



Minnesota Woodturners Association

An Affiliated Chapter of the American Assn. of Woodturners

1st Quarter 1999

Volume 13, Issue 1

Important Reminder !

It is time to renew your membership by getting your 1999 dues (\$20) to Ron Meilahn
1638 23rd Ave. NW
New Brighton, MN 55112

The Pyramid Point Tool

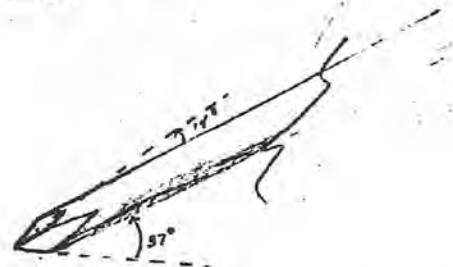
By Mel Turcanik

I was intrigued by the possibility of an "easy to use" skew. I have seen ads and articles about a variety of traditional European spindle-turning tools ground from a round shaft. One of these is the "pyramid point" or 3-edge skew. It is now being sold by at least one turning supply company. I purchased a round tool steel cutter blank from MSC Industrial Supply (3/8"x5" long). At first I ground the pyramid point with three equal sides, and three equal cutting edges. This is an easy operation, and quite frankly, I don't see how a company can justify selling a tool for over \$20 that can be made from a \$5 tool blank and a few minutes on a grinder. In any case, if you decide to make one, (and you shouldn't after reading this) just keep grinding back the three sides until they are equal and the point is in the center.

I found this tool to be difficult to use as a skew. It didn't kick back as easily as a regular skew, but it didn't cut as easily or cleanly either. Because the grind angle of the "blade" is essentially 60 degrees, it takes a lot of force to get it into the wood and it won't go deep. To me, this is like building the worlds safest

car, that won't go over 5 mph. In playing around with it I found it to have a couple of capabilities worth further exploration. I have been using a skew to do a final scraping cut on the outside of bowls and other faceplate work since I saw Clay Foster demonstrate how that eliminated the burnish marks that screw up a finish. This technique also speeds up sanding. This tool did a better job than my regular skews because the part of the blade doing the cutting was always much closer to being directly above the tool rest support due to the round shank. The round shank is also stiffer than a flat shank of the same width. This would, of course, be true of a round-shank skew as well. The tool was also useful as a pointed parting tool or vee-groove cutter. It easily made clean cuts regardless of grain.

I decided to modify the traditional shape to improve the function. I ground two of the sides further back than the third. (See the drawing.)



This changed the shape to resemble a round shank skew with a flat on top of the blade

Continued next page

(from the long point back). The main cutting edge is angled more than my regular skews, but does have a slight curve ala Raffan. This tool is quite useful. It offers three cutting edges, the other two being the intersection of the side bevels and the top bevel. It does a great job as a vee groove cutter. It does work more like a skew, though my traditional flat ones will still get into places this one won't. The sharper angle of a traditional skew will also still give a smoother cut. But this is a very controllable skew and with the added functionality of the extra cutting edges, has found a permanent place in my tool collection. The main reason is its ability to scrape the outside of a piece with perfect control using any of the three cutting edges. Also, having the three edges at different angles to the

handle means on small pieces I can scrape all parts of a curved piece without moving the tool rest. This improves the speed of work, and I need all the help I can get.

When I say "scrape", I want to make it clear that that includes everything from a 90 degree approach to the wood to a shearing cut with the bevel not quite riding the wood. There are always fine curly shavings coming off, so I guess that's what we call a "shear scrape".

The drawing illustrates the grind I've created. It fits nicely into my Stewart chatter-tool handle. The angles are approximate, I just ground until it looked right. Periodic sharpening is done with the diamond hone.

The Utah Woodturning Symposium

In spite of their annual announcement (since the one I attended in 1993) that "This year may be the last", there will be another Utah symposium this year. Kip Christensen is now the chairman. The list of demonstrators includes him, Bonnie Klein, Richard Raffan, Vic Wood, Dale Nish, Betty Scarpino, Dick Sing, Alan Stirt, and many more. The dates are May 27, 28, and 29th at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. Cost is \$220 before May 15th. For more information, write or call:

Utah Woodturning Symposium
P.O. Box 50196
Provo, Utah 84605-0196
(801) 378-2021

We should have applications at the next meeting as well.

Woodshop News - Request for Submissions

We have received a request from "Woodshop News" a national wood working publication. If you haven't seen it, it is a tabloid format magazine that covers all aspects of woodworking from amateur to professional to industrial. They have noticed that woodturning is now becoming popular and are looking for material. They request slides with submissions. Their interest includes activities of the chapter, stories about turners, techniques, exhibitions, or anything else of interest to turners.

The contact is Julie Doane Roberts, Editorial Assistant. Woodshop News, 35 Pratt St., Essex, CT 06426-1048.

MWA Treasurers Report - 01/29/99	
Final 1998 Actual Results	
Jan. 1, 1998 Beginning Cash Balance	\$1,401
<u>Income</u>	
Dues paid (92 members)	1760
Wood raffle/name tags	217
Total Income	1977
<u>Expenses</u>	
Prof. Demos (net cost)	-350
N/I prtgs & postage	-246
Annual liab ins.	0
Holiday party & picnic	490
Glue sales/purchases(net)	-183
Awards, misc. Suppl/postage, kits, Bd Mtg	446
Library tapes, vcr rental, etc.	-126
"Wdturning" mag. 2 yr. Subscription	0
Tools, Rpr, equip-upgrade	-110
Total Expenses	-1951
Net operations -12 months (FAV)	26
Education fund(new)	20
Excess library tape deposit	80
Final Cash Balance Dec. 31, 1998	1527

Treasurer's Report

1998 Actual Financial Results

Financially, 1998 was another good year for our club. We started with \$1401 in the bank, brought in \$1977, spent approx. \$1950, leaving a net gain of \$26, which increased our year-end cash balance to \$1527.

Membership by year-end was 92 persons, down-slightly from last year's record 103 ; but we did gain 15 new members during the year.

Total income hit \$1977, down by only \$145 from last year; receipts from dues dropped by \$195, but this was slightly offset by a \$45 increase in our wood raffle program.--thanks to the generosity of our member-donors this revenue increased to \$205, up 20% over last year.

Our club subsidized three professional demos during 1998- (Judy Ditmer, Bonnie Klein & Hans Finsterwalder) spending an additional \$350 over and above each member's \$20 attendance fee- this was mostly for higher travel costs.

1998 expenses totaled \$1601, down by nearly \$300 from last year,. With slight under-runs occurring in several expense categories.

The more significant expenses were: \$246 - postage for mailing six newsletters and one reminder postcard--this category has dramatically dropped over the past year as "Andersen Windows" continues to print our newsletters (no charge); \$371-gift exchange prizes and catering our annual holiday/ornament party; \$100-club award for the best turning at the annual "Northern Woods" Southdale Show; \$119--2nd annual picnic; \$239-additional super glue purchase to inventory; \$203 --Super Nova chuck for our club demo-lathe. Finally, we spent an additional \$88 upgrading our video tape library.

In summary, we achieved our 1998 goals as set forth in our January 8, 1998 board meeting; at the same time, we exceeded our targeted \$1000 minimum bank balance at year-end by an increase to \$1527, which includes accumulated operation gains, an initial donation of \$20 by Ruth Waterbury to create our club's first "Educational Fund", and an excess library deposit of \$80. The MWA board will be meeting in mid-February to formalize our 1999 budget, so please contact any of our board members with your suggestions or comments.

Ron Meilahn-Treasurer

Worth a Look

There is no doubt that wood turning is growing in popularity as a hobby. This growth is increasing the demand for information about techniques and equipment. While, in my humble opinion, the AAW still produces the finest sources of information available, the commercial magazines are beginning to address our needs as well.

The February issue of "Better Homes and Gardens Wood" has a short article about Ray Allen's segmented bowls. Ray is famous for his artistry and the article shows the low-tech way his segments are formed to fit precisely.

The February issue of "Woodwork" has the best explanation of the cutting action of a tool I have seen outside of heavy industry. Mike Darlow, a turner from Australia, uses the skew as an example, but his explanation not only covers that tool but any cutting edge going into any material on any machine or hand tool. If you understand this, you understand cutting period. The title of the article is "Catches, How to Avoid Them".

Subscribing to a bunch of magazines just for turning information is probably not cost effective, but many libraries carry these and they are easily copied.

MWA Board

President:

Mel Turcanik (507) 634-7570
e-mail: turcanik@means.net

Vice President:

Duane Gemelke (612) 566-8516
e-mail:
Duane.gemelke@corp.honeywell.com

Treasurer:

Ron Meilahn (612) 633-8902

Program Director:

Ed Johnson (651) 224-4194

Newsletter Mailing:

John Ratliff (651) 770-6471

Librarian:

Linda Ferber (651) 454-5774

Members-at-Large

Don Wattenhofer (612) 572-1045
Larry Heyn (612) 571-2117

Secretary:

Ken Tempero (612) 476-9024

Newsletter Editor/Membership:

Don Robinson (612) 441-8207
e-mail: dmrob@worldnet.att.net

Member Helpline

Do you have a question or need help with a project or turning? The following members have volunteered to try and answer your questions or point you in the right direction.

Mel Turcanik (507) 634-4986
John Engstrom (612) 475-0307
Jim Jacobs (651) 437-2302
Ed Johnson (651) 224-4194
John Magnussen (612) 477-6294
Dave Schneider (612) 934-4667
Don Wattenhofer (612) 572-1045

If any others wish to volunteer for this list please call Don Robinson @ (612) 441-8207.

DUES REMINDER !

Please return your renewal subscription for 1999 so you will not miss any of the Newsletter issues, meetings, special events and club discounts available only to members in the coming year.

Don't delay! This will be the last newsletter for the 1998 members.

For Sale

Some of the most exciting Turning-Wood in the world is available right here in Minnesota!

- Incredible Exotic Burls
- Beautiful Boards • Fantastic Prices

Call Craig Lossing at (651) 785-4194 Today!

Membership Application/Renewal MINNESOTA WOODTURNERS ASSOCIATION

Name (Please Print) _____

Telephone # _____

Date _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip Code _____

Dues are \$20 Yearly (starting in January)
But \$10 after July 1st (2nd half year)

Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Please Check: Renewing Member ☐ New Member ☐

Are you a member of the AAW ? Yes ☐ No ☐

You will receive all issues of the newsletter starting with the next mailing after you join along with a new members kit.

I would be willing to:

Help out at meetings	<input type="radio"/>
Be on a planning committee	<input type="radio"/>
Help at demos/shows	<input type="radio"/>
Serve on the Board	<input type="radio"/>
Contribute to newsletter	<input type="radio"/>

Mail To:

MN Woodturners Association
c/o Ron Meilahn
1638 23rd Ave NW
New Brighton, MN 55112

Show Announcement

We received an announcement for the 27th annual ARTARAMA show in Eagle River, WI. It will be Saturday 7/17/99, 9-4. Entry fee \$75, 3-5 slides to be submitted for jury. Application deadline 3/5/99. Get application from Artarama, P.O. Box 683, Eagle River, WI. They expect 10,000 visitors, 42% of sales are over \$2000.

The Minnesota Woodturners Collaboration

At the December meeting, we decided to enter the AAW Chapter Collaborative Challenge. Since this is a highly competitive event, we don't want to mention in print what our entry will be. If you are interested in contributing to the building of the project, contact the project coordinator, Don Wattenhoffer at 612-572-1045.

Tips And Tricks

By Jim Jacobs

- 1.) A bag of sand sold at places like Menard's and called "Sand-in-the-tube" works well for soaking up vibration. I hang it over the headstock and/or the bed of the lathe when starting larger turnings.
- 2.) A piece of carpet on the floor around the lathe protects tools if they fall. It also is easier on the feet and it catches dust. Just take it outside and shake it to clean it.
- 3.) Make a block jig (see Fig. 1) to attach almost any wood to your 4-jaw chuck. Pre-turn a round block of hardwood (I use maple) to about 1 1/2 thick by about 2 inches in diameter. Pre-drill four clearance holes

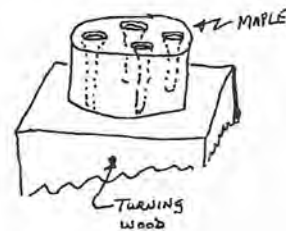


Fig. 1

(countersink if you use flathead screws) then attach this block to a flattened area of your turning-wood. I like the deep-threaded screws for better holding power.

Chuck the assembly to the lathe and turn the round tenon on the turning-wood. You now can remove the jig and chuck-up your turning on this tenon.

- 4.) This fixture (see Fig. 2) is great for holding any vessel that has a lip. Use plastic "panel clips" to hold pieces in cup-chucks. The clips are available at any hardware type store. Take a scrap block of wood, turn the recess to fit the vessel then rotate the clips over the lip of the vessel and tighten in place. The inside of a lid or the bottom of a vessel can now be turned.

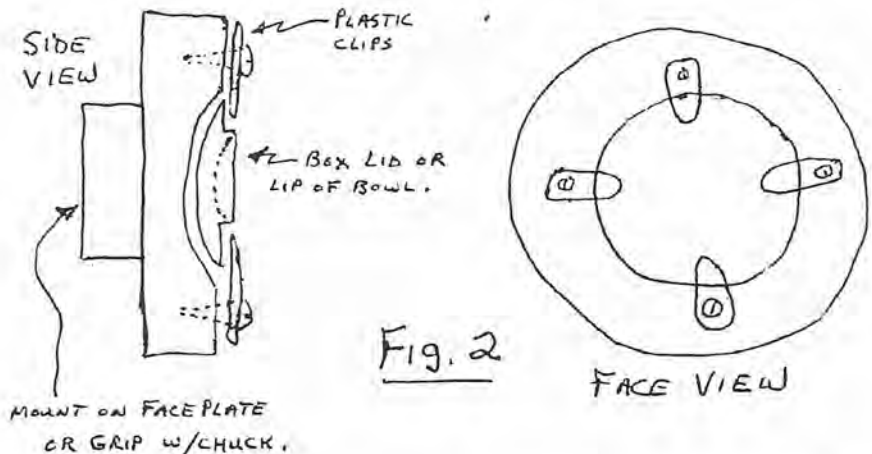


Fig. 2

The Beginner's Dilemma

By Don Robinson

I am into my third year of woodturning and I am starting to do things that I am proud of. Some of you are probably in that "just getting started" period and I know how you feel. You have seen some beautiful vases and bowls and other turned-art-forms at a wood show. Suddenly it was like somebody was sitting on your shoulder saying, "Wow! That looks like something I have to do!"

STEP 1: You're hooked and you take that first step of deciding to look at wood-lathes at Sears or Menard's because you have no clue where else to look. You have occasionally walked past their \$125 lathes over the years and thought "you've seen one, you've seen them all".

You buy this beauty and you see the bag of six turning tools for \$19.95 because that's all they have on display and you think "this is all I need".

When you get home and start setting up you find that the lathe must be mounted on a bench of some sort. Later you will realize the height is not correct for you to be comfortable.

You are ready to start turning and in the only wood items you have seen in any quantity are spindles made from dry wood. Maybe you find a chunk of 4X4 lying in your shop and prepare to mount it on the lathe. The lathe probably came with a spur-point to screw onto the headstock and a drive center to push into the tailstock. When you finally get ready to turn you don't know which tool to use (the names are on the plastic bag but which is which?). When you make a few cuts with the tool of your choice you think maybe this is dangerous when you bring the lathe to a halt with a deep grab. You decide to go to the next phase.

STEP 2: Somewhere you have saved a flyer or handout for membership in the Minnesota Woodturners Assn. You call the phone number and find out where the next meeting will be.

When you go to the meeting a lot of talk is over your head and you think you would look like a dummy if you asked a foolish question. That is, if you even know what to ask.

STEP 3: If you can hang in there for steps 1 & 2, and eventually join the Woodturners club the terms and names of tools will start to become clear. Following, I will try to list what I found to be important and useful to me.

1.) If you bought that \$100 lathe it's OK to use it for a while but ask members of the club what they use. Also check the local retailers and catalogues pertaining mainly to woodturning. Once you have seen the vast amount of equipment available you can pin down the lathe that fits your criteria. You will probably find \$500 to be the low end of acceptability for full size and \$300 for mini-lathes. Also check the club's newsletter for used equipment.

2.) Buy a good 3/8 or 1/2 inch bowl gouge (both if you can), a 1/2-inch spindle gouge and maybe a good scraper. If you have the parting tool from a cheap set it will work for now, otherwise buy one. Later on you can decide on a bigger selection of tools.

3.) You will need a grinder with a white aluminum oxide wheel. I use 100 grit for one wheel and 120 for the other but I seem to use the 100 grit the most. The grinder is a must; later you can decide on special attachments to aid in grinding.

4.) I would put a bandsaw almost as a must have item. If you buy one be sure it can be fitted with a riser block kit so you can cut thick logs (remember, you probably won't turn many 2X4s).

We Are Almost Done Spending.

5.) Look for a faceplate with threads to fit your new lathe if it wasn't provided. The spur-point and drive center will only be used for spindle turning.

6.) Lastly, I will guarantee that you will want to buy a good 4-jaw chuck. If you continue to turn you will find setups that won't work well using a faceplate only.

There, We're Done Spending.

You won't need to buy all of these things immediately but will be needed if you continue with this hobby. Some of the club members turn the hobby into a paying profession which helps offset the cost of tools.

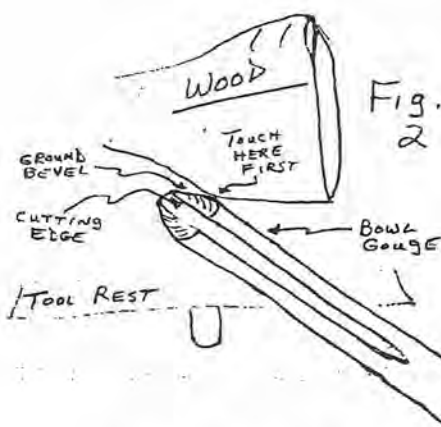
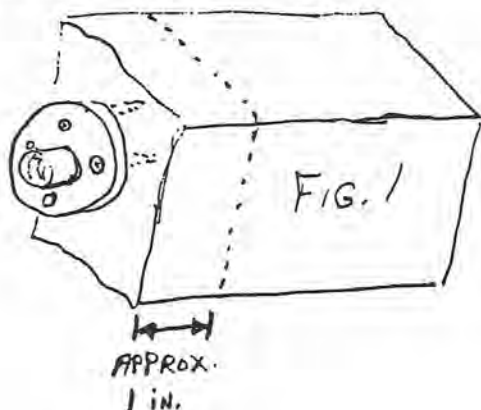
HOW TO TURN A SIMPLE BOWL:

The faceplate is one of the acceptable ways to mount your work onto the lathe if you turn vases and bowls. I use 3/4 sheetrock screws to hold the wood to the faceplate.

If you think of turning a bowl, for example,
(Continued next page)

there are two ways of approaching the mounting of wood to faceplate.

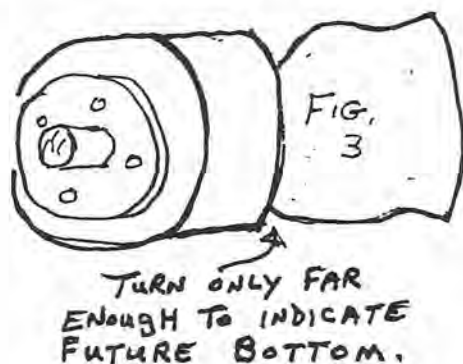
The first way is to screw what will become the bottom of the bowl to the plate (see fig.1), being careful to roughly center the wood so it doesn't cause much out-of-balance shaking when the lathe starts turning. When mounting this way you must note that the first inch out from the plate is not usable because of the screws so adjust the picture your mind sees of the final bowl accordingly.



I next turn the outside profile first using some combination of bowl gouge, spindle gouge and homemade tools. Later on you may want to try using a skew but this tool requires some experience and is less forgiving.

When using any tool, bring the heel of the bevel up to the wood first then pivot the cutting edge up to the wood (see fig.2). When you first start on a rough, out-of-round chunk of wood it might be hard to gauge this accurately but later when the turning has been brought to round it will be easy to see.

It is good to sand the completed shape at this point because the wood is more stable with the center of the bowl still intact. Don't worry about the bottom of the bowl yet except to mark where it will be (see fig. 3). (The last step will be to go in to shape the bottom and part the bowl off from the faceplate.)



Next, you can rotate the tool rest around so the bowl can be hollowed out. Bring it up to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch from the wood and adjust it so your spindle gouge is centered on the center of the bowl. What you will see is the tip of the gouge will touch the wood slightly below center as you approach the wood.

Turn the lathe on and start straight in with the tool (trough pointing straight up). If the tool grabs and jumps you will need to adjust the tool rest up or down accordingly. The goal is to be able to run the gouge in much like a drill bit.

Once it is centered, continue to push the tool in about an inch then back it out so the depth is about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch. The tool should be resting trough-up on the tool rest. Firmly hold the tool so you can swing the tool in an arc to the left. The wood will be cut (sheared) on the left cutting edge.

Continue to hog out the bowl in this manner being careful around the outside thickness of the bowl. Leave it at about $\frac{3}{16}$ thick and you can use a scraper later to finish the depth.

A caution here; stop going in with the spindle gouge at a point about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from the outside bottom of your bowl --(think ahead).

I run the gouge in to this $\frac{1}{4}$ inch point so

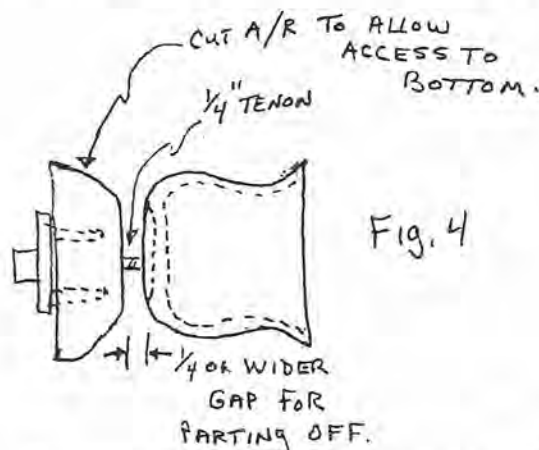
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that I have a hole all the way to the inside-bottom of the bowl. However, the gouge may start vibrating when you get to far away from the tool rest so I then switch to a bowl gouge to finish removing the inside of the bowl. I look for and use the earlier hole I made with the spindle gouge to tell me when to stop removing any more wood.

You can use calipers or your fingers to determine the final thickness of the bowl.

CAUTION: Turn the lathe off in either case.

Bring the tool rest back to the side of the bowl. Use the parting tool to start cutting



away under the bowl. Remember the $\frac{3}{4}$ inch screw clearance. I like to dish out the bottom slightly so you must measure carefully the inside depth Vs where you are on the bottom. It will work best if you can have $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch clearance between the $\frac{3}{4}$ inch waste and the bottom of the bowl. This will allow you to angle the parting tool in when the bottom is being dished. (See fig. 4)

Most of the time I don't completely part the bowl off. I leave a $\frac{1}{4}$ inch tenon holding the bowl to the waste wood. This way I can proceed with finishing and use the lathe to help with sanding between coats. The "professionals" probably will call me chicken but I actually use a hacksaw to go through this tenon to remove the bowl at the very end. I then sand the stub smooth to the bottom and coat with a finish.

In the next newsletter we will talk about the second way of mounting to the faceplate and also discuss using a four-jaw chuck.

By the way, I strongly recommend using a face shield and wearing a dust mask.

Future meetings

- The meeting for March will be held at the Woodcraft store in Bloomington on Saturday the 13th. Alan Lacer will give a demonstration of proper techniques using the skew.
- The meeting for April will give us a chance to once again try for the turning of a perfect egg. The "Egg Challenge" has been enjoyed by participating members for the last two years and it does indeed challenge a turner to create this shape. It's not to early to start on your rendition of an Easter egg.

HOLIDAY PARTY

The photos on the next page are from the December Holiday party. The party was well attended and everyone enjoyed the gift exchange as well as the great raffle prizes. A large THANKYOU goes to Ron Meilahn, Merrily & Larry Heyn and Barb Bader for all of their efforts.

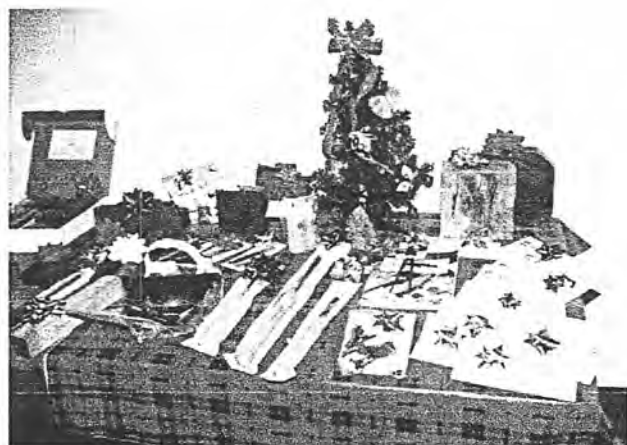
A special thanks goes to the following vendors for their generous contributions toward the raffle prizes:

Wells Fargo Bank of New Brighton --- Use of the second floor facilities.
Craft Supply --- Gift certificates and discounted merchandise.
Rockler Woodworking --- Gift certificates and discounted merchandise.
Woodcraft --- Gift certificates and discounted merchandise.
Shaw Lumber --- Gift Certificate.
Craig Lossing --- Several Exotic Turning-Blocks.

I hope that our club can continue to support these vendors since they in turn provide us with many varying services.
Thanks from MWA.



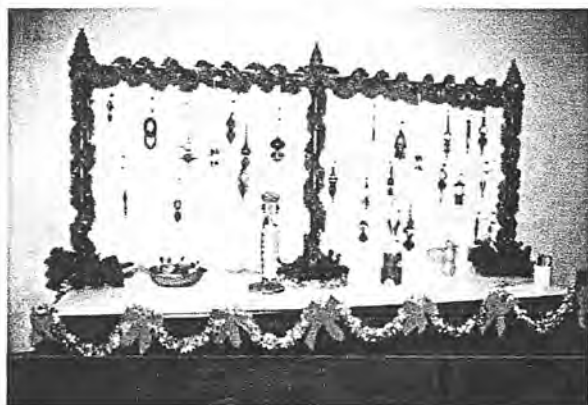
Above: Cheaper by the dozen.



Above: Lots and lots of raffle prizes.

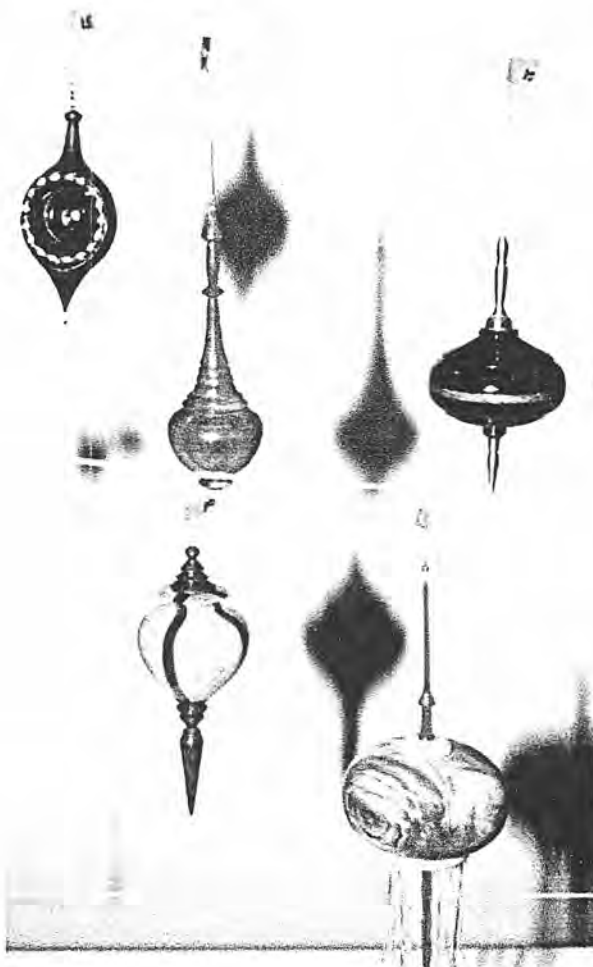
Right: Close-up of some of the ornaments.

Below: What a great assortment of all the ornaments.



Above: Dave Bovee with winning ornament.

Below: Some of the gift exchange pieces.



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 quarterly.

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.



Editor
Minnesota Woodturners Assoc.
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Elk River, MN 55330



First Class Mail