

AAW

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF WOODTURNERS

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January 25, 2018

MEMBER PROFILE:

Walter Wager

MEMBER #21502

Walt Wager enjoys turning wood and teaching others to turn, including his granddaughter, Adrienne. Like many, Walt learned to use a lathe during his college years in an Industrial Arts program but rediscovered the joys of turning after a lengthy absence from the lathe. Today, Walt also enjoys writing about woodturning projects, has been a frequent contributor to the AAW's digital publication Woodturning FUNDamentals, and was instrumental in bringing AAW's Woodturning FUNDamentals online learning portal to fruition. Perhaps you are one of the many who have turned one of his projects.

- **Hometown:** Monticello, FL
- **Chapter Affiliation:** [North Florida Woodturners](#)
- **Contact Information:** waltwager.com



Shear-scraping with the edge of a shear scrape on an olive wood bowl. The shear scrape is held at an angle to the wood and with the cutting edge parallel to a steep angle.

Mike Mahoney

Conventional woodturning wisdom tells us the preferred way to remove wood on the lathe is with a bevel-riding cut. With that tool presentation, the bevel supports the edge of the tool, keeps it sharp longer, and provides a guide to achieve your desired line or curve. In my business as a professional bowl turner, I have found that another valuable technique is shear-scraping, which I like to further refine and remove slight imperfections such as tearout from some (but not all) turned surfaces. When done correctly, shear-scraping can dramatically reduce the amount of sanding required. It allows you to "run

out" high spots, blemishes, and tool marks easily.

When to shear-scrape

Shear-scraping is typically applied to the exterior of subgrain turnings to the lathe bed, also known as the plate wood. It works exceptionally well on bowl exteriors prior to hollowing and on platters. It is also handy for anyone making hollow forms with bowl or subgrain wood. Often, hollow form shapes have sloping curves, and when your workpiece is still mounted between centers, the lathe's headstock and tailstock can get in the way of making level-riding cuts. Shear-scraping is

sometimes the only way to connect the upper and lower curves on this type of form.

Another benefit of shear-scraping is that it can be applied in any cutting direction, left or right, regardless of grain direction.

I don't recommend shear-scraping endgrain, as doing so tears the wood fibers badly. Bevel-riding cuts work better for specific work, with the grain running parallel to the lathe bed. I also do not recommend shear-scraping the inside of a bowl, though, based on what I have seen on YouTube, many people do. The reason it is safe to shear-scrape the outside of a bowl is that you would

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AAW EXPLORE! STAFF PICK

In his article, "A Closer Look at Shear-Scraping," from the June 2017 issue of *American Woodturner*, Mike Mahoney explains that shear-scraping works exceptionally well on bowl exteriors prior to hollowing and on platters. It is also handy for anyone making hollow forms with burl or side-grain wood. When done correctly, shear-scraping can dramatically reduce the amount of sanding required."

[Click here for a direct link to the article \(you must already be logged into the AAW website\).](#)



Walt's 11" 5" sable palm hollow vessel with ebony and bloodwood collar was juried into an art show in Gadsden, Florida.

What motivated you to join AAW?

After seeing a member of AAW exhibiting his work, I told him I had done a bit of lathe work in my Industrial Arts program at State University of New York but hadn't done it in years. He invited me to a local chapter meeting of the North Florida Woodturners and I was hooked. My desire to learn and absorb it all led me to join AAW.

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

I've learned from so many different woodturners at workshops and symposiums, but my primary mentor was John Penrod. John was a professional turner, sold work at American Craft Council shows, and was a member of AAW.

What was your happiest turning moment?

My happiest turning moment was finishing a contract job turning four table legs out of wenge. That was the splinteriest wood you could imagine and I was so glad to have the job finished.

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

The AAW symposium is a great way to meet interesting artists, learn new techniques, and share knowledge about woodturning. The articles in the *American Woodturner* and the annual symposium challenge me to draw outside the lines.



VIDEO: FLICK OF THE WEEK

After a brief message from the AAW, Mike Mahoney shares a tip on shear-scraping to help you be more successful. We encourage you to share this tip from YouTube with your social media friends!

[Woodturning tip on shear-scraping from Mike Mahoney \(TRT 5:36\)](#)

I've been a teacher all my life, and, in my opinion, the best way to learn is to teach. AAW facilitates my teaching. Below is a picture of my granddaughter and the bowl she made on a lathe she won at the 2017 AAW symposium in Kansas City. Teaching her to turn wood is one of the greatest joys in my life.



Walt's granddaughter, Adrienne, shows off the bowl she turned after winning a lathe at the 2017 AAW symposium in Kansas City.

What is your favorite tool/wood and why?

I really enjoy turning Norfolk pine. I love working concentric knots into the design of the piece. My favorite tool is probably the 3/8" spindle gouge, which I use for turning finials, beads, and such.

What's your favorite project/piece?

My favorite piece is generally whatever I am working on. I recently turned some sable palm. The piece (pictured with Walt at the beginning of this article) was juried into an art show in Gadsden, Florida. My latest piece is a vase (pictured below) with marbling on four sides.

Why is Mike Mahoney smiling?



I'm smiling because I'm moderating a panel discussion on **Marketing** with Sally Ault, Nick Cook, and Ashley Harwood at **AAW'S 32nd Annual International Symposium!**

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Mike's smiling because

he's moderating a panel discussion on Marketing with Sally Ault, Nick Cook, and Ashley Harwood at [AAW'S Annual International Symposium June 14-17, 2018](#) at the Oregon Convention Center in Portland!



Walt used a marbling technique to enhance this 13" x 5" sweet gum hollow vessel.

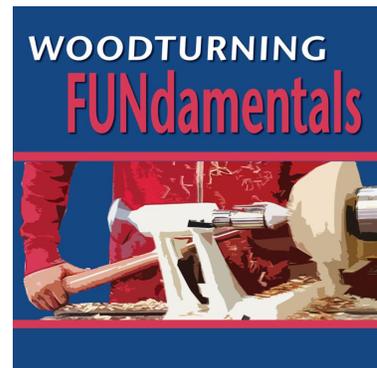
What's your favorite piece turned by another artist?

A friend, Jim Sampson, made this piece (pictured below) for me from masur birch he brought back from Finland. Jim and I were colleagues at Florida State University. He just retired so we'll get a chance to collaborate on a few pieces in the future.



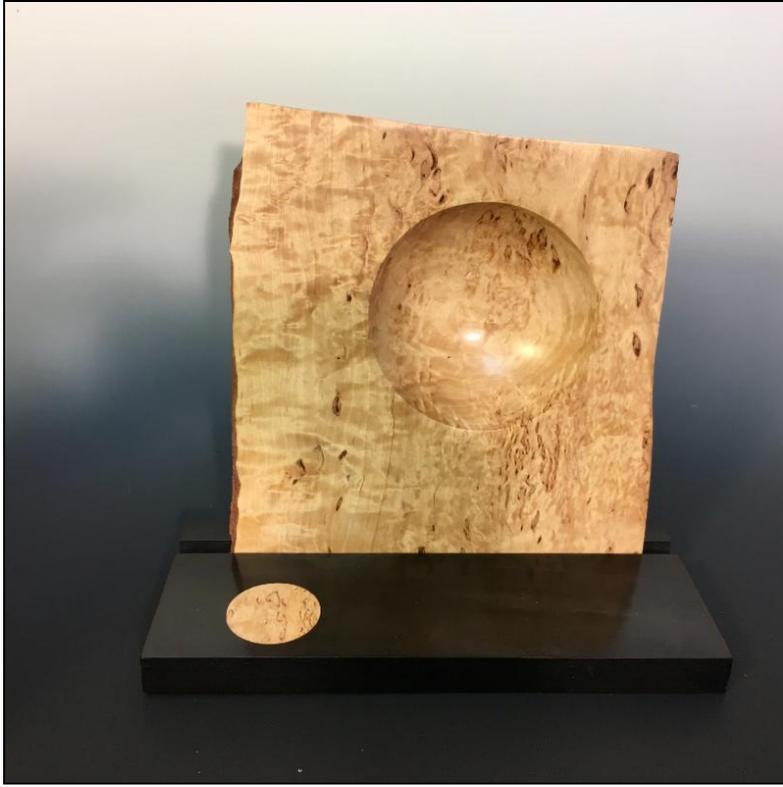
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is an online learning experience that introduces the art and craft of woodturning to visitors. Discover Woodturning enables the general public to learn about woodturning, its origins, appeal, and how to get started. [Check out Discover Woodturning.](http://woodturner.org)



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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 Fundamentals online!](http://woodturningfundamentals.org)



Walt treasures this piece turned by friend Jim Sampson.



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