



# Greater Vancouver Woodturners Guild

130<sup>th</sup> chapter of the  
American Association of Woodturners



Newsletter

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## President s Column

*Art Liestman*

The May meeting began with a group discussion entitled "What do I do with this?". Bruce Campbell led the assembled masses in a discussion of the possible uses of oddly shaped pieces of material. Many audience members joined in with creative suggestions.

The main speaker for the meeting was Bill Smith of the Northwest Washington

**June 28, 2000 Meeting:**

**Focus on Fundamentals —**  
*John Bese* —Three Basic Cuts  
(starts at 6:30 p.m.)

**Main Speaker —**  
*Steve Hansen* - Tool Making

**Meeting at Canadian Legion Hall**  
**1025 Ridgeway Ave., Coquitlam**

Woodturners who showed us how to make a goblet with a barley twist. Bill s demonstration was very informative and Bill proved to be a very entertaining speaker, as well.

The President s Challenge for May was to make mushrooms. Bonnie Klein s influence is still strong as evidenced by Larry Stevenson s chattering shroom (with some nice chatterwork on its top) and Ted Fromson s mushroom pen. Ted also brought two more ordinary wooden mushrooms. Andrew Forsyth contributed 3 meaty efforts while Rich Schmid brought a family of five impressive fungi. Two of Colin Delory s three mushrooms had captive rings on their stems — a nice touch, though rarely seen in nature. Doug Schop s group of mushrooms attracted a hungry lizard and Phil Laliberte s trio of mushrooms was nicely executed in holly. Well done, guys!



*Mushrooms in May*

Don't forget June's challenge — a baseball bat — full-sized or miniature.

### Meeting Food Providers — Reminder

The following people have volunteered to provide food for the June 28 meeting:

Steve Hansen, Myrna Berera, Fred Baldwin and Mike Dawson.

*Thanks, gang!*

### Focus on Fundamentals — What do I do with this?

*Bruce Campbell*

Last month, the FOF topic was "What do I do with this?" It was a group discussion of alternative approaches to various samples of wood brought in by members.

Neno brought two simple squares of 1" stock - one 6"x6" and the other 4"x4". We agreed that laminating them together would provide a good blank for a dish. Neno will bring the finished product to the next meeting.

I brought two ugly pieces of wood: one a weathered western maple burl and the other a found-wood wedge about 14" across. General discussion was that both had interesting natural edges that should be retained in the final work. Then we discussed various ways of cutting the blanks. The advice on the maple burl was excellent and I have a candy dish and a 12" hollow form from it. I will attack the found wood next.

The overall lesson from the session is that patience and flexibility are key. If you cannot see something in a bit of wood, discuss it with fellow turners. Their eyes may see something you missed.

### Instant Gallery

*Art Liestman & John Flanagan (photos)*

I am just amazed by the gallery contributions that arrive every month. There is some excellent work being done by beginners and old-timers alike. Well done!

May's Instant Gallery began with a couple of classy bowls from Neno Catania — one in laburnum and the other in maple. Great stuff!

Marco Berera got a bit carried away with the President's challenge theme, so he submitted his mushroom box with numerous captive rings to the instant gallery. Marco, who clearly has way too much time on his hands, also brought some lovely tulips.



*Marco's Mushroom — closed (top) and open (bottom)*

Bill Kennedy showed two Japanese sake cups — one in a traditional style and the other in a more contemporary vein. Continuing with the Japanese theme, Dave Broomhead showed two classy ickebana (flower arranger) pieces.

Loren Boyle brought in a nice potpourri dish that will make someone very happy!



*Potpourri Dish — Loren Boyle*

Klaas Focker, noted for his thousand coats of lacquer, showed two shiny pieces — an excellent hollow form in honey locust and a very fine cherry bowl.



*Hollow Form — Klaas Focker*

David MacDonald showed us his interesting model of a 1500 s lathe that he recently made as

a school project. Maybe we should make a full-sized one as a group project.



*David MacDonald's Lathe from the 1500 s*

Last, but not least, Bob Vergette contributed an oak bowl with an unusual rim and a lovely lidded box with a contrasting lid.

## Upcoming Speakers

*Fred Baldwin*

Guest presenters for upcoming meetings are as follows:

September 27 - Fred Holder of the Northwest Washington Wood Turners will demonstrate his techniques on making Chinese Balls.

October 25 - Ross Pilgrim will show us how he uses a lathe to make a Watch.

November 22 - Four members will present their ideas on Turing Xmas Gifts. (If you have any projects you would like to see, please call me.)

December — A special event to be announced.

January 24 - Have trouble with finishing your turnings? Cornelius Regehr will discuss and give advice on the techniques he uses to get that great finish.

February 28 - Ever turned a bowl with a scraper? Scott Belway of the Fraser Valley Woodturners will demonstrate his techniques on how he uses only a scraper to do it.

March 28 — a special guest to be announced.

April 25 - Bark edged bowls. Neno Catania will show us the tools and techniques he uses to do either natural or burl bark edged bowls.

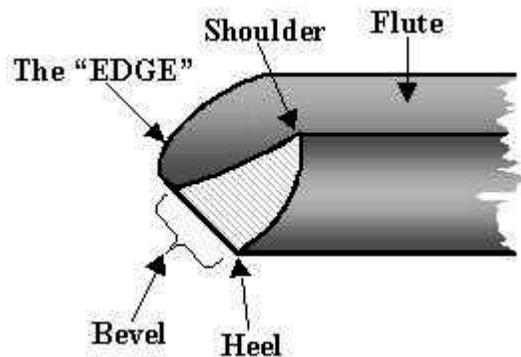
For future meetings if you have any suggestions please give me a call at 604-224-5780 or email me at fbaldwin@direct.ca.

## Tuning Gouges

*Dave Broomhead and Steve Hansen*

That s not a spelling error in the title. Yes, we thought we could talk about tuning those trusty old gouges in order to make them work better. Here s a handful of things that are guaranteed to improve your turning results.

First, I know most of us are well acquainted with the terminology and features of a gouge. However, I wanted to try out my POWERPOINT software to see if I could produce a suitable diagram — here it is:



The **Flute** is the U-shaped channel/groove that runs lengthways for much of the tool s shank (fancy word for bar). The **Bevel** is the surface that we grind. The **Edge** is any and all points where the bevel meets the flute — the sharp stuff. The **Shoulder** is the high point of the edge — or where the edge disappears into thin air.

Okay, now for punch lines. The **Flute**, because it constitutes ONE of the two planes (surfaces)

that determine the edge, must be shiny smooth in order for you to have a chance at a keen edge. (I would say a keen edge is one where the bevel, when held at 10 degrees, will easily stick to your thumbnail.) That means the flute should not have any of those minute grooves that are typically left behind from rough machining at the factory. Most gouge flutes are not well dressed to begin with. Take time to smooth them out with a slip stone or other abrasives. The angle of the **Bevel** at which you grind is yours to choose. (A follow-up article is planned on this subject). It is important that the bevel is a continuous arc (or straight) from the heel to the edge. A bevel that is uniform from heel to edge is MUCH more easily controlled than a bevel that has, for example, a micro-bevel . A micro bevel is where you have only honed the edge of the tool — fine for carvers who are not prone to *catches*. A micro bevel forces you to tip the tool up off the major portion of the bevel so that most or all of the full bevel is no longer riding the wood —*BAD* and unpredictable. To avoid micro-bevels: when you grind or hone your tool, always start at the heel and work up to the edge. This way will also maintain the bevel angle — good thing! The **Heel** should be slightly rounded or honed so that it does not score the wood. A quick touch every now and then with your hone will do the trick. It will give smoother results. Did you ever notice after starting a new cut that when the heel hits the wood, there s a tiny bead/bump left on the wood? Look close. This happens because the incidental angle abruptly changes when the heel hits the running surface of the timber.

Lets now turn to the other end of the tool: handles. **Throw your tool handle away!** Well, at least take it off and tune it. Actually you don t have to take it off but it may help - most come off with a sharp tap, especially if they have a square tang. The objective is to re-balance the handle and increase its inertia - professional turners don t use heavy tools for fun. Drill out a hole in the end and put in lead - lead sinkers from Canadian Tire come in a range of sizes.

Use silicon to secure the weights. The hole length and diameter should be such as to add as much weight as practical at the outer end of the handle. Hold the tool in one hand where you would normally hold it and add weight until it is handle heavy. This will counter the force on the cutting edge. The increased mass of the tool will also dampen the vibrations from the cutting edge. You should consider making a custom handle from a tropical hardwood, weighted as above, for your best bowl gouge. Your turning will be significantly easier and better. If you feel the handle is too short, make a new one. Use a heavy timber or steel pipe covered with bicycle grip - works great.

## **Taming the wild grain — So many possible answers**

*Art Liestman*

For most any woodturning problem, there is more than one correct answer and each of these answers has a vocal group of supporters. One question that arises from time to time is How can I get a clean cut in this uncooperative wood that wants to tear out?

There are lots of answers. First of all, sharpen your tools. This is a pretty good all-purpose answer to most woodturning problems and is probably what we should always try first. Various experts will go further and suggest honing after sharpening. Other experts will then chime in to insist that honing is not necessary. This is generally followed by a discussion concerning what grit to use on your grinding wheel and the whole thing often degenerates into name-calling. I won't even mention sharpening with sanding belts or Tormeks, or by placing the gouge pointy side up inside a pyramid. All of these have their adherents.

There is also the issue of what tool to use and how to use it. For example, if we are talking about bowl gouges, there are many different possible bevel shapes and each shape offers many possible safe ways to cut (and some that

are not so safe). Shear scraping with a bowl gouge is a popular approach to improving the surface and worth a try. One might also do the same thing with a scraper or even with special purpose left and right shear scrapers. I'm not trying to talk you into buying more tools, but you can see that there are numerous options.

Taking another approach, some people advocate applying various substances to the wood to get a cleaner cut.

One famous woodturner applies oil to the surface of a nearly finished bowl before making the final pass with the gouge. It works for him. Another uses a thinned sanding sealer and does much the same thing. Both of them make the final cuts while the surface is still somewhat wet and never seem to use sandpaper under 240 grit. Others apply the oil or sealer but do the final pass *after* the liquid has dried. This also works for them. Personally, I've tried spraying on lacquer or sanding sealer or applying paste wax to the surface prior to the final cut with some success.

Recently, I obtained a liter of a new product called Clapham's Cutting and Sanding Compound that is meant to be used in this way. So far, I have only used it only once, but it worked very well on some dry walnut. Plus, it smells much nicer than lacquer or sanding sealer. I'm planning to use a lot of this stuff.

There is, of course, a household appliance approach to most woodturning problems. In this case, simply stick the offending piece of wood in a freezer until it is well and truly solid, remove from freezer, attach to lathe, and try cutting (with a freshly sharpened and/or honed tool, of course) while the wood is still icy cold. This has also been known to work.

Finally, some people even use 16 grit sandpaper on an angle grinder. More power to them, I say. Personally, I don't even *own* an angle grinder.

## Melvin Firmager Seminar

*Fred Baldwin*

One of our members, Bob James, has arranged for Melvin Firmager from England (known for his hollow forms and wet and natural edges) to give a three-day hands-on class August 14, 15, & 16<sup>th</sup>. The cost will be approximately \$550. In addition, Melvin will give all day seminars on August 19<sup>th</sup> and August 20<sup>th</sup>. The cost for the seminars will be approximately \$30 per day. More information will be available at the June meeting or call Bob at 980-9192.

## Summer Shop Crawl

*Art Liestman*

Klaas Focker recently remarked that he always learns things when visiting other people's shops. He suggested that we might hold a tour of some members' shops. Always eager to please, we've instituted the *Summer Shop Crawl* to run from the end of July through the middle of September.

On various weekend afternoons throughout the summer, individuals will open their shops to interested guild members. What happens during these open shops will depend on the host. Some will focus on particular projects, others on specific tools, and others will be more of an open house. So far, Neno Catania, John Bese, Art Liestman, and Andrew Forrest have volunteered to open up for the crawl.

To give you an idea of what to expect, I'm planning to show off my new lathe - a Stubby 750. (It's the only one in Canada west of Ontario.) I'll also fire up the King Kooker and boil some rough turned bowls.

If you would like your shop to be included, please call Klaas Focker at 277-3607 before July 10<sup>th</sup>. Klaas will work out the details with you and we'll include the full schedule in the July newsletter (out around July 20<sup>th</sup>).

If you'd like to attend various crawl events, just show up! This promises to be lots of fun.

## Upcoming Events

*Art Liestman*

The guild's summer picnic/social event is still in the planning stages. Final details will be announced in the July newsletter. Stay tuned!

In October, the guild will be very busy at the Surrey Woodworking Show (October 20 — 22). In addition to the Canadian Woodturning Competition, we will also have our own guild booth. We will need *lots* of volunteers to work in the guild's booth (to be coordinated by Ted Fromson) as well as to help with the competition booth (headed up by Bruce Campbell and Andrew Forrest). More details will be in the July newsletter, but start planning now. We'll need your help!

## Shopping Guru Needed!

*Art Liestman*

Can we save some money by bulk purchasing? This came to mind since Neno and I are both running out of end sealer. Buying end sealer in relatively small quantities is expensive and we'd both like to save some money if possible. Are there enough guild members that use end sealer to justify buying a 45 gallon drum and splitting it up? That's probably too much for Neno and I, but not if there were 15 or 20 of us that would like to get in on a good deal. How about saving some more money by buying a container load of exotic hardwood, a case of cyanoacrylate glue, a dozen respirator helmets, or a truckload of sandpaper? These things are all (probably) possible. Of course, there are logistical complications (where would *you* store a truckload of sandpaper) and we'd have to figure out how to handle the monetary side of things, but these details could be worked out.

What we need is someone who would be interested in checking into such things and

**GVWG Officers, Appointees, and Volunteers**

President — Art Liestman (939-3843)  
 Vice President — John Bese (581-8807)  
 Secretary — Dave Martin (521-8327)  
 Treasurer — Don Hoskins (939-6808)  
 Member at Large — Ted Fromson  
 (876-0267)  
 Focus on Fundamentals Coordinator  
 Bruce Campbell (469-0221)  
 Education Coordinator — Fred Baldwin  
 (224-5788)  
 Librarian — Dave Armatage (936-0705)  
 Wood Exchanger — Phil Laliberte (936-2995)  
 Instant Gallery Managers — Neno Catania  
 (291-7898), Sandy Dougal (931-5952)  
 Food Chief — Rich Schmid (852-2810)  
 Digital Photo Guy — John Flanagan (939-0942)  
 Acting Newsletter Editors — Doug Schop (461  
 2184) and Mike Dawson (987-4109)  
 Webmaster — Mark Bese (markbese@home.com)  
 Collaborative Challenge Coordinator —  
 Bruce Campbell (469-0221)

working with the executive to make it happen. This could start with one simple purchase (remember, Neno and I still need that end sealer) and then grow as other opportunities arise. So, here s another way to get involved to help yourself and the rest of us. (Neno and I would be *very* grateful.) Let me know if you are interested in becoming our bulk-buy shopping guru.

**THANKS!**

Special thanks to the following for donations, expertise and help:

KMS Tools (Coquitlam) 522-5599  
 Mount Cheam Woodworking  
 (Chilliwack) 795-9297  
 Neufeld Brothers Hardwoods  
 (Chilliwack) 795-7886  
 Windsor Plywood (Langley) 530-7355

**CLASSIFIEDS**

**Craftsman Wood Lathe** complete with stand, motor, 4" face plate, 12" and 4" tool rests and bowl turning tool rest. \$175. Ted Wiltshire — 522-6174.

**Wonder how to get that wood home?** Utility trailer for sale. 4' x 8' box, 15" wheels, 1500 lb. capacity, steel floor and tail gate, former rental. Needs some TLC but a good deal. \$250. Doug Schop — 461-2185.

**Burls for sale-** mostly Red Cedar, some Yellow Cedar and some spruce. These burls are unique and some are as large as 8 feet, yes 8 feet and all the way down to a two hand hold. Two B train loads. Would like to sell as one lot but will sell smaller lots. Located in Port McNeil, B.C. Contact Randy Wilson at 250-338-8095.