



VOLUME SIX—ISSUE SIX

MARCH, 2005

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN:

Bruce Campbell

We are revising our meeting formats to maintain our information flow to new turners while attempting to provide more for intermediate and advanced members. Last month was the first example of two new formats. It had Andrew Forrest doing a Focus on Fundamental session on hand sharpening, Larry Stevenson talking about basic hollowing tools, a round-table discussion of finished pieces and then Marco Berera with a very entertaining session on making and using small tools. Thanks to all for their terrific contributions.

In alternate meetings the format will be two speakers. The first will be coordinated by Steve Hansen and will be an a more advanced topic of interest to turners. The second speaker will be similar to our usual "main" speaker and will be coordinated by Marco Berera. This month will be a two-speaker month.

I look forward to seeing how this new activities will continue to make the Guild an interesting group for turners of all skill levels.

Congratulations to Merv Graham who was elected Treasurer, and Jay Mapson, Gerry Vickers and John Weir who were appointed as members-at-large to our Board at our AGM. Thanks go out to Gina Myhill-Jones, Ross Pilgrim, and Ted Fromson who are stepping down from the Board after multiple years of excellent service.

Lots of people took up the President's Challenge last month to finish a piece to 2000 grit or finer and the results were spectacular. Thanks to all who entered. This month the challenge is to create piece with a "Fair Curve" as Art spoke about in his presentation in January. I hope to see lots of great curves next meeting and if some of you choose to also sand them to 2000 grit or higher, well.....

Finally, we have organized an auction of John Bese's turning estate for April 02, 2005 at his home. I have looked over the inventory and there will be lots of tools and WONDERFUL wood (blocks and bowl blanks) to bid on. Please try to come out and support this event. All proceeds will go to John's family.

NEXT MEETING

March 23, 2005

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

Dual Presentation:

Hollow Turning Without Breaking Your Arm or Your Budget

Steve Hansen and Larry Stevenson will be doing a two part event on hollowing and hollow forms. Steve will do the first presentation at 6:30, and then Larry will follow up after the break.

March Food Providers:

Bob Macgregor, Jay Mapson, Dave Martin, Robert McConnell, Gary Miller, Ron Minshall, plus whoever brought the salmon last time (mmmm....)

April Food Providers:

Jim Moses, Ralph Myhill-Jones, Gina Myhill-Jones, Lorne Nelson, Herb Neufeld, Claudio Nonis

FEBRUARY'S MAIN EVENT—MARCO BERERA

Kerry Deane-Cloutier

Marco started out as a pattern maker in Switzerland, the land of the precise. In sand casting a model of the desired end product is packed in sand; the model is removed, and molten metal is poured in the void. After cooling, the sand is knocked off. Depending on how often the pattern is intended to be used, it is made out of wood or metal. As a result, a pattern maker has to be able to make very precise shapes out of almost anything. That is where Marco started using a lathe, and where he got his metal working skills, which he uses to make his tools.



Marco delights in making his own tools. Since much of Marco's work is very (sometimes incredibly) small he makes many specialized tools from scraps of metal or old tools. Marco's main point is that you don't need to spend a bunch of money to get excellent tools. Marco showed us tools he made from a number of inexpensive things:

- Chinese files ground to shape to form small scrapers
- Allen keys
- Butter knives ("liberated" from CP Air when it was purchased)
- Dental picks
- A Phillips screwdriver can be used as a drive centre for small items
- Sealing wax can be used instead of CA glue.
- An old mouse pad is useful for a friction drive mount

Marco finished his presentation by showing us a couple of small projects: making a flower using a specialized tool and making a turned dog for the garden.

The audience's suggestions showed that the dog has a great deal of potential for individualization. Marco created a waisted body and round head. The head gets parted off and doweled onto the top of the body. A V-shaped mouth is cut off the lathe and leather ears added. A turned ring could serve as a collar. Dowels are turned for legs, with a pad on the bottom for the foot.

As always, Marco's presentation was educational, and hugely entertaining.

ALCOHOL SOAKING METHOD FOR DRYING BOWLS

I saw this while looking at the Woodcentral website (<http://www.woodcentral.com>), which, by the way is a pretty decent website. I am planning to give this a try when I get the chance. It sounds like a great method, although alcohol is very flammable, so please be really careful, and please don't sue me if you burn your house down..
Dennis Cloutier

by Dave Smith

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Background:

Drying roughed turned bowls has always been a challenge for wood turners. You need to balance the desire to finish a piece as soon as possible with the inherent tendency of wood to warp and split when dried too quickly. Wood

ALCOHOL SOAKING METHOD FOR DRYING BOWLS (Cont.)

Dave Smith

turners have employed various methods to maximize the drying speed while minimizing the degradation of the wooden shape being created. Over time each method has collected its own supporters and detractors with respect to the relative effectiveness of the process.

Criteria for a good drying process include ease of use, cost, and consistency of results. A process that is difficult to use, even though it produces good results, will garner few adherents. Likewise, an expensive protocol may appeal to a commercial turner who can expect to recoup the investment but it may be cost prohibitive for the average wood turner. Consistent results without labor intensive monitoring or manipulations are a major benefit of any method.

The most common method of drying wood bowls is placing them in a paper grocery bag. The theory is that the permeable paper produces a micro climate around the bowl. The bowl dries slowly with a small differential moisture gradient across the bowl sides. This method works well but it is slow.

Boiling can improve the stability of the wood by rupturing the cells, allowing moisture to more readily migrate to the surface and evaporate. Boiling is time and labor intensive, consuming requiring considerable space for a large pot and heat source. Since most people don't want to boil bowls in the kitchen, it is necessary to set up some way to boil outdoors which can be a big drawback in cooler climates during the winter months. Boiling can also be dangerous. A good friend of mine was severely burned when a plate blank wedged in a boiling pot of water, sealed the pot and led to a steam explosion.

Soap soaking has gained popularity in recent years. A bowl soaked in a soap solution is supposed to be easier to turn because of the lubricating action of the soap. Bowls are said to dry faster and crack less after soaking but some people report that there is still a fair amount of distortion of the finished piece.

It was my experience with soap soaking that led me to the alcohol soaking procedure I use today. When I researched soap soaking and read the discussions on wood working forums, the consensus was that it was the surfactant in soap that allowed the wood to dry faster.

Researching the MSDS (material safety data sheets) for several commonly used soaps revealed that the surfactants were listed as being alcohols. I reasoned that using alcohol for a soaking solution might be a simpler method. The most readily available alcohol is denatured alcohol found in the paint section of any hardware store. A gallon of denatured alcohol costs from 10 to 12 dollars.

A search on the internet noted several instances of alcohol soaking of archeological artifacts to displace water in a complicated protocol for stabilizing and preserving historical wood pieces. Alcohol soaking is used as the first step in of a process to replace water in the wood with a stable inert binder that will maintain the shape of the artifact and prevent further degradation. The fact that alcohol is used to displace water in archeological artifacts suggests that it might also work to displace water in green wood thus speeding up the drying process.

My testing involved a large variety of wood species. In each case, the results have been consistently good. Types of wood included some traditionally hard to dry woods such as apple, plum, cherry and mulberry.

The test consisted of turning two similarly sized bows from the same type wood. One bowl from each sample was soaked in alcohol then both were dried in the same manner. Several methods of drying were used from the most conservative, a paper bag, to the most radical of placing the bowls uncovered on a wire rack in my heated, dehumidified shop. I recorded the weight, date and time when the bowl was set aside for drying and then recorded the weight daily when possible. After the bowl stopped losing weight



ALCOHOL SOAKING METHOD FOR DRYING BOWLS (Cont.)

Dave Smith

it was considered dry or at equilibrium with the surroundings. The data showed that small thin (1/2 inch thick walls) bowls would reach equilibrium in 4 to 5 days. Using this data, I developed a process that was quick and consistently yielded usable bowls.

Here is a set of roughed out apple bowls that were cored from the same block. After more than a year they are still in good condition and ready to turn when I get a chance.

The Process:

Bowls are roughed out to 1/2 inch wall thickness for pieces less than 8" in diameter. Over 8" in diameter, I leave a wall thickness of 5/8 to 3/4 inches. Since my lathe is limited to 12 inches, I have not tested bowls larger than that for optimum wall thickness. I often turn utility pieces with a finished wall thickness of a quarter to half an inch. In these cases the roughed out wall thickness needs to be thick enough to allow for distortion. No drying method will completely prevent movement of the wood when it dries, so plan your roughed out blank accordingly.

Once the bowl is roughed out it is submerged in denatured alcohol for at least 2 hours. Larger, thicker bowls need to soak longer to



ensure good penetration of the alcohol. Longer soaking time does not appear to damage the wood.



Remove the blank from the alcohol and let it air dry for about an hour to dry the surface.

Now wrap the outside of the bowl in heavy paper such as a grocery bag. Secure the paper with a couple of wraps of masking tape around the rim. Fold the paper over the rim, trim off the excess, and place the bowl upside down on a rack to dry. If the bowl set on the foot it may not rest evenly due to the paper and the air may not circulate as well. The inside of the bowl needs to be exposed to air.

The reason for wrapping the outside only is the theory that it will create a compressive stress on the bowl by drying the inside quicker than the outside. As the inside dries it shrinks which pulls on the outside causing it to compress. This compressive force minimizes cracking during the drying process. Thinner walls yields less distortion and fewer cracks by decreasing the maximum stress developed between the inside and the outside.

The alcohol I use for soaking bowls is denatured ethanol alcohol, straight from the can. I do not recommend methanol due to health and safety concerns. Although I did successfully test some bowls in isopropyl alcohol I did not like the smell. Isopropyl is not readily available in concentrations greater than 70% while denatured ethanol normally is 95%. Alcohol is added to a container as needed to cover pieces. During soaking, some alcohol will be absorbed, so a small amount will be lost when each bowl is removed and must be replaced with fresh alcohol. Because of this I have not worried about the dilution of the solution over time. The results have been consistent for bowls soaked in fresh alcohol and those soaked in solution used many times.



ALCOHOL SOAKING METHOD FOR DRYING BOWLS (Cont.)

Dave Smith

One concern was the possibility that alcohol used to soak dark wood would become a dye and discolor lighter colored wood subsequently soaked in the solution. There has been no indication of this happening.

The solution does collect wood dust and other debris over a period of time, so I strain the solution when transferring between containers. A kitchen strainer placed across a container with a paper towel filter is sufficient to remove the big hunks.

Containers used for storing soaking alcohol should be non-metallic. Alcohol is about 95% alcohol and 5% water when purchased. As bowls are soaked in it, the moisture content of the solution will increase, which, along with other impurities leached from the wood will attack metal containers.

I use plastic ice cream containers for soaking bowls and storing used alcohol. A one-gallon container will accommodate a bowl 8" in diameter by 5" tall. A two-gallon ice cream container will hold a turning 8 1/4" in diameter and nearly 10 inches tall.

For larger bowls, a 13qt stainless steel bowl will accommodate 13" diameter bowls that are less than 6" from the rim to the bottom of the foot.

To cover a large bowl, place a sheet of heavy plastic film over the steel bowl and secure it by wrapping the rim with clear packing tape. If you stretch the tape, the cover can be removed and replaced as needed while providing a reasonably good seal.

Still larger bowls can be placed in a heavy plastic bag and then nested into a pile of shaving to conform to the bottom of the bowl and limit the amount of alcohol needed to cover the bottom. The inside of the bowl can also be filled to reduce the volume of alcohol needed to completely cover the bowl. With a little bit of ingenuity the amount of alcohol required to process large bowls can be held to a reasonable quantity.

(Due to space limitations, this article will be continued next month. Stay tuned...)

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COOL WEBSITES

Submitted by Merv Graham

Merv submitted a couple of interesting websites with technical info on wood species.

<http://woodworkweb.com/woodwork/contentid-17.html>

<http://www2.fpl.fs.fed.us/TechSheets/hardwood.html>

TIPS, TRICKS & PROBLEMS:

Submitted by Larry Stevenson

Last month I posed the following solution to a problem I had:

Solution to my dilemma: My solution involved a piece of closed cell foam, a “Whoopee” cushion and some Silly Putty. What was the problem?

Did any of you happen to think about this and if so let’s see if you came up with the correct problem. As many of you know, I love to do hollow forms. A variation of the hollow form that I do is the lens shaped forms in the arced stand. I call this series “Divine Winds”. The lens is made by the following process:

1. Select a figured piece of wood and glue to holding blocks on center.
2. Turn the recess on both blocks
3. Part the pieces in half with a thin parting tools and cut remainder with thin kerf saw.
4. Turn and finish the inside curve on both halves.
5. Glue the halves together aligning the grain.
6. Turn the outside curve on the front half first.

Vacuum chuck the front face and turn the back curve.

I’ve left out the finishing and lots of niggly details, but the point is not to teach how I make these other than let you know that the piece must be vacuum chucked in order to cut



the curve on the back face. It is very difficult to get a vacuum on a piece of wood that is full of holes, hence my problem. To solve this I cut the mouth out before the piece was finished, inserted a rolled up piece of closed cell foam and unrolled it inside the form. A “Whoopee Cushion” just happens to have a profile similar to the inside of the form, and can be inflated to hold the closed cell foam on the face that you are trying to hold on the vacuum chuck. There is still one problem left and that is that there is voids and holes where the vacuum chuck seals on the face of the form, and this is where the silly putty comes in. “Silly Putty” isn’t particularly sticky and will not mess up the wood and therefore is a good material for plugging the voids where the seal sits.

This entire procedure was a little hair raising (for those lucky enough to have hair) however the results are stunning. The form is still quite fragile when you are turning that final face and you must use light cuts and have the tools very sharp. I’ll bring this piece in to the next meeting for you to have a good look at but *please* “Look but do not handle”.

The other bonus of doing this is you can be a kid when the job is done and play with the silly putty and put the whoopee cushion under one of your kids or spouses seat cushion and remember all the goofy things we did as kids. (or maybe things we still do)

RON GERTON DEMO AND CLASSES—UPDATE

Art Liestman

As we reported last month, Ron Gerton, from Richland, Washington, will be here on Saturday, April 16th for a demo and for hands-on classes on April 17th and 18th.

Ron Gerton is a retired mechanical engineer who now does art full time. Ron's unique work combines his interests in jewelry and woodturning.

On the jewelry side, Ron works with bronze. He set up a foundry in his studio and has earned a reputation for his extremely high quality castings. He occasionally casts pieces for local artists.

Ron is also an accomplished woodturner. He has developed tools that allow hollowing of very large wooden vessels through a small center opening. A four-foot diameter vessel thirteen inches tall and hollowed through a three and a half inch center hole has been created, and is possibly the world's largest hollow vessel.



He combines his jewelry-making and woodturning skills to create unique art, pairing bronze castings of distorted sagebrush plants with woodturnings to create fantastic sculptures. He has also sliced his wood turned vessels either straight or curved and reassembled them by rotating the segments to create a totally new vessel shape. Some of these are combined with bronze to make unique sculptures. The combination of woodturning and bronze casting has allowed him to work on pieces of much larger scale than jewelry. To him it is still jewelry but jewelry for the home or office.

On Saturday, April 16th, Ron's demo will be held at the Sapperton Pensioners Hall from 9:30 am to approximately 4pm. There is a \$25 charge to attend the demo. In the demo, Ron will explain in detail how something is prepared for gravity casting, do an actual bronze cast, and then discuss how the castings are combined with wood turnings and finished. He will also discuss how to make a rubber mold.

COMING EVENTS

Stephen Hatcher - May 14 demo, possible class on May 15 (if there is interest) <http://www.stephenhatcher.com>

Andi Wolfe - June 25 demo, classes on June 26 and June 27 <http://www.biosci.ohio-state.edu/~awolfe/COW/wolfe.html>

Russ Fairfield - September 10 demo, classes on September 11 and 12 (if there is interest)

Marilyn Campbell - November 12 demo, classes on November 13 and 14 (if there is interest)
<http://www.marilyncampbell.ca>

If you are interested in some of these classes or if you'd like to request other demonstrators, please contact Art Liestman (artliestman@shaw.ca or 604-939-3843).

Turning 101: skew and spindle gouge class Apr 9

INSTANT GALLERY



Hollow Form, Carved Top, Acacia, 6" x 6"
Larry Stevenson



Bowl, Cherry, 3" x 3"
Doug Schop



Hollow Form, Spalted Horse Chesnut, 8" x 6",
Neno Catania



Pot, Elm, 5" x 6"
Tom Kilgour



Triangle Box, Dogwood, 3" x 2"
Ross Pilgrim



Weaved Hollow Form, Maple & Mahogany, 6" x 5"
Don Bishop

INSTANT GALLERY (cont.)



Triangle Box, Spalted Cherry, 2.5"x 4"
Gary Miller



Vase, Liburnum, 4"x 5"
Al Koehn

Turning 101—Boxes



Alan Cusworth



George Leroux



Harry Taylor



Gary Miller

PRESIDENT'S CHALLENGE—SANDED TO 2000 GRIT



**CLASSIFIEDS:
FOR SALE**

Nova 3000 swivel head lathe with variable speed DC motor and heavy stand. Three tool rests, live center, face plate and drive spur - \$1,200.

David Broomhead 533-1142 (broomhead@shaw.ca)

NOTICES:

- AUCTION NOTICE -

On Saturday April 02, 2005 the GVWG will auction the remaining wood turning affects of the late John Bese. All proceeds will go to John's family.

LOCATION:

10041 157th Ave
Surrey, BC

TIME:

09:30 - inspection and registration
11:00 - auction begins

No reserve bids. All items are sold as-is, cash and carry and must be removed before 4PM on the

Call for Artists – Richmond Outdoor Art Exhibition—July 22-24, 2005—Minoru Plaza

Wood – Digital Art - Jewellery – Drawing – Glass – Metal – Ceramics – Photography – Painting – 3D Mixed Media – Fibre – Printmaking – Sculpture – 2D Mixed Media

The City of Richmond is thrilled to offer artists an opportunity to showcase their talents. 2005 marks the inaugural year for the Richmond Outdoor Art Exhibition (ROAE). ROAE is an annual, juried national event for students and artists working in contemporary fine arts and crafts. Its mission is:

- To increase public knowledge and appreciation for contemporary fine arts and crafts.
- To provide opportunities for interaction between the public and artists.
- To recognize through awards some of the best that Canada has to offer.

Artists are invited to submit slides or digital images on CD of their work for this juries exhibition. Cost to exhibit: \$150/artist and \$60 art student. Organizers will take no commission on works sold.

Application deadline is March 31, 2005. Notification of acceptance is April 30, 2005.

To receive a copy of the Application Form: Telephone 604-231-6433; Email sgreening@richmond.ca; visit www.richmond.ca

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