from beginner trepidation to understanding the principles and process of turning. There are ups and downs for every student. We teach turning with traditional gouges, not with carbide-tipped tools, and the first time the student completes a successful push cut takes away the memory of struggle to get there."

Southwest School for Woodworking, Phoenix, Arizona

sw-sw.org

Raúl Ramírez, who began his working life in the aerospace industry, taught himself woodworking in the 1970s and now specializes in custom furniture and antique restoration, with particular emphasis on hand-tool techniques. In 2013, in collaboration with other woodworkers, he founded the Southwest's only school for fine woodworking to serve hobbyists and professionals alike. Starting in borrowed premises, the School moved in 2015 to its own building on the campus of Rio Salado College in downtown Phoenix.

The website states, "With our hands-on classes and low student-to-teacher ratio, we offer a contemporary update to the Old World tradition of mentorship in craft education." The School has a dedicated woodturning studio with full-size floor lathes as well as a machine room

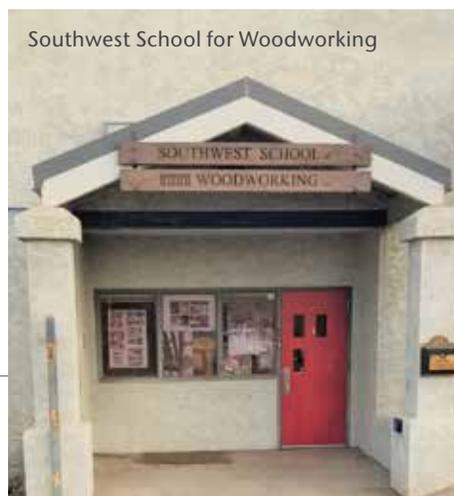
with all essential hand and power tools; classes are year-round. Accommodation and meals are not provided, but the area abounds in bed and dining options.

Student Jim Reavey offers the following comments: "I have nothing but great things to say about the Southwest School of Woodworking. I have attended multiple classes over the years, from beginning turning classes to more advanced knowledge and hands-on experience in not only woodturning but also furniture making. I really appreciate the learning as well as the great culture and fun. Raúl does a fabulous job of bringing in very impressive professional instructors that have years of experience in the woodworking field. The courses provide an excellent balance of teaching, demonstration, and shop time; they have helped me [acquire] skills that I would never have learned on my own or via YouTube."

Conclusion

Instructor Betty Scarpino provides food for thought: "The older I get, the more I realize the joy and importance of the community of woodturning that is [craft schools], the AAW, Women in Turning, and the kind of community I've been able to build because of that. You can't have a major field with just one or two players in it. You need a mass of people making objects so that they get noticed." She continues, "One of the things I've enjoyed is the yearly conferences, when people get together to create energy and exchange ideas; this helps build the field and push everybody forward. That's getting harder and harder to do because the meetings are so massive. But being together helps generate that energy." In light of the restrictions that some gatherings now require, smaller-scale woodworking schools and woodturning classes may represent an alternative way to generate that energy. ■

D Wood designed and made furniture to earn a Diploma in Crafts and Design at Sheridan College in Canada and an MFA at the Rhode Island School of Design. In 2012, she earned a PhD in Design Studies from University of Otago.



CONNECTIONS

The Inspired Art of Andi Wolfe



*From Observation
and Discovery to
Inspiration and Design*



"I've learned to 'see' plants through the lens of a camera, or through the eyepiece of a microscope, and that part of my life has now become important to me in my woodturning."

Photos:
(Left) UA Creative Studio
(Right) Stephen A. Wolfe

J. Paul Fennell

I first met Andi Wolfe in 2002, at the 16th-Annual AAW Symposium in Providence, Rhode Island. I should say we met *after* the Symposium—our paths never crossed during the weekend—as we were the only passengers on the 6:00 a.m. Monday airport shuttle. During the Symposium, the owner of a prominent gallery had asked me to tour the Instant Gallery with her, looking for the work of promising new artists. At one point during our walkthrough, I pointed to a piece that impressed me—a finely made small bowl decorated with a botanical design. "I like his work," I said, and the gallery owner quickly corrected me: "*Her* work" and added, "a university professor of botany." She then pointed to Andi, busy photographing other work nearby. On the way to the airport, we introduced

ourselves, and I soon discovered Andi was a faculty member of The Ohio State University, my alma mater. Such was the eye-opening start to my friendship with Andi Wolfe, a multitasking artist driven by an array of interests that intersect in surprising ways.

I would wager a guess that the majority of AAW members either know or have heard of Andi Wolfe. She is well known throughout the woodturning community in a variety of ways:

- As a professional photographer for the AAW, creating a vast organized array of visual imagery for the organization's publications, social media, and website. You probably have seen her many credits in *American Woodturner*.
- As an accomplished artist with an impressive *oeuvre* of adroitly turned

and embellished sculptural forms. Her beautiful botanical abstractions are inspired by her love of nature, often seen through the lens of a camera or under a microscope.

- As a professional demonstrator at national, international, or regional symposia, sharing the methods and techniques she has developed to embellish her work: carving, burning, coloring, collaborating, and incorporating other media such as glass and metal.
- As a lecturer, teaching about wood, its technical properties, and its cultural, historical, and economic significance to humankind.
- As a workshop instructor at various art-and-craft schools and at AAW chapter classes, sharing not only her techniques, but also her process of

inspired design and the subsequent flow of work.

- As a writer of *American Woodturner* articles, promoting the idea of creating “designs from what you know.”
- As a content creator for various web log posts and social media platforms.
- As the editor of the Women in Turning (WIT) quarterly newsletter. Former AAW Board member Jean LeGwin called Andi “a central figure in the success of the WIT program itself.”
- As a friend, discovering and sharing common interests that go well beyond woodturning.

After learning of Andi’s demanding schedule—which includes academic responsibilities (professor and research scientist), extensive botanical laboratory and fieldwork, writing and traveling to present research papers, applying for research grants, administrative duties, raising a family, managing a household, and playing the fiddle and singing in a Celtic band—I couldn’t see how there would be any time left in a day to do much of anything else, woodturning notwithstanding. Obviously mistaken, I learned that through an amazing ability to multitask, Andi consistently accomplishes all of the above—and quite successfully.

Early years of woodturning

Andi Wolfe was born and raised in Oregon and from childhood was deeply interested and immersed in the natural world. Her passion for nature and science eventually led to a bachelor of science degree and a doctorate in botany from the University of Oklahoma, with subsequent post-doctoral studies at Vanderbilt University. It was during this time she became interested in woodturning and acquired the requisite power tools for making furniture.

Upon accepting a professorship at The Ohio State University, she and her family moved to Columbus in 1996, where her neighbor Walt Betley happily



Testa series, 2000-2004,
Various woods, various sizes

introduced himself after noticing how much woodworking equipment was coming out of the moving van. Walt became a mentor during her early years of woodturning as well as an enduring friend.

Attending local woodworking classes, Andi continued making furniture. But when a Shaker candlestand project required turning a pedestal (and the only lathe tool allowed was a round-nose scraper), Andi became fascinated with the turning process and how quickly shapes emerge and change. She also experienced the frustration of using an improper and inefficient tool and realized there had to be better ways to turn wood. Determined to learn properly, Andi enthusiastically began the process of discovering the lathe’s enticing (and therapeutic) attributes. She sold nearly all her woodworking machinery in exchange for a set of turning tools and a small lathe.

With an aptitude for problem-solving, as well as determination, enthusiasm, and a willingness to try new things, Andi was quick to master the basic turning skills. She joined the Central Ohio Woodturners (where she would later serve as president, 2004 and 2005), and with the honest, fair-minded mentoring of her neighbor, her work improved quickly. By the end of 1999, Andi looked beyond the unadorned bowl forms she could now create consistently. She notes, “I started exploring texturing with carving gouges with different bowl

Ode to Monet, 2001, Cherry,
pyrography, acrylic paint,
1¾" x 4½" (44mm x 11cm)



forms. Sometime during the early-to-mid-2000s, I added acrylic paint to the mix and worked on a series with carved texture and acrylic paint.”

Andi’s first AAW Symposium (Saint Paul, Minnesota, 2001) was a breakthrough event for her. There she met Jacques Vesery and was inspired to take her work in a new direction. She explains, “Jacques was the one who got me thinking about using what I know to put my voice into my work. I sat in on all of his demos. His use of pyrography for surface embellishment really inspired me, but I didn’t want to imitate his work. He emphasized the idea of using one’s own experiences to make surfaces that were meaningful to the maker. That’s when I started doing my botanical and biological motifs.”

In the fall of 2001, Andi brought her new work to the Ohio Valley Woodturners Guild symposium. David Ellsworth took notice of it and offered valuable feedback. She soon enrolled in David’s class, her first hands-on workshop. David recalls, “I was instantly impressed by her grasp of the concepts and techniques, but also her communication skills in a student/teacher relationship, with someone who knew absolutely nothing about botany—namely, me! I followed her ▶

work for several years and, when I felt her work had matured to the point of her being a serious artist and a potential leader in our field, purchased a piece from her. I have not been disappointed; her work is stunning.”

Demonstrators invited by her local club and regional symposia also provided Andi with opportunities to take workshops from notable wood artists, including Binh Pho, Michael Hosaluk, Jean-François Escoulen, Bonnie Klein, Trent Bosch, Stuart Batty, and Betty Scarpino. For Andi, these workshops were an opportunity to experience how woodturners are inspired by other woodturners, and where they have gone from there.

In her home basement, Andi created a compact but well-planned, well-lit, functional studio. A substantial lathe, bandsaw, shelving for wood blanks, and a Michelle Holzapfel-inspired carving bench comprise the essential equipment needed for her work. Like the basic workshops of 18th-century woodworkers, Andi’s modest space belies the quality of the work created within.



Andi’s basement studio, a simple but well-lit and functional workspace.



The ideas I bring to my work are based on the internalized knowledge I’ve gained from my experience as a naturalist and scientist. —Andi Wolfe

Observation, discovery, inspiration

Implicit in the aura of *mystery* are curiosity and intrigue, which can draw one deeply into a field of interest to discover more. For an engineer, mystery could be the *why* or *how* of the way things work; for a scientist, it could be about interconnectedness or how things evolve. With her own extraordinary sense of mystery, Andi visualizes and connects her scientific world to her artistic world, continually discovering interdependencies worth exploring in creative ways. She uses macroscopic and microscopic tools in both worlds—science and art—for the same purpose: to observe, discover, and find inspiration.

The late art critic/essayist Clement Greenberg’s thoughts on the role of inspiration in art are germane

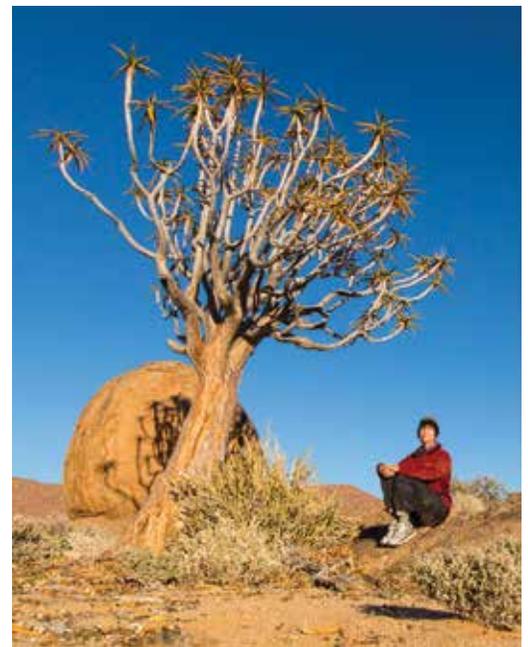
in appreciating how Andi’s ideas come into being—from observation to inspiration to design to fruition: “Inspiration alone belongs...to the individual; everything else, including skill, can now be acquired by anyone. Inspiration remains the only factor in the creation of successful work [sic] of art that cannot be copied or imitated.”

With Jacques Vesery’s comments in mind, Andi began visualizing her turned forms as “canvases” for embellishment inspired by nature. She says, “The motifs I use are pretty much rooted in biology. ... I think it helps people to know that the ideas I bring to my work are based on the internalized knowledge I’ve gained from my experience as a naturalist and scientist.” Conveyed from the field of science to the world of art, the role of observation is paramount to her inspired designs.



Photographic scientific observation leads to creative inspiration.

Photo: Stephen A. Wolfe



Traveling for botanical fieldwork in South Africa (2013) led to important woodturning connections and sources of inspiration.

Photo: Self-portrait by Andi Wolfe

How she does it, as Andi explains, is in large part through photography and by methodically organizing a great quantity of relevant images: “I use digital photography as a supplement to my sketchbook for recording design ideas. I will often try to capture images that might give me some ideas for design motifs. Most of these images will not end up being useful in the short term, but I browse through them periodically, and I’m sure some of them will spark an idea for navigating a new direction in my work when the time is right.”

Connections

Andi’s world comprises a series of connections, or collaborations, between various elements.

Collaborations with wood

Wood is unique as a material for art, compared to clay or glass. It is organic, having had a former life within a tree, each piece being characteristically different in color, grain, texture, and weight. Considering the challenges wood artists face to overcome the material’s propensity to crack, splinter, shrink, or move, a *collaboration* between maker and material is critical. Although not quite a love affair, it is in the artist’s best interest to “know” the material intimately. On her scientific side, Andi Wolfe understands the technical challenges of wood. In fact, discourses on wood are part of her collegiate-level curriculum, and she is happy to share ideas on the biology of wood in her woodturning demonstrations and workshops. On her artistic side, she achieves a remarkable synergy between the organic medium of wood and her inspired organic motifs: “I tend to use woods that are fine grained with subtle figuring so that my botanical designs become part of the whole vessel, complementary to the wood....”

Collaborations through travel

Andi’s artistic journeys have benefited, directly or indirectly, from

the scientific travel required for her role as researcher and professor of botany. Doing seasonal fieldwork in foreign lands is one example. Such was the case upon visiting South Africa, when Andi was studying *Hyobanche*, a parasitic flowering plant. Andi saw an opportunity during a field season in 1999 to meet South African woodturners. Aside from developing new friendships, she was able to showcase their talent in an exhibit she organized for the country’s contemporary woodturning community. She later created an exhibition of South African turned art—heretofore rarely seen in North America—at the 2003 AAW Symposium in Pasadena, California.

Collaborations with artists

The key to a successful, meaningful collaboration between artists is synergism. With respect to the interpretation of a theme, synergism implies that a singular piece resulting from the *combined* inspiration, ideas, experiences, design elements, and media of both artists can be more expressive than the sum of each artist’s *individual* interpretation of the same theme.

Andi collaborated with renowned wood artist Clay Foster to create *Ceremony* for the 2021 AAW benefit auction. Referring to the inception of the idea, Andi recalls, “We both love old bronze artifacts and African art and have bronze pieces from Africa in our personal collections.” This inspired the concept of a ceremonial piece, implicitly sacred in its ritual use over many generations. Andi explains, “We wanted to emulate the patina found on these artifacts, with areas that are worn and shiny from handling.”

Clay’s contribution, the pedestal—clearly appropriate to the theme—is based on his previous, powerful interpretations of ritualistic pedestals for ceremonial fonts. Andi made the ancient-looking ceremonial bowl—cast in bronze from a mold of a wood



Andi Wolfe and Clay Foster, *Ceremony*, 2021, Bronze, wood, brass, grout, 9½" x 3½" (24cm x 9cm)

bowl she had made and used for many years in her demos—to sit upon the pedestal. Implicit in this piece is the noteworthy ability of each artist to draw upon their common interests from the past as well as from their years of individual artistic endeavors, and then create—*together*—a work as meaningful to one artist as it is to the other. It was also quite an accomplishment to add a new medium (cast metal) into their mix of established design techniques.

Mixing media

In addition to recently experimenting with metal casting for *Ceremony*, as early as 2005 Andi introduced another medium to her work—glass—as stylized “platforms” for her carved sculptures. Andi commissioned a local glass artist to create the platforms from her own designs; they are functional but also organically fluid, ▶



(Above) *Earth, Water, Air, and Fire*, 2021, Camphor burl, ink, glass, 6¼" × 5¾" (16cm × 15cm)

(Left) *Verdigris*, 2005, Maple (turned, carved, and dyed), glass stand, 5" × 3" (13cm × 8cm)

Photo: Jerry Anthony Photography

harmonious, and in consonance with her botanical abstractions. *Verdigris* is an excellent example.

Andi is currently working on a new series of work that combines wood and glass. An example is *Earth, Water, Air, and Fire*, a piece Andi made in 2020 for the AAW's 2021 POP *Elements* exhibit and auction. This sculpture vividly illustrates the forces of nature in terms of classical elements—wood evolving from earth, water, and air—with red glass alluding to fire. As a metaphor of nature's "rebirth" by fire, flowers appear to sprout from visibly scorched wood—a vivid connection to the renewal and continuation of life that follows.

Inspired by photography

An important element of inspiration, borrowed from the field of science, is observation. As a scientist, Andi will tell you that discovering the mysteries of the natural world through observation necessitates the use of photography. In fact, she regularly teaches a graduate-level course in the subject: Communicating Science

via Photography. In an article Andi wrote in 2002 on decorating work, she notes, "I've learned to 'see' plants through the lens of a camera, or through the eyepiece of a microscope, and that part of my life has now become important to me in my woodturning."

Regarding her series of work entitled *Imagine the Hidden World*, she says, "Some of my most enjoyable projects have involved my attempt to recreate the microscopic textures and architecture of pollen and seed as seen through a scanning electron microscope." Alternatively, with the naked eye or through a camera lens, "I'm particularly attracted to interesting color combinations and textures, and the way light plays off foliage and flowers."

When Betty Scarpino became editor of *American Woodturner* in 2009, she recognized that Andi's photographic skills would be a valuable aid in building visual content for AAW publications and in documenting events like AAW Symposia. Betty hired Andi

as a freelance photographer and notes, "She doesn't just randomly take pictures at symposia; she fully covers all of the activities, personally knows the demonstrators, understands how to make each person look good on camera, and isn't afraid to discreetly position herself for the best shot." It makes sense that in this role—recording year after year multitudes of demonstrations in every specialty, the Instant Gallery, AAW auctions, panel discussions, award ceremonies, the youth program, collectors, volunteers, and attendees—Andi has reciprocally broadened her own perspective on the diversity of our field.

Betty adds, "Andi's scientific background comes in handy for cataloging and retrieving thousands of images. When I was editor, Andi would often be able to provide just the right photo for the journal's wide-ranging topics, even beyond symposium images." Joshua Friend, the current *AW* editor, agrees: "Her symposium photos are



Andi Wolfe poses in front of a mock-up of an *American Woodturner* cover at the Raleigh, North Carolina, Symposium, 2019. Her professional-quality Symposium photos have provided instrumental visual support in the journal for over a decade.

Photo: Joshua Friend

Calla Lily 2, 2004, Ambrosia maple, pyrography, acrylic paint, 7¼" × 6½" (18cm × 17cm)

Bill and Kay Haskell Collection

Photo: Jerry Anthony Photography

so thorough and of such professional quality, they are an editor's dream come true."

Besides her role as a photographer for the AAW, Andi has a personal goal of creating a detailed photographic archive of the history of the AAW, a far-reaching and worthy vision of the organization and its contribution to the worlds of art and craft. Environmental portraits of such notables as David Ellsworth and Michael Hosaluk will be important components of this archive.

Collaborations in music

Although not a discernable path of inspiration, music has been another of Andi's non-verbal "languages" of expression. She has devoted much of her limited time to *Aisling*, her Celtic music group, singing, playing the fiddle, bodhran, and hammer dulcimer, as well as composing many of the tunes the group has recorded professionally. Andi acknowledges that discipline is key to playing well consistently—*practice, practice, practice* being an all-too-familiar mantra for woodturners as well. Importantly, the *structure* of music can also inspire visual impressions, born from similar concepts observed in nature: rhythm, contrasts, repeating patterns, texture, order, adaptation, and even improvisation.

The role of demonstrating

As a demonstrator and teacher of our craft, Andi shares a wide range of topics and techniques—not so students can copy an artist's work but to illustrate the process of how signature work emerges over time.



This approach is predicated on the way inspired connections are derived from one's unique life experiences, "seeing" the world around you, using what you know, and subsequently creating new designs. "I was a demonstrator for the first time at the 2003 AAW Symposium," Andi says. "This led to a series of invitations to demonstrate in the U.S., where I shared my techniques for texturing, pyrography, and coloring." Andi's invitations have extended to international venues as well, including Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and China.

Bodies of work

Andi's notable accomplishments over the past twenty-plus years—resulting in series that reflect personal narratives—began modestly in 2001 with her two-dimensional embellishments of botanical motifs, primarily using pyrographic carving techniques, Prismacolor markers, and acrylic paint. *Calla Lily 2* and *Leaf Saturation* are notable examples. *Carmine Ohio* is another example of her pyrographic carving technique and the application of color. Two-dimensional relief



From *Leaf Saturation* series, 2003 to present, Various woods and sizes

Photo: Jerry Anthony Photography



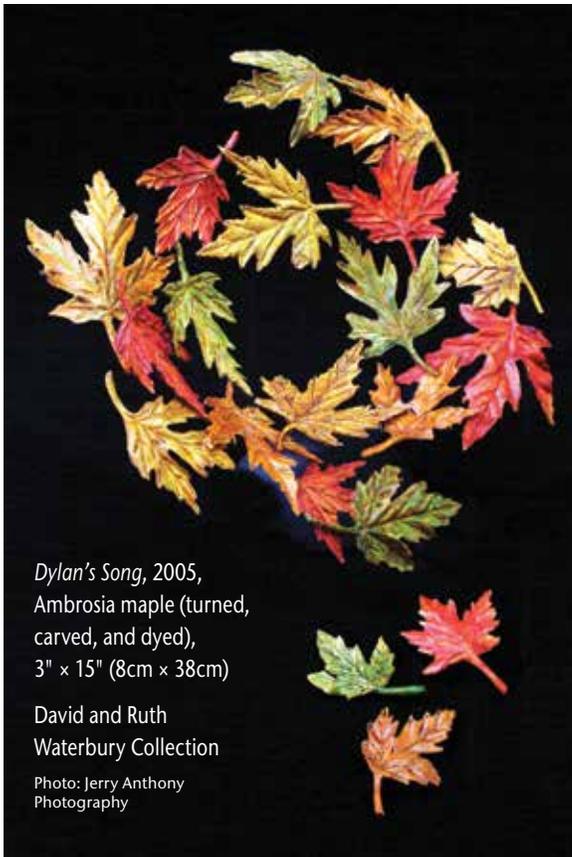
Carmine Ohio, 2004, European pear, pyrography, acrylic paint, 14" (36cm) diameter

Al Selnick Collection

Photo: Jerry Anthony Photography

carving soon followed, with prominently textured backgrounds like the one found in her 2004 piece, *Bronzed Autumn*, an example of her *Scorched Brilliance* series.

Andi recognized the need to move beyond the limitations of two-dimensional embellishments as early as 2003 and began the technical and aesthetic mastery of carving leaves in three dimensions. She was influenced by the stylized leaf motifs of Ron Fleming, Michelle Holzapfel, and Brenda Behrens. But in her evolving work, Andi also wanted to express a sense of realism, as in the works of Anglo-Dutch master carver Grinling Gibbons. What eventually resulted was a series of leaf motifs wherein Andi carved the leaves as thinly as possible, and—importantly—on both sides. They do not appear as flat objects, but twisted, as if dried and curled by ▶



Dylan's Song, 2005, Ambrosia maple (turned, carved, and dyed), 3" x 15" (8cm x 38cm)

David and Ruth Waterbury Collection

Photo: Jerry Anthony Photography



Quercus rubra, 2006, African sumac (turned and carved), 3" x 9½" (8cm x 24cm)

Honolulu Museum of Art Collection

Photo: Jerry Anthony Photography



Bronzed Autumn, 2004, Walnut, pyrography, relief burning, 4½" x 3½" (11cm x 9cm)

Photo: Jerry Anthony Photography



Glory of Autumn #3, 2005, Maple (turned, carved, and dyed), 4¼" x 4¼" (11cm x 11cm)

Dave and Karen Long Collection

Photo: Jerry Anthony Photography

nature. Pieces in her series, *The Glory of Autumn*, are early examples, culminating with one of the most distinctive, expressive, and refined works in the series, *Dylan's Song*.

Other outstanding pieces in her leaf-carving *oeuvre* include the highly refined sculpture, *Quercus Rubra*, and *Acer Embrace* (see front cover). Considered her most ambitious and

challenging work in this motif, *Acer Embrace* is a *tour de force* created for the *Maple Medley—An Acer Showcase* exhibit, which was on view at the 2010 AAW Symposium in Hartford, Connecticut. A lucid interpretation of her signature style, this piece is the manifestation of her dexterity in mastering difficult, extraordinary three-dimensional leaf-carving.

Andi began the series, *Imagine the Hidden World*, in 2003 as simply textured patterns on small bowls, with pyrography or a combination of carving and scorching. Some of her subsequent designs were inspired by seed surfaces and pollen grains seen under high magnification. *Tesserae Serai* is one excellent example, where the botanical design of repeating patterns defines the vessel's structure. Andi elaborates on the source of inspiration: "The outer cellular walls of some seeds collapse during drying, forming a mosaic of three-dimensional spaces." Bleaching the wood eliminates the distraction of color, leaving only the tessellations of cellular walls as the solitary design element.

Another important work in her *Imagine the Hidden World* series is *The Time Travelers*, created for the *New Horizons* exhibit in Richland, Washington, 2018. The purpose of the exhibit was to "push established artists to explore new work" by asking invited artists to step away from their typical motifs to create a new piece that would be "educational, inspiring, and significant." Andi took up the challenge in dramatic fashion with a huge change in scale and a new design idea from her background in biology. She focused on the fact that *propagules* (seeds, for example) can exist for a very long time and travel great distances from their source. This work comprises seventy-three turned and carved propagules from a variety of wood species, representing an amazing array of imaginary pollen grains, spores, egg cases, seeds, and the like. Installed, they are cleverly suspended to form a "wave," a space-time metaphor of the underlying rationale for her work.

In her 2008 series, *When I Let Go of What I Am, I Become What I Might Be*, Andi wanted to move in "an entirely new direction, where I combined the difficulties of carving and sandblasting." Her inspiration,



The Time Travelers, 2018, Various woods (turned and carved), 4' x 9' (1.2m x 2.7m) AAW Permanent Collection



based on the famous quotation by Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu, refers to the relationship between personal growth and risk-taking. Her first piece of this series was created for the POP *Spheres* exhibit at the AAW's 2008 Symposium in Richmond, Virginia. Carving very deep, extremely thin spherical wave forms is inherently risky in and of itself, and the abrading process of sandblasting increases the risk of failure significantly. Using very fine glass beads as blasting material to erode the soft grain of redwood, Andi created swirling textures in the

raised hard grain that remained. The end result is an exceptional visual connection of the inspired idea to the medium of wood. A subsequent piece in this series, *No.5*, created from redwood burl, received an AAW excellence award at the 2009 Symposium in Albuquerque, New Mexico. A third work in this series resides in the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, D.C.

what happens." I suspect we will all want a front-row seat, to experience just where this remarkable artist's journey will take her next.

For more, visit andiwolfe.com.

Andi Wolfe will soon retire from academia, and her plan is to become a full-time artist. Her new work will undoubtedly involve a mix of media, including wood, glass, metal, paint, and anything else that "speaks to my willingness to try new things and see

J. Paul Fennell, actively turning for over fifty years and an early member of the AAW, lives in Scottsdale, Arizona. His work resides in many museums and private collections, and he is a frequent demonstrator and instructor nationally and internationally. He can be contacted at jpaulfennell@yahoo.com.



Photo: Andi Wolfe

Tesserae serai, 2011, Ambrosia maple (turned, carved, and bleached), 10½" x 7½" (27cm x 19cm) Randy Pi Collection



Stephen A. Wolfe

When I Let Go of What I Am, I Become What I Might Be #5 (Lao Tzu), 2009, Redwood burl (turned, carved, and sandblasted), 5" (13cm) diameter



Jerry Anthony Photography

An Enduring Donation

Renwick Gallery Acquires 43 Works in Wood

Photos by Mitro Hood Photography.

After more than twenty years of collecting and incorporating wood art into their home, Jeffrey Bernstein and Judith Chernoff have donated a portion of their diverse collection to The Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum (Washington, D.C.). They

Connie Mississippi, *Midnight Mountain* (Circle of Time Series), 2001-2004, Baltic birch plywood (turned, carved, dyed, waxed, laminated), 6½" x 22" (17cm x 56cm)



(Left) **Robyn Horn**, *Stone Circle*, 2006, Jarrah burl, steel, 19½" x 18¼" x 14" (49cm x 46cm x 36cm)



(Right) **Hunt Clark**, *Untitled Wood Sculpture*, 2011, Maple, 15½" x 20" (39cm x 51cm)



had been in conversation for some time with the curators of the Renwick regarding their desire to add wood art to the Renwick's permanent collection. Current Renwick curators Mary Savig and Nora Atkinson were invited to the Bernstein/Chernoff home multiple times to study their collection, after which time pieces of interest were researched and eventually put through an extensive review process as dictated by the Smithsonian. Judy and Jeff gave the curators maximum flexibility to pick pieces they would like to add to the Renwick collection. This resulted in the selection of forty-three pieces from thirty artists. They are especially pleased that, for twenty-three artists, this will be their first object(s) accepted into the Renwick's permanent collection. Their donation will be part of the Renwick's 50th Anniversary exhibition, *This Present*

Moment: Crafting a Better World, a building-wide show that will be on view May 13, 2022, to April 2, 2023.

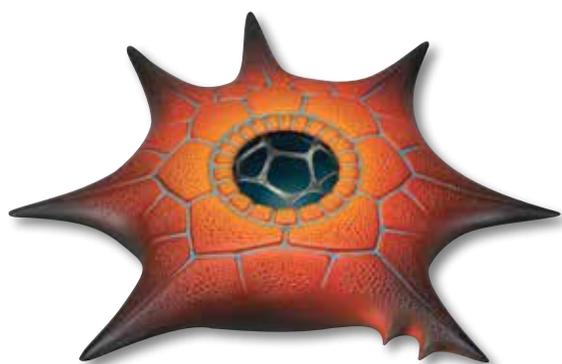
Artists included in this gift and exhibition are John Beaver, Dixie Biggs, Hunt Clark, Andy Cole, Sharon Doughtie, Cindy Drozda, Harvey Fein, Ray Feltz, J. Paul Fennell, Ron Fleming, Michael Hampel, Stephen Hatcher, Louise Hibbert, Robyn Horn, Jerry Kermode, Pat Kramer, John Mascoll, Hal Metlitzky, Connie Mississippi, Philip Moulthrop, Mark Nantz, Graeme Priddle, Avelino Samuel, Betty Scarpino, David Sengel, Koji Tanaka, Curt Theobald, Holly Tornheim, Jacques Vesery, and Andi Wolfe. Following is a sampling of works included in Jeff and Judy's remarkable donation.

For more, visit americanart.si.edu/exhibitions/this-present-moment.



Koji Tanaka,
Nagamé, 2013,
African mahogany,
5¾" × 27⅞" × 2¾"
(15cm × 71cm × 7cm)

Louise Hibbert, *Radiolarian Vessel VII*,
2004, English sycamore, silver, texture paste,
acrylic inks, 2½" × 6" (6cm × 15cm)



John Beaver, *Protruding
Wave Bowl*, 2011, Alder,
padauk, 3" × 5" (8cm × 13cm)



Stephen Hatcher, *Falling Blossoms*, 2016, Bigleaf maple, gaboony ebony, fiber-veneer, mineral
crystal inlay, rare earth magnets, resin, colorfast dyes, lacquer, 7¾" × 6½" (20cm × 17cm)

Curator's View

In 2002, Jeffrey Bernstein and Judith Chernoff acquired *Fusion* by Mark Nantz, an other-worldly amboyna burl vessel suspended within an ebony exoskeleton. *Fusion* marked the shift in the Bernstein-Chernoff's journey from curious seekers to informed advocates. For the next twenty years, they gathered an outstanding collection and helped grow a community of woodturners. In 2021, they donated forty-three sculptural wood artworks to the Smithsonian American Art Museum's Renwick Gallery, one of the preeminent public collections of contemporary wood art in the United States. The artworks selected for the Renwick Gallery are dynamic and of the moment, introducing a new group of accomplished artists to the Renwick. The selected artworks fit seamlessly into the existing holdings and will energize scholarship for many generations to come.

To visit the Bernstein/Chernoff home in Laurel, Maryland, is to enter a constellation of lively artworks: many works radiate with the beauty of wood, and others dazzle with segmented, colored, and pierced designs. When Nora Atkinson and I visited their home in 2020, we immediately took note of the diversity of techniques and forms, a measure of Jeff and Judy's scrupulous collecting

philosophy. They explained how they carefully selected works after getting to know the artists and gaining insight into their processes. We noted the hallmarks of virtuosity and ingenuity, like Cindy Drozda's splendid finials and John Beaver's segmented wave bowls. All the while, we were fascinated by the personal backstories of each artwork.

As part of the 50th anniversary exhibition, *This Present Moment: Crafting a Better World*, a gallery has been designed to evoke the feeling of Jeff and Judy's home, where over the years they have welcomed many visitors to share their knowledge and passion. We are proud to extend their educational mission to a public gallery, where the collection will inspire visitors to discover the intricacies of knots, burls, and grain, learn more about process and skills, and reflect more deeply on the creative possibilities of wood in our world. Beyond the 50th anniversary, Nora and I have already plotted to place these new acquisitions in conversation with existing collections, teasing out affinities between craft mediums and perhaps staging a few surprises.

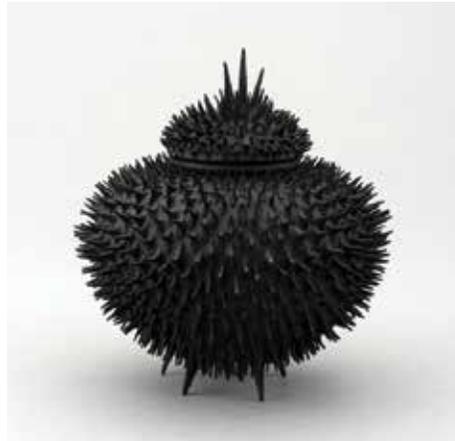
—Mary Savig, Lloyd Herman Curator of Craft, Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum



Jacques Vesery, *Makana Ka Na Hoku (Gift of the Stars)*, 2006-2007, Cherry (carved, textured), 23K gold leaf, acrylic paint, 2½" × 5" (6cm × 13cm)



Jerry Kermode, *Untitled Bowl Vessel*, 2007, Redwood lace burl, 5¼" × 18¾" (13cm × 48cm)



David Sengel, *Round Lidded Container with Legs*, Bing cherry, rose, blackberry, and locust thorns, 4" × 3¼" (10cm × 8cm)

(Above) **Pat Kramer**, *Night Blooming Serious*, 2003, Norfolk Island pine (turned, carved, burned, and ebonized), 5" × 15½" (13cm × 39cm)

(Left) **Cindy Drozda**, *Pele (Hawaiian Goddess of Fire)*, 2005, Australian red malee burl, blackwood, garnet in 14K gold, 15¾" × 9" (40cm × 23cm)

(Right) **Mark Nantz**, *Fusion*, 2002, Amboyna burl, ebony (turned and constructed), 12¼" × 11¾" × 12¼" (31cm × 29cm × 31cm)



Sharon Doughtie, *Four Winds*,
Two Poles, 2005, Norfolk Island pine
(turned, burned, textured, leather
dyed), 3" x 9" (8cm x 23cm)



Hal Metlitzky, *Cyclone*, 2012, Yellowheart, Gabon
ebony, holly, imbaia, black walnut, satine, old-growth
East Indian rosewood, 15" x 21" (38cm x 53cm)



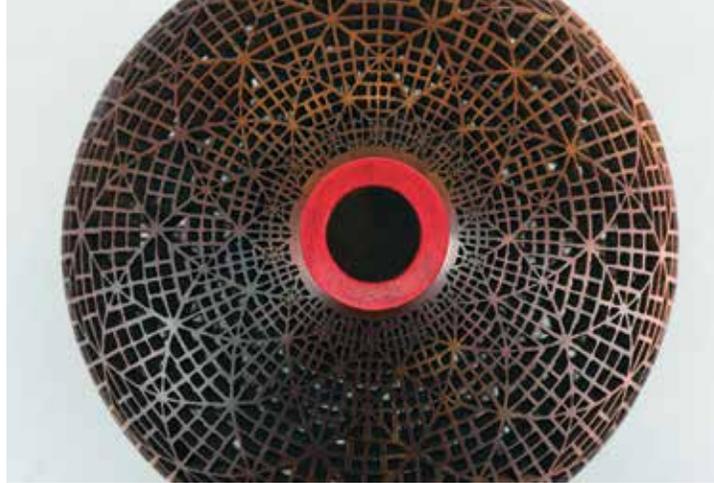
Graeme Priddle,
Reflection, 2006, Macrocarpa,
acrylic paint, 14¼" x 8½" x 4"
(36cm x 22cm x 10cm)



Andy Cole,
Hawaiian Six Pack, 2015,
Macadamia, largest:
7½" x 12¼" x 10¾"
(19cm x 31cm x 27cm)



Philip Moulthrop,
Mixed Mosaic, 2003, Pine, mimosa,
oak, pear, cherry, darkened resin,
9" x 13" (23cm x 33cm)



J. Paul Fennell,
Szechwan Serenity, 2013,
African sumac, 11" x 9"
(28cm x 23cm)



**Harvey Fein and
Avelino Samuel,**
Untitled, 2011, Cocobolo,
10" x 6¾" (25cm x 17cm)



Dixie Biggs, *Sweet Dreams*, 2010, Sugar maple,
paint, 3" x 4" (8cm x 10cm)



John Mascoll, *Untitled Lidded Vessel*,
2016, Citrus, 11" x 4¾" (28cm x 12cm)



Curt Theobald, *Eye of the Storm*, 2013, Butternut,
maple, bubinga, 3½" x 15" (9cm x 38cm)



Ray Feltz, *Ribbon Bowl*, 2010, Bloodwood,
holly, pink ivory, 1½" x 3½" (29mm x 9cm)

MEMBERS' GALLERY

Bob Bing-You, Maine

This winter, I participated in the eight-week woodturning intensive at the Center for Furniture Craftsmanship in Rockport, Maine. My classmates and I learned a tremendous amount from our outstanding lead instructor, Beth Ireland, and our two visiting instructors, Mark Gardner and Dixie Biggs.

Since I began woodturning (only five months ago), I have been intrigued by small boxes. For the course's final project, I chose to create a chess set where all the pieces are boxes. I am not sure what possessed me to tackle this large project of

thirty-two boxes! One side is made from cherry and the opposing side, from maple. During the course, we had a fun debate about what should go inside the boxes—candy? money?



CFC instructor Beth Ireland plays a game of chess with the author, using his “box” set made during the school's eight-week woodturning intensive.

And does the winner get all the boxes' contents? Should only one box contain a surprise? I feel that as a woodturning community, we are lucky to have such a great course.



Blake Patterson, Florida

As a committed segmenter, I use more science, technology, engineering, and math turning wood than I used during my twenty-plus years as a Bell Labs engineer. I recycle wood—bowl segments of green poplar were the core of a discarded dining-room tabletop; I imagine families laughing, fighting, celebrating, and grieving around that table. I seek new bowl designs, segment-assembly methods, and tools that make the creation process more efficient. To grow bowls horizontally, I attach a new ring *outside* the previous ring, much like in male-female plumbing components.

I adapted old paper-shredder motors to power a “potter's wheel” for applying finishes, a mixing pot for epoxy, and an “antigravity machine” that rotates up to five bowls as finishes cure. I recently began arranging wood shapes and rings on flat cardboard to form “troughs” that I fill with tinted

epoxy. Epoxy simplifies assembly, fortifies wood against cracks, and offers limitless color options. Ever-active members of the AAW's Segmented Woodturners chapter (segmentedwoodturners.org) inspire me. ▶



Compass Rose, 2021, Poplar, aromatic cedar, aspen, sapele, epoxy, 2½" × 13" (6cm × 33cm)



Cube Illusion No. 9, 2021, Poplar, aromatic cedar, aspen, epoxy, 2" × 12¾" (5cm × 31cm)

Cube Illusion No. 9 is one of ten cube-illusion variations inspired by Peter M. Smith's April 2021 journal article, “Make a Tumbling Bowl.”



Star of David, 2021, Poplar, aromatic cedar, aspen, sycamore, padauk, pine, walnut, epoxy, 2¾" × 12¾" (7cm × 31cm)

MEMBERS' GALLERY

Fred Chase, New Jersey

I have been a licensed psychologist for forty-one years. It is a skill set that requires patience, grounding, experience, and a genuine interest in people and the human condition. Over the past nine years, I have found a deep passion for woodturning. Following a two-week intensive experience with David Ellsworth, that passion has continued to grow.

I participate in several craft shows annually, including the *Rittenhouse Fine Craft Show*, the *Philadelphia Furniture Show*, Artrider shows, and others. In 2018, I won first prize at New Hope's *Works in Wood* show for best small turned vessel.

I gather all my wood locally and work with both green and twice-turned vessels. Increasingly, I have

expanded my interest in making forms that emphasize the aesthetic experience over the functional. I have begun painting on the surfaces of my turned vessels, which I see as a vital progression in my development. Translating a two-dimensional design into a three-dimensional object represents a place of creative potential that I look forward to exploring further.



Bee Hive, 2021, Maple, Prismacolor artist markers, archival ink, 4½" x 12" (11cm x 30cm)



Horizons, 2020, Spalted maple, Prismacolor artist markers, archival ink, 8" x 13" (20cm x 33cm)



Ribbons, 2021, Ash, Prismacolor artist markers, archival ink, 6" x 18" (15cm x 46cm)



Michael Hamilton-Clark, British Columbia, Canada

I took up woodturning by happenstance. After using a friend's lathe to make wooden tops for two whiskey glasses to serve as jam jars, I realized woodturning could be a good thing. Eighteen years on, and having joined the local woodturners guild, this has proved to be true. I enjoy the overall creative process. Sometimes a piece such as a bowl or dish evolves during the turning; other times, for a particular item to be nicely proportioned, a drawing may be needed. I have found that for pieces intended for display, the use of colorants can increase the aesthetic appeal. All-in-all, woodturning is a multifaceted and truly creative activity that has helped keep me on form in my advancing years.



Dish, 2021, Figured maple, dye, 2" x 14" (5cm x 36cm)



Jewel Box, 2020, Narra, button, 3½" x 5" (9cm x 13cm)



Rudi Truninger, California

I enjoy gardening and growing my own fruits and vegetables. As someone who is handy and mechanical, metalworking and woodworking are also in my blood. I started woodturning in 2018 due to space limitations and took a few lessons from Curtis Thomson to learn the basics. After making several spindle projects and small bowls, I felt confident taking on larger bowls. Curtis introduced me to the El Camino Woodturners Guild (Torrance, California), where I learned lots of tricks and techniques.

Before long, I ran out of space to display my turned items. I also had a lower-back problem, which limited the time I could work at the lathe. So I started turning miniature items, such as bowls, vases, goblets, cups, plates, and hollow forms. The wood is mostly scrap and some fresh wood from my fruit tree cuttings. Soon I needed a display for those little items. After thinking about possible designs, I figured out that a spiral staircase could hold the most pieces on a small footprint. *Stairway to Insanity* comprises 210 turned items.

Stairway to Insanity, 2021, Lemon, orange, peach, apricot, cherry, apple, padauk, cocobolo, macadamia, walnut, pecan, juniper, grapevine, oak, ash, MDF, unknown woods, 35" x 11½" (89cm x 29cm)



Wes Jones, Georgia

I bought an interesting log of buttonwood at a symposium, and it sat in my shop for some time as I waited for inspiration. I wanted to find a way to showcase the log's irregular, convoluted outer surface.

I started with the piece between centers and then turned a deep bowl into one end. My idea was to part in at several places around the bowl to reveal the bowl shape in the middle.

But when I tried to part in with a parting tool, I discovered that due to the convolutions and the depth of cut required, I could not hold the parting tool safely. I needed a better way to support the cutting edge.

Using an XY compound sliding table bolted to my lathe bed, I was able to mount a machinist's vise with a square cutter 6" (15cm) long and 5/16" (8mm) wide. The jig was aligned so

the cutter could be advanced into the workpiece perpendicular to the axis of rotation. I made five deep cuts, using the sliding table to advance the cutter slowly and securely. The angle on the cutting edge of the bit was reshaped for each cut to follow the outer shape of the bowl I had hollowed. Finally, I reverse-mounted the log and used a bowl gouge to continue the lower cut around to the bottom of the bowl. ■



Bowl Within a Bowl, 2021, Buttonwood, 4" x 10" (10cm x 25cm)



Deep, straight-in cuts made with a machine tool bit held in a vise highlight the log's irregular outer surface.

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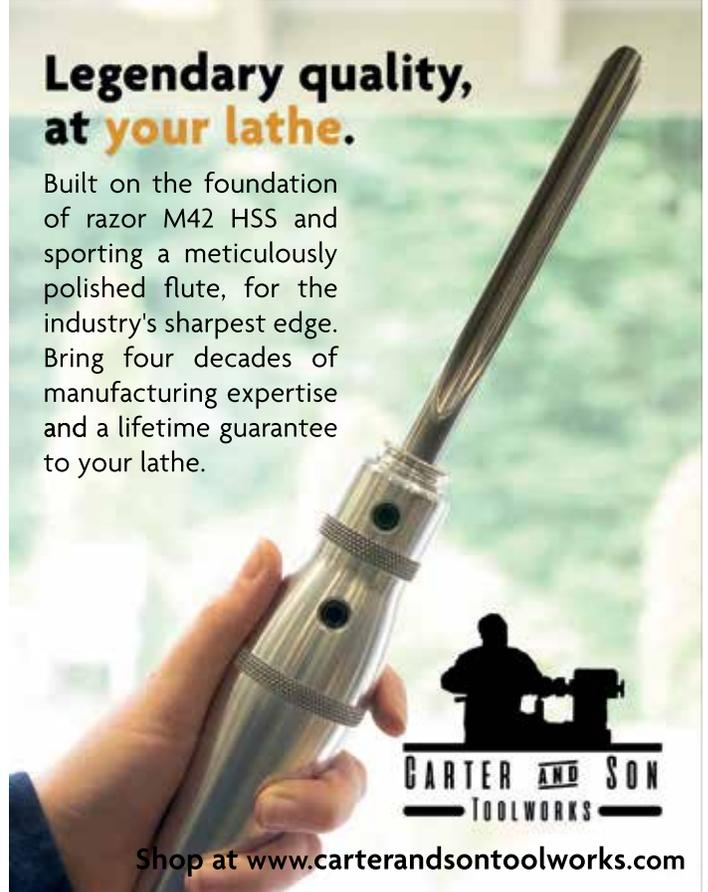


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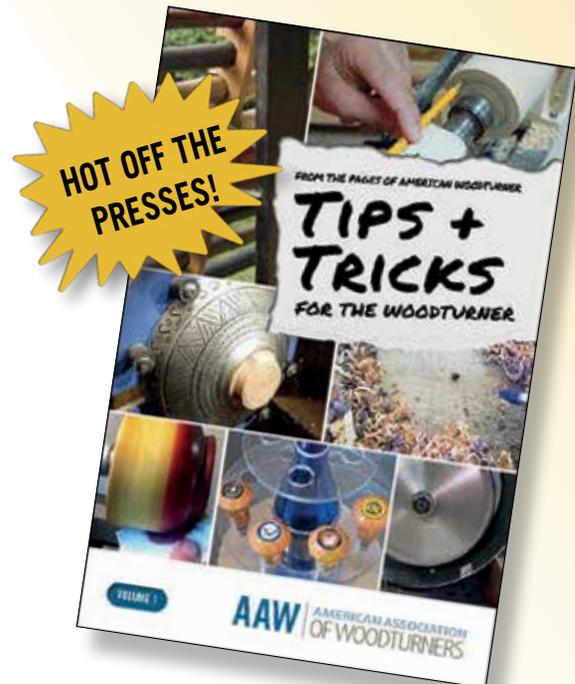
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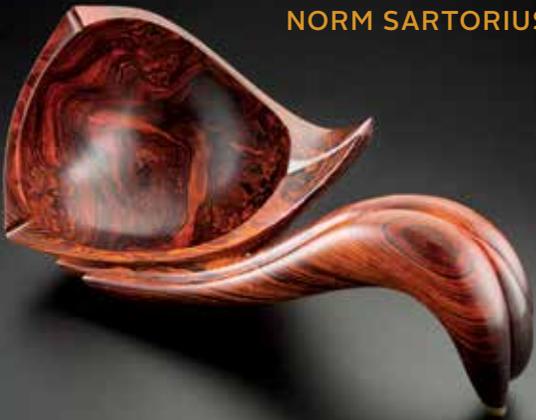
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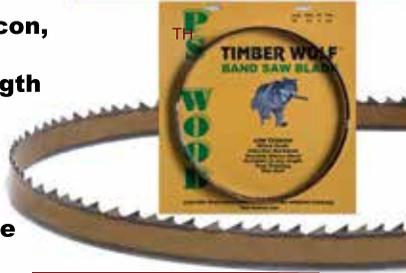


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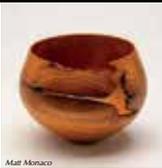
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Rick's work is available at Bainbridge Arts & Crafts gallery in Bainbridge Island, Washington (bacart.org). Learn more about him through his listing in the artist resource, Pacific Northwest Sculptors (pnwsculptors.org/member-profile/rickcrawford).

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