

## MEMBER PROFILE: Rita and James Duxbury Member #15556

### *A Family Affair*

#### Rita Duxbury



*After watching her husband turn for 14 years, Rita finally tried turning for herself and has not stopped.*

#### **What motivated you to join AAW?**

After watching my husband, Jim Duxbury, day after day in our shop, and after sweeping all of the shavings from his turnings, I decided it was time to try my hand at woodturning. Now I turn almost daily and also continue to sweep the shavings - and there are more of them.

**When you look at your turnings, what do you**

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see?

When looking at my turnings, I see much improvement! I have kept the first bowl that I ever turned and now realize how primitive and poorly designed it was.

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

My greatest teacher is my husband. He has shown true patience when I ask questions, require assistance. When I think that I have "cleaned the shop," it is really in his mind "hiding the tools." Invading his "man cave" has been a transition for both of us.

**What was your happiest turning moment?**

The happiest moment was the first time the sanding on my bowl passed the inspection of my husband. To this day, each piece that I turn must go under the discerning eye of my mentor.

**What is your favorite wood/tool and why?**

Each and every piece of wood that I see is a unique example of grain, color, weight, texture, and beauty. Wood is like snowflakes. None are exactly the same and I treasure each. My pile of "little scraps" that can't be discarded is growing and growing.

**Where do you see the field of woodturning going?**

Woodturning for most is a hobby, sometimes an expensive hobby at that, but the outreach programs and the demonstrations made available to the public have opened the eyes of many to woodturning as a craft that requires skill, imagination, and diligence. Woodturning has taken its rightful place in the world of art. The limits are boundless.

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

In the past I have become involved in numerous hobbies such as quilting, gardening, scuba diving, and traveling the world. However, mastering the craft of woodturning has been an enjoyment and given me the ability to assist Jim at all of his demonstrators and workshops.

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

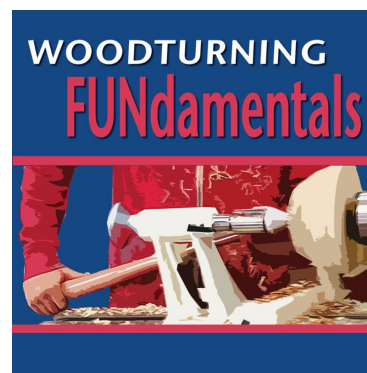
My life is totally consumed by woodturning. Each day is spent in our shop, each month I attend chapter meetings, and during the year, most of our travels are for the purpose of demonstrating to chapters, regional symposiums, or the annual trek to the AAW Symposium. My life is everything

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is a members-only web-based learning portal for building strong woodturning skills and essential techniques. Designed for new turners, it complements the Woodturning FUNdamentals digital publication. [Visit Woodturning](#)

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### **What is your favorite project or piece?**

One of my favorite projects, and also one which has been very successful, is the turning of seam rippers for those who quilt and sew. It is a very useful item, ergonomically comfortable, and a desirable little tool.



*Seam rippers Rita turns for quilters.*

### **How has your local chapter helped you?**

My local chapters have afforded me the opportunity to see numerous excellent demonstrators, each with new techniques, projects, and ideas. Additionally, I have served as Librarian and on the Social Committee of the Piedmont Triad Woodturners, providing a chance to meet, converse, and work with all of the members and their families.

**James Duxbury**



*Jim has been seriously turning for 18 years.*

**What motivated you to join AAW?**

I started turning at about ten years old, making tool handles, tools, and small lamps which were crude but things we needed around our house and farm. In 1998, I was introduced to the North Coast Woodturners in Cleveland, OH, the Buckeye Woodturners in Akron, OH, and the AAW. The fascination never ended.

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

I can see a steady progression of improvement. The quality of my turned piece, my ability to design, and the variety of my turnings sometimes even exceeds my own expectations.

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

David Hout did a one day class at Cooks Forest in Pennsylvania which gave me the inspiration and confidence to really get into woodturning. It also revealed how little I knew and exposed me to how much I had to learn. So, after practicing for a few months with near disastrous results, I took a basic woodturning class at John C. Campbell Folk School with Nick Cook. Nick, a master in the craft, got me started the right way, and it has been an enjoyable learning ever since.

**What was your happiest turning moment?**

Teaching others, by far. I taught my wife, my son, and two grandsons and that is a great feeling. However, while teaching at the community college,

a successful lawyer enrolled in the class, having never made a thing in his life. He had no knowledge of tools or woodturning at all. After much instruction, by the end of the first session he had turned two door stoppers. They were a little crude at best so I suggested he bring them back the following class for a touch up. He paused, held them up and said, "No way! These are beautiful and I made them." It doesn't get any better than that.

**What is your favorite wood/tool and why?**

All species of wood have their function but my favorite wood to turn is cherry. It is a good hardwood, finishes well, and mellows in time to a darker honey color. My favorite tool and the one which I use about 85% of the time is a 3/8" spindle gouge.

**Where do you see the field of woodturning going?**

It is great as a hobby and I think the possibilities are endless.

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

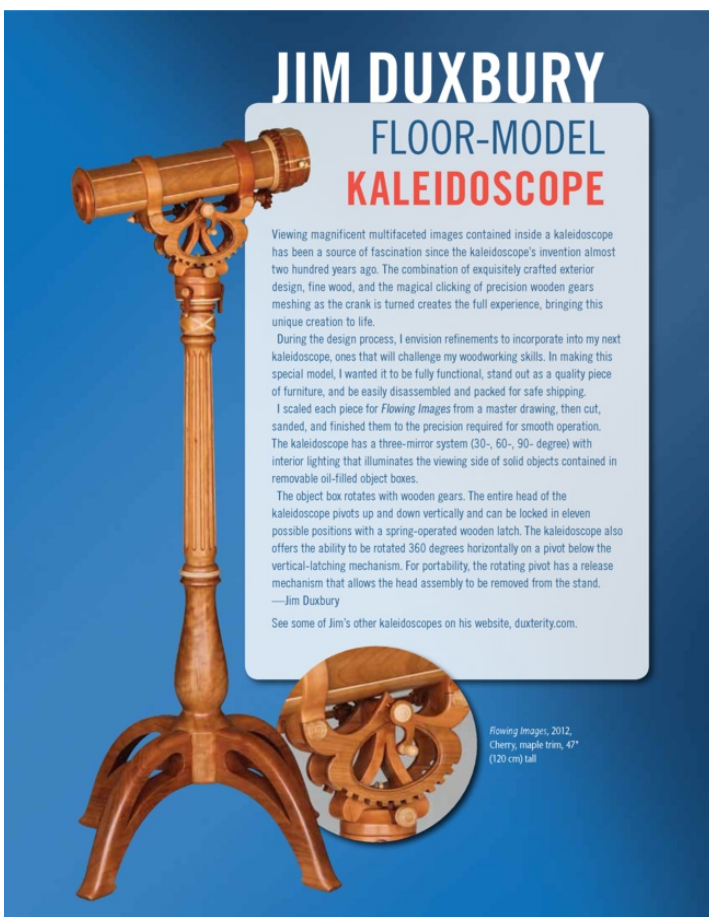
Other than woodturning, walking has become my hobby. I used to train for triathlons, scuba dive, ballroom dance, and do other woodwork.

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

You get out of an organization what you put into it. I was the Program Chairman for the Piedmont Triad Woodturners for eight years and got to meet and host many professional turners from all over the world. Also, as a demonstrator, my wife and I have traveled and stayed with turners in many states. It is great to meet other turners, see their shops, talk to the families, and spend down time together. Participation broadens your scope as a person, and helps others, too. Woodturners are great people.

**What is your favorite project or piece?**

Of all the things I turn, I have become known for my turned wooden kaleidoscopes. One of my favorite pieces is a floor model kaleidoscope of cherry with maple trim. I am honored that it was selected to appear on the back cover of the AAW magazine.



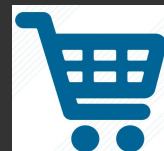
*Jim's kaleidoscope appeared on the back cover of American Woodturner, August 2012, vol. 27, no 4.*

### How has your local chapter helped you?

As previously mentioned, you get out of an organization what you put into it. Sometimes it seems like a lot of work for nothing but both my wife and I have learned so much, met some really nice people, and all while helping others. Isn't that why we were put on this earth?

### A Family Affair

The AAW and woodturning have become a family affair for the Duxburys. In addition to Jim and Rita being a team, they have encouraged their two grandsons to take up the craft. The boys quickly became hooked! They attended the AAW Symposium in Pittsburgh, and participated in the Youth Room Program, where the youngest grandson won the AAW Best of Show award. The ability to "turn a profit" from their work has really made a difference for these two teenagers.



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