July 2015 - Volume 4: Issue 4 Features

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Video: Tip from Theo Haralampou. Enhancing Your Enjoyment of Woodturning Using a Lady Finger Spindle Gouge.

Video: Tips For Bleaching Wood by Joe Fleming

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**Woodturning FUNdamentals**
a bimonthly publication by the American Association of Woodturners
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**A Note About Safety:**
An accident at the lathe can happen with blinding suddenness. Respiratory and other problems can build over years. Take precautions when you turn. Safety guidelines are published online at [http://www.woodturner.org/?page=Safety](http://www.woodturner.org/?page=Safety)

Following them will help you continue to enjoy woodturning.

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Cover photo: Janice Levi
A Note from the Executive Director

In this preview edition of *Woodturning FUNdamentals*, we are happy to offer selected articles of the next edition which includes projects, tips, videos, and information for those of you who are looking to advance basic skills or are new to woodturning. This issue offers four projects, two videos, and plenty of tips to keep you turning! If you're looking for even more, I’d like to remind you that past issues of *Woodturning FUNdamentals* are available for download or viewing at http://www.woodturner.org/default.asp?page=FUNdamentalsRes.

The AAW continues to identify opportunities to better meet the needs of our members through education, information, inspiration, and community. I'd like to tell you about two exciting new services AAW has recently launched based on recommendations from the AAW’s Chapter Relations Initiative (CRI) work group.

**AAW Connects**

AAW Connects is a one-stop, web-based map tool that “connects” users with information about international woodturning schools, woodturning organizations, exhibitions, and symposia, as well as AAW chapters, chapter events, and demonstrations. AAW Connects was built using an easy-to-navigate Google Maps application that enables users to click on an area of the globe, zoom in, and obtain relevant information for specific woodturning venues, such as website address, contact information, dates, times, etc. So far, the response is very favorable.

This visual tool can help woodturners around the globe connect with turning resources in their regions. Accuracy of source data is a priority, and we need to rely a great deal on AAW chapters and others in the greater woodturning community to help ensure the data is accurate and complete.

You can try out the new AAW Connects map tool at http://www.woodturner.org/?page=AAWConnectsMap
AAW Woodturning Marketspace
Woodturning Marketspace is an online advertiser hub that consolidates all AAW’s business supporter logos onto one webpage list. The logos are hot-linked and users may “click-through” directly to advertiser websites, which makes finding information about woodturning products and services easy. What’s more, AAW’s business partners can extend offers and discounts exclusively to members through Woodturning Marketspace. Over the coming months, members will see a growing range of special deals featured on the Woodturning Marketspace. The Marketspace is intended to make locating information about woodturning-related businesses and services a simple process. Additionally, it provides a means for woodturning suppliers to connect with customers, as well as extend discounts not otherwise available elsewhere to AAW members. Take a look the Woodturning Marketspace at http://www.woodturner.org/?page=Marketspace2

As always, we welcome your questions, tips, and projects!
Sharing your woodturning experiences, issues, and solutions through Woodturning FUNdamentals is a great way to help everyone! Please send your questions, tips, and projects to us at linda@woodturner.org.

I welcome your feedback.

Respectfully,
Phil McDonald
Executive Director
phil@woodturner.org
Breathing is Good

Happily, we usually do it automatically and mostly don’t have to think about it. This article begins a discussion of issues woodturners should consider if they like not thinking about breathing.

The tiniest particles of wood dust cause the biggest problems. They get into the tiniest places in your body (like your mucous membranes and sinuses and the little folds on the inside surface of your lungs), and they may stay there a long time, maybe for as long as you live.

And sometimes those tiniest dust particles really annoy the cells in those tiniest places, and when those cells get annoyed, they may take it out on bigger parts of your body. If that happens, it may become very difficult for you to breathe. Some kinds of wood dust can even cause cancer.

Now here’s the hard part. If a woodturner started sneezing, hacking, coughing, and sputtering for breath every time the turner got tiny particles of wood dust where they don’t belong, I wouldn’t have to write this article. I wouldn’t have to, because we would all know immediately whenever we screwed up and got tiny bits of dust in the wrong places, and we wouldn’t need some dumb safety officer to write us an article about it.

But we don’t start sneezing, hacking, coughing, and sputtering for breath every time we get tiny particles of dust in the wrong places, so we don’t always know when it happens. In fact, we can get a lot of dust in the wrong places and never notice... at first.

The dust that gets in those places can be just like the neighbor’s dog poop on your lawn. The first few times you may not even notice. Then you notice, and say to yourself “Dogs will be dogs.” But about the tenth time you step in it, walk into the house, and track it on the carpet, you get hopping mad. You have become “sensitized” to the dog poop.

Wood dust can sensitize cells, too. Repeated exposure to bits of dust that didn’t formerly cause a problem all of a sudden can make your cells hopping mad. And those cells can’t just go outside, scoop up the poop, and strangle the dog (or his owner). They just have to sit inside your body, unable to get rid of the dust that has already come in, unable to stop more from coming in, and getting angrier and angrier.

If that happens to you, you will start having to think about your breathing, and that won’t be fun. And that can happen to you, even though you have never had a problem with wood dust before. Repeated exposure can sensitize you.

Bear this one thing in mind: The dust from that local walnut we all love to turn is particularly toxic.

~Harvey Rogers, Portland, Oregon
Safety Officer, Cascade Woodturners Association
FREE SOURCES FOR WOOD

Wood Budget?

When I took up woodturning as a hobby/business, I considered a budget for wood. After spending many hours researching suppliers and pricing on the Internet, I discovered that I would quickly run out of money purchasing the wood I wanted to use for the products I wanted to turn. I knew I would have to find alternative sources for my wood.

I realized that as I was “on the road” for my business meetings, I was passing several possible sources for wood. I also started to notice all the yards that had wood just sitting near the road with a “Free” or “Please Take” sign. I knew that if I turned wet wood, it would probably crack and warp as it dried, but if it was free ... **WHY NOT TRY IT?**

I am happy to say that I have paid only $40 for all the wood I have used in my bowl turnings over the course of three years. I am also air drying enough wood for over 100 bowls (all free). I have collected several species of wood available in my area just by asking businesses to allow me to search through scraps and stopping along the road, picking up random pieces of wood from strangers. I have found beautiful cherry, curly maple, apple (my favorite), chestnut, ambrosia maple, sycamore, walnut, honey locust, black locust, black cherry, pear, holly, and Kentucky Coffee tree. Here is a list of my favorite places to source FREE wood. I hope this works for you!

1. **Pay attention to yards.** In one week, I counted 42 yards with free wood available. Stop, pick it up, and go on your way. I’ll usually stop if there is a sign next to the wood and look for crotch pieces or burl. Since I have lots of wood already drying, I’m now more selective on what I pick up and bring home with me. If I don’t see a sign but see an interesting piece, I’ll knock on the door,
explain that I can use the wood to turn bowls, and see if the wood is available. Sometimes it is there for the taking and sometimes they want you to purchase the wood. If I start to walk away, they'll usually call me back and let me take a piece or two if I want. If they are local, I may offer to make a bowl for three or four pieces of wood.

2. **Make friends with an arborist.** Maybe there are no professional arborists in your area? Make friends with ANYONE who cuts down trees. Perhaps it is a local landscaper or a tree removal business. I am lucky to know three different arborists and two tree removal companies. Each one has a list of wood I am interested in seeing. I routinely get calls about cherry, walnut, and ornamental species. They'll call me when they are on site and it saves them money if I take a few pieces, since they don’t have to haul it away and dispose of it. My favorite tree removal company just drops off pieces he thinks I’ll like. I’ve received several burl and crotch pieces on my front porch or driveway. Pay them back by making a bowl and they’ll be friends for a long time.

3. **Craigslist!** I found a 600-lb piece of maple in a yard ten minutes from my house. They cut the tree down to make room for a garden and offered the large piece free. I called them up, took my chainsaw over, and cut it into several turning-sized hunks. I was amazed that EVERY piece is curly. They produced some of my favorite bowls.

4. **Local Compost Facilities.** My community is very lucky. We have a community compost drop-off facility where we can dispose of yard waste and purchase compost at a discount. Our facility allows wood drop-off up to 6’ long and 13” in diameter. I will visit the facility once or twice each month, disposing my yard waste and scoping out the wood other community members took there. I found several ornamental trunks and fruit tree branches that can be used for smaller items.

5. **Lumber Mills, Saw Mills, Lumber Yards.** I discovered there were four lumber/saw mills around me. I stopped into the closest one and started talking about how they operate and discovered they have a scrap yard where they regularly throw out pieces they can’t use. These items are perfect for pen blanks, duck calls, bottle stoppers, and other smaller items. There are times where the defects we bowl turning love (knots, staining, spalting) are found in
abundance, but are not desirable for the lumber/saw mills. They now save unique woods for me and I make regular stops once a month.

6. **Cabinet Companies.** I wasn’t expecting anything from the first cabinet builder I visited. I did not know what they did with their scraps, if they even had anything worth taking, or if they would ask me to purchase the wood to recoup their costs. I WAS AMAZED. Not only did we talk for 45 minutes about woodworking, but I was asked if I wanted a tour of their facility.

It was amazing to see how modern technology merged with hand tools to produce these beautiful cabinets. I learned they focused on maple and cherry cabinets and had a scrap dumpster behind the building. I asked to go through the dumpster not expecting to find much, as I imagined they precisely cut each item to minimize the wood waste. I walked away with two beer-case-sized boxes of dried cherry wood perfect for segmented bowls. As I was leaving, the owner of the company stopped me. I felt I was going to be in trouble because he didn’t know what I was doing. Would I have to purchase what I was taking? I was in shock when he said, “I heard about you in my office and I have something for you. Bring your car around the back.” I quickly took my cherry wood to my car and drove around the back, where the owner was waiting with approximately 300 lbs of Brazilian Rosewood scraps from a project they did nearly 30 years ago. I remember the brief conversation clearly.

**Me:** “Wow. That’s some really nice wood. How much do you want for it?”

**Him:** “It’s yours. I had it in the warehouse for 30 years waiting to find a use for it. We have no use for it, but I didn’t want to burn it. You are the first person who stopped by, asking to use our scraps for something. Make something nice.”
As you can imagine, I was shell-shocked. The pieces vary in width and thickness from veneer strips to 2”x2”x10’. He helped load all the wood into my car. We talked for another 45 minutes about turning and cabinet-making. He ended up closing shop and selling the property a few months later.

I visit four cabinet companies on a regular basis. Most work with oak, cherry, maple, and walnut. One company works with a larger variety of wood including mahogany, teak, and exotics. There isn’t as much scrap available in the exotics, but I can find some small items for inlays (or at least, that’s how I hope to use them). If I see a cabinet manufacturer anywhere I’m on the road, and it’s 9am-5pm, I’ll usually stop. I always have a box in my trunk. These scrap pieces are perfect for segmented bowls and are already kiln-dried and sanded smooth. All I have to do is cut them to size and glue them into rings. Be prepared to climb into a dumpster and get a little dirty. The pay-offs can be worth it!

7. **Tell Others What You Do!** I have lots of friends on Facebook and post photos of my bowls often. Several people will call me if they know a neighbor is cutting down a tree or ask what kind of wood I’m looking to turn. I was able to obtain some Flaming Box Elder and other non-common species through simple communication. My business clients know about my woodturning and hold wood for me when I am in the area and help spread the word for me.
There was only one time I purchased wood specifically for my woodturning hobby/business. While perusing Craigslist, I saw an interesting Black Cherry burl for sale. It was about 30 minutes away and I offered less than what they were asking. Burl is a tricky thing to buy without seeing the actual item. The inside could be rotten. The buyer could be lying. In this case, the buyer accepted my lower offer and I drove over to pick it up. I didn’t even have to talk with him. He put the burl on his back porch, I left the money in an envelope under his plant. It felt illegal, but the burl was heavy. I left, thinking I struck gold.

Now that I have sold enough bowls to create a wood-purchasing account, I can justify buying wood under certain circumstances for specific items I want to create. Here is when I would consider purchasing wood.

1. **When the wood is not available free anywhere.** I know I won’t find certain exotics available in my area. I know I may need sizes not readily available. Those items will need to be purchased and I’m OK with it. I’m starting to run out of free walnut sources.

2. **When I need a certain quantity and/or quality.** My 600-lb curly maple find might not happen again for years. Ambrosia maple happens less than I want. I was lucky to find 300 lbs of apple, but it cracks like crazy, so most of it may be waste. I’ve been lucky to have a college fraternity brother with a fallen cherry tree of amazing quality. I can go get as much as I want any time I want. I wish all my sources would have the same quality of wood available on a consistent basis, but as we all know ... wood is not the same from all parts of the tree. If it was, life wouldn’t be as much fun.

3. **If I need it RIGHT NOW.** We have lots of sycamore around where I live. I’ve found only three pieces of it in three years. I would love to find more because I have someone who wants me to make them a dyed-sycamore bowl set. I patiently drive and wait. I have the chainsaw in my trunk. It’s too bad chainsaws don’t have silencers. Many of these sycamore trees are on farms far away from the house. It gets very dark around here ...

Finding free wood is not something you can rely on 100% of the time. It depends on the time of year, weather (storms are great!), and location. I’d love to live in the south and have access to pecan, mesquite, and other species I haven’t turned yet. There are
times when you don’t run into anything unusual and it’s the same wood over and over. I don’t turn oak, pine, or poplar, but it is in abundance around me. I’m starting to get tired of non-curly, plain ole maple.

I’d encourage everyone to open your eyes as you drive around. Go to http://maps.google.com and put in your address. Search for “cabinet” and see how many cabinet manufacturers are close to you. There will probably be companies you didn’t know existed. Search for “saw mill” or “lumber” and find other businesses. Take a day trip and knock on some doors. You never know what you’ll find. Maybe you’ll find some business owner just waiting to unload his hidden batch of exotic scraps to the right person! Good luck!

~ David Schell
Mount Joy, Pennsylvania

Dave Schell is a web designer by day, and a bowl turner by night and on weekends.

- Email Dave with questions at dave@imakewebpages.com
- View his work online at his facebook page https://www.facebook.com/imakewebpages
SAFETY TIP

Make yours a ladder of success

Spring means maintenance, and maybe a need for a ladder. For each use, one should consider the type, length, rating and material of the ladder to be used for the job at hand. In preparation to making a climb, setting up your ladder is a major step.

1. Chose a safe location.
2. Prepare a level footing. Set the ladder at the correct angle (75 degrees). A too steep angle will endanger the climber to the ladder tipping over.
3. Ladder should extend at least 3’ above upper level (extension ladders).
4. Secure the bottom. Make sure both feet are in contact with the ground.
5. Secure the top. No sliding around.

Maintain the area clear of debris.

Do not:
1. use a step ladder in its closed position.
2. use it from the wrong side.
3. straddle it or sit on top.
4. walk it to move while you are on the ladder.

Climbing a ladder
1. Face the ladder going both up and down.
2. Keep your weight centered
3. Use 3 point contact – 2 feet and a hand; 2 hands and a foot
4. Carry no loads (only small tools on a belt)
5. Only one person on ladder at a time
6. Avoid exerting force while on ladder which could cause the ladder to shift.
7. Be very aware getting on and off, especially at the top.
8. Do not stand on top 3 rungs.

All above adapted from National Institute for Occupational Safety & Health -2005.
I have been guilty of skipping steps five through eight of set up, step one of do not’s and four and six of climbing.

I hope you have a better record.

~ Vern West, Bremerton, Washington
AAW MEMBERSHIP

Membership

Turn to the AAW for inspiration, education, and information about woodturning tools, techniques, projects, safety, and more.

More than $120 of educational resources included with each $55 general membership.

American Woodturner journal, six issues annually, each packed with woodturning-related articles, projects, photos, tips, techniques, and news. Plus, a comprehensive library of all past issues dating back to 1996, with a searchable, online index. Newsstand price: $53.70

Woodturning FUNdamentals six digital issues annually, filled with projects, tips, videos, and information on tools and techniques to build basic skills. Non-member price: $26.94

Safety for Woodturners this 64-page digital book will help you build strong skills at the lathe while helping you learn safe woodturning practices. Non-member price for printed book: $14.95

Let's Go for a Spin a digital seven part lesson plan for instructors designed to provide beginning and advanced students with a wellrounded set of turning skills. Non-member price: $87.70

Community Being part of a dynamic community of more than 15,000 enthusiasts worldwide: Priceless

You’ll want to join or renew your membership today so that you don’t miss a single issue of American Woodturner or Woodturning FUNdamentals!