



# 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*

Our Annual General Meeting will take place at the regular February meeting. At this meeting, we will elect those directors whose terms end in odd numbered years: the Vice President, Treasurer, and Member at Large. Members are reminded that these elected directors must be members of the AAW. (Any member can be a candidate for one of these positions, but upon election he or she is expected to become a member of the AAW.)

In addition to the elected directors, our guild has several important appointed positions such as the

### February 28, 2001 Meeting:

Focus on Fundamentals  
Level 1 – Mounting Systems I  
Level 2 – Interesting Projects I  
Level 3 – Basic Cuts III  
(starts at 6:30 p.m.)

Main Speaker – Scott Belway  
– Turning a Bowl with a Scraper

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

Focus on Fundamentals Coordinator, Education Coordinator, Librarian, Wood Exchanger, Food Chief, Digital Photo Guy, and Newsletter Editor.

Dave Armatage has just handed the Library over to Larry Stevenson. Otherwise, I believe that all of these people are planning to continue. However, if you'd like to take over one of those positions in the future or help out now, please let us know. We can always use help!

The January meeting was packed - in more ways than one. We had an excellent start to the new Focus on Fundamentals format, a riveting speaker, and a huge turnout. Let's keep it up!

### Meeting Food Providers – Reminder

*We have gone to an alphabetical rotation!*

We ask that the following members please provide some food for the February 28, 2001 meeting: **Sandy Howkins, Mike Jacobs, Bob James, Howard Jones, Ivar Jones and Bill Kennedy**

Your contributions are much appreciated.

Since the January meeting, we also hosted Clay Foster for a one day demonstration on February 3rd. Clay was very entertaining and showed us some interesting things involving turning and finishing. I'm sure that we will see some of his influence in our instant galleries in the future. Unfortunately, we didn't get to see the slides of his work due to equipment problems. Clay taught two days of hands-on classes on the 4th and 5th. I participated in the first of those and learned quite a lot. I hope everyone else enjoyed his visit as much as I did.

## **Secretary's Report**

*Dave Martin*

The executive of the Greater Vancouver Woodturners Guild held their regular meeting on Tuesday, February 13, 2001.

Treasurer Don Hoskins reported that the GVWG earned approximately \$500 on the Clay Foster workshops. The balance in the Guild account is now \$3500 with no outstanding bills. Guild policy is to structure fees for workshops so that costs will be recovered from those attending.

The executive spent some time discussing the use of the Guild crest on objects such as T-shirts, hats and other items. While the executive welcomes suggestions on how the crest might be used to promote the Guild, members are reminded that any use of the crest must have prior approval of the executive.

Arrangements for the Annual General Meeting, to be held on February 28, were discussed. At this meeting the Guild must elect several Directors including a vice-president, a treasurer, and a number of members at large. Nominations from the floor are invited. Members are reminded that the bylaws of the GVWG require Directors to agree to be members of the American Association of Woodturners.

Another item to be voted on during the AGM is the following motion which has been recommended by the Directors: "That the annual fee for the Greater Vancouver Woodturners

Guild be thirty dollars per year payable in September and that the fee be reduced to fifteen dollars effective February 1 to cover the period from February 1 to September 1 and that the fee for two members of the same family be fifty dollars per year."

The GVWG annual picnic will be held on July 22 in Pitt Meadows. Mark this date on your calendar now. Further details will be forthcoming.

Planning is beginning for the woodturning competition at the Wood Show in Cloverdale in October. A group of about six volunteers are needed to meet with Bruce Campbell to draft a proposed plan for the 2001 competition. If you are interested, please contact Bruce ([bruce.campbell@telus.net](mailto:bruce.campbell@telus.net) or 469-0221) as soon as possible.

Please note that the GVWG executive meetings are now on the 2nd Tuesday of the month. If you have an item that you wish to add to the agenda, please forward it to the secretary before the 1st of the month, so that the secretary can prepare the agenda and have a copy out to each executive member by the week prior to the meeting.

## **Please Help Us Keep Our Records Current.**

*Dave Martin*

If you move or change your e-mail address, please let the secretary of the Woodturners Guild know. Send an e-mail to [martin\\_dave@telus.net](mailto:martin_dave@telus.net) or call Dave Martin at 521-8327.

## **Focus on Fundamentals**

*Bruce Campbell, FoF Coordinator*

We debuted our new Focus on Fundamental format at the last meeting with the first round of presentations. Ross Pilgrim presented the Level I session - Starting Tools, Sandy Dougal presented the Level II session - Basic cuts II (roughing gouge and skew) and Bruce Campbell handled the Level III session - Fingernail grinding. Judging from the number of people at

the FoF sessions, this new format appeared to be well received. Despite this being "fundamentals" it seemed to appeal to a wide range of members from beginner to advanced.

Next month will be:

- Level I - Mounting systems - faceplates and between centers
- Level II - Interesting projects I
- Level III - Basic Cuts III - bowl gouges and scrapers

If you are willing to be a presenter please contact Bruce Campbell at [bruce.campbell@telus.net](mailto:bruce.campbell@telus.net) or 469-0221. The new format is very exciting but does require assistance to make it work.

**January's Instant Gallery**

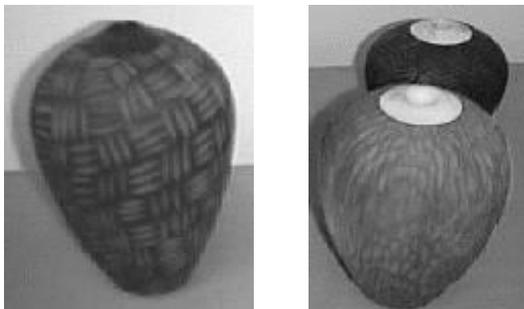
*Amie Hillaby & John Flanagan, Photos*



*Neno Catania – Maple burl vessel*



*Ryan Austman – Apple bowl*



*Art Liestman – Cherry vessels*



*Colin Delory – Apple platter*



*John Bese – Bowl Nesting Tool*

Thanks to the following people for participating in the January Instant Gallery: Rich Schmid, Ted Fromson, Bruce Campbell & Andrew Forsyth (in a collaborative effort), Art Liestman, Marco Berera, Mike Dawson, Colin Delory, Neno Catania, Andrew Forsyth, Fred Baldwin, Ryan Austman, Steve Hansen, and Scott Belway. Thanks also to John Bese for showing us his home made bowl nesting tool.

Thanks to the following people for participating in January's president's challenge: Bruce Campbell, Ted Fromson, Marco Berera, Doug Schop, Mike Dawson, Larry Stevenson, Andrew

Forsyth, Des Wilson – what a GREAT assortment of weed pots, guys!



*President's Challenge – Weed Pots*

### **Stuart Batty Demo and Classes to be held at the end of March!**

*Art Liestman*

We have just arranged for Stuart Batty to be here on March 29th - 31st. For those of you who don't know about him, Stuart sent us the following brief bio:

"I started turning at the age of twelve under the expert tutelage of my father Allan Batty and am a third generation woodturner. At the age of sixteen I started working for my father's woodturning business as a production spindle turner and teacher. I later joined Craft Supplies Ltd. in England as their in-house demonstrator and teacher. I also spent several years setting up and running sawmills both in the UK and in four different African countries. Over the past fifteen years it has been my privilege to demonstrate at over thirty International Woodturning Seminars in ten different countries, including your annual AAW Symposium. I make my full time living from teaching and demonstrating woodturning, as well as making pieces for British galleries."

On Saturday March 31st, Stuart will present a full day demonstration from 9am to 5 pm at the Evergreen Cultural Centre in Coquitlam. The demonstration will include 5 or 6 different topics from the following list:

1. Square Bowl turning

2. Spherical boxes
3. Spheres
4. Spindle Turning and skew work
5. Bowl turning with just a gouge
6. Delicate bowls out of dense exotics
7. Long thin stem goblets
8. Rough turning at speed and re-chucking

There will be a \$25 charge to attend the demonstration. The demo is just 3 days after our March meeting. The charge for the demo will be collected at the March meeting.

Stuart will also offer a 2-day course for up to 8 participants on Thursday March 29th and Friday March 30th. The class will be held at KMS in Coquitlam at a cost of \$250 per participant. Please note that this course will meet from 9am to 5pm on both days. Students will be expected to attend both days. The course begins the morning after our March meeting. If you wish to participate, please be prepared to pay at the February meeting. Any spaces left will be available at the March meeting.

Stuart sent us this course outline: "On the morning of the first day I teach spindle turning cut at a time and allow the students to go back to their lathe and practice until confident. Every possible spindle cut is covered and practiced by the students. Even if spindle turning is not the student's main interest, learning the correct cutting technique will be of great benefit when bowl turning is covered in the afternoon session. The students will make several bowls in the afternoon, practicing cutting only, with no scraping techniques required.

On the second day the students are given a choice of turnings they can make including box making, long stem goblets, square bowls and spheres."

I was lucky enough to attend a 5-day course taught by Stuart about 1 1/2 years ago. It was a wonderful experience. He is an exceptional teacher and a very entertaining (and funny) demonstrator. This will be good!

## **Beyond Technique – A Response**

*Stan Clarke*

While we are harping on design, I have a gripe (ancient guys get grouchy) about the article written by the jury of the woodturning competition in Cloverdale. The piece by Rusty Harrison was beautifully written and contained some very sound stuff, but it was almost entirely about technique.

After reading it I had the feeling that if competing turners, especially the newer ones, felt that in order to win a prize they had to do what was stated in that article, we would have a very boring show next year. The work would have “clean curves inside” and would be free of “Annoying bumps and hollows in the bottoms” but what about: inventive ideas, creativity, originality, style, and fun. We are not making parts for a Boeing 747 here, we are working with a chunk of beautiful wood hoping to create something meaningful in our own style. I feel, and I speak from long experience, that it is dangerous to get hung up on technique alone.

I watched the video of Bill Moore, professor of three-dimensional design, doing a critique of the work in the Instant Gallery at the AAW show in Tacoma and at no time did he mention the evenness of the wall or the nub on the bottom of a closed form and so forth. Instead, he talked about form relationships, the sculptured statement, the lyrical rhythm of the rim, the visual vocabulary, the possibilities within an idea, relationship of rim to foot, etc,

Technique is very important. There is no point in having a brilliant idea if you lack the skills to produce it; but, conversely, there is no point in having great technique and a lack of creativity unless of course you are bashing out salad bowls for a living.

Years ago when I was teaching ceramic design at UBC, I would see a piece of student work that denied the principles of good design. When I asked the student “Why did you make the rim like that?” often the reply was “because I like it

that way” and I found it hard to argue with that. The student was making a statement, perhaps rebelling against strict design rules. But what really annoyed me was that I lacked the guts to do the same thing.

I was a potter for over 40 years and the reason I stopped potting was technique. I got so hung up on technique that creativity went out the window. As a result, I made pots that were perfectly thrown, perfectly formed, perfectly finished, perfectly boring and perfectly dead. So I switched to glass blowing and then 15 years ago to woodturning trying to avoid the same mistake. I do not agree with a lot of what Frank Sudol says but I do agree with his quote “Perfection is Stagnation”.

When I read that “there should not be a nub on the bottom of a closed form” my first reaction was “who says so?” Does a jury throw out a piece that has a beautiful or exciting form, a dialog between shape and material, that articulates a point of view and has a finish that fits because it had a nub on the bottom? As for the lid on a vessel or box having a “continuation of curve” this can be quite boring. Some of the most exciting boxes I have seen (like the great ones of Chris Stott) have lids that do not have a continuation of form. Furthermore, if you believe (as I do) in the tenet proclaimed by the great Bauhaus school of design that “FORM FOLLOWS FUNCTION” a box has two functions: the bottom holds stuff and the lid covers stuff (generally only black air), so, two functions, two forms. The challenge is to make the two forms mate in a creative and meaningful way.

As for the argument about shiny finish versus matt finish there is one basic principle - the finish must fit the piece. To have the same finish for all pieces is to deny the full potential of the work.

Once, at a woodturning workshop, a sage told me “turning should be a dialog between you and the timber” so I thought about this and decided that the wood, with all its beauty and all its faults deserved respect. So I stopped working the hell

out of spalted wood to get “flat surfaces without undulations” and let it undulate. The judges would reject it but I love it so it stays.

Bernard Leach the “Grand Poobah” of potters once said “the pot is the extension of the man” (my daughter says in this case my work should be short fat and bald), but I think Leach’s statement goes for what woodturners create on the lathe. So try to get some of your own personality and your own style into the vessel you are turning and listen to the wood as you watch to keep the bevel rubbing.

*[Editor’s Note – Have you seen something in the newsletter that you’d like to respond to / critique / discuss? Please send me an article for inclusion in the newsletter. The above article is in response to Rusty Harrison’s “Judges’ Comments” published in the GVWG November 2000 newsletter, Vol. 2 Issue 2. Although we are interested in alternate opinions, please try to not get carried away in a “slagging match” when you respond to an article.]*

### **Is It Sharp (when I cut myself)?**

*Steve Hansen*

The title may be tongue in cheek, but I cringe anytime I see someone test for sharpness on his or her bare skin by dragging a fingertip over the tool’s edge.

I guess there are two messages to be gleaned from my madness. The first is the safety issue: I will bet anyone that this method will cut you if done over a properly honed edge. The second issue is determining if the tool is truly sharp before going back to the lathe.

The best test (known to me) is the direct one – try it on a block of end-grain wood. To make this practical, mount a block of wood - pine, yellow cedar - next door to your sharpening station. Test the edge by cutting a thin sliver across the grain. It should be effortless and leave a smooth shiny surface.

### **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)  
     Andrew Forrest (990-9667)  
 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)  
 Food Chief – Rich Schmid (538-7012)  
 Digital Photo Guy – John Flanagan (939-0942)  
 Newsletter Editor – Amie Hillaby (273-9408;  
     email: plover\_wing@yahoo.com)  
 Webmaster – Mark Bese (markbese@home.com)

Next best and ever portable is to present the edge to your fingernail, gently, at an acute (less than 30 degrees) angle. The tool should be “very sticky” to your nail. If it has any tendency to skip along and then grab, it is not sharp enough. To quote an old-time woodworker: “If you’re not frightened of the edge, then it’s not sharp!” A few tips on the fingernail test: One, choke up on the tool so that you have complete control over the sharp end. Two, test several spots along the length of the edge. Don’t forget that excellent lighting is essential for the sharpening station.

As an interesting side note, many years ago there was an article – it might have been in *Fine Woodworking* – that talked about the benefits of obtaining a keener edge. One of the things it *pointed* out was the exponential benefit of getting your tools sharper. The laboratory tests showed that all factors being equal that a tool twice as sharp will cut four times longer ... two birds with one stone – all due respect to animal lovers!

### **Upcoming Events**

*Fred Baldwin – Education Co-coordinator*

February 28 – Ever turned a bowl with a scraper? Scott Belway of the Fraser Valley Wood Turners will demonstrate his techniques using a scraper to turn a bowl.

March 28 – Martin Thorn from Squamish will demonstrate either his yellow and red cedar burl balls or turning beaded boxes. Martin is a professional wood turner with works being sold throughout North America.

*March 29, 30, and 31* – **special event** – Stuart Batty from England will present a one-day demo and teach a two-day class. See details in separate article.

April 25 – Robert Prinse of Mt Cheam Woodworking and Bill Headridge will give a discussion on local woods, how to identify them, what turns well, and drying characteristics. They will be available to answer any of your questions.

**May 12** – **special event** -Jack deVos from Australia will present a one day demonstration at the Evergreen Cultural Centre in Coquitlam. Details to follow.

May 23 – Doug Black of Island Woodcraft Supplies will demonstrate turning small items for sale plus be available to answer any questions regarding wood turning tools.

**June 2 and 3** – **special event** - Russ Fairfield from Washington state will be putting on a two day demonstration at Willoughby Hall in Langley (just off of the freeway). More details to follow.

June 27 – Bark edged bowls. Neno Catania will show us the tools and techniques he uses to do either natural or burl bark edged bowls.

September 26 – T.B.A.

October 24 – Keith Greffe will give us a demonstration on segmented plates using a Cyma curve technique that interlocks segments with the previous segment.

November 28 – Once again, we will have a collaboration of turners demonstrating turned Christmas gift ideas.

That's all so far. For future meetings if you have any suggestions please give me a call –

(604) 224-5780 or email me at fbaldwin@telus.net.

## CLASSIFIEDS

**WANTED** – a lathe that will turn bowls 16” to 20” in diameter for under \$750. Please contact Wayne Pilchak at wapilchak@hotmail.com.

**FOR SALE** – General 260 mechanical variable speed wood lathe, equipped with riser blocks, an outboard turning bracket (up to 26” diameter outboard) and has inboard turning capability of 20” diameter. The lathe comes with 2 inboard and 2 outboard faceplates and 3 Nova scroll chuck inserts. The current price of the lathe with PST and GST is \$4800. The lathe is like new and I would like to sell it for \$4000. Anyone interested should call Bob Vergette at 739-5249 (work) and 572-1034 (home)

## THANKS!

A 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

Shadow Wood Too (Kerf's Wood Cream)  
(Bellingham) (360) 738-3369

Lee Valley Tools (Vancouver)  
(604) 261-2262 and www.leevalley.com