

# MINNESOTA WOODTURNERS ASSOCIATION

in association with the American Association of Woodturners

June 2002

## 70 People “Turn Out” for Soren Berger!

May 11<sup>th</sup> was gray and dismal, which made it a perfect day to be

inside learning from New Zealand turner, Soren Berger. Seventy

people were in attendance, including several members from other area clubs: the Zumbro Valley Woodturners of Rochester, and the Coulee Region Woodturners of La Crosse, Wisconsin.



Our set-up for the demo included a big screen, which allowed everyone to watch Soren in “close-up” detail.

Photo by Chuck Bjorgen

Soren has spent 10 hours a day at the lathe, for 26 years, which has given him a thorough understanding of how tools cut wood. During much of his morning session he explained and demonstrated how to obtain the best cut. It is simpler than it often appears because, as Soren pointed out, all cutting tools are basically the same. Once you understand *how* a tool cuts wood you can use almost any tool for turning. Soren used a knife and a pencil to illustrate the process. Hold a pencil, its point facing away from you; lay the knife flat on its side against the pencil; tilt the knife up slightly so the sharp edge is in contact with

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### CLASSIFIED ADS

Turning related ads are free to members. Commercial ads are billed at \$4 per month, per column inch. To place an ad, call Cathy Nicholson (763) 785-1587 or jc.nicholson@usfamily.net. Ads will run one issue unless you call to extend your ad for each additional issue.

Submission deadline for the next issue:

**July 26th**

## President's Corner



How many times have you told someone that you are a woodturner and they said, HUH?, what is a woodturner? I have explained to many people what woodturning is, but I'm not sure if I get the idea across to some of them. Many of you were at Soren Berger's demo on May 11 and heard his story about marketing. He feels that we Americans could do a better job of marketing woodturning. He thinks that with our population, there are enough potential customers to keep thousands of woodturners busy. To illustrate the importance of marketing, Soren told a story about how New Zealanders enjoyed eating Chinese gooseberries for many years, but the growers were not marketing them to other countries because the name wasn't very appealing. So somebody came up with a new name and they began selling them all over the world. The name? Kiwi fruit. Then the nurseries thought it would be a good idea to sell the kiwi fruit vines to places like California and Chile, which was so successful, that the markets for New Zealand kiwi fruit almost disappeared. The NZ growers then developed new types of kiwi fruit, such as the yellow and the hairless kiwi fruit, with which they regained their world market.

So, we need to get the word out about woodturning! Certainly most woodturning publications are for woodturners; but, why shouldn't articles about woodturners and woodturning be published in other magazines, and such, that would appeal to consumers?

While working with the staff of Minneapolis Community & Technical College (MCTC) to set up the Soren Berger meeting, other possibilities for activities between MWA and MCTC have begun to develop. The Director of Continuing Education at MCTC is hoping to develop courses in woodworking as well as other areas over the next year. She said that her particular niche is "Technical Arts" which she views as kind of a mix of the fine arts and the trades. She would like to keep in touch with the MWA to find out what topics our members might be interested in, and also to get ideas for courses from our members.

If any of you have ideas for topics and courses that you would like me to discuss with the school staff, please let me know. Also, if anyone wants to be part of developing proposals with the school, let me know that as well.

We have some demos coming up in the near future and are still looking for some people who would like to participate. The first one is at Rockler's Maplewood on Sunday, June 23 and the next is the following Saturday and Sunday, June 29 & 30 at St. Catherine's College in St. Paul. The Washington County Fair is Friday to Sunday, August 2-4.

If you want to volunteer for any or all of these demos, please contact John Nicholson or Bruce Arones.





Above: Soren explains tool usage to a crowd of 70

Photos by Chuck Bjorgen

Below: Soren demonstrates how light a touch is needed when tools are used properly



(Continued from page 1)

the wood, then push the knife away, peeling the wood off (with the grain)—the bevel behind the sharp edge must ride on the wood! You'll hear most instructors stress that you can't practice too much, but Soren put a slightly different spin on practicing. He did agree that practice is a key, but understanding should come first: *understand* how the tool cuts, and train your brain with practice, practice, practice. Proper tool technique should become as automatic as driving a car, which takes *practice, observation, and experience*.

Soren returned again and again to the pencil sharpening analogy, stating that "all woodturning is a pencil". The same processes that are used in spindle turning can be used in bowl turning, because a bowl is just a spindle turned vertically (the outside of a bowl is a bead, while the inside is a cove). As he turned the first bowl in his demonstration, Soren stressed using a gentle touch, and following the bevel down the wood—don't poke the tool into your wood, or a catch will result. Once your brain understands that, it will do its best to prevent catches!

Sharp tools are, of course, essential, and Soren demonstrated sharpening before we stopped for lunch. The afternoon session con-

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Hollowing a bowl

Photo by Chuck Bjorgen

## Our New Members

## Welcome!

### Please welcome our newest members:

**Jim Mans** from Aitkin, MN  
**Carol Wagner** from Mound, MN  
**John Kempiles** from Hastings, MN  
**Robert Bouvin** from River Falls, WI  
**Daryl Hanson** from Shakopee, MN  
**Robert Jensen** from Fridley, MN  
**Linda Scott** from Excelsior, MN



# Spotlight on John Engstrom

by Chuck Bjorgen

Given John Engstrom's heritage, it's no wonder woodworking has been a major part of his life for the past 83 years. His grandfather ran a sawmill in northern Minnesota and with John's father, owned and operated Engstrom Lumber Company at 10th & Marshall in northeast Minneapolis.

In 1942 John took his interest in wood to the U.S. Navy when he enlisted in the Naval Construction Battalion during WWII. He served with the Seabees as a lumber specialist until 1945 and was involved in the invasion of Guam.



↑ John at his lathe Photo by Chuck Bjorgen

⇐ Display of John's work Photo by John Nicholson

After the war he continued to work in the lumber industry on the west coast and finally returned to Minneapolis where he started a mill-work business in northeast Minneapolis in 1959. Named JJJ Specialties Company, the business was turned over to his sons John, Jr., and Jim, when he retired in 1984.

John and Marcella Engstrom, married for 31 years, are living a comfortable retirement life in their Long Lake home. When they built their house in 1979, John decided to build the balusters for the staircase himself. His hobby as a woodturner began with the purchase of a Craftsman round bed lathe. Forty-eight balusters later the project was finished and he was hooked on woodturning.

The couple's house is testimony to John's woodworking skills as a cabinet maker, carver and turner. He is particularly proud of the





bird's eye pine table he built for their sun room. Marcella's favorite is the dining room table and china cabinet John built. His carvings and turnings are displayed throughout the house.

One thing about being married to John, according to Marcella, is that she always knows where he is. "He's always in the shop," she says, and when she calls him for a meal he always responds, "I'll be up in ten minutes."

John now focuses mostly on wood-turning and does his work on a Jet mini lathe. His brightly lighted basement shop is well organized. A recent bout with pneumonia curtailed his activities a bit but Marcella says the workshop "has been wonderful therapy for him" during his recovery.



John & Marcella

Photo by Chuck Bjorgen

*Pictures, clockwise from the right:*  
 Samples of John's carving - Photo by John Nicholson  
 In John's shop - Photo by John Nicholson  
 Turned eggs - Photo by Chuck Bjorgen  
 Carving in progress - Photo by Chuck Bjorgen



# Reducing Timber Drying Defects by Boiling

By: Steven D. Russell  
Eurowood Werks Woodturning Studio  
The Woodlands, Texas  
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*Article submitted by Chuck Bjorgen, reprinted with permission of the author.*

In the summer of 1999, several of my Internet woodturning friends urged me to begin a comprehensive series of timber drying tests. My goal was to reduce drying defects to the absolute minimum and to discover faster and more efficient ways to accelerate the drying process. This is the first in a series of articles profiling the results of my continuing drying tests with bowls, platters and hollow forms.

This report covers "plain paper bag drying" and pieces that were "boiled, then bagged". Future articles will cover freeze drying, microwave drying, live flame drying, dry heat assisted drying, steaming, vacuum drying, solar kilns and supplemental treatments. These include alcohol immersion baths, mineral spirit immersion baths and Pentacryl immersion baths.

## **Boiling Experience:**

I first started experimenting with boiling approximately three years ago. At the time, I had a supply of green Madrone Burr in my studio. This burr is quite unstable when it is green. Drying defects typically include severe cellular collapse, gross deformation, numerous checks and corrugation. With a supply of the burr in stock, I began to experiment with ways to reduce the drying defects by boiling. The procedure was a tremendous success. From then on, I would periodically boil timbers that were susceptible to significant drying defects. Last summer, I began a large scale-drying test with several local timbers.

## **Paper Bag Drying Experience:**

I have been drying my rough outs in paper bags for almost two and a half years. I have become quite fond of the plain paper bag drying method. It is a significant time saver after a long day roughing out production bowls. It is quick, cheap and I have had good luck with it using a variety of timbers. However, there are certain times when other methods will work better. It really depends on the characteristics of the piece at hand.

## **Test Overview:**

In March of 2000, the first group of four hundred and fifty bowls and platters were removed from drying production. All of these bowls and platters were dried

in paper bags. Some of the rough outs were boiled for one hour and were placed into paper bags without end grain sealer. The balance was placed into the bag straight off the lathe, without end grain sealer. The species included in this analysis: Maple, Walnut, Mulberry, Sycamore, Pecan, Winged Elm, White Ash, Flowering Plum, Bodark, Sweet Gum, Black Ash, Cottonwood and a few others.

## **Subject Pieces:**

I chose to include some marginal pieces in the test (those with branches or rims very near the pith), because I like to "push the envelope". I usually make my chainsaw cuts to clear the pith, any checks and the smallest growth rings. This leaves a bit of turning stock from the center section, so it is not wasted. However, on smaller logs there is precious little room to do this and still get a nice size bowl.

Therefore, I began experimenting with making a single cut, directly through the pith. This offered minimal waste and gave the largest possible bowl blank (unless bandsawn). However, the small growth rings next to the pith are very prone to splitting during traditional air-drying. (The small growth rings in the test pieces that were boiled, remained intact).

Immature or overgrown branches (I call them "branchlets") are another thing that has challenged me over the years. Most of the Sycamore pieces in this test came from trunks that were approximately 30"-32" in diameter. Sometimes, these immature branches will dry intact, but most of the time they do not. They tend to shrink and loosen when they dry and at times, even fall out. Liberal doses of thin CA will help, but even CA will not save them all. (All of the boiled test pieces that contained branchlets dried successfully and remained tight in the timber.)

## **The Procedure:**

An open pot is used for boiling, but you can also use a pressure cooker. A pressure cooker will reduce the overall boil time considerably. The problem is getting a large enough pressure cooker to hold your bowls! Whatever you decide to boil in, use a pot that you can dedicate to timber boiling. The extractives in the tim-

*(Continued on page 11)*



## focal point of our April meeting: Inspirational Work From Two Recent Turning Exhibits

Our meeting, April 9<sup>th</sup>, held at the AAW office, was well attended—46 people, including three who joined that night! Vice President John Nicholson opened the meeting with club business, then turned it over to Mary Lacer for the feature presentation.

Mary gave a slide-show review of the “Nature Takes a Turn” exhibit; an invitational exhibit of woodturnings inspired by the natural world, which appeared at the MN Museum of American Art during last year’s AAW Symposium. There was a wide variety in the artists’ interpretations of nature, and of course, excellent turnings, although many of the pieces had been carved to such an extent that it was difficult to tell what part of the piece had been turned.

The second show reviewed by Mary, was “Wood Turning in North America Since 1930”, which appeared at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts last Fall. In the early 1900s, turnings were primarily simple, utilitarian, Scandinavian-inspired designs. Over the last 70 years, turning has evolved into a more creative art form, with many artists incorporating carving, paint, and other materials in their turned work.

It would be difficult to choose a favorite period or style, because whether you consider primarily the wood, the design, or the turner’s skill, each piece had its own appeal. I don’t know about you, but after seeing so many spectacular pieces, I couldn’t wait to get home and start the lathe!



Show 'n Tell, works by:

1. Plates—sorry, didn’t get the names of the artists.
2. works by: Dody Bemrick, Erwin Nistler (two-spouted vessel), Boyd Annis (tagua nut pitcher), Wilfried Hein (goblet), \*sorry if I missed anyone.
3. Vase by Erwin Nistler.
4. Two lidded boxes by Chuck Bjorgen, and a mushroom box by John Engstrom.
5. Sorry, didn’t get artists’ names for the back two, but in the front is a boxelder bowl by John Engstrom.
6. Pine bowl in progress; Don Wattenhofer is experimenting with black paint.
7. Lidded jewelry box of Maple and Ebony, by Brian Grobe.

Photos by:  
Steve Tiedman

Below: Crowd of 46 enjoys Mary’s presentation

Photo by John Nicholson



# Mark these dates on your Calendar

*Activities you don't want to miss!*

## January 2002

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

## July 2002

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
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## February 2002

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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## August 2002

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## March 2002

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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31						

## September 2002

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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29	30					

## April 2002

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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14	15	16	17	18	19	20
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## October 2002

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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6	7	8	9	10	11	12
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## May 2002

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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5	6	7	8	9	10	11
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## November 2002

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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## June 2002

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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30						

## December 2002

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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15	16	17	18	19	20	21
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29	30	31				

### January

- ♦ **9th**—The board of Directors meeting was held at the AAW Office in Shoreview.
- ♦ **15th**—The January meeting consisted of “How to Photograph Your Work”, and a discussion on Finishing.

- ♦ **18th-20th**—The Woodworking Show was held at RiverCentre in St. Paul. Big thanks to the members who demonstrated over the three days.

### February

- ♦ **13th**—The February meeting was held at Woodcraft, and featured egg turning demonstrations.

### March

- ♦ **6th**—Board of Directors meeting was held at the AAW office in Shoreview.
- ♦ **16th**—Bowl making demonstration(s) were featured at the March meeting.

### April

- ♦ **9th**—A slide show and review of two recent exhibitions: Nature Takes A Turn and Wood Turning Since 1930 was featured at the April meeting. See article page 7.

### May

- ♦ **11th**—Soren Berger, a New Zealand turner, demo'd at our May meeting. See front page article, and pictures from Show 'n Tell on the back page.

### June

- ♦ **23rd**—Demonstrators are needed for the Maplewood Rockler's Woodworking Carnival (Sunday). We'd like to have the lathe turning from about 9:00 AM until around 4:00 PM. Sign up for an hour or two—it'll be fun! If you'd like to



## June (cont.)

participate, contact Bruce Arones or John Nicholson.

- ♦ **26th**—An exhibit of Fred Somers' oil & pastels opens at the Ripple River Gallery. Reception will be held June 29th.

- ♦ **29th - 30th**—Demonstrators are needed for the MN Craft Council's Art Fair at St. Kate's. We'll have two lathes set up, Saturday 10:00AM to 6:00PM, and Sunday 11:00AM to 5:00PM. Come enjoy a great art fair and demo for an hour or two! If you'd like to participate, contact Bruce Arones or John Nicholson.

## August

- ♦ **2nd - 4th**—We need demonstrators for the Washington County Fair! We'll have two lathes set up Friday 5:00 to 9:00PM; and Saturday & Sunday 10:00AM until half past noon. Bring your family to the fair, and demo for a couple hours! If you'd like to participate, contact Bruce Arones or John Nicholson.

- ♦ **7th**—"Time and Place", featuring the work of Jo Wood, a bead artist, and Tina Fung-Holder, a fiber artist, opens at the Ripple River Gallery. Reception to be held August 10th.

- ♦ **17th**—Annual Club Picnic to be held at Brookdale Park. Directions and details will be supplied in the next newsletter; however, you can start now on your entry for the turning challenge, which will be "Animals"—see page 15 for details!

## September

- ♦ **11th**—The board of Directors will meet Wednesday, at 6:30 (the meeting location has yet to be determined). Any member with something they would like brought before the BOD should contact any board member listed in the newsletter, and it will be put on the agenda.

- ♦ Although the date is still to be determined, we're planning a Tool Swap at John Magnussen's. Start setting aside those tools you'd like to get rid of, and prepare to accumulate others!

## October

- ♦ Our membership meeting will consist of a demonstration by well known turner Robert Rosand. The date has yet to be determined—details will be supplied in a future newsletter.

## October (cont.)

- ♦ **2nd**—"The Elements", an inaugural portfolio exhibit by the Northern Printmakers Alliance, will open at the Ripple River Gallery. Reception to be held October 5th.

- ♦ **5th - 6th**—Fall Colors & Apples Open House at the Ripple River Gallery.

## November

- ♦ The date of our membership meeting has yet to be determined, but we're planning on a Bowl Saver demonstration at the Rockler's in Burnsville.

## December

- ♦ **10th**—Our Annual Holiday Party will be held at the AAW office in Shoreview.

- ♦ Plan a trip to the Ripple River Gallery for their Holiday Open House.

### **Directions to Ripple River Gallery:**

**from Deerwood:** Five miles south on Hwy. 6, then 3 miles east of Ruttger's Bay Lake Lodge on County Road 14 to Partridge Avenue (formerly County Line Road), then north 1/4 mile on Partridge Avenue.

**from Aitkin:** South on Hwy. 169 to Bennettville, then 3.2 miles west on County Road 11 to Partridge Ave.

### **Host a Hands-on Session!**

The MWA is in need of volunteers to host hands-on mini-sessions as educational experiences for both new or experienced woodturners. Members hosting a session can set the agenda as their experience and shop space dictates. The session may be hands-on or strictly a demonstration of favorite techniques. You set the topic, number of guests, day, time and duration of any session you host.

Club members who are also members of AAW are automatically covered by the Association's liability insurance. The club must know in advance if you are planning such a session to qualify for this coverage.

Please send a note to Chuck Bjorgen at the following email address if you'd like to volunteer to host a mini-session:

[cbjorgen@citilink.com](mailto:cbjorgen@citilink.com)

# A Fairy in the Making ...

work by Rick Johnson

Those of you who attended our May meeting may have seen the pictures Rick Johnson brought for Show 'n Tell depicting his current project. If, like me, you were intrigued by the pictures and wanted to know more about what Rick's working on, you're in luck!

An MWA member since January 2001, Rick has already spent more than 70 hours on his piece, "Fairy Standing on a Mushroom". She began as a piece of Butternut, about a foot long by 3 ½ inches wide. Rick first turned the lower portion into a mushroom shape, then turned the upper portion into a figurine, using a one bite offset in his one-way chuck. (Rick mentioned that he thought Soren Berger's demo was "great", and was especially impressed with



Soren's use of the chuck to create a turning with an offset of three bites. Rick hopes to become as talented as Soren!)

After he had the mushroom base and his fairy's body shaped, Rick began the hand carving, which he's still working on. One of the tools he uses for carving is the Turbo Carver, which is attached to an air compressor and turns at 25,000 rpm—so fast it can carve an egg without breaking it!

The next step of a "fairy in the making" will be the creation of her wings. Rick will be using the lathe and scroll saw, but will not share his secret for constructing the wings until the piece is completed.

Rick has already sold his Fairy on a Mushroom, and after her completion, plans to continue making wood-art. He expects to incorporate 60% lathe work, 30% carving, and 10% scroll sawing into each of his creations.

Thanks for sharing Rick-- we'll be waiting to hear your secret for creating the wings, and hope to see more examples of your work in the future!





*(Continued from page 6)*

ber will quickly make a mess of your boiling pot and you will not want to use it for anything else.

In the past, I boiled my rough outs with a full rolling boil for the entire boil cycle. I found out that this was not necessary and just wasted propane. Those Cajun cookers can really burn the fuel! Now, I bring the pot up to a boil and place the bowls and platters into the "soup". I boil most of the items for one full hour, per inch of wall thickness, under a low to medium boil (not a simmer, not a full rolling boil). Begin your one-hour timing (after placing the bowls into the pot) when your pot RETURNS to a boil! You must monitor the pot to insure it does not boil dry. Periodically, you will have to replace some of the water lost during the boil. You can also cover the pot with a lid to help retain heat, water and conserve fuel. The boiling water may slosh out and stain some surfaces, so take precautions to insure that you have suitable protection.

Some of the smaller items may require a weight to prevent floating. A brick or a large rock works great for this. In unusual circumstances, I will boil for two hours if the piece warrants more time. However, all of the items in this particular test were boiled for approximately one hour. When I remove the pieces from the pot, I let them air dry overnight to reduce some of the excess water and bag them the next day.

In extreme cases (like green Madrone Burr), put the items into cool water and then bring it up to a boil SLOWLY, over the course of two hours. When the water begins boiling (2 hours from the start), boil for two to three hours. When this cycle is up, (4-5 hours from the start) turn off the burner and let the piece sit in the pot until the next day. Then, remove the items from the water and air-dry them for one day before bagging. However, most timbers do not require this extra effort.

Sometimes, the design will limit the amount of pieces you can put in the boiling pot. For example, semi enclosed bowls, hollow forms or tall roughed out vases etc. However, I load as many pieces as I can fit in the pot. You can load quite a few platters into the pot, because they stack so well.

### **Deciding When to Boil:**

Does the piece include branchlets in the sides/bottom? Is there wild grain on one side and straight grain on the other? Is the rim/bottom of the bowl near the smaller growth rings (closest to the pith)? Is the species well known for gross distortion or cellular collapse during drying? Does the species exhibit

"honeycomb" degrade or severe corrugation when dried? If so, then I would suggest you augment your "plain paper bag" method (rough out placed in the bag without alteration of any kind) with a boiling cycle. Here's why...

### **The Results:**

Of the four hundred and fifty bowls and platters included in the analysis, the largest amount of drying defects were in the plain paper bag test group. The least amount of drying defects were in the boiled, then bagged test group which had little to no drying defects (splits, fissures etc.) and exhibited significantly less gross distortion, warp, twist or other undulations in the test samples. Species with the largest amount of defects present when turned were Sycamore and Pecan, followed by Sweet Gum. For example: Several of the Sycamore and Pecan pieces had branchlets in the sides or bottoms of the test pieces.

Of the twenty bowls in the plain paper bag test group containing these branchlets, sixteen showed splits through the branchlets. Most of the splits were limited to the diameter of the branchlet in twelve bowls. The four remaining bowls had splits that extended well past the branchlet boundaries. All of the branchlets received an initial application of thin CA glue before going in the bag.

Twenty-one bowls and five platters in the boiled, then bagged test group revealed NO splits in any of the branchlets. Gross distortion on the rims of the bowls and platters was significantly less on the boiled pieces as well. They still warped a bit, but the overall rate was significantly less than the plain paper bag tests group.

Other comparisons demonstrated similar results. Twelve Black Ash bowls contained heartwood (wild grain) and sapwood in the same piece and were boiled, then bagged. These showed significantly less gross distortion than the plain paper bag test pieces. All of the Black Ash test pieces that were boiled, then bagged had no splits. Of the ten pieces in the plain paper bag test group, two revealed minor splits.

Bowls turned with rims or tops very close to the pith also exhibited similar results. Of the forty-five bowls and twelve platters in the boiled, then bagged test group, only one bowl contained a split. Of the forty bowls and fifteen platters in the plain paper bag test group, thirty-one of the bowls and twelve of the platters exhibited numerous split defects at the rims.

### **Summary and Advantages of Boiling:**

*(Continued on page 12)*

(Continued from page 3)

sisted of his turning a natural edge bowl, followed by a small, lidded box, with a faceted knob on the lid. The faceting was achieved by taking small chisel cuts around the knob in a staggered pattern.

The next subject Soren covered was vacuum chucking; he presented several different ways to make successful vacuum chucks using materials like cardboard tubing, PVC pipe, duck tape, and hot melt glue!

He concluded his demonstration by turning an off-center scoop handle; we ran out of time before he was able to complete the entire chuck.

We wrapped things up with a wood raffle, and Show 'n Tell, facilitated by Duane Gemelke. *See*

### *the back page for pictures of Show 'n Tell.*

**Note:** If you missed the meeting, the session was taped and is available for rental from the club library.

Pieces turned by Soren Berger during his demo

Photo by John Nicholson



(Continued from page 11)

This testing clearly demonstrates that the addition of a boiling cycle helps to prevent or eliminate many common drying defects. For me, I plan to boil, then bag much more often! I will reserve the plain paper bag method for pieces whose grain character and overall defects are within the demonstrated success profile. Other pieces that exhibit various defects or possible grain/growth ring compromises will get a "hot water bath".

I have also found that boiled timber dries up to twenty-five percent faster than non-boiled timber. Another advantage comes when you sand the piece. Species that tend to clog the sandpaper when traditionally air-dried, offer little to no clogging when they are boiled. In addition, most unwanted guests are eliminated in the boil cycle. This is especially important if you dry your bowls inside your home and you want to stay out of divorce court!

It is clear that boiling does have benefits for marginal, as well as sound pieces. It is my guess that the boiling process relieves or relaxes much of the internal stresses. The area around the branchlets on dry (boiled) pieces was very tight and showed no separation from the surrounding timber. I believe that the combination of the heat and hot water loosens the lignin bond between the cell walls. The internal stresses then relax a bit while boiling and when the piece cools, the lignin bond "cures" (for lack of a better word) in the new relaxed state. Wild grain and other defect prone areas are therefore, brought under control.

Most of the platters in this test were crotch pieces

and the feathers on the boiled pieces were tight and free of checks. By contrast, the plain paper bagged pieces did contain some minor checking in the crotch feather areas. Even very thin platters (3/8" thick) showed very little rim movement in the boiled samples. By contrast, the non-boiled group had some pieces that looked like a potato chip!

#### **Final Thoughts:**

Some turners say that the reason they do not like to boil is the inherent color loss. In my experience, the outer 1/16" or so WILL lose color, but below that, the color is unaffected. I have carefully compared the color in air dried and boiled pieces many times. In my opinion, there is no detectable difference between color, shading or tone values in boiled timber and that of traditionally air-dried timber. If your rough out is only 1/8" or less in thickness, you have a valid point regarding color loss.

However, on a 12" bowl with a wall thickness of one inch, the point is mute in my opinion. Obviously, nothing works in every situation, with every timber. I would encourage you to try boiling some of your problem bowls and platters before bagging them. The process is easy and relatively quick and offers amazing results. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me via e-mail at [benzer@flash.net](mailto:benzer@flash.net). Best wishes in all of your turning endeavors.

*Steven D. Russell is a professional woodturner, demonstrator and turning teacher. His studio Eurowood Werks, is located in The Woodlands, Texas USA. He specializes in bowls, platters and hollowforms with unique surface treatments. He can be reached via Email at: [benzer@flash.net](mailto:benzer@flash.net)*





## Another Hands-on!

Bruce Arones hosted a second hands-on session in his shop on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. Assisted by Jim Jacobs and John Nicholson, Bruce supplied guidance and instruction to nine club members with varied turning experience. As with most turners, the majority of those attending were self-taught, and came hoping to learn "proper" tool technique and tool sharpening.

In attendance were: Andy Brown, Sheila Martin, Don McCay, Paul LaFrance, Dan Hegman, Todd Williams, Irv Swanson, Carol Wagner, and Andrew Cockcroft.

With the exception of Carol Wagner, everyone had some turning experience so, after introductions, everyone began turning or sharpening. Bruce and Jim answered turning questions and provided instruction, while John was kept busy on the grinder ... giving lessons in sharpening with the Wolverine jig.

**"... Up until about a month ago, the only thing I ever turned was a corner ..."**

**- Paul LaFrance**



*Pictures, clockwise from upper left:*

⇒ Bruce Arones gets things started for Sheila Martin, Don McCay, Andrew Cockcroft, Todd Williams, Paul LaFrance, Dan Hegman, and Andy Brown.

⇒ Irv Swanson's daughter, Carol Wagner, who had never turned prior to the hands-on session, does have pottery experience, and believes she "can feel the shape of a bowl". (Looks like she's doing well!)

⇒ Don McCay gets tools ready, while Andrew Cockcroft has started his lathe.

⇒ Andy Brown at the lathe, while Paul LaFrance, Don McCay, and Bruce Arones look on.

⇒ Jim Jacobs and Andrew Cockcroft work on turning technique.

⇒ Todd Williams tries his hand at sharpening with the Wolverine jig.

Photos by John Nicholson





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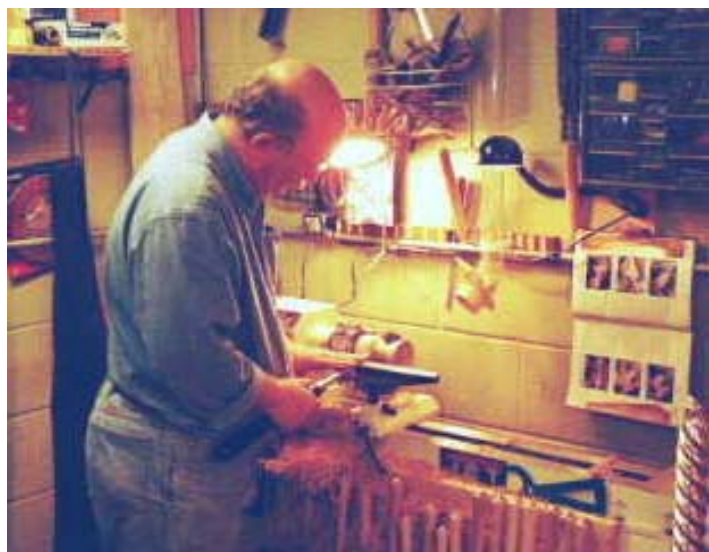
Call Laurel Olson at 320-587-5919

## Opportunity to learn from a professional

Lyle Jamieson will be traveling in our area around the second week of August, 2002. He is available to do a one-on-one, hands-on class for anyone wishing private instruction in your own shop.

Call Lyle to discuss your desires, availability, and costs.

231-947-2348 [www.lylejamieson.com](http://www.lylejamieson.com)



New club member, Don McCay of Hastings, hard at work in his shop learning the craft on his new Jet lathe. Photo by Steve Tiedman

## Animal Challenge!

Animals are the turning challenge for this year's annual club picnic.

Use one, or many, turning techniques to create an animal.

Look at animals around the house, in the zoo, or in the wild, and start thinking ...beads and coves ... segmenting ... off-center ... or maybe turned, cut, then glued back together differently!

**The possibilities are endless!**

Spend the summer months practicing your turning skills while you turn an animal . . . or lots of animals!

## Check this OUT!

The Woodturners video library has increased again. We ordered \$250.00 of new videos, which are now available, including:

- Ray Key 3 video series *The Basic Box*—The basic techniques, from mounting wood in the lathe to the final finish *The Capsule Box*—A stylized box design for you to create with the help of Ray's expert guidance *The Finial Box*—Perfect your techniques by making a graceful traditional finial box.
- Dennis White—The complete 5 video series covering all areas for beginner turning.

## VIDEO LIBRARY

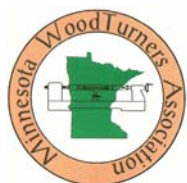
Videos are available for members to check out from the library at the monthly meetings. A \$2.00 per video fee is required at the time of check out.

***Videos are due back to the library at the next meeting. If you are unable to attend that meeting, videos should be returned by mail to the librarian.***



⇒Show 'n Tell items brought to the May meeting. (See article beginning on the front page.)  
 ⇒Show 'n Tell included some pictures of a work-in-progress by Rick Johnson; see article on page 10.

*Photos by Steve Tiedman and John Nicholson, clockwise from above: Steve, Steve, John, Steve, and John.*



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