

# WOODCHUCK CHATTER



June 10, 2008

Volume 5, Issue 6

## THE NEWSLETTER OF WOODCHUCK TURNERS OF NORTHERN VERMONT

An Affiliate of American Association of Woodturners

[WWW.WOODCHUCKSVT.org](http://WWW.WOODCHUCKSVT.org)

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### Next Meeting: June 19, 2008

One of the more difficult tasks in turning is to cleanly and safely turn the inside of a deep hollow form. There are tools made for this task by several big companies and a few small ones. Bill Walsh is a machinist as well as a turner. He's built an articulated arm hollower which he will show us how to duplicate and use, complete with handouts and sources.

Ralph has received 50 gallons of Anchorseal and will distribute to all who bring their own containers at \$10.00 per gallon. Payment can be given

or sent to Ted Fink.

The Annual Woodchuck Picnic is set for Aug. 30 at Russ' house. He's got a nice workshop for Al Stirt's demo (which hasn't been revealed yet) and very pleasant grounds.



**Late News: Russ has received an invitation to a niece's wedding on Aug 30. The meeting may be re-scheduled or moved elsewhere. Stay tuned!!!**

### May Meeting Notes

Woodchuck Turners of Northern Vermont  
Monthly Meeting 5/22/2008

Meeting called to order by president Russ Fellows

Intro's

[Old Business](#)



Minutes ok

Food safe Finishes – Russ has copies of the published handout.

(Continued on page 3)

## Woodchuck Chatter

### Woodchuck Turners of Northern Vermont

#### Board of Directors

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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.

## Random Shots –



Here I am, pushing my own deadline and a thunderstorm goes whizzing by. Close the windows! Power the computer down! Keep tuned for bad news!

The strong storm passed to the North of us and I'm waiting for the 6:00 o'clock news to see if there was any damage.

Robert A. Heinlein, my favorite science fiction writer once wrote a short story titled "The Year Of The Jackpot". The main character is a mathematician who notices some very strong trends in statistics he's tracking. The

political situation in a number of countries, including the U.S., China, and others, is rapidly getting worse. Drought, earthquakes, and violent weather have disrupted the world's food supply and killed millions, causing rebellions and violent invasions of neighboring nations. The pattern of storms has strayed from historical paths and become more frequent. Sunspot activity has increased. Earthquakes along major tectonic plates are gradually getting more violent. Somehow, insect populations have increased and ocean fisheries have declined.

I know this is a work of fiction, but the current world is starting to look like Heinlein's

story. Be afraid. Very afraid.

There. Got that off my chest.

Do you subscribe to magazines? I have a stack waiting for me to get to my shop and try some of the projects. It's amazing that 2 or more of the mags will have articles about the same subject almost simultaneously, like "12 Steps To Perfect Pens" or "New Pens To Turn".

Segmented turning made the cover of a couple of magazines the same month. I'm sure my favorite projects aren't as good as they can be, but I'm yearning for new adventures. How about you?

**Arny**

## From the Chairman 's Burrow



Greetings fellow "Chucks"! Since it is becoming my custom to start off my column with a weather comment...I will not disappoint! I LOVE this hot

sticky weather! A bit strange for a native Vermonter perhaps....but I always have, and conversely, have come to loathe the gray and cold.

It is not too early to be talking about our annual "Woodchuck" picnic. The date is Saturday August 30th, a week later than has been our custom in the recent past, but that is the only weekend Al Stirt had available on his calendar. It is also the Saturday of Labor Day weekend, hopefully not a problem for all of you. There is also a change in the venue this year. For a number of reasons we have moved it to my home in Jericho. We will put directions in later issues of "Chatter", and I will have handouts at the meetings. I will also be asking for volunteers/contributors for the menu.

Our Anchorseal has arrived and Ralph and I will bring in a couple of pails into the meeting next week, so if you want some, bring in your gallon containers. Milk jugs really are too light, old windshield washer jugs (or equivalent weight) being a good option. The price is \$10/gallon. If you can't make it to this meeting, we will be keeping it at Ralph's shop in Cambridge, and we will be bringing it to future meetings as well.

The AAW Symposium is nearly upon us....June 20-22 in Richmond, VA ([www.woodturner.org](http://www.woodturner.org)). It looks as though, except for Al Stirt, who is

teaching a seminar, our chapter may not be represented this year....unfortunately! If there is a possibility any of you are going, please get in touch with me. If you are not going, but have a concern that you think might be of interest to the national board, please let me know and I will forward it to Larry Genender, the national president.

Many of you are already familiar with the Vermont Woodworking School in Colchester. They have just released their summer curriculum and are offering many new courses. Check them out at [www.vermontwoodworkingschool.com](http://www.vermontwoodworkingschool.com).

Another reminder to keep your eyes peeled for items of interest for future issues of "Chatter". Send either a link, or copy of the article to Arny by the first of the month.

See you on the 19th.....and bring a little something for the raffle!!

Cheers,

Russ Fellows



# May Meeting continued

(Continued from page 1)

National Symposium Richmond VA, June 20-22  
AnchorSeal – will be stored at Ralph’s shop. Order to be placed



Ted examines Russ’ bowl

soon. It should be here for the June meeting.

Hats – Ted reported the hats would cost between 9:50-10 dollars



Close up of Russ’ bowl

Reminder to submit tips for the chatter

Fine Furniture Show in Wood-

stock – Russ to be the point person for the club’s booth

### New Business

If you want to plan a vacation next Feb 6-8 then the Desert Turning Roundup in Mesa, AZ might be a great spot to visit.



Some of the artifacts David Scrase brought back from Australia.



Closer to home is the Energy Conference June 18, at UVM

Al Stirt is looking for someone to take 2 boxes of tools to the Na-



tional Symposium as he will be flying down.

Summer Picnic is August 30<sup>th</sup> @ Russ Fellows house.

Next meeting 6/19 @ Shelburne Art Center

Raffle

Show & Tell

Demo: Ralph turned a bowl from fresh green Maple.

### 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

Bill Walsh: tool sharpening

802 482 215

billiriquois@yahoo.com

# Treasurer's report

<b>Balance Forward</b>	\$3255.11
Income	
Dues	80
Raffle	32
Expenses	
Anchorseal	530
WTNV hats #36	231
Website annual fee	79.95
<b>Balance Forward</b>	<b>\$2526.16</b>
Ted Fink	
Treasurer	



**Notice:** The long awaited Woodchuck hats are in and they only cost \$7 each. I will bring a supply to the next meeting for individual purchases.

Ted

## Greetings From Skunk Hollow

### In House Demos:

June 19.

Bill Walsh: Making & using an articulated arm hollowing tool

July 17.

Ralph Tursini.  
Google Sketch-up

August .

Picnic meeting. Date & place TBA

September

Texturing. Ted & Russ.

October

Randy, Xmas ornaments

It has been a busy month for me here at the Studio in Jericho. Once again I opened my doors for the Vermont Craft Council's Open Studio Weekend, held every year over the Memorial Day Weekend. I scrambled to get as much inventory together as possible for it, including a big table of seconds, prototypes, and old stock....which of course, sold much more swiftly than my regular items! After a slow start on Saturday things picked up nicely and I ended up with about 100 visitors and sales somewhat above last year's. I was very pleased with the response and feel quite certain I will do it again next year.



I also had family visiting that weekend, which normally would not be an event worthy of Woodchuck interest, but definitely was in this case! My young cousin, age twelve, came in and proudly handed me a bag with something inside that she wanted me to look at...and it was an exquisite little natural edge oak bowl that she had made in school, an alternative school that she attends in Arlington, MA. I was really impressed with her efforts and told her I wanted to "show" it to my club members. So, here is my cousin Anna Whittemore and her first bowl...and hopefully the first of many, many more!!

I am also including some pix of a couple pieces I

am just finishing for my galleries. The vessel is approximately eleven inches high by thirteen inches wide. It is African mahogany with walnut, holly, and padauk accents. The picture does not accurately show the mahogany color. It appears the sections are quite different, which they are not. It is only the light! The bowl is twelve by five inches and is padauk and wenge. It is a first for me to use colorful "exotic" species for the body of the bowl. I usually save them for the accents. I also wanted to try the red and black contrasting each other. I am pleased with the results, but don't enjoy working with the padauk, as it is so "waxy" with resin it is hard to sand, and it also "feels" toxic, mostly because of the color and consistency of the dust, thus requiring extra caution with ventilation and respirator. I will bring it in next week if it hasn't gone out to a store.

Feel free to stop out at my shop any time! Hope to see many of you next week at the meeting!



Cheers,  
Russ Fellows

## Woodchuck Sightings

**Al Stirt** will be one of the featured demonstrators at the AAW symposium in Richmond, coming up in June.

**Fifth Annual Vermont Fine Furniture and Woodworking Festival**

Sat. Sept.27-28, Union Arena, Woodstock, VT

[www.vermontwoodfestival.org](http://www.vermontwoodfestival.org)

**Location:** Rte.4 west of Woodstock at the Woodstock High School

**Show set up:** Fri. Sept. 26 9:00 AM-8:00 PM, Electricity is part of your cost

**Questions ,concerns:** Kathleen or Erin at 802- 747-7900

They still have space (most are 10 x 10) and may want more demonstrators.

Note: Joe Laferriere has reserved space for that event. Ted Fink also mentioned exhibiting there.

## Some Methods to Prevent Splitting

Last month was about what happens in the wood to cause and prevent splitting. What follows are a number of practices that apply this theory. Each is an attempt to dry the piece evenly from surface to core or to change the cell walls so they will stretch or compress without separating. (See last month for details.)

There are a variety of methods. Simplest is setting the piece on the bench and doing nothing else. If thin enough or from wood you find to have little tendency to split or your bench is in a very cool place this may work. If it has been finished with oil or varnish it has a better chance. I know it says on the can the wood must be dry, but I know turners who have finished hundreds of wet bowls in this way. As with any method, experiment with your wood, your finish, and your conditions to see what works. I like to let the work dry long enough for the surface to look dry. I then apply finish and put it in a cool place.

Another method follows from the above. With or without finish put the project in an environment where drying is slow at first and gradually move to dryer and warmer places. For example a cellar floor, to a high shelf in the cellar, to the shop floor, to a high warm shelf in the shop. Depending on your circumstances you can combine this with the next method, wax coating and/or bagging.

Coatings and brown paper bags create the same slow drying environment needed to achieve



the even drying, surface to core. Commercial log sealer, wax, and paint are generally put on the end grain. For fruit and other woods with a tendency to crack I coat all over and then add an extra coating on the end grain. This second coat is best applied after a little soaking in but before it turns clear. Some turners dilute the first coat 50/50 with water. I also paper bag these at the start. I now only use log sealer. Years ago I used a heated mix of oil and canning wax brushed on or dipped. The wax/oil has bad fumes, is a serious fire hazard, is messy, and does not stick well to wet wood. Paints vary greatly in their ability to block drying, may make toxic dust when worked and some contain materials that quickly dull the tools. The log sealer is a water based wax that leaves a soft paraffin-like coating when dry. Because it is a thick coating and is dirty after months of drying, it lends itself best to work that is going to be re-turned or log blanks. (Remember to cut the logs so they do not split.) For finished pieces, which I wet sand to 2000+ grit, I use just the paper bag(s) and start in a cool place.

Keep in mind that you want to let the water out slowly and evenly. Wax has very poor resis-

tance to moisture gain and loss. It is a poor finish for a board that must remain the same size summer to winter. When used as above it does allow the water to escape from the end at the same rate as it does from the side. It does not stop water from leaving the wood. Applying this reasoning to the use of plastic bags, they seem like a poor choice unless you want to stop water loss. You might if you catch a small crack and want to give the piece time to even out. I also use them to keep a project on the lathe from cracking while eating lunch or answering the phone. If the work is small enough grocery bags over the work and tied to the spindle work well. Some stores have larger versions of these bags.

There is a method that works if you are in your shop on a regular basis. Put the work in a plastic bag. Let it sit overnight. The inside of the bag will then be covered with condensed water. Remove the wood and towel it off, turn the bag inside out, and close the bag. Repeat this until there is no condensate visible even after a few days. Note that if you forget to check and turn the bag your hard won project will mold into colors and a furry coating that may not be part of your original plan. (A new way to finish wood, perhaps?) There are plastic zip type bags for vegetable storage that come in a variety of sizes and have hundreds of small holes. I have had good luck with these, but you will have to have someone go or travel yourself to Canada as they are no longer available in the US. I like them well enough to have done

this.

Next month I will talk about other/newer high and low tech methods of drying. If you have a question that will not wait, give me a call or email me your number and questions and I will call you.

If you use these or any method I want to emphasize experimenting and frequent checking. If you can catch a crack when it is tiny you may be able to save things with more bags, heavier coating or a cooler location. If it is to be returned I mark the crack, wet the area to close the crack and give the deeper wood more time to dry, and move it to a cooler place. If it is a finished piece I see what can be done with the crack to add a feature for which folks will pay even more. You can also cut it in half to see how evenly or smoothly you developed the form. Of course there is always the fire-wood pile.

## And The Winner Is:

*I want to thank those of you who responded to my request for input, suggestions, and/or questions about these notes. They were helpful, informative, and appreciated. Ralph Tursini won the drawing and is now a very rich man.*

Richard Montague  
802-584-3486

montagueturn@hotmail.com

# May Demo—Turning A Bowl From Wet



Discussing the steps for wet wood



This is a nearly finished bowl, still with some thickness for final shaping.



Bore a hole, usually 3/8" in the face side to accept a screw chuck..



Bring up the tail stock for safety. Start shaping the outside of the bowl.



Form a tenon on the bowl base to fit your scroll chuck.



Continue to refine outside of the bowl.



Reverse the bowl, tightening the scroll chuck properly. Be prepared to re-tighten.



Hollow out the inside. Leave thickness about 10% of diameter.



After the bowl is dry (see The Sharpening Bench on P. 5, re-mount using a jam chuck, vacuum chuck, or friction chuck. Use the tail stock. Remove most of the tenon.



This is about all you can leave safely. Some detail has been turned in the base.



Use a very sharp chisel or carving gouge to remove the last of the tenon.

**The Newsletter of  
Woodchuck Turners  
of Northern Vermont**

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Seen in a Connecticut art gallery

## 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.

## 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 re-

turning 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.