



Minnesota WoodTurners Association

A LOCAL CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF WOODTURNERS

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A new venue was chosen for the Annual Christmas party. A casual potluck dinner was held in the Roseville Banquet Center. It proved to be a pleasant atmosphere and as usual, the MWA family provided outstanding food and conversation. Traditional spouse gifts, ornament challenge, raffle of items donated by our visiting professional turners, and member gift exchanges were also held.

All in all, it was a grand evening!



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Editor's Note.

Please go to the website for all current, updated scheduled activities.



III. Editorial



Practice, Practice, & More Practice.

A couple of months ago, Jim Jacobs referred me to an article written by a woodturner named Roger Fairfield entitled “Forty Universal Truths. “ Jim suggested that if this were printed in the newsletter it would have relevance to new and old turners alike. After finding and reading the article, I agreed with Jim and have included it in this newsletter. It can be found on page 21.

I have found this paper to be thought provoking and recommend it highly to you. It is a good document to use to evaluate your woodturning skillsets and thought process.

While I have been thinking about all forty truths, I find truth #1 to be quite applicable to me. It states:

There are only three ways to become an accomplished woodturner, and they are practice, practice, and more practice.

As a wood turner for about four years, I can do a lot of things, but my skills aren’t well developed. This is probably due to my tendency to explore new things rather than practice regularly. I love to read woodturning articles, take classes, attend demonstrations, and make one of a kind projects instead of hands on turning of multiple pieces and repeating turning exercises over and over.

In contrast, I have been reminded of fellow members who have been very intentional at developing their skills. For example, Ken Kruizenga has improved with the skew by making hundreds if not thousands of spatulas, and Linda Ferber faithfully sets time in her schedule to turn. I admire this approach and believe them effective.

I have been disappointed with my turning skills development and intend to consciously improve by “practice, practice, and more practice.”

I have found this insight from the article helpful. I hope you get similar benefit. Let me know your experience.



IV. Noteworthy News

A. President's Challenge Now Members' Challenge

It was announced at the Christmas Party that the challenge would continue but that it would no longer be called the President's Challenge, but rather **The Members Challenge**. This change in name reflects the fact that the President will no longer select the type of turning to be crafted, but the members themselves will challenge each other. Starting in January, members are requested to forward to Steve Mages, turning challenges. His selection will be posted by month on the website. The first member challenge is a natural edge bowl with a lid and sample submissions are planned for the Members Challenge at the January 2016 meeting.

IV. Noteworthy News

B. One time Free Members Sharpening Class.

Also announced at the Christmas Party is the fact that everyone who joins the club or is already a member is being provided with a one time **Free** Members sharpening class. This is in recognition of two key issues:

1. A sharp tool is key to woodturning success.
2. Taking classes with MWA is very informative as well as a great way to get to know MWA members. Every member is encouraged to participate in classes and even take the same class several times.



So if you haven't had a sharpening class or haven't taken any MWA classes, please sign up for a free sharpening class. You might learn something, you will meet some fun people who love turning, and the price is right.

IV. Noteworthy News

C. George Wurtzel Update

Lee Tourtelotte forwarded information and photos of our former blind MWA member who has moved to California to teach the blind how to work with wood. It tells a lot more about him and his history than most of us knew.

George Wurtzel has not missed much in his previous life. He qualified as a skier for the United States at the Winter Paralympic Games in Norway. He has toured Japan, conducted his own business for woodwork and has even flown an aircraft. Last year, his wood works were seen for months in the Detroit Museum of Contemporary Art. Hardly a person with two healthy eyes manages to do all those things. George Wurtzel did it completely without sight.

In his early childhood, a hereditary disease took his eyesight, but that never stopped him. Today, he is still working with wood. Currently Wurtzel is refurbishing an old barn in California and converting it into a workshop. But that's not his most important job on the Enchanted Hills Camp for the Blind. There he is most notably a teacher.

He teaches children and teenagers what drove him so successfully through his life. In his own words, it sounds like a simple task: "We use tools, finish things, learn to solve problems and have fun," Wurtzel says. The hard part of that work: "People, even blind people often mistakenly think, the blind cannot use saws, nail guns and welders because it is too dangerous," Wurtzel says. He has worked out a program that helps blind people develop a new attitude. The most important lesson he teaches: "Don't set yourself any limits." George Wurtzel somehow naturally developed this attitude for himself.

In his childhood, when he gradually became blind, he collided on a bike with the postman. The postman asked Wurtzel's mother to lock the bike wheel. She replied, she had already tried that, but young George had found the bolt cutters to use the bike.

"I am blind but that does not define me," Wurtzel says. "Only what I do



makes me who I am." The woodworker wants to awaken this self-esteem also in his students and prove to them: "It is not the blindness that prevents you from getting what you want in life. If the inner attitude is right, the external circumstances don't really matter."

Here are pictures of George, his new shop and some of his first students.



V. Monthly Meetings
A. December Christmas Party
1. Some tables



Aaron and Jessie Timmerman Jim and Denise Jacobs Lee and Lois Tourtelotte
(Good conversation and great company!)



Denny Dahlberg, Jerry Ritter, Ken Gustafson and wife, Richard Messer and wife
(This table had a lot of fun!)





Mike Hunter

Linda Ferber, Tom Farber

Janese Evans

Ed Mielich

(This group insisted that I take their picture!)



Paul and Mary Ann Laos

Dianne and Bob Puetz

Bob Meyer

(Note the outdoor ice rink visible behind them. It was fun to watch the skaters on a lovely night.)



IV. Monthly Meetings

A. December Christmas Party

2. Drawing for Professional Samples

Finished and partially completed samples were donated by professional turners that gave demonstrations this year. These were provided by Nick Cook, Dixie Biggs, and Al Stirt. The samples were raffled off.



Everyone bought some tickets but Tom Farber and Linda Ferber bought many raffle tickets!



A few of the winners were:



Neil Robinette



Duane Hang



Dick Hicks



Linda Ferber





Ginger Robinette picked a special piece for Gar Brown who was unable to attend.

IV. Monthly Meetings

A. December Christmas Party

3. Door prizes for spouses.

Members donated turnings for spouses. Raffle tickets were given to each spouse upon arrival. Judy Mages had the first ticket drawn and had her pick of the entire table.



IV. Monthly Meetings

A. December Christmas Party

4. Last President's Challenge

The challenge was a Christmas ornament, of course. All submissions are shown below.



The following submissions were considered outstanding.



FIRST PLACE

Dan Larson made an ornament in which he used techniques from every professional and MWA class in 2015. Here he explains some of the techniques and how he used them.



SECOND PLACE

Jerry Ritter shows the Chinese ball he made. It is three balls in one



THIRD PLACE

Ken Gustafson holds his entry



FOURTH PLACE

Fred Kogler made a centerpiece for his dining room table entitled "Forest of the Nativity." The trees are made of different woods and finished with the Kwick Krystal method which Fred developed. The trees are topped with Swarovski crystals, Hungarian furnishings, and gold wire. The trees and decorations represent the USA, the star of Bethlehem, the love of God, and the Holy Family.



V. Monthly Meetings

A. December Christmas Party

5. Member Gift Exchange

Members voluntarily participate in this event. Each member submits a special turning with the intention of giving his turning to another member. In return, he will receive a special turning from some other member. Names are put into a hat and selected at random. The moderator will select a name first and then give his turned gift to the first name selected. Then the first name selected will select a second name and give his turned gift to the second name. This continues until all the turned gifts have been selected. All turned gifts are shown below.





Some individual gift exchanges follow.



Jerry Ritter and Greg Just



Duane Gemelke and Denny Dahlberg



VI. Monthly Meetings

A. December Christmas Party

6. Donation in Memory of Joe Ugro

Most of us who are new to MWA don't recognize the name of Joe Ugro until we see his face.



Then we realize he was the friendly, but quiet gentleman who faithfully guarded the door at the front of the Salvation Army and made sure we didn't trip an alarm coming in or going out. Tripping an alarm would summon the police and result in many unpleasanties. We never had such an event on Joe's watch.

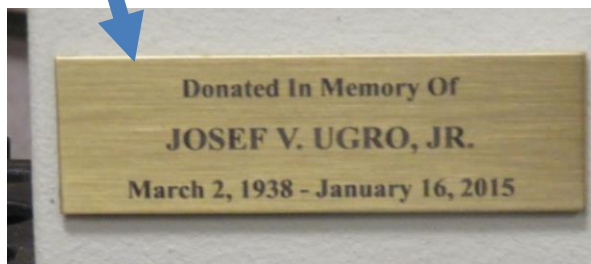
Those who have been members longer remember Joe as a woodturner who had a passion for MWA classes and who was class coordinator for MWA for several years. They also remember Joe as someone who was always ready to help and who always



followed through. Several pieces of Joe's work were demonstrated at the Christmas party and they indicate that Joe was a pretty good turner as well.

After his passing in January of 2015, Joe's family made a donation to the MWA in his memory. The board decided to use this donation to buy four lathes which we will use in our classes for teaching. The current lathes are worn, outdated and badly in need of replacement. In light of Joe's love for education, it was felt that this would be a fitting use of the funds. This announcement was made at the Christmas party by Neil Robinette. Neil also told of Joe's history, and formally thanked Joe's family who were in attendance. A lathe, a memorial plaque to be placed on each lathe, and Joe's family are shown below.

Plaque





Son Joe Ugro

Daughter Dianna Christian

Wife Gail

In keeping with the family tradition, Joe's son recently joined the MWA.

The new lathes were used in the December second ornament class. All users agreed that these were a tremendous improvement from the old models, and deeply appreciated this gift. The equipment will be actively used in a way Joe would have approved.

VI. MWA Classes

A. Second Ornament Class

A second ornament class was held in the middle of December. Students were Tom Buck, Dick Zawacki, Roger Erickson, Dick Hicks, and Pete Bryant. The class was taught by Mike Hunter and Bob Meyer.





Bob demonstrates the art of turning a finial for the ornament.



Mike demonstrates the hollowing process for the ornament globe to Dan Larson, Roger Erickson, and John Buck





Dan Larson and Dick Hicks show their finished globe ornaments.



Jam Chuck by Dick Hicks to make final cuts on globe

Pete Bryant makes first attempt at hollowing very carefully. Photo complements of Dan Larson.



IV. Forty Universal Truths by Roger Fairfield

This paper by Roger Fairfield has been published in many sources including some MWA newsletters in 2003. This time the material was taken from the Central Illinois Woodturners Newsletter of January 2011. It was published in tribute to Roger Fairfield following his death in 2010.

These Truths I hold as self-evident. These are the things about woodturning that I have learned to accept without question. They are above argument. I have no doubt that many more can be added as I become more proficient in the art/craft of woodturning. I also have no doubt that there will be arguments on the merits of some of those that I have included. There is no importance in their listed order; I wrote them down as I thought of them.

1. There are only three ways to become an accomplished woodturner, and they are practice, practice, and more practice.

That practice will be easier with a copy of Keith Rowley's book, *"Woodturning: A Foundation Course"*, and learning to do everything that he discusses. Follow that with his book, *"Keith Rowley's Woodturning Projects"*, and make all 20 of them. If you do these things, you will be well on your way to becoming a woodturner. There are comparable books and videos, but I happen to like these.

2. It takes years to become an expert woodturner. Standing in front of a lathe, all day, every day, for 20 years would be a good start. Others may be faster than that, but most of the real experts have a lot of gray hair.

3. Woodturning is both an "art" and a "craft." The "craft" is in how the wood is cut, the tools we use, and how we use them. The shape of the finished piece is the "art." Learning about other art forms (pottery, glass, sculpture, etc.) will improve the "art" of our woodturning.

4. Continue being challenged to learn new things. One year's experience repeated ten (10) times is not the same as having ten (10) years of experience.

5. Never lose sight of the customer/user. Anything that is intended to be used must be usable.

6. You can't cut wood with dull tools. The corollary is that the sharper the tool is, the better it cuts.



7. Consistency is more important than the actual profile of the cutting tool. Otherwise we are using a different tool after every trip to the grinder. It doesn't matter what the grinding wheel is made of, how fast it spins, whether the tool is held in a jig or freehand, or if we use a belt sander or a rock, so long as the same edge profile is repeated every time we use it.

8. The speed of the grinding wheel doesn't matter. They all remove metal. The faster wheel removes it faster. There is some justification for the new woodturner to use the slower wheel.

9. It doesn't matter what color grinding wheel is used. It can be pink, gray, white, violet, blue, green, or whatever color. It can be made from Aluminum Oxide, Silicone Carbide, sandpaper, or a rock. They all remove metal. Some may be softer and require dressing more often to make them flat again. Others, like the hard gray wheels that came with grinder, will require dressing more often to remove the glaze of embedded metal and "sharpen" the wheel.

10. The color of the grinding wheel has no meaning. While all white wheels may be Aluminum Oxide, not all Aluminum Oxide wheels are white. They also come in a pale green, violet, pink, blue, and yellow, depending on the manufacturer and the dyes they use in the binders that hold the abrasive particles together.

11. There is no truth to the myth that the gray wheels will damage the steel.

12. A cheap grinding wheel is a cheap grinding wheel, whatever color it is. Good quality is more expensive. Lacking any other knowledge and specifications, the price is a good indicator of quality.

13. A 46-grit is a coarse wheel, and a 120-grit is a fine wheel. Take your pick for those in between. There isn't enough difference between 60, 80, and 100-grit to worry about it.

14. Getting HSS to turn blue or even red-hot while grinding is not a problem. But, if you do, let it cool in the air. Don't shock it by submerging it in cold water because that can start micro-cracks in the thin cutting edge.

15. Getting carbon steel hot enough to turn blue can be a problem. That temperature allows the Carbon to move around in the steel and it loses its temper. All is not lost when this happens, just get it hot again, immediately dip it in cold water, and then grind away the blue steel, keeping it cool this time with frequent dipping in cold water.

16. Real woodturners do use scrapers.



17. You can turn an entire bowl or anything else, inside and out, with a scraper. It just takes longer and there is no reason for the tooled finish to be any different from that of a gouge.

18. Any wood can be turned. Some is just easier than others. On a scale of 1-to-10, I have yet to find a "Zero", but I have had some that came close.

19. Don't turn bad wood. There is good wood and there is bad wood. Experience will teach us the difference. And, a high purchase price is not a measure of wood quality.

20. Some wood will crack, no matter what you do with it. Neither soap, nor bags, nor magic potions, or prayer will save it. And you will never know until after it happens.

21. Cracking in wood started long before we turn it in the lathe. How it was handled before is more important than what we do with it after it is turned.

22. There are only two kinds of people. Those who are allergic to Cocobolo and those that will be.

23. Measuring the height of the tool-rest *is not* important. Riding the bevel of the gouge on the wood *is* important. The tool rest has to be at whatever height makes that happen while the handle of the tool is held in a comfortable working position.

24. Learning to use a skew chisel will teach us how wood is cut, and that will make all other turning tools easier to use.

25. The walls of bowls and other vessels will become thinner and more uniform with practice, automatically. We will know when we are getting there because we "just know it" and can hear it. Cracking and other drying problems will start to disappear at the same time. Some folks will never get there, and that's OK too. There is nothing wrong with using calipers.

26. Don't make turning tools from old files, even if you understand the heat treatment of steel, know how to do it, and have the facilities for it. Every groove on the surface of the file is a stress concentration waiting to crack. Many will have already started to propagate microscopic cracks through the file. No amount of grinding the grooves away, annealing or tempering the file will weld these cracks back together.

27. Sanding is important. No finish can be any better than the surface that it is applied to.

28. The finish will accent your mistakes and torn grain. It will not hide them.



29. Sanding and finishing takes at least as long as the turning, and often longer. If it doesn't, you are either very good and don't need to be reading this, or your standards are too low.

30. Wood cannot be made into something that it is not: waterproof. If you want waterproof, consider making the vessel from glass or porcelain.

31. Before using Mineral Oil, keep the customer in mind (again). Ask yourself if you would want to use a salad bowl that was covered with the same thing that your mother gave you as a laxative when you were a child.

32. That didn't do it? If you wouldn't put motor oil on the wood, why would you want to use Mineral Oil? They are the same thing. (This one always gets an argument!)

33. There is no such thing as a "food-safe" finish. Somewhere, sometime, someone will be found who has an allergy to anything that we can put on the surface of a piece of wood, or to the wood itself. If it considered as being safe, it's because that person hasn't been found, yet.

34. Woodturners and chemical companies are the only people who believe that, "All finishes are food-safe after the solvents have evaporated." Try explaining this logic to a generation of folks who believe that their health has suffered from "Better living through chemistry."

35. If the bottom isn't finished, the piece isn't finished. And, a flat surface from a belt sander, or a glued-on piece of felt, is not a finish.

36. If it isn't signed, it isn't finished. If you don't think enough of it to sign your name, nobody else will think much of it either.

37. Always wear face and eye protection, even while sanding. You never know when a piece of wood will explode, and the heat from sanding can be enough to do it.

38. Do not sand without covering your nose and mouth with a respirator or air filter that is approved for fine wood dust. A cheap paper mask is neither. If you think that this isn't important, come back in 20 years and tell me again that it isn't.

39. I have never met a woodturner that I didn't like. There have been a few that have pushed that statement to the limit, but in the end, they are all good folks.

40. Never do anything that you wouldn't want to read about in the next morning's newspaper.

