

Member Profile Mark Palma, Member # 30289



Mark Palma

Mark Palma has retired from what he calls a "cutthroat industry" (he was an attorney) and is delighted to be part of a group of people who celebrate openness, camaraderie, teaching, and sharing – woodturners. Mark thanks his wife for the gift of not one, but two Oneway lathes. Only problem is, he says he can no longer blame the equipment.

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AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
OF WOODTURNERS

Name: Mark Palma
Home Town: Cameron, WI
Chapter Affiliation: Chippewa Valley Woodturners Guild,
Minnesota Woodturners Association
Number of Years Turning: 10

What motivated you to join AAW?

As a self-taught turner I reached a stage where I could do the basics, but I knew something was missing. I wanted to find that next step in my learning process. I had read lots of books and watched some videos but I was topping out. AAW provided the springboard I needed.

When you look at your turnings, what do you see?

When I look at my early work, I cringe and see bottoms as thick as my Aunt Millie's! As my work has progressed, I have seen stages (or phases) that show my journey with specie, form and shape, embellishment, and whimsy.

Who, or what, was your greatest teacher/influence?

Of professional turners, Richard Raffan's videos kept me going those first three years as I struggled to find the secret of tool control. His humor (and on camera mistakes and laughter) kept me going.

Jimmy Carter is a person who has wisdom when it comes to woodworking. Read his interview with Fine Woodworking and it will inspire you to be a better woodworker, regardless of the specifics or your style of woodworking. He taught me to do my best and make things that others will cherish after I pass from this planet.

My greatest influence was a turner from the CVWG, Rick Bauer, who said in a demonstration, "Don't hoard your work, share it with others, give it away, but don't just pile it around yourself." It was great advice and since then I have given away hundreds of pieces. It has brought that element of joy to the process by seeing my work through the eyes of the recipient.

What was your happiest turning moment?

Anyone who has read my writing (or watched me demonstrate) knows I make jokes about everything so this is hard. Maybe it was the "Learn to Turn" event with the 70-year-old Mennonite woman, or the time I was privileged to help a sight-impaired girl turn a pen. I think my personal high point may have been the time in the demo what I threw bags of potato chips into the crowd so that they saw "chips fly." Who knows!

What is your favorite wood/tool and why?

My Crown PM 3/8 spindle gouge has been my friend for years. I keep it next to me all the time. I am experimenting with some new Hunter tool designs that are on the market and they may give the spindle gouge a run for the money.

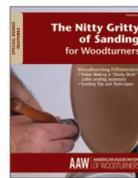
Where do you see the future of woodturning going?

This is an easy question and a tough one. For the amateur turner, the future is very bright. We have access to the greatest lathes, tools, alloys, sharpening systems and wood species that any turner has ever had available since we learned to cook with fire. With the books, magazines, videos and demonstrations available, the amateur wood turner has tremendous resources. The variable speed mini-lathe has become a sophisticated tool and has really created access to great equipment with a minimal footprint.

For the professional woodturner, it may be tough. Sure some big name turners will sell some pieces to museums, but people are buying less "stuff" to have sitting around in their

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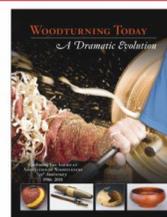
**Buy a AAW 30th Anniversary Shirt
and get *Woodturning Today* FREE!**



Member price

\$20

Plus shipping



The tee shirt is pre-shrunk 100% cotton with a screen printed logo. *Woodturning Today*, is a 256-page, full-color, soft cover book documenting the growth of woodturning and AAW.

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**Watch for our
Black Friday
deals next week!**

**REMINDER: 2016
Year-End Drawing!**

Each year, the AAW draws a name from its membership roster to give away a **Powermatic 3520B** lathe. The winner then names a local chapter to win either a **JET 1642** or **five JET mini-lathes**, donated by Powermatic/JET. Included is free shipping in the continental USA or up to a \$500 allowance for international winners. All AAW members will be entered for a chance to win, but to qualify for the

lives. As homes shrink in size and the boomers (who were "collectors") age, who is going to buy this work? My kids will snap a picture of it with their phone, post it on some social media site and move on. I think as we see a generation of people who will own fewer things become the nation's primary purchasing consumers, the demand will dry up. I think utilitarian pieces will have a spot, so turners who make durable daily-use items will have a place.

In addition to woodturning, what other crafts/hobbies have you enjoyed?

I also love to do landscaping; however my wife thinks I would be far too dangerous to society if I owned a skid steer. We are privileged to live on a lake and go boating whenever we can. Besides my Corvette (which is a necessity and hence, does not meet the definition of a hobby) I make furniture.

Has being a part of AAW affected your life and work? How?

I think of myself of a block of wood (my children will tell you it's between my ears). AAW is knocking off the rough corners. Over time I will learn what shape and form will evolve from being involved with such a great organization. I have met so many wonderful people through AAW.

I am privileged to do some writing and demonstrating. Writing for FUNdamentals has given me a chance to share with others, and brings reward to me. Besides, who else would tolerate my odd writing style but people who spin wood at a few thousand rpm's and then stick a sharp piece of metal into it? I worked in a cutthroat industry (law) and cannot believe how open to sharing and teaching AAW members are! Wow, never take yourselves for granted; you are an incredible group of people.

What is your favorite project or piece?

I have been lucky and accidentally turned out some work that others think is fairly solid. The "Tribute Bowl" is personally special to me because it's about my paternal grandfather. My new mixed media car part vessels are fun. Since I give it all away, it lets me worry about the piece, the form, and finish. If it takes a week, hey, it's all great shop time. I am less wed to the piece than to overall outcome. It's got to be perfect (or my best work) regardless of how long it takes.



Mark's "Tribute Bowl" is special to him because it represents the interests of his paternal grandfather.

drawing your dues must be current so **be sure to renew by December 31!** [Renew online at the AAW website](#) or call 651-484-9094.



This mixed media car parts vessel is one of several that Mark finds are fun to make.

How has your local chapter helped you?

This is AAW's greatest strength. It's not the cash on the balance sheet; it's the chapter level volunteers and members who make AAW. The openness, comradery, ribbing and kidding, teaching and sharing, all create a unique breed of people you look forward to spending time with and around. What other meeting do you look forward to attending?

We hope you have enjoyed the Anniversary Profile stories we've shared with you this year. They were a great way to help us commemorate the AAW's 30th year.



Inspired by positive feedback on this series, we've decided to continue sharing member stories, but with an expanded scope to include those who joined the AAW later and have had (or are having) a significant impact on our organization's success. We hope you enjoy these Member Profiles!

Click [here](#) to read this and other profiles online.

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