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## NEXT MEETING

NOVEMBER 26, 2003

Sapperton Pensioners Hall  
318 Keary St, New Westminster  
Meeting starts at 6.30

### Main event:

Vijay Narayan from Mohawk Western Finishing Products will be talking about the various finishes he makes.

### Focus on Fundamentals:

Level 1 - Sharpening  
Freehand sharpening of a spindle gouge and parting tool.  
Level 2 – Basic Cuts  
Using a roughing gouge and a skew.  
Discussion forum on finished pieces.  
Get involved in a group discussion on form and design.

### Food providers:

Art Liestman, David MacDonald, Bob Macgregor, Robert McConnell, Gina and Ralph Myhill-Jones, Lorne Nelson, Herbert Neufeld.

## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

*Art Liestman*

Another busy month has passed. Thanks to all of the members who volunteered time to staff the guild and competition booths at the wood show. Congratulations also to all of the members who entered work in the competition. The weekend was a great success due to your efforts. Thanks from all of us!

On November 15<sup>th</sup>, we hosted a tremendous demo by J. Paul Fennell. Those who attended learned a lot about turning from one of the masters. He showed us some novel tools and techniques ranging from shear scraping to sanding. We got to see how he achieves his super thin hollow vessels using a fibre-optic light. He also taught us about designing and laying out surface enhancements. The attendees took pages of notes, and I suspect that over the next few months we will see a lot of items in our instant gallery that have been influenced by Paul one way or another. Thanks, Paul!

We are planning to hold our Annual General Meeting at our February meeting. This will include the election of some directors and dealing with other guild business. We'd like to thank David Wagner for taking over the job of finding speakers for our regular monthly meetings. If you have a suggestion about who or what you'd like to see, please let David know.

As usual, our December meeting will be a special one. This year, we are very fortunate to be able to offer a full-day demo by segmented turner Curt Theobald on Saturday, December 13<sup>th</sup>. There are more details elsewhere in the newsletter

President's challenge for next month is to turn a wooden button. Have fun!

## WOOD SHOW DISPLAY

*Merv Graham*

It maybe a biased opinion but from my point of view our booth at this year's wood show was a great success! Through the efforts of both turners and talkers we were able to entertain a large number of people and hopefully encourage many to come and visit us at the next guild meeting. Those on the lathes demonstrated their skills to an appreciative audience who watched intently, inquiring and commenting as lumps of wood took shape into interesting forms. Marco's "Christmas Tree Extravaganza" at a "toonie" a pop alone raised \$50.00 for the club coffers. People waited in line to purchase trees. Kudos to you Marco, the club thanks you.

Turners and would-be turners marveled at what can be done with a piece of what is usually considered firewood. They kept a constant stream of questions flowing about tools, materials, techniques, and the guild. The display of members' work garnered a lot of attention, in particular "I Scream" our club's entry into the AAW's collaborative challenge. Pieces were lovingly fondled and admired by those passing through the exhibit.

I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank all of those who made this such a successful event. It is cooperation such as this that makes coordinating such an event an enjoyable experience. I hope everyone had as much fun as I did.

Thanks go to the following participants. If I have missed anyone's name I sincerely apologize; please see me at the meeting on the 26th and give me a bad time about it. The rest of you club members, say thanks to the following people who were great ambassadors for the guild: Fred Baldwin, Marco Berera, Brian Billington, Don Bishop, Tom Byron, Bruce Campbell, Neno Catania, Alan Cusworth, Mike Dawson, Colin Delory, Ted Fromson, Steve Hansen, Gerry Hodgins, Don Hoskins, Keith Hudson, Mike Jacobs, Bob James, Steve Kent, Al Koehn, Bob MacGregor, Gregg Parsons, Wayne Pilchak, Ross Pilgrim, Aymeric Ronse, Anne Rostvig, Rich Schmid, Doug Schop, Larry Stevenson, Robert Turrell, Gerry Vickers, and last but not least John and Alison Weir.

## CURT THEOBALD DEMO IN DECEMBER

*Art Liestman*

As usual, our December "meeting" is held at a time other than our usual fourth Wednesday of the month. This year, we are very excited to have Curt Theobald from Pine Bluffs, Wyoming here to do a full-day demonstration. You don't want to miss this one!!

On **Saturday, December 13**, Curt Theobald will present a full-day demonstration at the Sapperton Pensioners Hall from 9:30 am to approximately 4pm. This event will be available to all members at no charge. (Non-members may attend for a \$25 fee.) Please bring along a lunch so you don't miss any of the fun.

Curt Theobald is recognized as one of the young masters of segmented turning. He has been quietly working away creating some exceptional pieces and is gaining international recognition for his work. Curt is also an experienced demonstrator, having demonstrated for various AAW chapters and at several symposia including the recent AAW symposium in Pasadena.

After the demo, Curt will teach a pair of two-day classes for some of our members. At this time, the classes are full, but if you'd like to be on a waiting list in case space opens up, please let me know.



Some examples of Curt Theobald's work.

## **WOOD SHOW 2003**

*Anne Rostvig*

The Wood Show is over for another year and I have managed to survive it without completely breaking the bank. The temptations are so great though, that without my restraining other half, who knows what I might have bought. Bill is one of those people who can browse all day and buy nothing. Bill loves demos, he can stand for precious minutes watching some guy wittering on about how many ways he can clamp a piece of wood with his wonder clamps, while I hop from one foot to the other wanting to move on to something I can buy. I just wish they would cut to the chase, tell us how much the thing is, then demonstrate how it works to the people who can afford to buy it. As you can tell, I'd make a rotten salesman.

Each year we spend more time at the show. This year it was almost six hours, and I know we didn't see everything. Our first visit was about four years ago, before I became a woodworker myself, and although I quite enjoyed it, I felt three hours was too long to spend looking at tools. Now, however, it's hard to drag me away. Sunday is usually the day to get some bargains, especially in wood, but it seems that the vendors are getting wise to the Sunday scavengers and there weren't too many markdowns to be had. I got a very frosty reaction from the guy at Black Forest Wood Company when I suggested at 4.30 that he might mark down his bowl blanks.

Is woodturning becoming more popular? I noticed that there were far more wood blanks available, more turning displays etc than in previous years. But our display topped them all. The competition continues to draw fascinated crowds, and having our own booth next door was the icing on the cake. To emerge from the competition display full of admiration for the skill and creativity of the participants, then to encounter real people actually producing similar items was an inspiring experience for many visitors. During my volunteer stint on Friday I talked to hundreds of people who had never considered turning themselves but who were captivated by the idea of making something beautiful and unique. Hopefully all that talking will translate into some new members for the club.

So ends another Wood Show, and as I spent a sleepless night, my brain juggling the 'what ifs' and the 'should haves', I am comforted by the fact that I get to do it all again next year and maybe, just maybe, I can spend some real money!

## **MARCO BERERA DEMONSTRATION**

*Doug Schop*

We have all seen the amazing things Marco can do with wood, and his demonstration at the last guild meeting showed us how some of his unusual things are produced.

The most outstanding piece was the Saturn turning that he did some time ago. It has six lattice turnings on the rim around the satellite and then multiple turnings on the centre of the globe.

Marco showed the jig he had built to allow the offset turning and the construction of the jig must have taken as much time as the final turned piece.

For the demo he produced a small lattice lidded box and explained amid various jokes and stories how the box was produced. Many of the steps required small tools that Marco has created for the job. A blank with an end tenon is inserted in the chuck. After cutting the lid from the blank he drills two holes in the inside of the lid, a centre hole and an offset hole. The bottom of the box tenon allows him to turn the base itself. Then the lid is mounted on a block using carpet tape and is offset using the offset hole and a small pin. The top of the lid is turned after determining the position and spacing of the latticework.

Marco removes the edges of the latticework with a small skew, lightly sands the lattice and then reverses the lid in the lathe. Using a back up block he now turns the inside of the lid on centre, this removes the holes from the inside of the lid. He cleans the edges of the turned rings with a small skew and then lightly sands the piece with hand held sandpaper. The lid is then fitted to the bottom of the box and the final turning to finish the lid-to-bottom match is done. The final step was applying wax with an old toothbrush and then polishing with paper towel.

The result was an excellent little lidded box with a latticed lid. Beautiful. Marco makes it all look so easy. Great demo Marco, thanks a lot.

## **SAGA OF THE SHOP – EPISODE 1, THE PERMIT AND THE PIT.**

**Anne Rostvig**

As many of you know, when I moved house this past summer, the first plan was to build a workshop. Never having undertaken anything similar before, we asked questions and sought advice from woodworkers of all styles and skill levels. We read books and magazine articles about shop design. We played around with graph paper and paper cutouts of our tools. Totally confused, we finally came up with a rough idea and arranged for someone to draft a plan for us.

This was our first mistake. When we paced out the finished plan, the building would have totally overwhelmed our little rancher. Enter new architect and Plan B. This seems more reasonable we think, big but not enormous, spacious but not resembling an aircraft hangar. We scurry off to the Civic Centre to proudly present our request for a permit. Mistake number two. Make sure you understand the requirements for a permit before trying to apply for one. Enter Harry, our friendly neighbourhood plan checker. We got to know Harry quite well, in fact I think I saw him every day for a week. The building was too high, the elevations were wrong, we were too close to the property line. On our final visit, I think Harry realized I was ready to tear the plan up and, quite possibly, throw it at him. He relented and helped us with the final adjustments, so that, finally, we received our permit and building could commence.

The following week the excavator arrived and proceeded to dig a hole the size of a small country. Our pleasant backyard was transformed into a lunar landscape. The local squirrels could be seen sitting atop the heaps of dirt with puzzled looks on their faces, as if searching for some genetically-modified gopher. My son has always wanted to make a horror movie and saw this as the perfect setting. He does special-effects make-up and decided to transform a couple of his buddies into zombies and film them climbing out of the pit at night, with atmospheric effects provided by a smoke machine. The neighbours, already having a healthy suspicion of the newcomers, are now convinced that we perform satanic rituals in the pit. The proximity to Halloween escaped nobody's notice.

And so, there we were, knee-deep in mud and wet leaves, patiently awaiting our shop to arise like Phoenix from the ashes. Little did we know that there were more fun and games ahead and that this experience was to be more of a challenge than we imagined. Watch for the next exciting installment

## INSTANT GALLERY



President's challenge was a nut bowl



Larry Stevenson's 'Out of the Fire'



Gary Cormier's Bloodwood and Maple Vessel



Allan Cusworth's maple and mahogany bowl



Bruce's birch burl platter



Neno's bark edge maple bowl

## CREATIVE WOODTURNING

Once an aspiring turner has mastered the basic techniques, and made an assortment of domestic articles, the way forward may not be all that clear. One answer may be the adoption of a more creative approach. There are other reasons, too, why this should be encouraged. Thinking about design, exercising the imagination, coming up with new ideas, and using the craft as a means of self-expression, all enhance the pleasure that turners get from their activity. In addition, as Dale

Nish has suggested, woodturners who wish to build a reputation need to "make a determined effort to develop a style of their own".

What do we mean by 'creativity'? It is an elusive concept and one that is difficult to define in a way that will satisfy everybody. One view is that creativity can only be expressed in work that is not copied from other makers. Originality alone, however, is not enough; not everything that is original is 'good'. A creative piece of work also needs the ability to stimulate a special reaction in the viewer, such as the experience of beauty, pleasure, excitement, surprise or amusement.

To be creative, a piece of work does not have to be violently different. Often an object is given a 'lift' by relatively subtle effects. Turnings can be considered creative when they are good examples of their style. A piece of work has 'style' when it is immediately perceived as looking 'right'. The beholder thinks "yes, that's got 'it'".

This leads to the concept of personal style referred to by Dale Nish. To have a personal style is to create a look that is characteristic of your work, a look that is as personal as your signature. Since the achievement of a personal style means producing work that has distinctive characteristics then it must exhibit originality and, by definition, creativity.

How do we become more creative? To begin with, most turners wish to improve and develop their technical skills. The better a turner's technique the more avenues there are for exploration. Providing the turner is correctly applying the basic principles, technical skills can only be increased by practice, and yet more practice, and by gradually increasing the difficulty of the projects which are tackled. Very often, however, the desire to attain a high level of technical skill can blind the turner to the need to acquire other attributes. There is danger in putting too much emphasis on skill and technical virtuosity. This can lead to more attention being given to the way in which an object is made than to the qualities of the object itself. The means become more important than the end.

There are, therefore, two aspects to creative woodturning; one is craftsmanship, the other is imagination. Most turners will need to draw a line somewhere between the two extremes. We do not, however, all have to draw the line in the same place. What is imaginative to one person may be weird to another. So, technical ability is one thing, imagination is something else. We may feel the need to develop this aspect of our creative ability, but how do we achieve it? For most of us creative skills are not innate. When considering all the elements that go into the design of a creative piece of woodturning it will be noted that most of them involve the development of vision. To help this process I suggest following the 'four Ls': Look, Listen, Learn and Labour.

Look at, and handle if possible, as much good woodturning as you can. If this is impractical, look at photos. Look at (and read) books on design. Visit museums and galleries and look at work in other media, not only at ceramics, pottery and glass which have affinities with turning, but also at sculpture. Look at the world around you - at the natural world - in the garden and countryside, on the beach, or wherever you happen to be. Inspiration may be found in the shape and texture of a flower, of a seed head, of a shell, or in something else quite unexpected.

Listen and pay attention, be receptive to the views of others even when you disagree. Seek out opportunities to discuss design with other turners, and crafts people in other media, and listen to what they are saying.

Learn complementary techniques, eg shaping, carving, texturing and colouring. It may also be useful to take a short course in another discipline, such as sculpture, in order to look at design from another viewpoint. Above all, be prepared to experiment and take risks. We need to take risks in order to get closer to our individual form of expression.

Work at it. Keep thinking and looking for ideas. Brainstorm with others if possible. Consider ideas even if at first sight they do not seem promising. Do not expect ideas to come fully fledged but let one thought lead to another. Keep records so that you do not forget the ideas you have had. Make sketches – no great skill in drawing is necessary.

When considering turnings which you admire ask yourself this question: why do they have that appeal? The following elements can be considered: 1. Form, 2. Line, 3. Decoration, 4. Texture, 5. Colour, 6. Contrast or harmony, 7. Dynamics, 8. Composition, 9. Tactile quality, 10. Volume and weight, 11. Fragility, 12. Material selection, 13. Beauty of wood, 14. Technical ability, 15. Style.

There are a couple of points to be made about these headings. In this context, the term form refers to the overall three-dimensional aspect of the object. Line is a two dimensional concept which can be provided both by the profile of the piece and by decoration.

When considering the beauty of the wood itself, to what extent should we rely on this? Even when the wood is beautiful, all factors are still important, particularly form, tactile qualities and style. The wood itself may supply elements such as decoration and colour but all these qualities must be brought into a harmonious whole. Not all wood is inherently beautiful. In this case the turner must make up for its deficiencies by using other decorative techniques.

There has been little mention so far of the most important concept, that of design. Design is the process by which ideas are developed to the point where they can be expressed in a physical form. Even the crudest pieces of work do not emerge by accident; their makers must have had some idea about what they were trying to achieve.

Prior to putting a piece of wood on the lathe the turner may produce some preliminary drawings or, more commonly, may hope to proceed directly from a mental concept to the physical form. Unless the design is similar to pieces made in the past, or the turner has an exceptional visual imagination, the latter is likely to result in a flawed piece of work and a considerable waste of time and material. Lack of clarity in the preparatory process is often betrayed in the results.

Under the heading of 'labour' I have some suggestions about making drawings and keeping records. It is worth trying to sketch ideas. These are an important aid to preparation and the development of design. Sketches do not have to be brilliant works of art to be useful. Drawing instruments, such as compasses, a ruler and set squares, can help. To ensure drawings are symmetrical, draw one half of the profile, fold the paper along the centre-line, and trace the original lines onto the blank half. To judge if your shapes are satisfactory, cut them out of black or brown, paper. The cut-outs give a better impression than just lines on paper. If the design has more than one element, such as a pedestal bowl, then different ideas for the various parts can be cut out and tried in alternative arrangements. It should be borne in mind that a turned piece is a three dimensional object not usually observed in profile. As a consequence shapes conceived on paper may have to be modified during the turning process as the form becomes clearer.

As far as the aesthetics of design are concerned there are some basic principles of which every turner should be aware. These should be regarded more as rules of thumb, as guides, not followed slavishly. An example of such a concept is the 'Golden Mean'. These are competently covered in the chapter on form in Richard Raffan's book 'Turned Bowl Design'.

In the chapter on design in G.T.James' book "Woodturning Design & Practice" he says ".... an essential prelude to making any piece of craft-work is to have a clear idea of what one is trying to do.... technique is only a means to an end ..."

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## J. PAUL FENNELL DEMO

Anne Rostvig

I had the great pleasure of attending the demo by J. Paul Fennell on Saturday November 15<sup>th</sup>. I am rather ashamed to admit that this was my first attendance at a demo by a visiting turner. Saturdays are busy days, I couldn't afford the time, the demonstrator was too advanced for me, I had endless excuses. This time I decided to make the effort and I am very glad I did. Paul is an accomplished presenter, a mine of information and a patient, unassuming man. He quickly had us all scribbling, anxious to take down all the creative ideas he put forward. He makes a good number of his own tools and has an innovative way of using them. He grinds his scraper upside down, which gives a good burr for shear scraping. His handles are square for a better grip. He has his lathe turning in reverse, because he finds it easier on the body when doing hollow forms.



And hollow forms are what he does best. With a crazy-looking tool made from a steel tube and a sharpened Allen key, he proceeded to hollow out his rough-shaped vessel to about 3/8 inch. Then the real fun began. The lights went off and Paul switched on his fibre-optic light, holding it inside the vessel with his left hand while he continued to hollow with the right. Gradually we were able to see the glow of the light through the wood. It was easy to see where there were ridges inside that needed to be smoothed out. We held our collective breath as Paul carved away with apparent unconcern to produce a vessel with walls barely 1/16inch thick.



After lunch, Paul showed us slides of his work, explaining the various methods he uses to decorate the finished form. He used a homemade indexing wheel to divide the surface into segments, plotted out his design, and then defined it using a dental drill so that we could see how he achieves his distinctive basketwork patterns. He sands using tiny mandrels with discs of sandpaper fixed with double-sided tape. His finished results are remarkable, intricately carved, eggshell thin and a delight to hold and to look at

I learnt so much from watching this master at work. I was astonished how much information was relevant to all turners, no matter what their level of skill. I may never be as accomplished as Paul Fennell, but I learnt things that will definitely help me in my everyday turning. I would like to encourage all members to do their best to attend future demos – it's the best learning experience you can have, not to mention the cheapest!

## CLASSIFIEDS

Delta Midi Lathe in excellent condition, used very little, with standard accessories. Asking US\$ 260.00. Contact John Novak Phone (360) 671-7925 email: [jcnovak1@comcast.net](mailto:jcnovak1@comcast.net)

## WOOD ON THE WEB

If you think pepper grinders are boring and didn't go to the Craft Circle Craft Fair last weekend, then checkout [www.bidule.qc.ca](http://www.bidule.qc.ca)  
Talk about thinking outside the box.

[www.roundthewoods.com](http://www.roundthewoods.com)  
[www.woodturningplus.com](http://www.woodturningplus.com)

## NOTES

If you didn't receive a copy of this month's newsletter, it's probably because you haven't renewed your membership! Make sure you don't miss next month's issue.

Deadlines for submission of items for the newsletter have been set for 10 days prior to the meeting, ie the Monday of the week before. This gives me an opportunity to put everything together and send it out in good time for the meeting.

Heads up for next month's food providers – I guess that will be January – Bill Olsen, Bill Ophoff, Gregg Parsons, Wayne Pilchak, Aymeric Ronse, Gordon Rosenthal, Lance Rossington and me.

Technology is great, but. . .  
A gentle reminder to set your cellphones on vibrate(woo-hoo) while attending meetings. Interruptions, like ring tones, are disruptive to a presenter and his/her audience - thank you.

## GVWG Officers, Appointees and Volunteers

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