

# WOODCHUCK CHATTER

NEWSLETTER OF THE WOODCHUCK TURNERS OF NORTHERN VERMONT

AN AFFILIATE OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF WOODTURNERS

WOODCHUCKSVT.ORG

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Volume 18, Issue 12

President: Harvie Porter

Vice President: Dave Bucholz

Secretary: Gary Walz

Treasurer: Brad Jackson

Newsletter Editor: Andrew Duling

Members at Large: Bob Martin, Arny Spahn,  
Tom Dunne



Last Meeting: November, 17th *Finishes*

Next Meeting: January 19th 2022 *New tools  
and toys, and what I learned last year.*

After that: February 16th 2022 *Tom Dunne  
Topic TBA*

**Next meeting January 19th 2022. Please come prepared to review some of your favorite or least favorite tools, toys, jigs, gizmos, or finishes you acquired in 2021. Also what did you learn in 2021?**

⇒ Dave & Cheryl Ferry—Adventures with Birch Burls

Dave tells us about he and Cheryl's work in acquiring and turning birch burls . (p 4)



⇒ Jim Holzschuh—Adventures with Turned Eggs

Jim writes about his work with turning eggs and some uniquely sized eggs. (p 5)



⇒ Gary Walz—Adventures on Interstate 89

Gary work had been displayed at the interstate 89 rest stops. (p 5)



⇒ Russ Fellows—Adventures in Florida

Russ tells us with he has been up to down south. (p 6-7)



⇒ Edwards Smith—Adventures with tailstocks

Edwards tells us about a tailstock problem and solution (p 7)



⇒ Andy Duling—Adventures with Chatter

Andy tells us about some of his plans for the future of chatter. (p 8)



# NOTES FROM LAST MEETING

Woodchucks Meeting Minutes – 17-Nov-2021

Meeting was called to order by Harvie Porter at 7:00. Meeting was held 100% virtually.

## Introduction

Attendees were asked to introduce themselves, where they are from, and what items they may be selling for this holiday season. There were approximately 28 attendees who shared with the group.

## Announcements

Harvie thanked the outgoing officers for their service to the organization. Special thanks went out to Arny for his many years of dedicated and the exemplary job he did on the Newsletter month after month.

A plug was made to join AAW (American Association of Wood Turners). They are currently offering a free three month trial membership. In addition to their great magazine, members have access to a wealth of information, discounts on classes, and many other benefits too numerous to mention. Check it out!

Harvie mentioned that if you need one, Rockler currently has the Rikon Slow Speed Grinder on sale for \$ 110. This is a great deal even with the shipping.

## Finishing

The topic for the month was finishes and finishing techniques. Mickey was kind enough to share a great presentation with us on the various finishes he uses, including many formulas for making your own finishes that he developed by trial and error over the years! This was very generous of him, and typifies the sharing nature of this group. Finishes he discussed included:

### Non Food-Safe Finishes

Oil based wipe on

Shellac/oil based wipe on

Sealer/Finish

Walnut Oil Food Safe Finish

Walnut Oil/Wax Mixture

Wood Conditioner (Primarily for tear-out)

### Formulas For:

Shine

Yorkshire Grit

Commercial Finishes

Melamine Sanding Sealer

Pre-Catalyzed Lacquer

Other Attendees Shared Some of their Finishes as Well:

Bartop Sealer for Vases

Harvie

Huts Wax

Ted -

Poly (for food safe). Uses Gloss primarily.

For non food-safe, uses his own mixture:

1/3 Shellac

1/3 ???

1/3 Denatured Alcohol

Dave Bucholz

95% of the time uses Spar Urethane (Clear Gloss) and Paint Thinner

6-12 coats typically, applied on lathe

A tip was discussed about wetting the bowl while you're sanding

Rick

Talked about using a natural soybean finish called Velvit Oil

Bob

Reminded us about Sutherland and Wells

Andy

Watco Butcher Block Oil (can get at Lowes)

A discussion about sanding was held. Most people typically sand from 220 to 500. It was mentioned to use bronze wool instead of steel wool.

Chris

Hard Wax 3043

Wrap-Up

Pay your dues! Please.

Tell us if you want to be signed up for discounts at Hartville, etc.

Brad gave his address for dues:

Brad Jackson

14 Rustic Drive

Essex, VT 05452

No December Meeting!

Respectfully Submitted,

Gary Walz, Secretary



Some of the November 2021 Gang

# Photos from Last Meeting



Rich Hamilton and his favorite finish.



Above and Right: Mickey Palmer's informative presentation on finishes.



Left and Below: Dave Bucholz showed some of his artistic bowls.



## Commercial Finishes

Mohawk Pre Catalized Lacquer

Zinsser SealCoat (dewaxed shellac)

ParFix 3408



A beautiful bowl by Rich Hamilton.



Dave Bucholz preserves finishes in old wine box bags

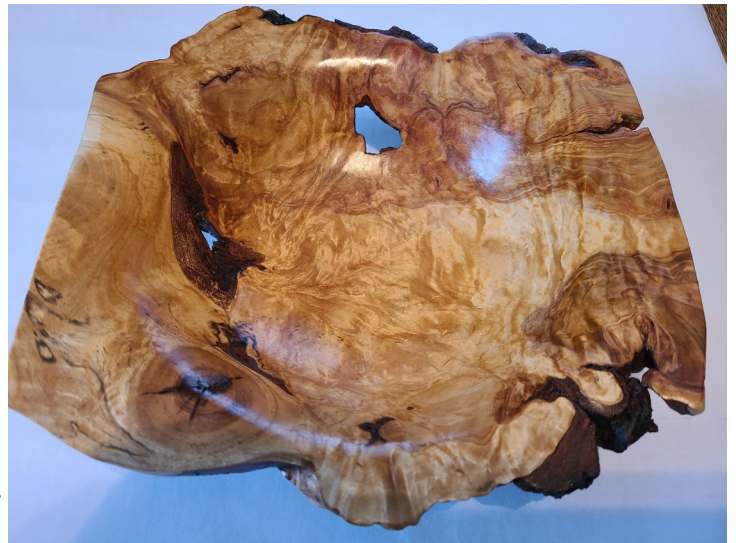


## ***The Elusive White Birch Burl***

By Dave and Cheryl Ferry

Several years ago our brother-in-law generously offered us a couple burls off his land in Bethel. We were very excited at a large cherry burl and somewhat confused when he said he had a white birch burl as well. Since we had never seen or heard of one. Imagine our surprise when we started turning some of most beautiful wood we had ever seen! Thus began our search for more of these gorgeous burls.

We quickly learned two things. They are not common or readily available and other turners (yes, Tom Dunn) also



knew the value of these burls. I have managed to find several and secure permission over the years. One thing for sure these bowls go to good homes in a hurry!

About four years ago we were set up at craft show and got in a conversation with a logger who admitted he had neither noticed or had seen a white birch burl in his decades of logging. We asked him to keep his eye open and promised a fair trade barter. We received a phone call from him this summer and he said he finally found a white birch burl and a fairly large piece that was probably caused by previous skidder damage.

After swapping him a nice end grain cutting board we contacted Russ Fellows to have an appraisal and best use of the wood. He worked with Cheryl to help create a wing shaped bowl (she ended up being able to get three bowls



out of the pieces) which was both a new skill and made the best use of the wood. I have some small pieces left that I can incorporate into other work (segmented burl bowl?). As always thank you Russ for your generous time and expertise.



I have since located a couple of others and working with the land owner to get permission to

harvest. In the mean time keep your eyes open and jump at the chance to try turning this beautiful wood! Tom I promise to bring the next piece over to your shop!!!

## ***Unique Woodturning Request***

By Jim Holzschuh



As you and others know, I have been making a lot of eggs recently. Folks buy one for sock darning, several for a colorful display, and even in quantities of 20 or more as they are using the eggs as the Queen on a chess set. All this seems fairly normal to me, however I got a request recently that was out of the ordinary. A person in Texas had seen my eggs featured on our Etsy site. She contacted me and asked if I could make several oversized eggs 8" long and 6" at the widest part. One of them had to be split, lengthwise, exactly in half. These were to duplicate a "Costoblock" designed to alleviate costochondritis. Apparently you lay on one of these

"bumps" and it relieves chest pain and helps align your spine. She wanted something made from wood and, as she said, "pretty". I made the split egg by gluing two pieces of walnut together with a piece of brown paper bag between them so I could later split them apart. The cherry egg was a piece of a well seasoned log that I turned on the pith, hoping for it not to split. Both eggs were recently put in the mail and from the accolades coming from the buyer she was well pleased. In the pictures the split walnut egg appears shorter and smaller however it was just about the same size (when put together) as the solid cherry one. Once you put your turning information out there you never know what requests you will get. Now on to my next request - making 6 bobbins for an antique spinning wheel using the last bobbin known to exist as a template - wish me luck.



## ***Interstate 89 Display***

By Gary Walz

I have a collection of my small turnings on display in one of the show cases in the I-89 Southbound Rest Williston Rest Area. The Milton Artists' Guild is asked from time to time to feature work of their members in the display cases both north and south bound. I am lucky enough that this is the second time I've been able to display my work. I chose to display a variety of pens, resin bowls and vases and my





## ***A LITTLE MORE SOUTHERN SAWDUST***

By Russ Fellows

Greetings once again fellow Woodchucks. Last month I reported that as soon as I got back to Florida it was business as usual in our club log yard. Every Tuesday we gather to process the latest trees that have been delivered, and two recent species were camphor (<https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdf/ST/ST16700.pdf>) and bifschovia (<https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/ST100>). The common name for bifschovia is bishopswood. The one we had gotten was a big one and, per usual, I brought home a chunk of it! I showed a photo of a very freshly turned piece last month (reproduced again below), and it is a dense, quite clean turning, extremely wet, and has a beautiful russet red color when fresh. It is also very corrosive, and the chips will leave rust spots on the bed of your lathe in an hour! I was curious to see how much of the nice red color would be preserved in the drying process, which I would learn is a slow ordeal. The moisture meter read 35%, although I suspect it may have been even higher, as the meter didn't budge, even after drying in a bin of dry chips and a couple microwave sessions! I wanted to end up with a fairly thin wall, so took it down in several stages, each time checking the moisture. It started to drop, but very slowly. I even bought, and borrowed two more meters, because I thought maybe my meter was not giving me an accurate picture. It wasn't! It is a pinless type, and it consistently read higher than the other two pin style ones. It finally got down into the low teens, so I put it back on the lathe for the final turning. The result is shown below. It is about 3/16 inch thick, and while not as bright as when fresh, has retained much of the nice red color. I put a lacquer finish on it to highlight the color as much as possible. The conclusion: some challenges in drying, but the end justifies the effort.



The camphor, as suggested by the botanical name, a first cousin of the tree whose bark produces the cinnamon spice, is another tree brought in for landscaping and is now considered invasive. It has been planted around parks and other public places because of its durability, beauty, and shade producing qualities. Even though we have gotten a couple big loads recently, a few weeks ago I went with a friend to a specialty wood company north of Tampa where they specialize in very big old trees that have come down. It is called urban logging and there are several companies around that do this. In this case it was a gigantic old red camphor on the campus of a seminary that had been hit by lightning and had to be culled. We bought a couple large blocks, each of which would give us multiple bowls and hollow forms. The picture below with two chunks shows a piece of this and a piece of "standard" camphor from our log yard. The red one clearly promises more color! I have made several hollow forms from it, both end grain and side grain. The one pictured below is side grain and approximately 12" x 6". I mention the grain orientation only because the grain in this old tree was so fine and clear that it almost didn't matter how you blocked it out! This piece, nearly dry when I started on it, cut and hollowed cleanly, and although more granular than the bifschovia, it took a finish

nicely. I chose a satin wipe-on poly, as the colors in the wood made such a lovely statement, I didn't think they needed the additional emphasis of a gloss.

Of these two woods covered in this article, my preference is camphor! It is much more forgiving in the drying process, and had a lot more variegation in the color. The only negative is the very strong "hospital" smell that lingers in the shop after turning it. I call it that because camphor oil is used in a number of medications and ointments. Some find it a pleasing smell. I don't! To my nose, it is too much of a good thing! Others like it

With all of the woods I will be talking about here, I will, as in the past, endeavor to rough out a few samples and bring them back to Vermont.

Next month I will revisit our ubiquitous Norfolk Island Pine. It is a tree we almost always have in our yard, and while most make hollow forms out of it to highlight the beautiful knots, I use it in a little different way, and will talk about this.



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## ***Tailstock Problem and Solution***

By Edwards Smith

I have a Powermatic lathe with a 20 inch swing and I frequently turn bowls in the 14-16 inch diameter range. These are heavy pieces of wood. I try to keep the ways of the lathe bed smooth and lightly waxed or oiled so that the tail stock and banjo will slide easily. My problem is that even though I lock the tailstock down an unbalanced blank will make the tail stock walk back so that I have to constantly be cranking the tailstock so that it is tight against the blank. I remember

in a tutorial session I had with David Ellsworth he reminded us to constantly keep tightening the tailstock against the blank

I don't know about others but when I turn, I get lost in the process and lose awareness about details like that. Losing control of a rapidly revolving heavy piece of wood can be a real problem. Although it is an extra step I have solved my problem by using a very large steel C-clamp. After the tailstock is in place against the blank then I attach the C-clamp directly behind the tailstock and lock it down on the bed as hard as I can clamp it. This seems to prevent the tail stock from "walking back" as the unbalanced blank rotates at higher rpm.

I wonder what other turners have done to deal with this problem. If there is an easier solution it would be nice to share it. Clamping the C-clamp is an extra step to attach it to the lathe bed and to remove it when the tail stock needs to be moved out of the way.

## Notes From Ya Boy

By Andy Duling

I had big plans for my first issue of Chatter, but with organizing everything that needed to fit in, and keeping up with my bowl supply during a busy season I ran out of time. An idea I thought of was to include more videos in chatter, woodturning is a very visual craft and instruction through writing can be difficult to understand. I enjoy video editing and would be happy to help anyone who is interested in making a video submission for Chatter in coming months.



On October 13th I hit a big milestone for me, I turned my 1000th bowl. It was out of sugar maple from Main Street in Milton.

Don't tell anyone but it's going to be a Christmas present for my mother.

A couple weeks after that my next log load arrived, with the next 1,000 bowls in log form. I'm working my way through processing it, some of it will

surely go to firewood.

I want to thank everyone who submitted to Chatter.



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## Woodchuck Sightings

- ◆ Dave Buchholz gave a demo of German Ring Turning to the Upper Valley Woodturners in Thetford, Vermont on Dec. 4. The turning was a gingerbread lady for a Christmas ornament.



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## MENTORS

*These Woodchucks are able and willing to help other Woodchucks wanting some hands-on instruction.*

Dick Montague: General turning, all aspects plus tool sharpening.  
802-584-3486  
Montagueturn@gmail.com  
Groton

Russ Fellows: General, segmented, & multi-axis turning  
802-899-3059  
skunkmen@gmail.com  
Jericho

Ted Beebe: Segmented work.  
802-849-2436  
Teddy.beebe@gmail.com  
Fletcher

Tom Dunne: Hollow turning, etc.  
802-388-6981  
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## Treasurer's Report

By Brad Jackson

### DECEMBER 2021 Treasurer's Report

#### Balance forward

4524.53

#### INCOME

Dues 125.00  
Credit for camcorder 181.14  
Bank Reconciliation 13.99  
320.13

#### EXPENSES

Zoom 15.89  
Bank fee (Oct, Nov) 10.00  
25.89

Cash on Hand 25.00  
Bank Balance ending 4818.77

Brad Jackson/Treasurer

The Board of Directors of The Woodchuck Turners of Northern Vermont gratefully acknowledges the payment of dues from the following members for **2022**: George Cacchio, Sara Campbell, Sal Chiarelli, Karen Cutler, Linda Hollingdale, Scott Johnson, Eddie Krasnow, Joe Laferriere, Ross Mitchel, Barent Rogers, Robert Schumacher, Marilyn Stohlb-berg (12)

(Scott Bennett, Russ Fellows, Ted Fink, Dick Montague, Michael Mode, Nick Rosato, Hav Smith and Al Stirt are Honorary Lifetime members, (8)

If you have paid your dues for the 2022 year but do not see your name listed above, please contact me at [BradJackson234@gmail.com](mailto:BradJackson234@gmail.com) to correct that error of omission. Dues for 2022 are \$25. Checks should be made out to "WTNV" and sent to: Brad Jackson, 14 Rustic Drive, Essex, VT 05452

Please note: The following privileges are only available to dues-paying members: Video library use, mentoring program, bulk purchase discounts for CA glue, Anchor Seal, Klingspor, Hartville Tool, & Penn State Industries discount of 10%, (to remain on the discount lists dues must be paid by April 1<sup>st</sup> each year). Mention the club to get your discount. PSI and Klingspor request you login **before** you order anything to ensure your discount.

*Reminder: Unless you have paid your annual dues by April 1st your name must be removed from the discount list.*

## CLASSIFIEDS

⇒ None this month, please make sure to send me for sale items by the 5th of the month, [aeduling@gmail.com](mailto:aeduling@gmail.com)