



Minnesota Wood Turners Association

An Affiliated Chapter of the American Assn. of Woodturners

Aug. 1998

Volume 12, Issue 6

REMINDERS !!

- 1.) Call in now for the August picnic. See page 4 for details.
- 2.) The demo by Hans Finsterwalder is on Sept. 26. Send in your reservations soon. Details on page 3.

American Association of Woodturners – Symposium '98 A quick focus by Mel Turcanik

This symposium, like all the others I have attended, was big, exciting, and full of more stuff than you can possibly assimilate in a weekend. Since I have been attending symposia regularly since 1993, I've seen a lot of different people demonstrating a lot of different techniques. Fortunately, I've been able to bring a lot (though not all, not by a long shot) of these techniques into my shop and get a feel for what people are trying to teach. Over the last few years, I've come to the conclusion that I'm not young enough to hope to do everything possible, and do any of it well. So, I now attend a symposium to find out what's new, so I don't waste my time trying to develop something that someone else is already doing well. I'd like to pave my own path. I'm telling you this so that you can understand that I'm looking at these sessions a bit differently than a lot of

people who seek ideas or plans so they can replicate them. There is nothing wrong with borrowing ideas or techniques. We all do it. In fact, if I continue to report on the symposium experience, you will see evidence that woodturners haven't come up with anything new, yet. Most of the art in the modern world was done for the first time from 500 to several thousand years ago.

As I was driving to the symposium with my wife, I was reflecting on the ideas above and trying to figure out exactly why I was expending the energy to go to another symposium. Wouldn't I be better off just staying in my own shop turning? What I realized was that I was seeking a turning philosophy. I will try to continue to report my thoughts and experiences from the symposium, and I will be submitting a complete report to the AAW which may be published in "American Woodturner".

The first session I attended was very much the typical "how-to and what-for" type session that I have looked for at symposia.

Todd Hoyer presented the turning of crotch wood. His teaching approach was, I feel, most effective because of his thorough exploration of the nature of the wood and it's relation to the finished product. He explained the reasons for the formation of the different figure patterns around the crotch of a tree. Then he went on to explain how to position the finished piece within the crotch so that a pleasing form, maximizing figure would result. Even though the result should be somewhat predictable, his technique allowed for lots of time to stop and assess what was happening as the turning progressed, and change plans if that's what is appropriate. As we all know, wood has a way of presenting us with surprises, and this periodic reassessment of progress allowed for the surprises and their suggested modifications to the previous plan.

There were two tools that he has made which were different than anything I have worked with before. His end grain hollowing tool (see fig. 1) has a square shank so that when it was flat on the rest, he knew exactly what angle the cutting edge was making to the surface of the wood. The cutting tip had a round cross section. It was inserted into a round hole in the shank. The tip was held in place with a setscrew so that the exposed length and angle could be easily changed. This allowed the tip to be set so that it could maintain the ideal 45 degree angle to the wood at the cutting edge. This should be very helpful.

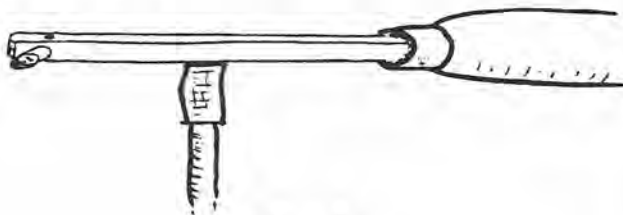


Fig.1

Todd was turning open winged forms from crotches. They were positioned so that the base of the form was the large trunk, and the opening was the space between the branches of the crotch. Essentially these are end grain vessels, except the majority of the walls are of air. Depending on how deep the trunk was hollowed or whether the wings splayed out or came together, the form could have a variety of appearances. Also coming from green wood, the drying process would eventually complete the process by warping the thin wings. One detail that may be lost on the casual observer, was the requirement that all the edges of the completed form be natural, that is, the edge must always come through the bark. (See fig. 2) When examining his finished work, it was easy to see how this differentiated a really nice flowing piece from one that looked roughly contrived. The eye tends to follow the growth rings around the form. If the edge is artificially manipulated, it breaks up that flow and detracts from the natural beauty of the wood, and ultimately throws the balance of the piece off. It doesn't really matter if the bark itself remains or not. What is important, is that the growth rings aren't cut or interrupted.

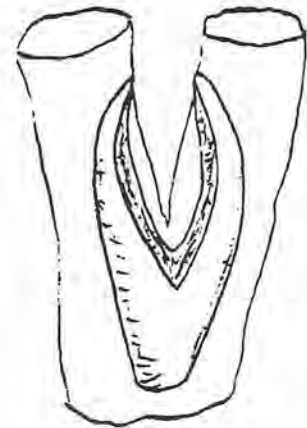


Fig. 2

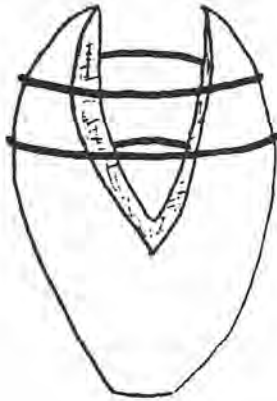


Fig. 3

When turning the thin wings of a form where the wings are roughly parallel to the lathe axis, the wings will tend to splay outward from centrifugal force of the lathe spinning. Todd made rings to hold the "wings" of the form from splaying out from centrifugal force. These rings were made of either brazing or welding rod or steel wire bent and welded to shape. (See fig. 3) Some rings were made by bending the round ring and just making a hook on one end and a loop on the other. Apparently a lot of strength is not necessary but they have to be round or you will cut into them when hollowing. This is why a hose clamp won't work, it flattens across the gaps. The rod has to be stronger than coat hanger wire, but not as strong as a 1/4" rod. The rings were held in place by masking or duct tape.

Obviously, there was a lot more in this 1 1/2 hour session than I could convey here. In fact, Todd started about 15 minutes early and was still not done at the end of the session. A book could be written about this one session alone. In subsequent articles, I will try to pass on a few other jewels I discovered in Akron. If there is interest, I will also try to pass on some of my philosophical exploration of the art of turning.

Hans Finsterwalder Demo

Saturday, Sept. 26 9:00 to 5:00

Hans will be demonstrating some truly unique shapes and ideas that he has developed. Some of you may have seen some of his examples at John Magnussen's house. I certainly was impressed and intrigued to see how he accomplishes these designs.

Hans Finsterwalder is an accomplished wood turner from Lake Havasu City, Arizona. Hans started in Germany at age 14 on a three-year apprentice program. The first year his duties were clean up, and other odd jobs, and learning the turning process. His only tools were the skew and gouge. At the end of the third year he had to pass a strict exam which consisted of identifying twenty types of wood, and making various types of spindle turnings from drawings given to him. He was scrutinized very closely for days during his exam. After successfully passing, he became a journeyman turner.

His turnings are mainly segmented bowls. The larger segmented bowls may have as many as 600 to 800 separate pieces. However, he also turns excellent Christmas ornaments and jewelry boxes along with some contemporary turning and 'far-out' stuff.

This should prove to be a great demo. Get your reservations in now. The fee will continue to be \$20 for members and \$30 for non-members.

Send your checks to:

Ron Meilahn
1638 23rd Ave. N.W.
New Brighton, MN 55112

Contact any Board member for further info

1998 PICNIC

The annual family picnic is fast approaching. This year it will again be at **John Magnussen's** house from **noon to 6:00** on **Saturday, August 15th**. We'll eat about 1:00.

The "challenge" this year is to turn a frisbee. Certificates will be awarded for the following categories:

- Largest
- Best Design
- Best Finish
- Most Colorful
- Most Exotic
- Thinnest
- Longest Actual Flight

The frisbee turnings will be used for show-and-tell so put your thinking caps on, put a tool in your hand and turn out some exotic new designs.

The only thing food item you have to bring is any meat and buns for your family. There will be grills available to cook on. Salads, soft drinks, coffee and dessert will be provided. A special treat will be fresh corn on the cob provided by Rod Olson

Bring your own lawn chairs and mosquito repellent. John's yard is big so you could even bring along a (UGH!) plastic frisbee. There will also be croquet and bocci ball available.

The picnic committee needs to know how many people will be attending so they can have enough food available so please call either of the following members to let them know if you are coming and how many in your party. **Please help out by doing this ASAP.**

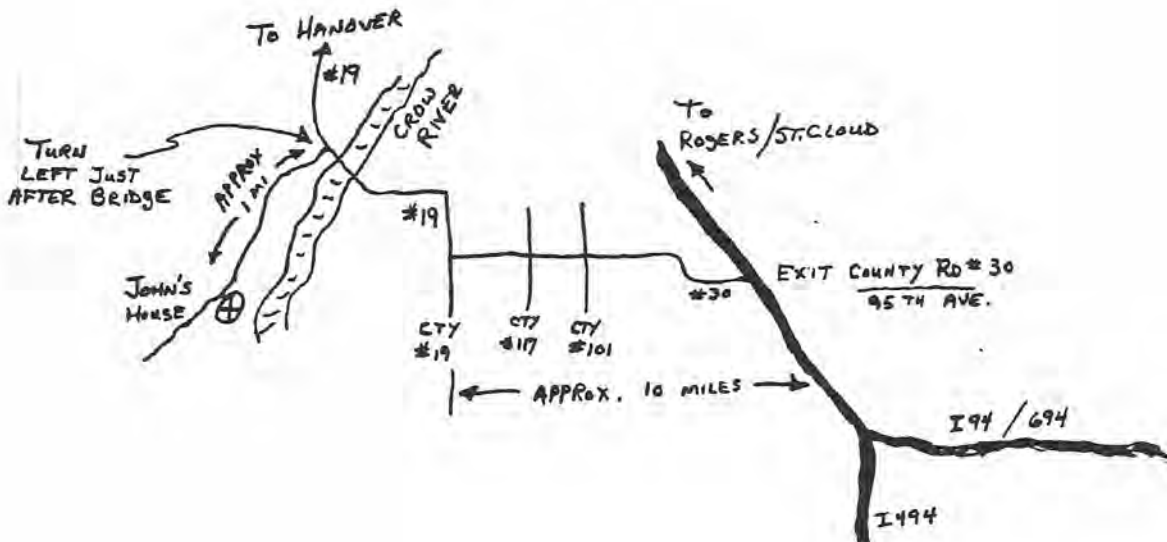
Don Robinson 441-8207

Ron Meilahn 633-8902

See the map below for directions to John's.

Note: There will not be a wood raffle at this meeting.

Pat Westphal



Here is a tip from Mel Turcanik that, on his advice, I have tried and I can say it works great.

Mel's tip:

I just saw, on the TV show "American Woodworker" how myths get started. The fellow was demonstrating making pens on a lathe and was using "Super Glue" to assemble the components. His comment to, "Be sure to cap the bottle because it has a short shelf life" stuck out as one of those things that seems intuitively natural but in fact leads one to do exactly the wrong thing. "Super Glues" (cyanoacrylates) cure in the absence of air and in the presence of humidity. This is exactly the opposite of other glues. I never cap my super glue any more and since I stopped capping them I haven't had a bottle go bad. The shelf life applies to the unopened bottle where there isn't enough air to prevent it from hardening over a long period of time. Also, not capping solves the problem of the clogged spout, just tap the bottom of the bottle on a table top before putting it away to clear the spout.

St.Catherine's Arts and Crafts Show

The Demonstration booth was manned by volunteers again this year. Thanks to Ed Johnson for coordinating this effort and to the volunteers who contributed their time and talent. There was a severe storm that roared through the area on Saturday but fortunately nothing at the club's booth was damaged.

The spectators appeared to be very interested in the art of woodturning and the kids liked the "quick and dirty" tops that were handed out. As in previous years the group that does lace work was present so some dialogue about turning bobbins occurred. The lady that I chatted with was very well versed on bobbins; traditional, decorative and just plain functional. Since it peaked my interest I looked up the subject on the Internet. There are many sites that can be visited. One that I found that you might want to look at if you have Internet access would be: users.mwci.net/~rspragg/lacebob.html

Note:

If any of you have found Internet sites that might be of special interest to our members please let me know and I will put them in the newsletter.

Along that same idea, I can always use your tips, articles or topic of interest to write about in the newsletter.

Don't delay signing up for the August picnic and the September Demo. It really helps the organizing committees to complete their planning at the earliest.

Minnesota Woodturners Association

Dedicated to providing education, information and an organization to those interested in woodturning.

The Minnesota Woodturners Association was formed in 1987 with approximately 25 charter members and now has about 100 members. The Association is non-profit and all work by members is done voluntarily.

The skill level of our members ranges from complete beginners to skilled professionals. Membership includes a few professionals but hobbyists make up the majority. The members live mostly in the Twin Cities metro area, however there are members in all areas of Minnesota stretching into western Wisconsin.

The Association normally schedules meetings once a month during fall, winter and spring of the year. (September thru May) The meetings are normally held on Tuesdays or Saturdays and the group meets in a different location each time. The meeting locations vary from members shops, educational associations, to the various woodworking stores located throughout the metro area.

The Newsletter is published bi-monthly, 5 times a year, excluding the months of July/August

The meetings usually consist of some sort of turning demonstration or related subject. The subjects of the demonstrations vary from basic techniques to advanced levels. The meetings are always open to questions from the members and we invite and encourage them to share their knowledge and skills freely. The Association tries to arrange at least one professional demonstration each year, with past professional demonstrators coming from all areas of the United States, England and as far away as Australia.



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First Class Mail