

# WOODCHUCK CHATTER



September 12, 2008

Volume 5 issue 9

## THE NEWSLETTER OF WOODCHUCK TURNERS OF NORTHERN VERMONT

An Affiliate of American Association of Woodturners

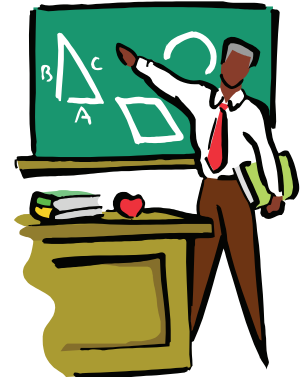
[WWW.WOODCHUCKSVT.org](http://WWW.WOODCHUCKSVT.org)

### Next Meeting: September 18, 2008

Back to the Shelburne Art Center! The regular program will start at 7:00 PM and will feature Ted & Russ (and perhaps others) demonstrating texturing techniques & devices. The President will call for nominations for the entire Board. In true Vermont fashion, you stand in danger of being nominated in absentia if you are not there. We feel that if

you were interested enough to become a Woodchuck, you are smart enough to help run the outfit.

Russ has set a Board meeting for October 9 at his place. All members are invited to take part. Please let Russ know you are coming.



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### From The President's Desk

From the President's "Party Central!"  
Greetings fellow Chucks! Well, the garage was alive with the sounds of Woodchucks! And from the sound of those 'sounds', I think they were having a good time! The regular August meeting of our organization was not held in August, but rather on Saturday, September 6th at my home/studio in Skunk Hollow, Vermont (a.k.a. Jericho). You will get other reports and pix elsewhere in Chatter this month, so I won't go into too much detail here. Because of the forecast for rain we set up in my garage, which served two purposes. It gave us a nice comfortable place to gather, AND forced me

to do my Fall clean-up a little early! Perhaps it was helpful to not have a beautiful sunny day to make some of us wish we were out on the lake, mountains, or just relaxin' in our own garages/yards.

Many thanks to all you Chucks who made the effort to attend, and many more thanks to all who helped to make it happen

A special thanks to Joe Laferriere for not only standing at the grille until all were served, but also coming over the day before to help clean and prep the "venue", particularly my shop in anticipation of the demonstration by our esteemed master Chuck, Al Stirt. We are so fortunate to have a world-



class turner like Al in our group, and even more fortunate that he continues to take time out from his busy schedule to come and do the demonstration for us. On behalf of all the club.....THANK YOU Al for another great demonstration.

(Continued on page 4)

## 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.

Al Stirt remarked at the picnic that the English size their gouges in some arcane system. Our detail & spindle gouges are sized according to the width of the flute. Our bowl gouges are sized according to the diameter of the tool stock. The British detail gouge which Al had is called a 1/4 inch gouge, but neither the flute nor the tool stock are 1/4" across. Any one who has worked on an older British car knows that some bolts were sized to the Whitworth system. That's the first thing that came to my mind. That set me off onto a trip of whimsy. It's totally random, so grab your favorite medicine for headache and hang on.

#### Metric Vs. English Vs. Imperial.

Canada fully switched to metric in 1970. Only Liberia, Myanmar (Burma) and USA still use the English system of measurement, but their "official" system is metric.

We use what we call the English system for weights & measures, but it differs from the traditional British or Imperial system in several ways.

The barleycorn = a grain.

Variouly, the Brits used troy pounds of 12 Oz., mercantile pounds of 15 Oz., and the avoirdupois pound of 16 Oz. A Troy pound has 12 oz. or 5760 gr. & a troy oz. has 480 gr. Twenty pennies weigh an ounce. so a pennyweight is 24 grains.

An avoirdupois pound (16 oz) weighs 7000 grains & the ounce weighs 437.5 gr. or 16 drams.

The Brits use a hundred-weight which weighs 112 oz. av. Why? it matched up to the weight system of Germany & France. So the cwt. is divided into 4 quarters, (28 lb.) 16 stone (14 lb.) 16 cloves (7 lb.). and a ton weighs 20 cwt. or 2240 lb. (long ton).

To the Brits, an American hundredweight (100 lb. or 1/20 ton) was useful enough to use at times & called the Cental.

#### Liquid measures:

Ok, we've heard of Brits hoisting a pint. What is it?

It's 570 ml or 20 oz. U.S.

And what about a stone?

It's 14 lb especially when talking about a person's weight. A butcher's stone is 8 lb.

How about an Imperial gallon? It's 1.2 gallons U.S. or 4.5 liters. A gallon U.S. is 3.8 liters.

#### Who drives on the left side of the road and why?

The Pope decreed in 1300 AD that pilgrims must walk on the left side. This may be apocryphal.

Drivers of heavy wagons in USA & France drove on the right because their seats were on the left back horse & they whipped with their right hand. Elsewhere, with smaller wagons, drivers sat on the right side in the wagon & their backstroke was out over the road so as not to tangle with their load.

Today, the following drive on the left: the United Kingdom including Australia, Japan, East Timor, Indonesia, many former & present British possessions such as West Indies islands, Bangladesh, Botswana, Brunei, the English Channel islands, Cyprus, the Falklands & Fiji, India, Kenya, New Zealand, Thailand, This is only a partial list. Even more puzzling is why most aircraft are flown from the left seat but helicopters are flown from the right seat. Since aircraft carriers have the command island on the right or starboard side, perhaps choppers are flown from the right seat so's the pilot has a better sense of his distance from the island.

#### On to currency.

The dollar vs. the pound: In 1792, the U.S. declared the dollar (100 cents) as the official currency. Foreign coins were to stop being legal tender in 1797, but a shortage of gold & silver delayed that.

In 1797, Britain was short on silver also so over stamped Spanish dollars with an engraving of George III. The re-issued coins were worth 4 shillings 9

pence, just short of a crown. A crown in this sense was 5 shillings & the alternate name was the English dollar. Who else uses the dollar as the unit of currency? Australia, Canada, Zimbabwe, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Mexico (the peso) among others. Great Britain's old system of currency was the Pound Sterling, divided into 20 shillings divided into 12 pence divided into 4 farthings.

Now comes the fun part of the old currency.

You could ask for a ha'penny, thruppence, a florin ( 2 shillings), a half-crown (2 shillings 9 p) or a crown (5 shillings). A pound coin was a sovereign.

There was also a guinea, a gold coin worth 21 shillings. Some Briticisms for their money: A quid or nicker is a pound. A bob is a shilling.

In the 70's the British decided to go to a metric pound of 100 pence.

#### Finally, now about the Whitworth system!

The Brits used the Whitworth thread system on just about everything until about 1970, when metric came in. Whitworth measurement starts with a thread angle of 55 degrees with a pitch and depth varying according to the diameter of the bolt. The spanner ( wrench) size was marked according to the diameter of the bolt, not the distance across the flats of the head.

Whitworth, inch, and meter bolts are NOT interchangeable.

After the war, GB, Canada, & the US agreed to unify thread pitches so that a bolt on a Triumph could be found in an American parts bin, etc. Not surprisingly, smaller Brit manufacturers decided to opt out, partly from tradition & partly for economy and kept the Whitworth system.

So, if you have an un-restored British car or bike you might need 3 sets of wrenches; Metric, English (inch), and Imperial or BSVV.

## Greetings from Skunk Hollow

And another "howdy" from deep in the heart of Skunk Hollow!

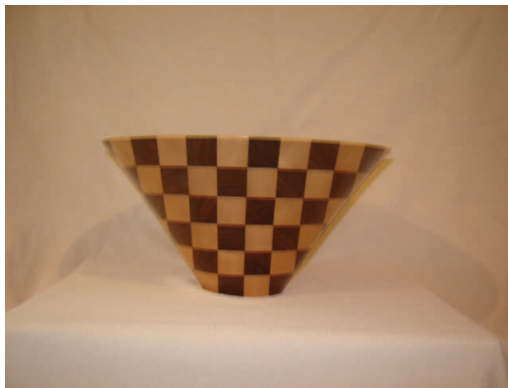
As usual it is busy, busy, busy for me! With my membership in the Frog Hollow gallery group now in full swing, I am producing for six galleries.....five in Vermont, and one in New Hampshire where I have a summer home. While sales volumes ebb and flow with the seasons, and the somnambulant national economy, August was a good month for me and I am scrambling to replenish stock for my outlets in anticipation of the arrival of the "leaf-peepers", usually a good time for all Vermont



tourist-related business (and hopefully no different this year!!). As always I am attempting to expand my design parameters through new shapes, materials, and techniques. I am enclosing three pix here: the first is a 12" x 5" walnut piece with an



accent band of holly. It is new in that it is one of my first pieces with a textured side using my new motorized texturing tool, which I will be demonstrating next week. Unfortunately the picture doesn't highlight it real well, but you will see it better next week. The second piece is an 18" x 5", ash with a plain walnut rim (usually I make the rim with a little more detail). This is a very straight-forward design, but I am finding that one of the ways I am able to differentiate my work in my galleries from others is to "go big". While there is an increasing amount of segmented work coming into the marketplace, there are almost no large segmented bowls, and they are being received well. The third piece is one of my "checkerboard" pieces in walnut and Birdseye maple, 11" x 5". This is a relatively simple design to execute, but creates a complex appearing effect and has been a good seller. I am expanding my "flute" design pattern like this one using other



woods and lamination combinations. "Playing" with designs and procedures like this helps keep it from becoming 'production' work too!!

For now.....cheers! Hope to see you on the 18th!

Russ Fellows

**In House Demos:**  
**September 18:**  
**Texturing. Ted & Russ.**

**October**  
**Randy, Xmas ornaments.**  
**Elections & Bylaws Vote.**

## Treasurer's report

Balance Forward	\$2719.16
Income	
Raffle	34
Dues	40
Hats	49
Anchorseal	20
Expenses	
New website	74
Woodstock show booth	360
Balance Forward	\$2428.16
Ted Fink	



# President's Desk continued

*(Continued from page 1)*

**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  
billriquois@yahoo.com*

A final reminder (well not quite final, I will harass you once more at the meeting next week!) that our club will have a booth at the Fine Woodworking Festival in Woodstock the weekend of September 27th & 28th.

As I have indicated in this column and at the last couple of meetings, this is not only a gathering of the finest woodworkers in Vermont for exchange of resource information and general chit-chat, but it is also a retail show open to the public. It is thus an opportunity for our club to provide a temporary test market for members for their work. Those of you who have been toying with the idea of trying some sales of your pieces, but haven't quite gotten to the point of doing it, can do so now, and do it with minimal commission expense (more about that at the meeting). So poke around your shops, buff up a few of your hidden "gems" and bring them to the meeting on Thursday September 18th (or make arrangements to get them over to Craig Hall or me prior to the 26th), and we will see what we can do for you. If you plan to go to the show you can stop by the booth with items also. Stop by and say hello anyway, even if you don't have anything for the table this time around!

The Vermont Wood Net is a coalition of Vermont wood product producers and woodworkers, both hobbyist and professional, with a mission of helping its members strengthen and grow their organizations and opportunities via education and the exchange of informa-

tion. This is a group of Vermonters (our fellow Chuck Bob Bouvier is chairman) helping Vermonters make and sell their products and at the same time promote a commitment to the sustainability of forest products and related industry in the state, something for which we have always been known. With the closing of our Maplewood Gallery earlier this summer, this has been a challenging year for us, and we are in the process of evaluating and redefining our aspirations and goals. If you need help with almost any aspect of your woodworking, from resource sharing to FSC certification to web marketing help to vendor discounts, and much much more, please visit the website at [www.vtwoodnet.org](http://www.vtwoodnet.org).

The annual meeting is Friday September 19th at the Farm Barn at Shelburne Farms, and the next day hosts the annual Harvest Festival. We are interested in expanding our membership, so consider this if you are not already a member. The cost is minimal for what can be gotten out!

The national woodturning organization, the American Association of Woodturners... [woodturner.org](http://woodturner.org), is also having a drive to expand their membership base. In addition to hosting their annual symposium... next year it will be in Albuquerque! (too bad it is not in February) They are a nationwide resource network, and publish an excellent quarterly magazine, "American Woodturner".

Of interest to me, but alas I cannot make it!.. the AAW is sponsoring a weekend seminar on segmented woodturning No-

vember 14th-16th at the Marc Adams School in Indiana. Check it out at

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

Hope to see you all at our next meeting, Thursday September 18th at the Shelburne Art Center. Along with our regular business we will be nominating the new board and officers for the coming year (to be voted on at the annual meeting in October). This year we will be expanding our board (subject to approval of the by-law change by the membership) to include two members-at-large, so if you would like to serve, or have someone else in mind, make it known at that time. Also, Ted Fink and I will be demonstrating different texturing techniques that we utilize, and since this process is a very individualized one, if you have any special tools that you have "cobbled" up for your work, bring them in to show the group!

The next board meeting is Wednesday October 8th at 6:00 at my home in Jericho. This will include dinner, followed by the semi-annual business meeting. All Chucks are welcome to attend!

Russ Fellows, Pres.

## Special AAW Notice for Members

I want to announce an unique event scheduled in a few months. This will be the very first symposium exclusively organized for "segmented" turners. The dates are November 14th-16th at the Marc Adams School in Indiana. All the details are posted on the event website at: <http://www.segmentedwoodturners.org/>

Malcolm Tibbetts - AAW Board member



Some pictures in Russ's workshop



Joe worked the grill. Great burgers & donated salads & desserts. Greg Drew's daughter examined the Woodchuck cake provided by Russ.



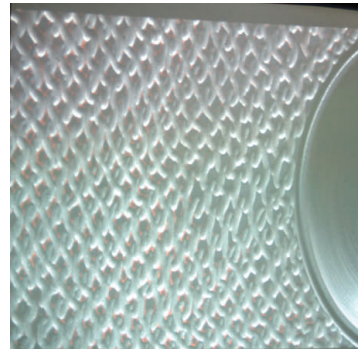
Some of the great Instant Gallery items.

# Al Stirt and a Decorated, Square-edge Bowl

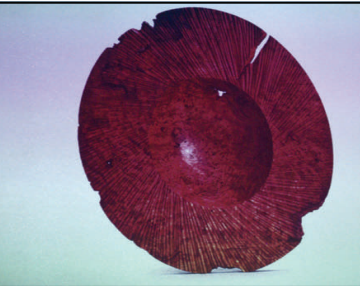
Al's concept is to take a square block, make a graceful edge-on profile, and decorate the face with a semi-random texture. He then uses milk paint and judiciously sands and scuffs the surface to produce the shadings and richness which antique milk-painted household items are treasured for. First, some samples:



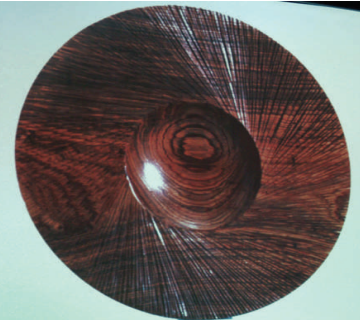
A natural pattern made by wind & wave



Section of a bowl emulating above pattern



Notice the spiral-effect texture.



Geometric shapes carved into paint



Close-up of a decorated square bowl



1. Mounting a spacer to a screw chuck. A matching hole (3/8") is drilled centered on the face of the blank.



2. The blank is mounted and the tailstock brought up for safety.



3. Al starts to shape the bottom & foot of the bowl.



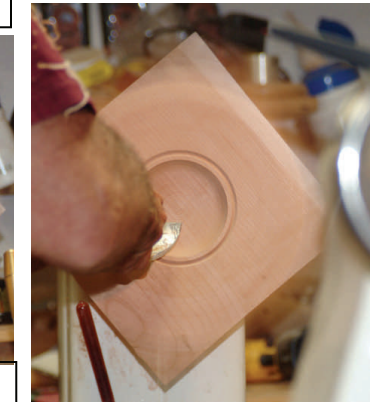
4. Rough shaping the bowl bottom. Al is using the ear of a bowl gouge.



5. & 6. Al uses a flat-ended scraper ground to a sharp edge and used as a shear scraper to finish the bowl side. Note how the tool is held. A rounded corner is on the tool rest in a strong grip.



7. The piece is now held by its foot in a scroll chuck and the face is being refined. The bowl will have a shallow broad rim.

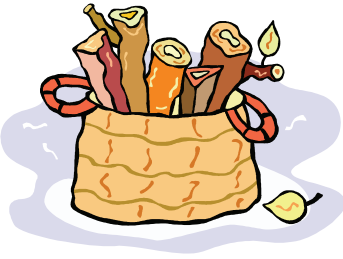


8. The bowl is being hollowed. A good design will have the ratio of face to hollow 2:1.



9. Al pencil scribes concentric circles and radial lines with random spacing.

## Some comments from the picnic



A few of you asked about some details for getting that green log to be a project without cracks. This month I will touch on some of these questions and mention a method of drying that will appeal to the “let’s make it as complicated as we can” school of thinking.

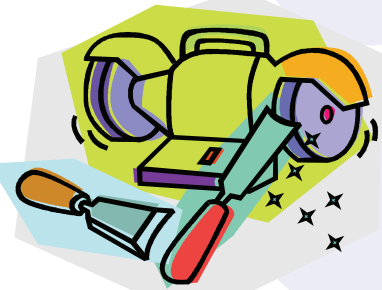
Some questions revolved around “how long” do I leave it in the bag, keep it cool, zap it in the microwave, .... Since the variables are many, there is no one simple answer. As always, you will need to apply the basic fact that to dry without cracking, wood must lose its moisture evenly from the outer surface to the core. Even if you wax and bag it for a few weeks in a cool place

and remove it to a drier and warmer room, drying at the surface may increase enough to cause small cracks. There is no substitute for keeping track of your own circumstances and testing for what works. Keep in mind that conditions change with the weather and seasons. Some of you use a moisture meter and this should give you an idea of the water content. It will not tell you by itself when the wood is “dry”.

When is it “dry”? As usual, it depends. If you have a damp cool shop, dry will be different than in a warm wood-heated one. If you buy dry wood from a supplier it may not have the same moisture content after sitting in your shop for even a short time. To know when your project is stable and as dry as it will get in your shop there are a couple of things you may do. Save a sample of the wood you are turning with similar side grain thickness. Leave it in the shop without waxing or bagging. This will give you something with which to compare the moisture readings. Also, after bagging for a few

weeks or until the drying (weight loss) begins to taper off, remove from the bag and give it some more time. Keep an eye on it at first for any signs of surface cracking. Wet it and re-bag if this happens. When you think it is ready you could lightly turn or scrape away the wax and give it some more time to stabilize. After keeping track for a while you will have a better sense of “how long will it take” without constant measuring and checking.

I know some of you are just impatient to turn that roughed bowl and get to the real turning. If it will fit, you might try microwaving the almost dry blank. Remember to run some test pieces that you do not mind losing. Another solution is to turn and finish the project while green. Although it will change shape (warp), many turners make a feature of this. You still have to keep it from cracking as it dries. Since it will be thinner, drying will not take as much time. However, all the rules about wood cracking if dried



unevenly still apply. Putting finish on a green turning may seem counter intuitive as well as against the “surface must be dry and clean” directions on most finishing products. With the caveat that you should experiment with your materials and conditions, I have been able to get good results by letting the turning sit until most of the surface moisture is gone and applying an oil/ varnish. Wipe off and keep in a cool place and add more coats until the wood no longer looks “thirsty”. The finish will help the wood dry evenly.

A short note on sanding wet wood: I use wet/dry paper and keep each grit in a separate bowl of water along

*(Continued on page 8)*



10. The piece has been reversed onto a vacuum chuck. The tape is to seal pores for a better grip. Al is finishing the foot and giving the outside of the bowl some interesting cove cuts.



11. Resting on the bed is Al's large vacuum chuck. It can be mounted on a carving vise or to a wall to hold work at a comfortable angle.



12. Making random-looking cuts with a high-speed tool.



13. Dabbing on milk paint.



14. After drying, Al uses a scrubby to burnish the paint which reveals some of the wood.

## The Sharpening Bench Continued

(Continued from page 7)

with a piece of Viva paper towel for each bowl. As I sand I hold the wet towel against the wood where I am sanding. The towel picks up the slurry of dust and keeps the wood wet and the sandpaper from clogging. I rinse both the sandpaper and towel often in the water. The paper lasts much longer, there is no dust, and if the speed is not excessive you will not get too wet. Each grit is kept in a separate bowl to not contaminate the next finer grit with any of the coarser grit. Generally I start with 220 P grade and go to 2000 or more. I reverse the lathe between each of the last few grits.

This gives a very nice finish even when dry. Another advantage of wet sanding is that there is no heat generation. This is a very common cause of surface cracking on dry wood.

The complicated but very fast drying method I said I would mention involves making a vacuum chamber to fit into a micro-

wave oven. This combines the vacuum, which reduces the boiling temperature of water with the through heating of the microwave. If there is any interest I will add some more details another time. Right now I can hear Arny Spahn wondering if I am going to get this in on time, so, until next month.



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### The Newsletter of Woodchuck Turners of Northern Vermont

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## 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 borrow 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.