



VOLUME FIVE – ISSUE SIX

FEBRUARY 2004

**CONTENTS**

President’s Column.....1  
*Art Liestman*  
 AGM Announcement.....2  
*Art Liestman*  
 Jimmy Clewes Demo.....2  
*Anne Rostvig*  
 Improvement to Razortip System.....3  
*Larry Stevenson*  
 Instant Gallery.....4  
 Some Thoughts on Tools.....5  
*Dinyar Chavda*  
 AAW Board Question.....8  
*Art Liestman*  
 Jimmy Clewes Classes.....8  
 Thanks to everyone.....9  
*Art Liestman*  
 Notes, Classifieds,  
 Wood on the Web.....10

**NEXT MEETING**

**FEBRUARY 25, 2004**

Sapperton Pensioners’ hall  
 318 Keary St., New Westminster  
 Meeting starts at 6.30

**Focus on Fundamentals**

Discussion forum on finished pieces

Sharpening II – freehand sharpening of a skew, roughing gouge and scraper.

Interesting projects – Marco and John will turn some skill-building projects

**Food providers**

Len Sawyer, Rich Schmid, Doug Schop,  
 Russ Sewood, Fred Sherman, Larry  
 Stevenson, Robert Turrell, Christine Vickers

**PRESIDENT’S COLUMN**

*Art Liestman*

Thanks to Bruce for a very informative presentation last month. It was a good way to start the new calendar year. We also had a great demo and some classes from Jimmy Clewes on the first weekend in February. Those who attended will not soon forget it.

In the upcoming meeting, we will hold our AGM. We will be electing a new president. An election will also be held for the Secretary’s position. In addition, we will vote on a proposal to increase the annual dues from \$30 to \$35, effective in September, 2004. So, be sure to be there to cast your votes!

We had originally scheduled Todd Hoyer and Hayley Smith to be here for demos and classes in April. Unfortunately, Hayley is recovering from surgery and won’t be able to travel that soon. We will reschedule them as soon as possible, but it probably won’t be this year.

Don’t forget to bring your President’s challenge pieces. This month, I am simply asking everyone to PLEASE bring something that they’ve turned. It needn’t be new, it needn’t be fancy, just help me fill up the table with items. That would be a great way for me to celebrate my last President’s challenge.

**REMINDER!**

Please bring your completed bowls for donation to the Empty Bowl Fund. Stan Clarke will be there to collect them at the meeting.

## **AGM ANNOUNCEMENT**

*Art Liestman*

Our annual general meeting will be held during the February meeting. At that time, we will elect a new President. In addition, the terms of the current Secretary and some of the Members at Large are up.

The executive has appointed Don Hoskins and Ross Pilgrim as a search committee to seek out nominees for all of these positions. If anyone is interested in running for one of the offices, please make yourself known to Don or Ross. Of course, nominations will be allowed from the floor at the time of the meeting, but Don and Ross are charged with making sure we have at least some candidates. The new officers will assume their duties immediately after the February meeting.

The executive has recommended that we raise our annual dues from the current \$30 to \$35 effective in September 2005. This will be put to a vote of the membership during the AGM.

## **JIMMY CLEWES DEMO**

*Anne Rostvig*

Jimmy Clewes doesn't fuff about. He turns a dead bonnie bi' o' wood into a brilliant piece without getting too nackered!

Those who attended Jimmy's demo on February 7<sup>th</sup> were treated to a crash course in 'Geordie', along with their instruction, and it caused a lot of laughter and a few scratched heads. Jimmy is an inspired demonstrator. It is very apparent that he thoroughly enjoys what he does and his enthusiasm is infectious. This is not a 'proper job' he says – it's far too much fun for that.



Jimmy has been turning for 20 years and holds an Honours degree in three-dimensional design. His current trend is towards coloured pieces and the audience was about evenly divided between those who liked to colour and those who preferred the beauty of the wood to be left untouched. Jimmy proceeded to win us all over by taking a beautiful piece of quilted maple (the dead bonnie bi' o' wood), turning a simple classic platter and decorating the rim with stains in various colours to enhance the grain.



After the break he made an oyster box, which when closed has no discernable join, and then proceeded to an elegant footed bowl using green wood and comparing the hollowing tools of Monroe, Exocet and Hamlet.



I learnt so much and was inspired to go home and try my hand at more creative pieces. It seemed that Jimmy scarcely paused for breath, he was constantly explaining and giving tips so that everyone was clear on his methods, and so that everyone from beginner to expert was able to learn from him.

Thanks, Jimmy, for a truly extraordinary day.

[www.jimmyclewes.com](http://www.jimmyclewes.com)

[www.chestnutproducts.co.uk](http://www.chestnutproducts.co.uk) for the stains Jimmy used

[www.polymerclayexpress.com/foils.html](http://www.polymerclayexpress.com/foils.html) for the metal leaf he uses

## **IMPROVEMENT TO RAZORTIP WOODBURNING SYSTEM**

*Larry Stevenson*

I bought a Razortip Woodburning system a couple of years ago with the idea of signing my pieces with it. It worked fine on most of our local woods but sucked on some of the dense exotics. There just wasn't enough heat. Now most of you know that my background is in electronics and electrical so you'd have thought I'd fix it right away, but no, I procrastinated for a significant time. Finally I tired of being grumpy over the lack of heat, got off my duff and replaced the cord from the control unit to the pencil. It has made a significant improvement. Not only can I sign exotics, but now I'm using it for other pyrography applications. The unit is still 2.2 Volt with a 10 Amp output, which gives you 22 watts, but now those 22 watts are at the tip and not getting lost over the cord.

I won't bore you with formulas for voltage drop and lost power but suffice to say that the improvement on my unit was about 25%. Where before I had to have the power setting at 10

it is now at 7.5 for the same performance. If you think yours is OK try this. Turn the heat setting up to 10 and use it for a while. If the cord is getting warm to hot replace it. On mine you could see where the wire was getting hot at the connectors and starting to melt the insulation on the wire. The other noticeable sign is that the cord isn't as flexible as it once was as the insulation is getting hot and hardening.

So if you want to improve your unit, go out and buy 2 good quality RCA male connectors and a length of 16-gauge heater cord and make up a new cord. This is the type of cord that you see on electric kettles. Remember to do a good job on soldering otherwise you'll lose power at those joints. I would try some of the car stereo joints for the RCA connectors and a decent hardware store for the wire. Good luck!

### **INSTANT GALLERY**

Our Members obviously learnt a lot at Curt Theobald's demo



## SOME THOUGHTS ON TOOLS

*Dinyar Chavda*

Recently, there have been many questions regarding what turning tools to buy, what lathe to buy, what chuck is best, etc. Most of these are from relatively new tuners, an indication of the explosive growth of the craft in recent years, and the question is often whether the person should splurge now and buy the best they can afford, or start small, see if they enjoy it, and then move up.

There has been a lot of good advice given on this rather difficult issue, and I have gone through most of them at least 3 times (at my age, one of the pleasures of life is that you forget things, and so you get to enjoy the same thing for the "first time" again and again—I really had to stretch for that silver lining for the loss of memory experienced by every baby boomer!)

Let me apologize in advance to all of you for being long-winded. In my defense, I grew up in India, where all the exams were essay-type, and it seemed that the way that the teachers judged your work is that they took the papers to the roof of the building, tossed them over, and graded them on the basis of which ones hit the ground first! Just pretend that Edith Bunker has taken up turning, and is telling Archie about it, with all the digressions she was famous for.

The question is whether one should recommend that new turners buy tools that are not the best, in fact, may be downright inferior, or whether they should spring for the best they can afford. The answer, as is the case for most of the interesting questions in life, is "Yes" and "Yes". Yes, they should buy inferior tools (I do not mean unsafe), if it is all that they can afford, because if they didn't, they would miss out on the opportunity of finding out whether they like the craft enough to progress further. On the other hand, they should buy the best they can afford, because, if they buy inferior tools, they may get frustrated with them, or may not be able to do the things that they can with better tools and equipment.

I started turning because of SWMBO (there's a statement subject to a multitude of interpretations!) For some reason she wanted me to take the adult education course in woodworking at the local high school. Why, I still don't know, given that I had exhibited absolutely no aptitude for doing anything remotely like it. In fact, I have the hands of a klutz! Couple that with impatience, and you have someone who should not be doing any craft that requires manual dexterity and the willingness to take one's time to do it right. My memories of woodworking were from school in India, where we traced designs onto a piece of plywood, and then tried to cut it with a hand-held fret saw (emphasis on "tried"). Given my natural inclination, I would push too hard, break the blade, and so spent much more time changing blades than in actually cutting! Speed, speed, speed—that's what was important. Anyway I prevaricated for several semesters, but eventually SWMBO reminded me that there was a reason for her title, and that it was a real title, and not an honorary one! So I signed up.

And I loved it! There were these machines, and they could do things fast!

Seriously, though, I had an enthusiastic teacher, a variety of equipment to learn about and to use, and a whole new set of skills to pick up. It was wonderful. Well initially I used all the equipment that was there, making various things for the house and the garden using primarily the table saw, the bandsaw, planers, drills, etc. But slowly, and for no real reason, I gravitated to the lathe. I was "playing" on the lathe, initially with no specific end-result in mind. I would

lamine pieces of pine shelving together to make large enough blocks (I did not know about turning green wood), and turned them into bowls and vases. The lathes that we had were the most unstable things created—in retrospect, they were truly meant for light spindle turning. If the wood was even slightly out of round, the whole thing would start walking across the room. In fact, I often had to recruit the assistance of a fellow-student to hold down the lathe while I initially turned the wood—sort of a human sandbag!

Furthermore, I found out (later) that I was trying to turn bowls and hollow vessels using spindle-turning tools, the kinds of sets that you see on eBay, made from carbon steel, shaped wrong in many cases, and SMALL! So I was using the wrong equipment on a lousy lathe, and it cost me all of about \$40 a semester. And it was great! I was having the time of my life. I was doing things that I never thought I could do—heck, I hadn't even conceived of the possibility of doing them, and, over time, I was doing a fairly decent job of them!

So, that's where my emotional "Yes, use whatever you can afford to try it and see if you like it" comes from. It is just as possible that I might have been turned off by the frustration of using inferior equipment, but I think that turning is insidious—for some of us there is something about it that gets into your system, and if that happens, you're going to stick with it no matter what. Nowadays, when my friends want me to show them how to turn, I warn them of the danger of getting hooked.

Well, now for the flip side of the argument, i.e., the reason to buy the best tools you can afford (but I'll add a caveat).

I went to that night school for several years. Then, as a birthday present, SWMBO sent me for a long weekend class with David Ellsworth. So I went to Quakertown, where I learned that I had been turning bowls and hollow vessels using spindle-turning tools. When David pulled out the standard bowl gouge and his swept-back gouge, I was impressed—this was a big piece of steel! Lesson #1—stand further away from the lathe than I was used to if I wanted to avoid gouging the wood inadvertently! Talk about a steep learning curve. And then when it came to hollowing using his tools and riding the lathe—that's when I realized why the tools I had previously used kept on being knocked out of my hand.

I realized after the next night school semester that I had to get my own lathe. So I discussed it with David, and ended up getting a Woodfast, plus several tools that he recommended. And, of course, I started to produce objects that I hadn't even imagined before.

So, is there a benefit to recommending that newbies buy good equipment—absolutely, if they can afford it. If not, go with whatever you can, even if you have to do what I did, which, in effect, was to borrow it!

Now for the caveat that I mentioned re buying the best equipment. When I had discussed buying the lathe with David, he mentioned that I would have to level the lathe, and described how to do so by using a bolt on the leg that wasn't quite in contact with the ground. Well, somehow that got translated in my mind to having to make the lathe horizontal, while what he meant was to make sure that all four feet were in contact with the floor. So I made it "level" based on my definition, and, no matter what I did, that lathe would shake at the slightest provocation. I tried everything—added a wider base at one end, weighted it down with sand, got a center-steady. And made sure that it was horizontal on both axes! I was seriously thinking of somehow bracing it to the wall, when a turner at the club I had joined

asked me if I had tried to shim it. And then he said the magic words "You know, it does not have to be horizontal!" Light-bulb time! I did what he had suggested, and the lathe has worked like a dream ever since. My point is that you can have the best tools, but that is no guarantee that you will not mess it up royally! Would I buy a different one today?---yes, but it does the job, and the shortcomings in the results are due to me, and not the lathe.

I consider myself very fortunate to have been "forced" to turn. Whether using the right tools or the wrong tools, it is hard to describe the satisfaction and joy that I derive every time I take a log and transform it into something else—all of you know what I am talking about. A couple of years ago, I started to donate my pieces to the local library for them to sell. The library system in my township is a wonderful example of how government works! The township pays for the building, the utilities, the salaries of the library staff, the ground-keeping costs, etc. In fact, it pays for everything - except for the books (and CDs and movies). Those have to be obtained through community donations. So, in effect, the way the government thinks is that they'll give you everything you need for a library.....except for the key reason why people go there in the first place—for that, you are on your own, buddy.

As a result, the library has to conduct donation drives. Well, a few years ago, I started to give my work to the library, and it was a win-win-win situation. They got the proceeds, I got a tax deduction, and, hopefully, someone got to enjoy my work. It was great when my first few pieces sold! It wasn't a lot of money, but it was still fabulous. What was just as wonderful was going to the library one day, and seeing some of my pieces, and next to them was a sign the librarian had put up which said something about "Made by a local woodturner and artist". Now I make no pretensions about being an artist—someday, I hope to be a good craftsman, but even so, that sign used a term to describe me that I had never ever associated with myself.

So, yes one should buy the best tools that one can afford. And yes, we can borrow everything like I did initially, or buy the starter sets and a starter lathe! But finally, the most important thing is not which tools to buy, but to use them, to enjoy what you can do with them, and, to get help in using them, either in person through classes and demonstrations, through videos, or through the Internet. Just do it---get some free wood, and make something out of it! I remember a few years ago, going to an extremely well-known craft store that carries a lot of wood turnings, and being accosted by one of the salespeople. We got talking, and I mentioned that I was a turner in my spare time. She said that she, too, was studying turning, and had been for several months. I asked her what kinds of turnings she did. It was then that she reiterated that she was studying turning, and clarified that it was from books, and that she had never touched a lathe yet, but hoped to do so sometime soon!

The best tools in the world cannot equal the willingness to try things despite the knowledge that you are almost certainly going to fail. The joy lies in learning, and in progress, and in the final success, no matter how small it may be. Now go turn something.

*Reproduced and edited with kind permission of the author*

## **AAW BOARD QUESTION**

*Art Liestman*

I have been asked to serve on the AAW Regional Study Committee. If you are an AAW member, I need your input. First, a bit of background.

The AAW Board of Directors is made up of nine members, each elected for a three year term with the terms staggered. The board annually appoints a nominating committee which interviews and reviews candidates for the board, whether solicited by the committee or who are nominated at large, and then selects two candidates for each open position, generally six persons to fill three positions. The election is then held to choose three of these six persons. All six are voted on by the entire membership, with no consideration for where they live.

After the recent election irregularities, there was some suggestion from the AAW membership that the AAW Board of Directors should be restructured so as to guarantee representation on a regional basis. The board recommended that a committee be struck **"to study if having representatives from regions would be an advantageous way to structure the board and to study governing structure"**.

Fifteen individuals were recommended by the board to be considered to serve on the AAW Regional Study Committee. Six members of the committee were selected from that list of fifteen after an interview process. (These members are Angelo Iafrate, Art Fitzpatrick, Larry Hasiak, Gorst Duplessis, Larry Genender, and Art Liestman.) The committee also includes two board members (John Hill and Gary Lansinger). No member of the committee was selected because of his preexisting views on this matter.

Among other things, the committee will solicit views from as many AAW members as possible. We hope to be able to come to some consensus and make a recommendation to the board, hopefully by the end of March.

Please take the time to give this matter some serious consideration. I would appreciate it if you would send me your views on this – preferably by email. When doing so, remember that we are talking about a possible change in the way our organization is governed. Any such change would have a long-term effect on the organization and should not be done lightly.

## **JIMMY CLEWES CLASSES – A variety of views.**

*Ross Pilgrim*

I found Jimmy a good teacher. Although I was only able to complete one piece (because I made a funnel out of the other one - so much for "measure twice & cut once") I found it interesting to use the three brands of hollowing tool. I found the 'Exocet' best for the narrow bottom of the vase. The 'Rolly Monroe' was a nice cut but rather wide to get into narrow openings. The 'Hamlet' was most universal and faster at removing wood although not able to do as good a job in the narrow base of the vase because of the rounded shape.

*John Weir*

Between the demo on Saturday and the course on Sunday I learned a lot about some of the newer sharpening jigs, of course now I have to get one (or make it).

This is the first course I have been to where we attempted to make more than one project.



Of all the hollowing tools I have tried, I find that to deepen a hollow, the pointier tools like the Exocet work faster, however, to smooth out the inside the round tip tools like the Hamlet or Monroe excel. I am sure that there is more to it than that, but, for now it works for me. In all cases, patience produces the best results.

If you want to stand out in woodturning, you have to do it well and be somewhat unique so that your work stands out.



## **THANKS TO EVERYONE**

*Art Liestman*

As I come to the end of my term as President, I'd like to thank everyone for their help in building the Guild from scratch to become one of the most active and exciting chapters of the AAW. We've grown quite rapidly and I'm very proud of our accomplishments so far. I'd like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the various individuals who have held elected office and those non-elected volunteers who contribute so much to our success. If I start listing names, I'm sure I'll omit someone, so I won't do that. Thanks again, to everyone! I have greatly appreciated your help over the past 5 years. Keep it up!

## NOTES

Symposium – Please contact Steve Kent at 604-937-0145 if you are interested in volunteering for the symposium. We need all the help we can get and there is a wide choice of opportunities available.

Some people are apparently having trouble getting the pictures in the newsletter to print. You might try downloading the latest Adobe Acrobat Reader, #5. If that doesn't work and you really want to print them out, another option is to right click on the picture and 'save as', save in a format appropriate to your computer and then print from there.

Heads up for March food providers: Gerry Vickers, Anthony Wade, Philip Wade, David Wagner, John Weir, Erv Wildeman, Des Wilson and John Wood

## CLASSIFIEDS

For Sale: Nova 1500 Wood Lathe, 1 HP, DC, variable speed, 8 tool rests, faceplate, drive & live centres, outboard attachment, 2" square tubular steel stand, Nova Super Chuck. \$1200 OBO. Phone Keith @ (250) 496-5423.

## WOOD ON THE WEB

A really great website from Australia, full of useful info, projects etc  
[Home.vicnet.net.au/~pwguild](http://Home.vicnet.net.au/~pwguild)

An interesting British site, some really different projects here  
[www.his.com/~tom/index.html](http://www.his.com/~tom/index.html)

The October 2003 issue of Fine Woodworking has a pretty good article on finishes for turnings. You can watch a short video of this at  
[www.finewoodworking.com](http://www.finewoodworking.com)

## GVWG Officers, Appointees and Volunteers

### PRESIDENT

Art Liestman 604-939-3843

### VICE PRESIDENT

Bruce Campbell 604-944-3028

### SECRETARY

Larry Stevenson 604-438-3947

### TREASURER

Ted Fromson 604-876-0267

### MEMBERS AT LARGE

Fred Baldwin 604-531-9395

Colin Delory 604-576-1172

Andrew Forrest 604-990-9667

Steve Hansen 604-585-0638

Gina Myhill-Jones 604-467-0474

Ross Pilgrim 604-985-6423

### FOF COORDINATOR

Bob James 604-980-9192

### MENTOR PROGRAM ORGANIZER and MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Al Koehn 604-273-6995

### EDUCATIONAL COORDINATOR

David Wagner 604-983-3852

### LIBRARIANS

Michelle Jacobs 604-581-7097

Russ Selwood 604-224-4126

### WOOD EXCHANGER

Steve Kent 604-937-0145

### FOOD CHIEF

Rich Schmid 604-538-7012

### NEWSLETTER

Anne Rostvig 604-467-2755

[gvwgnews@yahoo.ca](mailto:gvwgnews@yahoo.ca)

### DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY

Merv Graham 604-273-3525

John Weir 604-524-5831

### WEBMASTER

Steve Fairbairn

[sgfmail@shaw.ca](mailto:sgfmail@shaw.ca)



