

Woodchuck Chatter



September 10, 2007

Volume 4, Issue 9

Special points of interest:

- Random Shots:
- Woodchuck News
- What's Coming Up

Meeting of September 20th



Toys for the Good Humor Wagon

The children's ward of the hospital here in Burlington has many little kids convalescing at any time. Cross-infection is a big worry in a hospital. Once a child has taken a toy from the cart, it's his—or hers. Christmas or 4th of July, every day there are kids needing something to help get them through the day.

Several years back, **Bob Bouvier** built a wagon for distribution of toys for these kids.

The Woodchucks have generously helped with this project.

It seems that now is a good time to gear up for the project again. **Dick Montague** has demonstrated in the past; spinning tops are one of his specialties. Army will show a method of putting ball & cup toys together. He will also bring excerpts from a book in his library, *All American Wooden Toys*.

Most of the toys in that book are for the general woodworker rather than the turner but if you want to spread out a little, this can be a start. If you don't have a bandsaw or other tool the toys call for, this can be the perfect excuse for buying one.

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August Picnic & Demo



Thanks to **Marilyn & Bob Martin**, we had a nice picnic on the grounds of the Jericho Research Forest. Folks brought a variety of salads & desserts, and the Woodchucks feasted.



Al Stirt and other members brought objects for an Instant Gallery. Your Editor didn't make notes, but here are some of the works:



Square-rimmed bowl, painted & textured. Undoubtedly by Al Stirt.



Random Shots

Woodchuck Chatter

Woodchuck Turners of Northern Vermont

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Woodchuck Chatter will be published monthly. Deadline for submissions is the 7th of the month. Please E-mail all submissions to the Editor in text or Word format. Visuals can be submitted as JPEG or TIFF.



The American Woodturner magazine had an interesting column by President Angelo lafrate this month.

There seems to be at least two schools of thought on embellished turnings. Angelo gets feedback from a number of people that AAW should not be showing or promoting works by turners who heavily embellish turnings by other methods. The “purist” point of view is that the fine art of turning should stand on its own, that we should be striving to show the perfect symmetrical shape as the pinnacle of our art.

Angelo’s take on the subject is that we, if we are artists, should be allowed to explore the limits of what we can do with our chosen materials; wood, alabaster, resin, whatever. He gives the old “big tent” interpretation of

what AAW is and should be. You know, the tent is big enough for all of us. Angelo goes on to cite the works of Bin Pho, who has a piece featured in this issue.

Bin Pho’s work is truly beautiful and far beyond the talents of most of us. Al Stirt showed us a method of embellishment at our picnic which is probably within the range we all could work in. Look in any of the woodworking magazines on the newsstands and you will see articles far beyond what you see at our local Show ‘n’ Tell sessions.

For the sake of argument, let’s say that some embellishment is OK but too much non-turning work is not OK. Fine. Now tell me how much is too much. One-half of the surface? 3/4 of the surface? And is the application of paint better than the fretwork of Bin Pho? Is it a bad thing to use faux-finish decoration (making the wooden object look like marble or figured wood) but OK to paint daisies on a bowl? For that matter, what about the various trends of the natural edge, the addition of stones, wood inlay, or plastic?

One of the real issues we have to face is the level of our skills against the level of the skills of the embellishers. Do we dislike heavy embellishment because we don’t see the need or because we couldn’t display that kind of skill? We should open our minds

to what is possible. Our members need to try different techniques and use what they can do well and what they honestly enjoy looking at.

Last month, Randolph Rotary held an art auction. We brought in a company which provides 2- and 3- dimensional art and gives the Rotary a cut of the proceeds. One of our local people, in the name of “the art community”, wrote a several page letter of complaint to Rotary. He was mad that there were “unknown artists’ work” among the selections. He was unhappy that there was “phony art” among the works. Frankly, we think he was angriest because he hadn’t thought of it first and that the local “art community” didn’t profit from the auction.

Actually, virtually all of the money Rotary raised through that auction will go to various non-profits or scholarships her in the area. Some will go to 3rd world countries through Rotary Foundation initiatives.

Why do I bother to mention this? Sour grapes is the phrase which comes to mind. Sour grapes among the woodturners; sour grapes among the local art community.

It takes a lot less skill to complain than it does to produce. Why waste our time complaining when we could be turning?

Arny

Alan Lacer Comes To Vermont



Alan Lacer is one of the stars of turning education. He came to Vermont this month and demonstrated for us, teaching us how to make and use

tools for end grain turning. Seven people signed up for a morning with Alan. At our next meeting, ask around if the sessions were worth the time and cost.

There is an article by Alan on the subject of tool making for turners in this month’s AAW magazine. He suggests that we could become our own tool suppliers with a little organization.

Should we invite more top notch educators to Vermont? Let the Board know. Give us ideas to help us become a better guild.

Arny



Cherry bowl



Notice the different appearance of the scraped surface.

Al Stirt went through the process of turning and decorating a shallow vessel for us. He used a woodscrew in the face of the platter to start by shaping the under side first.



Using a fine diamond file to keep the edge sharp.



Al showed us how to achieve a surface which didn't need sanding, using a broad flat scraper held at an angle to the tool rest.

Using a tool like the Berdan gouge he proceeded to decorate the piece with concentric beads, rolling one circle at a time.



After decorating the bottom, Al formed the lowest part of the bowl & the tenon to hold it when he reversed the bowl to work on the upper or inner surface. During this process, Al used an extended live center to give clearance

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More of Al's Demo

(Continued from page 3)

so he could work very close to the center.



Taking down the rim to thickness. Get the rim thin before moving inwards to keep as much stiffness as possible under the gouge.



After reversing the bowl, Al gets the upper surface to the curve he wants. The bowl cavity is roughed in to keep from chipping the applied paint. A matte finish is applied to the rim to act as the ground for decorative carving. The bowl cavity then gets its final shape, being careful about the cavity edge.



Forming the bowl cavity. Use calipers to keep from making the cavity walls too thin.



Final sanding of rim before applying surface coat.



Applying black matt gesso as medium for carving design into rim. The bowl cavity will be finished after the "paint" dries for a crisp edge.



Final turning of the bowl cavity. A blunter bowl gouge is used to eliminate sanding the "painted" edge.



The bowl is reversed again using the tail stock and a padded jam chuck while the foot is being finished.



A very simple template is used to put a design on the surface. Al uses a watercolor pencil to put the design on the gesso. It is easier to erase its marks if you miss with the gouge.



Using a vacuum chuck (and a helping hand) while carving the design.

Ted's Turn; Woodchuck Turners Of Northern Vermont: An Endangered Species?

Our chapter became an affiliate of the AAW in April of 1994. In the intervening 13 years membership has quadrupled, we have greatly expanded the video library, constructed a website, presented a wide array of demonstrations and established and maintained a monthly newsletter. Now the future of the woodchucks is uncertain. There is a very real chance that we may see the demise of the Chapter in the next year or two by the one thing that could kill it....apathy.

Four years ago, Ralph Tursini took over the leadership role as president. He was enthusiastic and full of ideas and energy as he stepped into that position. It is only fair and appropriate that now, as he wishes to step down, some others would be eager and willing to come forward. to reinvigorate the organization with new leadership. So, if the WTNV Chapter is to survive, we must have other members make a commitment to take on some of the responsibility of the Chapter's operation.

Nominations for officers are scheduled for the September meeting. Consider nominating yourself. We need you.

The fall meeting of the Board of directors is Wednesday October 10th. All are welcome to attend. Consider joining us in discussing the future of our Chapter.

Hartville discount update:

The Hartville discounts for those of you who have signed up are activated. I will distribute a sheet outlining the use of the discount and with it, a copy of the Hartville tool catalog.

Also the Klingspor discount list has been updated and reactivated.

Silent Auction:

At the September meeting the following items will be offered in silent auction.

Cherry burls, a large laminated block of mahogany, a hook tool made and donated by Alan Lacer and the platter bowl made by Al Stirt at the annual picnic. So, if any of these items is of interest to you, bring some money with which to bid.

Ted

Woodchuck Sightings

Ted Fink will be demonstrating at The Shelburne Harvest Festival, Saturday 9/15/07 10 - 5 at Shelburne Farms and at the 4th annual Vermont Fine Furniture and Woodworking Festival on September 29th and 30th at the Union Arena in Woodstock, VT.

There is a terrific article/interview with Al Stirt in the new Woodturning Design magazine. In my opinion, very well done.

Kudos to Al!

John Brislin

Treasurer's report

Treasurer's Report	
Balance forward	\$2579.62
Income	
raffle	30.00
T-shirts	45.00
dues	20.00
Expenses	
Demonstration honorarium (Al Stirt)	50.00
Balance Forward	\$2624.62



New member:
Please welcome
 James H. McCarthy
 364 Marshall Rd.
 Duxbury, VT 05676
 802 2444 4952
cedarvt@gmail.com

In House Demos:

Sept. 20th: Wooden toys for the children's ward of the hospital.

October 10th: Board meeting @ Ted Fink's home, 6:00 PM. All members may come; this is a potluck supper & meeting. Call Ted for more info.

October 18th. Segmented vessels. Russ Fellows & Arny Spahn. Elect new Board.

November 15th. Open date. Member input needed.



AAW News

Woodchuck Mentors

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

*Craig Hall: Bowls, spindles, & hollow forms.
802-644-5344
craighall@hotmail.com*

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

*Ralph Tursini: Spindles & bowls, vacuum chucking.
802-899-6863
Tursini@pshift.com*

*Ted Fink: Bowls, spindles, & boxes.
802-985-2923
jantedfink@gmail.com*

*Russ Fellows: Segmented vessels.
802-899-3059
skunkmen@together.net*

The AAW Members Only section is now up and running on the AAW website. <http://woodturner.org/member/MemberLogOn.asp> Everything is clearly explained in the FAQ section below the login area. I have had no problem with it myself and it seems to work very well. Take it for a test drive and see for yourself what you can do there. Please pass this information on to your chapter members.

Thank you,

Sean Troy: AAW Chapters and Membership committee.

The Reading Room

I opened the AAW magazine when it came in this month and I was amazed at the quantity of pertinent stuff between the covers. If you are not an AAW member, I hope this teaser will make you think hard about joining.

The inside front cover has an ad for the latest Oneway lathe, a model you can sit down at to use. What a concept! How are you to dodge those flying fragments if you are sitting?? Sorry, I was thinking of someone else.

The facing page, "green with envy" shows photos of a collaborative turning which auctioned off at \$20,000. Yes I would turn green with envy over the skills it took to make that piece. How much it brought in? I think it was well valued, so I'm not jealous.

AAW also mentions their election coming up. They would like all members to cast ballots

for new leadership. The Board of Woodchuck Turners would like OUR members to volunteer to lead us as our election takes place in October and Ralph wishes to retire as President at the top of his game.

An article on how to make a great chapter newsletter caught my attention. I went down their check list and very few items they mentioned are missing from "Chatter." As for the quality of those items, I really should compete to see how others see "Chatter". The two pieces missing from "Chatter" are first, good demonstration writeups. I have tried to use illustrations and asked for the demonstrators to send me some notes. Some members are kind enough to help in those ways.

Second, multiple writers would bring more to the newsletter. Right now, Ted Fink and I are the major contributors and neither of us wish to make writing our primary occupation. We did a number of "Wise Woodchuck" columns in the past, and I would like to do more of them. Same thing with "Woodchuck Sightings." NINO. Nothing in, nothing out.

There is an article on a group who went to the Ukraine and taught turning to kids in orphanages. Folks, MOST of the countries of the former Soviet Bloc are dirt-poor, have orphanages, and turn the kids out when they are just past puberty. No skills, no support structure. The idea of giving kids a simple skill on the lathe could mean an entirely better life for them. This article caught my eye because Mirhgorod, Ukraine is sister city to Randolph and my Rotary club has

contributed over \$1 million worth of medical supplies and fixtures to that city. We have sent doctors, nurses, and professionals over there and can testify to the conditions there.

There's an article on gallery/artist relationships. The article stresses that having a relationship with an art gallery can enhance your career greatly. You need to give the gallery good, up to date info on what you are doing, what your history is, and where you have exhibited and sold your works. A resume, a biography, and a statement of philosophy are good tools for a gallery to work with. Conversely, your dialogue with the gallery should touch on how work is displayed, how it is promoted, and what the gallery can do for you and with you. Price & commission discussions are the least important to have when establishing a relationship, but it is still important to have a clear understanding of what's in it for you.

Multi-axis turning is explored in an article by Barbara Dill. Fantastic stuff.

Bob Rosand writes on turning a flood-damaged upright freezer into a small kiln for slow drying green work. That article could speed up your drying process! Read about his trial & error approach to finding the right drying temperature.

There are many, many more articles in AAW magazine; many by Alan Lacer. I find it at the top of my reading pile 4 times a year.

Arny

Policy on AAW Liability Insurance

Members of WTNV who are giving public demonstrations are covered by the AAW-sponsored liability policy under the following conditions:

You must be a member of

AAW and WTNV.

The event must be "sanctioned" by WTNV. That is, you must notify the Treasurer, who will provide a copy of the cover sheet for the policy. You

must also notify the editor of Chatter so you can be listed in Future Woodchuck Sightings.

The demonstration must have wood turning as the main subject.

Woodchuck Turners of
Northern Vermont
An associated chapter
of
American Association of
Woodturners

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Nothing like an August picnic.

Help Wanted

Candidates for Woodchuck Board.

Enthusiasm for turning and desire to help lead turners to new heights a must.

Will train on the job if necessary.

President Ralph Tursini has expressed a desire to retire from presidency on top of his game. All other Board positions are open for nominations. Nominations open with the September meeting; elections in October.

Policy On Borrowing The Club Lathe and Tent

This is the policy which was formulated at the October 2004 Board meeting. It was first printed in the October 2004 Woodchuck Chatter.

The primary goal in buying these tools is to have good equipment available so we can demonstrate in public, thereby attracting new members and recruiting would-be turners.

All members in good standing (paid up dues) are eligible to bor-

row the equipment primarily for demonstration purposes. We may borrow the equipment for ONE WEEK at a time. The Treasurer is responsible for knowing where the equipment is at any time; therefore the borrower is responsible to sign the equipment out—by phone or in person— and back in.

The lathe and its parts are a unit. Don't ask to borrow only the chuck or other parts.

The borrower is responsible for transporting the equipment to and from its storage location. The

borrower is responsible for returning the equipment in excellent condition with all its parts intact.

The borrower is responsible for any liability rising from the use of the equipment.

Only club members may operate our lathe to avoid litigation by untrained turners.

The Chapter has first dibs on all equipment so that we can show our stuff at public events.