



Slightly *Skewed*

Volume 10, Number 11 -November 2002

Next Meeting:

November 10, 2002

Sunday, 2:00 p.m. Sharp at
Crescenta Valley Regional Park
Recreation Center.

Presentation:

Mark Fitzsimmons, whose topic will be ideas for re-orienting a “turning in process” on the lathe to take advantage of features discovered in the wood that the artist doesn’t want to lose in a pile of shavings on the floor. For example, about a year ago, a turning was brought in for show & tell that had a bullet embedded in the side.

Challenge:

At the November meeting, we will judge children’s toys. There are no restrictions on size, or design, but we request that they contain some turned wood parts. Prizes will be awarded to the person who brings in the most toys, and to the person who brings in the best toy as determined by judges selected at the event. Members are invited to donate those toys to the club. We will coordinate with the Conejo Woodworkers to ensure your toys go to needy families in the SoCal area.



Brigantines Report

By Bill Kelly

The cabin soles (floors) have been installed in Irving. Construction of bearths in compartments A & B began Friday. I have completed 18 larger cabin lights. We’ll be making about 25 parrel beads for the gaff boom throats soon. These beads are 3” diameter with 5/8” centers. Work has commenced on splicing the ratlines and attaching batlines to the shrouds. The rigging crew has almost completed the bending on of sails on Irving while Exy waits patiently for her yards. Still shooting for Christmas to get ‘em sailing!

Activities Report

By Dan Hogan

December Meeting:

The December meeting will be on Sunday, December 8, 2002.

Workshops

There are no workshops scheduled for November or December, 2002. The “Multi-Center” Workshop (previously scheduled for October 26th) and the “Photographing Your Work” Workshop (previously scheduled for November 16th) have both been postponed until next year. You will be advised of the new schedule once it’s re-established.

Presentations:

For December, there will be no presentation and no challenge. That meeting will be dedicated to our end-of-the-year holiday potluck and fundraising auction. This is one of the primary ways GWG raises funds to support the year’s programs. Plan to bring spouses to that meeting and dress for the holidays. Bring a potluck food item to share. Also bring items you want to donate to the club for the auction. We will auction those during the event. In addition, we’ll also auction those items made by the professional demonstrators we’ve had over the past year.

Survey

Also during the November meeting, we will ask all members to consider what events and topics you would like to see during 2003. This is an important survey because it is the

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The Sören Berger Workshop

Sören Berger has developed a workshop that not only features superb quality but also something of interest to almost everyone with an interest in turning. He began with some basic turning tips, one of which was in direct opposition to traditional school teaching. He showed how he achieves a fine finish using what is essentially a roughing gouge with a straight edge which my instructor in school told us avoid using at all! He moves the chisel in a direction that is opposite to the opening with the heel resting solidly against the work. A new use for under-used tool.

He next turned a canister such as might be used to store coffee or flour on a kitchen counter while delivering a bit of his philosophy of turning. As close as I can recall, he said, "Our aim should be to have a hand turned item such as this canister in a prominent place - such as the kitchen counter - in every home in a

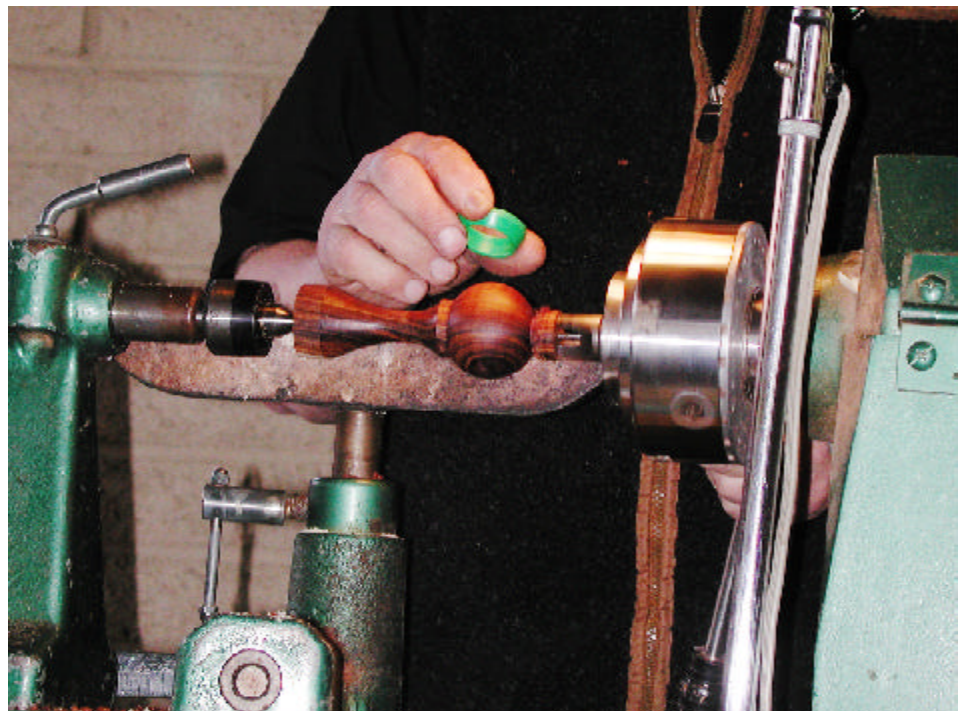


America so that we take would turning out of the 'exotic' category and start people thinking of wood turning as simply a good way to decorate their homes with beauty and originality."

During the break one of Steve Dunn's buddies who lives in Texas sold the participants some wood that is ordinarily quite rare and expensive in this part of the world, including cocobolo, red palm, black palm, and others. Because he's a direct importer, his prices are more attractive than most other sources in Southern California.



1. A blank about 2" x 2" by 5" is shaped roughly into a ball with a suggestion of the handle towards the tailstock.



After a tasty lunch provided by Jackie Comer, Sören showed us how to construct his trademark piece, a large bowled spoon (or small ladle) with an artistically curved handle that looks like it could not possibly be produced on a lathe. It's done in the following fashion:

2. The ball is fully shaped and finished except that the piece is still between centers
3. Next the ladle end of the piece is moved off center around $\frac{3}{4}$ ". The outside (or top) of the ladle is shaped with the piece still between centers.
4. A jam chuck is created to fit the ball.



5. With the ball in the jam chuck, the underside of the ladle is turned and finished. This operation takes a very delicate touch since a catch would send the piece flying across the room. Less talented turners might be able to cut the underside of the ladle on a band saw before starting on the ball. 6. Finally, with the ball in the chuck and the handle flying precipitously around in space, the top of the bowl is faced off and the bowl is hollowed out.

In a tribute to Sören's design proficiency, note that no expensive jigs or fixtures are needed for this project! The only fixture used was a jam chuck created from scrap wood

on the spot.

Sören finished his workshop with another illustration of working inexpensive parts, a home built vacuum chuck. A perennial problem for turners is how to finish the foot of the bowl or platter and eliminate all evidence of chucking. A vacuum chuck solves the problem by gripping either the inside or the outside of any spherical surface without any telltale marks.

The main parts of the system are:

1. A vacuum source which can be as sophisticated as a commercial pump or as simple as a household vacuum cleaner.

2. Some sort of plug-bearing to fit into the back end of the head stock



with a hose to attach to the vacuum source.

3. The chuck itself that Sören created out of P.V.C. pipe and duct tape.

All in all, I think most of the attendees thought it was a very interesting and satisfying workshop.

Sören showed a number of interesting tools from his shop in down-under New Zealand. Contact him at: www.berger.co.nz.

Activities Report *Cont. from Page 1)*

basis for much of the year's events. Please give this some conscientious thought prior to the meeting. That way, filling out the survey form at the meeting will go smoothly.

Show and Tell



Bill Haskell showed three hollow formvessels. One of the neat things

about hollow formis that was that the inside is inaccessible and thus need not be sanded. He is shown holding a large turban shaped hollow form done with richly spalted California buckeye containing intriguing bark inclusion windows. A second one was strikingly spalted silver maple and the third was an interesting and very old piece of distressed fig. All three pieces had a finish that Bill believes optimizes the visual experience of the wood's figure and color. The finish consists of a CA base coat over which a number of rubbed out lacquer coats is applied.



Don Comer also submitted three items including a tall hollow vessel (pictured) of ebony, silver and

bleached maple finished in lacquer.

Don also showed a lacquer finished returned lip bowl in spalted hackberry with turquoise inlay, and three decorated tops that he intended to enter in Challenge.



Dick Lukes showed a black torus of basswood and maple that was mounted on a black conical base. The finish was black leather dye and black patinating wax. He also showed a white off-center hollowed hemisphere with a white ball made of maple on a rectangular column

base. It was finished in white liming wax and acrylic spray.

Mel Foncannon exhibited a CA and lacquer finished carob vase that had an interesting history. While Mel was removing the boring bar (with the lathe running, of course) the vase sort of exploded. Mel repaired it by turning a new neck, gluing the parts back together and filling some voids with turquoise. The result (below) would play nicely at Del Manos.



Steve Jacobs showed a handsome mahogany Minorah (right).

Dave Heresheimer exhibited a 6" diameter Ash bowl with a natural

edge, an overlapping-edge Cherry vessel 3" in diameter, and an 8" diameter mortar & pestle (below), all finished in Lacquer and wax.

Bob Stumbo exhibited a bird house finished in Deft.

George Wintermantle showed some spiral turnings in oak, black walnut and maple turned on a Legacy lathe.

Al Sils showed a carob bowl with a wax finish and a varnished maple bowl.

Floyd Pederson showed two bowls, one of spalted ash and the other of walnut, both finished in tung oil.

Ralph Otte showed some uncut bookmarks of various woods.



From the Editor's Desk

By Cheryl V. Schneiders

In this month's *President's Column* Don Comer lamented the fact that there weren't even enough entries in the last Challenge (Surface Decoration) to hold a contest.

This in spite of the fact that surface decoration has been a significant part of the last four workshop demonstrations, two of which many members paid \$20 apiece to attend! There's a disconnect here.

A similar fate has befallen other challenges, so Don suggested dropping all but the most popular. I have a different suggestion.

I was reminded of a similar situation in my other avocation, playing pool. There are a few traditional pool tournaments around LA that

offer significant prizes every week. I entered one in Pasadena. There were 15 or so "regulars" and about 5 beginners like myself. All the beginners, some young, some female, were eliminated from the competition within an hour, and that outcome was repeated week after week. In two months I was the only beginner left. I found out that tournaments generally progressed in that fashion with a few players winning all the time and the rest eventually dropping out. Most tournaments had a life span of about a year before there were too few players left to support it.

About that time, I also discovered there was a whole different set of pool players playing in "handicap" tournaments. The pro's scoffed at these as not "real" pool but as I found out they were very popular and there were lots of young people and women participating who continued to play year after year.

The idea was simple: every player in the league has a handicap between 2 and 7. In a match, each player has to win the number of games in her handicap before the opponent wins the number in his handicap. My handicap is 4 so if I play against someone with a 2 handicap, we play between 4 and 5 games. I have to win

4 games before my opponent wins 2 games, or he wins the match.

There is an ongoing point system. The player gets a few points just for playing, and a few more for a good showing such as making an expert really work for a win, and of course there are lots of points for an upset victory. It's fun and stimulating for both beginners and experts. Beginners get a real thrill when they occasionally play very well and beat an expert, but they get some satisfaction if they just play well within their level and they move steadily upwards in the individual standings. The expert has to play really well every time, even against a beginner, because the slightest lapse of concentration or bit of bad luck can allow the beginner to win two games out of eight possible and embarrass the expert.

In thinking about the two situations, I was amazed at the similarities to the woodworking world. In my woodturning class at Cerritos College at least a third (33%) of the class is female, and fully half (50%) of the class is under 30. In GWG, by contrast, we have Carey and myself representing female turners (3%) and no one that I've noticed under 30 (0%). In fact, there are relatively few under 60. Now, of course, it's possible that the membership likes it that way, and would be content to see the club gradually decline and vanish as it's membership ages. But if not, here's a possible solution modeled on the pool league solution.

We can establish a Wood Turner's ranking with everyone having a rank from Top Turner to Wood Butcher, and we can publish a monthly ranking list. (Maybe we wouldn't list the

bottom 10. We don't want to embarrass anyone.) To make the competition meaningful and important, there should be two really significant prizes awarded at the end of the year, one for Top Turner and one for Most Improved Turner.

Members would earn points by:

- * Doing well in the Challenge competition
- * Making items for the Christmas drive
- * Making items for the brigantines
- * By exhibiting at the various shows and galleries
- * Performing services for the club

The number of points to be awarded for any given event would be announced beforehand. The first job in setting up this system will be to decide how many points are to be awarded for different items and functions. In the ball competition, for instance, you might award 5 points just for entering, 10 points for inherent difficulty, 10 points for finish and appearance, and 15 points for performance, for a possible total of 40 points.

All of the points earned, though, would be factored by the turners handicap. Initially, I think that the handicap scale should run from, say, 0.2 (for an expert) to 0.8 (for a rank beginner).

To show how this might work, let's suppose that we have a seasoned expert named "Carl" (handicap 0.7) and a young beginner named "Dan" (handicap 0.3). Carl enters a 6" ball of coco bolo with a blinding finish that's runs straight as an arrow and wins 38 points. Dan enters a 3" ball of walnut (low difficulty = 2), wobbles like a drunken sailor (low

performance = 2) but he really works to achieve a glowing finish (8) so he earns 17 points. Carl's score is $38 \times .3 = 11.4$ while Dan's is $17 \times .7 = 11.9$. Carl wins the challenge, but Dan picks up more points toward Top Turner.

Here's an important point: In pool, expert or novice, you still have to still have to sink 7 balls and the 8-ball to win a game. That's the absolute standard. The number of games won, however, is factored by the handicap and that scale is relative. In woodturning, the winner of the Spinning Top competition would be the turner who's top spins the longest: Absolute standard. But the points earned toward Top Turner would be relative, factored by the handicap. The two types of competition give everyone an incentive to work harder and more creatively.

If you're interested in this idea, send me your suggestions and I'll publish them (or not if you prefer) next month. If there seems to be some interest, I'll work out some of the math, and suggest a points and handicap system that seems fair to me. Then the fun can start!

Proposed Meeting Dates for 2003

January 12, 2003

February 9, 2003

March 9, 2003

April 13, 2003

May 4, 2003 (1st Sunday to avoid conflict with Mother's Day)

June 1, 2003 (1st Sunday to avoid conflict with Father's Day)

July 13, 2003

August 10, 2003

September 14, 2003

October 12, 2003

November 9, 2003

December 14, 2003

President's Column

By Don Comer

We held the elections for GWG Officers last meeting, October 13, and I have some "good news" and some "bad news". The bad news is; I was reelected President for a second term. Judging from the returns, I am now just about as popular as Saddam Hussein. After all, he won a landslide election too. I just hope all this power and authority doesn't go to my head! I want to remain the meek and modest guy you've all come to know and love. Isn't that right, Sgt. Nelson?

The good news is; Dan Hogan was elected Vice-president unanimously. Dan did an outstanding job of arranging and managing our club activities this year and has already "moved out aggressively" to line up some interesting professional demonstrators for next year. In addition, Dan is playing a lead role in the design and production of our entry in the Chapter Challenge for the AAW Symposium next year.

Cheryl Schneiders was elected Newsletter Editor. Al Sobel stepped down as Newsletter Editor but accepted the job of Secretary with the additional duties of maintaining the membership roster and mailing lists.

Bob DeVoe and Bill Nelson will continue in their present positions of Treasurer and Librarian respectively. So the Board continues pretty much as it was this year, with the addition of Cheryl and the loss of Steve Jacobs. Steve served as Secretary for five years and we all should to thank him for the effort he put in for the benefit of the club. I just hope we don't just completely lose him to the addictive game of golf.

Damon Siples gave us a very informative presentation on dust control methods and equipment. Damon has done a very thorough job of dust control in his own shop and it would benefit all of us, I'm sure, if we would

follow at least some of his examples. Thanks, Damon.

Earleen Ahrens reminded us once again of the GWG Brand Library Show; which will open June 7, 2003 and run through July 5, 2003. We'd like to see at least one and preferably more pieces from each and every GWG member. The idea is to present the full range of possible turnings and the enjoyment and pride they all represent.

The Surface Decoration Challenge turned out to be a bust. Mel Foncannon brought in a turquoise decorated vessel without intending to enter it in the challenge. I brought in four brightly painted tops that I had intended to enter in the Spinning Top Challenge but got them finished too late for that. Because the rules specify at least three entries, meaning three different members, the Challenge was voided. The Board has been concerned about the low interest shown by the general membership in many of the Challenges. Participation has sunk so low that I think we should consider canceling most of them. Possible exceptions may be the: Same Size Block, Tagua Nut, Spinning Top, Round Ball Contest Challenges and maybe others. Anyone want to weigh in on the pros and cons of this issue?

Soren Berger gave us a very interesting and informative demonstration on October 19. Soren has a different approach to wood turning than most demonstrators I've seen, and this leads to some very intriguing techniques. Contrary to my former conviction, the fingernail grind is not the only useful shape and I'll be regrinding some of my tools next time I start to do some vessel turning.

Don't forget to bring a toy or two to the November 10 meeting for the needy kids.

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