LOCAL CHAPTER AAW

March 2024 Volume 28 Issue 3

A CALIFORNIA NONPROFIT CORPORATION

MIKE MAHONEY

Bowls, Urns and Platters Saturday, March 9th 8:30 AM-4:00 PM

Mike Mahoney has been a professional woodturner since 1994. Saturday's **in-person** demonstration covers bowl coring, platters, and an urn. Mike's bowls have been featured in galleries across the United States. His work is sought after by collectors all over the world. Mike has demonstrated and taught for wood turning clubs, craft schools, and symposia. He has traveled the world to discuss and demonstrate his craft and is considered an authority in woodturning. Mike has a series of 4 instructional videos for the beginner to the experienced wood turner. Mike produces Mahoney oil which can be purchased directly or through woodworking stores.

Artist Statement:

"I am passionate about my craft and the American Craft movement. I am dedicated to producing quality craft and educating the public about woodturning. My wood comes from urban sources (tree trimmers and local cities). I produce all my work on the lathe without any embellishments after the fact, creating a very traditional feel with contemporary ideas. I want my work to be attractive as well as useful. For my work to be admired is one thing, but for my work to be used fulfills my purpose as a craftsman."

















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Club Meetings

Club Meetings-

Meetings are generally held on the 2nd Saturday of each month. We meet in person. Meetings are held at the PHEC Woodturning Center at 1 Santa Barbara Road, Pleasant Hill, CA. The doors open at 8:30am. The meeting start time is 9:00am. See our website at bayareawoodturners.org for more information.

Guests are welcome to attend in person by request to: membership@bayareawoodturners.org.

See <u>bayareawoodturners.org</u> for club information.

BAWA Officers Meeting -

The Association's officer meetings are held each month. Contact Steve Griswold at: president@bayareawoodturners.org for more information.

2024 Event Schedule	
March 9th	Mike Mahoney Bowls, Platters 8:30 AM-4:00 PM
April 13th	Kristin LeVier Power Carving, Bent Wood Turning 8:30 AM-4:00 PM
May 11th	Carlos Angulo Natural Edged Bowl 8:30 AM-12:00 PM
June 8th	Sally Ault Ornament, Box 8:30 AM-4:00 PM

The Bay Area Woodturners Association is a local chapter of the American Association of Woodturners. Our purpose is to provide a meeting place for local turners to share ideas and techniques and to educate the general public regarding the art of turning. The Association usually meets the second Saturday of each month. The Association periodically sponsors exhibitions and demonstrations by local and internationally known turners.

President Steve Griswold

president@bayareawoodturners.org

Vice President Bob Ackley vp@bayareawoodturners.org

Secretary Richard Dietrich

secretary@bayareawoodturners.org

Treasurer Rick Nelson

treasurer@bayareawoodturners.org

Member at Large Larry Batti

memberatlarge@bayareawoodturners.org

President Emeritus
Jim Rodgers
Jlrodgers236@comcast.net

Pleasant Hill Adult Education (PHAE) Liaison Jim Rodgers Jlrodgers236@comcast.net

Librarian

Cindy Navarro librarian@bayareawoodturners.org

Membership Anna Duncan membership@bayareawoodturners.org

Store Manager Richard Kalish

storemanager@bayareawoodturners.org

Webmaster Steve Griswold

 $\underline{webmaster@bayareawoodturners.org}$

Newsletter Editor Louie Silva

newslettereditor@bayareawoodturners.org

Video Coordinator
Dave Bentley, Larry Batti & Ed Steffenger
videocoordinator@bayareawoodturners.org

Woodmeister
Tony Wolcott, John Cobb, Steve Griswold
woodmeister@bayareawoodturners.org

woodmeister@bayareawoodturners.org

Educational Coordinator

 $\underline{educational coordinator@bayareawood turners.org}$

Pro Demonstrator Liaison Jim Campbell vp@bayareawoodturners.org

Staff Photographer Rick Dietrich

Jan Blumer

 $\underline{Photographer@bayareawoodturners.org}$

Campolindo turning program 2023-24.

This was an unusual group with a couple of beginners and three who had taken the class last year. The newbies had the usual projects; I created an advanced class for the returnees, with epoxy insets and paint decorated.

Thanks to Larry Batti for helping me out.

David Fleisig













BAWA Classified Ads



We want members and others with items to sell or trade, services to render or if you're just looking to find a specific item from fellow BAWA members.

Please send ads to Louie Silva at: newslettereditor@bayareawoodturners.org

You can't beat the price...FREE!!

Rockler Helps BAWA Members

BAWA members receive a 10% discount when purchasing directly at the Concord Rockler Store at:

 $\underline{http://www.rockler.com/retail/stores/ca/concord-store.}$

Mention your BAWA membership when checking out, to receive your discount. Rockler also donates part of the proceeds back to the club which help support our Holiday Party raffle.



Kristen Levier, Artist April Demonstrator

Artist Statement:

I create minimalist contemporary sculpture inspired by my deep fascination with the natural world, and my mission as an artist is to tell a story through work at the intersection of art and science. I'm driven to make art that excites curiosity and connects us to the extraordinary, strange beauty of the world around us.



The two decades I spent as a research molecular biologist allowed me to explore the complexity of our world, and I continue to view my surroundings through the eyes of a scientist. The structure of a leaf or the movement of a bacterium can be astonishingly beautiful, and I sculpt with the aim of illuminating the subtle and the tiny.

Through my work I hope to deliver scientific content viscerally to encourage curiosity and a desire to look more closely at the smallest details of the fantastically rich and beautiful world around us.













BAWA NEWS & NOTES



Photos from last meeting



Steve Griswold



Bob Ackley & Steve



Cindy Navarro



Anna Duncan



Rick Kalish



Bob Nolan

Show & Tell February





Photos by David Bentley & Ed Steffinger



























Continued on following page

Show & Tell February































Drilling Jig

Michael Hamilton-Clark

Recently, I wanted to make a clock with separate barometer and temperature gauges, all mounted in a slice of natural-edged maple burl. I would need to drill three recesses 2½" (6cm) in diameter and ¾" (19mm) deep—clearly a job for Forstner bits. I could not use my post drill, as its table did not provide enough maneuvering room nor a speed slow enough for a drill bit of this size. I realized that if I could make a wood-holding jig to fit on the lathe bed, I could drive the drill chuck in the headstock, which offers a turning speed as low as 100 rpm.

The jig (Photo 1) offers adjustable height, holds the wood securely, and slides along the bed ways with stabilizing support from the tailstock. Using the jig and tailstock together, the wood is pushed by hand into the spinning drill bit.

Construction and use

To make the jig, I used aluminum angle, as it is easy to cut and drill. In order for it to slide easily yet provide lateral guidance, the top slide plate should be sized for a cozy but non-binding fit in the gap between the bed ways. Likewise, the bottom slide plate must slide easily but without excess play under the gap in the bed ways (Photo 2). Center the clamping bolt and wing nut through both slide plates and base crosspiece. Tighten the wing nut so that the jig will be restrained but still slide smoothly along the lathe bed.

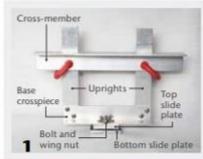
The tailstock quill supports the back of the workpiece. This may require winding the quill in or out to just make contact with the wood. Depending on the shape of the front of your tailstock, a wood spacer might be needed to fill the gap at the toe.

The workpiece sits upon the crossmember, which is clamped at the required height to the uprights. Ensure that the cross-member is level, and clamp the workpiece to the uprights as well (*Photo 3*).

Start drilling with a small Forstner bit and increase the bit sizes with successive passes up to your final drilling diameter (*Photo* 4). The lathe speed should be around 150 rpm or slower if smoke/ burning occurs.

You might wonder, why not lock the tailstock to the bed and advance the quill? Although the quill is in line with the drill bit, advancing it would tend to cause the jig to tilt forward, which could cause the bit to jam in the wood. By pushing the entire tailstock forward, the jig will remain vertical.

Michael Hamilton-Clark, a retired civil engineer, has been turning wood for fourteen years. He lives in the Fraser Valley, British Columbia, and uses mostly locally available woods from felled trees, branch trimmings, and mill offcuts to produce a variety of items. He is a member of the Fraser Valley Woodturners Guild, the AAW, and the Craft Council of British Columbia. For more, visit alberystudiowoodturnings.com.





Jig parts

(1) Size the drilling jig according to your lathe/ tailstock capacity.

(2) Viewed from the tailstock end, the jig's two slide plates are custom fit for smooth sliding without binding or excess play. The top plate rides between and the bottom plate fits under the bed ways.



Secure, adjustable holding

Both the cross-member and workpiece are clamped to the uprights during drilling. Adjust the cross-member up or down, and move the workpiece left or right to achieve your desired alignment with the drill bit.





Begin with a smaller drill bit and increase bit sizes successively, rather than drilling the large, final size all at once.



Completed project

woodturner.org 23

A Better Index-Locking Pin

John Lucas



There are many ways to make use of a good indexing system on your lathe.

have been using indexing on the lathe for a long time. What is indexing? It is a way to lock the lathe spindle in regularly spaced intervals, allowing you to carve, burn, draw, or route on turned projects with precise spacing, as shown in *Photo 1*.

Available options

I have tried several ways of locking the lathe spindle, but all of my methods

have had minor drawbacks. My first, very basic, approach was to use a box to hold the turned spindle and a screw to lock it into position. Some lathes have a built-in indexing system, but often this limits the number of available holes used to lock the spindle in place.

Over the years, there have been aftermarket indexing systems that offer improvements at a low cost, including index wheels with a wide variety of index positions. One example is the Iron Fire index wheel, which is quite inexpensive and offers a huge variety of positions. It comes with a pin that fits the holes. You have to rig up your own way to hold the pin in position, and it can be hard to keep up with that little pin even after putting a knob on it. But this is not difficult to do and it works pretty well. Then came the Alisam index wheel, which is heavy duty, well marked, and comes with a massive index locking system. However, you have to screw the index pin in and out. It's a very positive locking system but slow to use, especially if you need 120 or 144 index positions like the basket illusion turners use. It's pretty annoying just doing twenty-four.

A better pin

I wanted to design a spring-loaded indexlocking pin to work with the Alisam and other aftermarket systems. With several designs in mind, I asked for input on the Internet forums. Someone posted a really simple solution and I loved it. I started building one and came up with some modifications that I like even better. My new index-locking pin system comprises a long metal rod fastened to a base (metal or wood) fixed to the bed of the lathe. The rod has a tapered point that fits into the index holes of aftermarket index wheels (*Photos 2, 3*). You can add a little spring tension to the rod by pushing

Precise spacing



A router on an auxiliary table can be used to make repeatable cuts in a workpiece. The index wheel and locking pin ensure consistent spacing.

Simple and effective pin



The author's shopmade locking pin, affixed in a base on the lathe bed, provides a positive hold for accurate indexing.



the point into a hole, moving the base slightly further in the direction of the hole, and locking the base. This provides enough tension for a very positive lock. I simply pull the pin out against the spring tension, reposition the wheel, and release the pin into a different hole.

One modification I made is to allow the locking pin to be rotated for use in any orientation. The rotation is helpful because I can use the pin not only in a wheel mounted behind a chuck, but also directly in my chucks that have index holes—either on the side or back of the chuck (*Photos 4*, 5).

Another modification I made was to provide fine adjustment of the pin's height above the lathe bed. I did this by threading the bottom of the rod and adding an adjusting wheel, as shown in *Photo 6*. A set screw locks the pin in position after fine adjustment. A key benefit is that if I remove and then remount the turning for any reason and find that the index pin is off a little, I can fine-tune its position to replicate the previous setup perfectly.

Another benefit is that you could add more holes to your indexing wheel. Since the pin can be adjusted precisely, you can position it half-way between two holes and double the number of available positions. Or you can move it a fraction one way or the other to make overlapping index cuts. By changing router bits, altering the orientation of the router, and overlapping cuts, you can simulate ornamental lathe work.

How to make one

The first step in building this indexing pin system is to taper the end of a \%6"- (5mm-) diameter metal rod. I chucked the rod in my hand drill and slowly rotated it against a grinder wheel to "sharpen" it to a point. Then I ground off the tip until it fit into the various index holes in my chuck and wheel. I heated the rod red hot about \%" (19mm) from the tip and bent it 90 degrees. I also bent the rod near the bottom to make it fit the larger index wheels.





Works with chucks, too

Aside from the indexing wheel provided on some lathes, you can purchase (or make) an aftermarket version, such as this yellow disk with evenly spaced holes. Some chucks also offer indexing holes on the side or back.

Fine adjustment of pin height



The author's shopmade base, fabricated from metal, allows for fine adjustment of pin height. The end of the pin is threaded and fine-tuned using a threaded adjusting wheel.

Wooden base version



A wooden base is a good option if metalworking is beyond your skillset. The base is made to slide along the bed ways and adjust in or out. This allows for precise placement of the pin in relation to the indexing holes.

The metal base shown in Photo 6 requires some metalworking knowledge and could require access to a machine shop. But you can make a wooden version that will work very reliably (Photo 7). To allow for a rotating pin position in the wood, I started by drilling a hole to fit the rod. Then I inserted the rod with thin cyanoacrylate (CA) glue. Before the glue hardened fully, I rotated the rod, which effectively broke the glue bond but made for a tighter fit. The resulting friction of this fit means it takes a little effort to rotate the rod, but also the rod easily stays in position.

I also added a slot in the locking base so that the pin can be adjusted in or out for the various index wheel and chuck sizes. I hope you're inspired to build one of these, as I was. You will find it very quick to use with a positive locking position. I also use this system a lot when sanding natural-edge bowls; I can lock it in any position to make it easier to sand each area with the lathe off. I probably use it more for this than I do for its originally intended purpose.

John Lucas, a retired photographer, has been working in wood for more than thirty-five years and also dabbles in metalworking. He enjoys modifying machines, making tools, and sharing his knowledge through written articles and videos. He has taught classes at John C. Campbell Folk School, Arrowmont, and The Appalachian Center for Crafts.

Life's Not Too Short

TO TURN CRAPPY WOOD

Marty Kaminsky



The blank for this bowl had it all—rot, bark inclusions, cracks, worm holes, and spalting. It was in serious contention for the firewood pile.

uring a club demonstration, a member in the front row yelled out that it looked like there was a lot of tearout in my unfinished project. Not missing a beat and not willing to accept blame, I said by way of explanation, "Crappy wood." And he said sarcastically, "Yeah, blame the wood." And we all laughed. Okay, maybe sharper

tools and better technique would have helped, but the point is although turning "crappy" wood is more difficult than turning good wood, the results often make the effort worthwhile.

Renowned turner John Jordan famously said, "Life's too short to turn crappy wood." I take "crappy wood" to encompass all manner of natural features, mostly resulting from wood's inevitable degradation: cracks, voids, bark inclusions, punky (rotted) wood, spalting, worm and insect holes, and the

like. John's statement is well known among woodturners and has even been printed on T-shirts. John remains adamant in his view. I asked him if he ever turns crappy wood, and he insisted it is not worth the effort. He said he rarely sees anything that is "worth the countless hours that people spend trying to make a silk purse from a sow's ear. I guess you could say I'm pretty much opposed to it, except in rare occasions."

John raises a perfectly valid point—
there certainly are aesthetic and
safety risks in turning degraded wood.
If you are a production turner making
hundreds of salad bowls every year for
your livelihood, then life certainly is
too short to turn unsound wood. If you
carve your turned forms, as John does,
sound wood is the right choice. In these
cases, it wouldn't make sense to go to the

effort of trying to salvage compromised wood. And even if you were willing to do what it takes to do so, completing a turned form from such wood is far from certain. Stuff goes wrong—frequently.

Nevertheless, it has to be said that a piece made from "crappy wood" can be sublime. There are many beautiful things going on: fascinating patterns, multiple colors, wild swirls of grain, intricate spalting lines, and even worm holes can lend enormous beauty to a piece. It can indeed be worth the effort, though the safety risks should not be understated.

Safety issues

When wood has any of the problems previously listed, the turner is at risk.

Respiratory

Cutting or sanding rotted and/or spalted wood can send nasty spores along with the regular sawdust (which is bad enough) into the air for you to breathe. You must protect your lungs against this nastier-than-usual dust. At a minimum, wear a dust mask, but better yet is a full respirator with proper filtration. And set up a vacuum system with a collector close to your work to capture as much dust as possible as it is produced.

Bodily harm

Rotting, bark inclusions, cracks, and worm holes interfere with the strength ▶

JOURNAL ARCHIVE CONNECTION

EXPLORE!

Safety Resources
Take it upon yourself to
stay safe when turning
wood, but especially
when turning
compromised,
unsound wood. AAW's
online resources offer
valuable information; log
on at woodturner.org.
Two useful examples:

 Lynne Yamaguchi's June 2014 AW article, "Safety Matters. From the

"Safety Matters, From the Eye of a Survivor" (vol 29, no 3, page 27), in which the author makes the case for wearing a riot helmet during turning.

 John English's April 2010 AW article, "Wood Dust and the Woodturner" (vol 25, no 2, page 20).

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Rotted oak burl with padauk accents, stabilized with Minwax Wood Hardener.

of the wood, creating considerable risk of a turning flying apart as it spins. You must protect your head and body from the risk of flying wood, should your turning decide to self-destruct or release from your chuck or other holding device.

Later in this article, I'll talk about how you can stabilize and strengthen degraded wood. The stabilization process both enhances the appearance of the wood and makes it less likely to come apart while spinning on the lathe. But even with your best efforts at stabilization, you should use particularly good judgement while turning. Always be wary of the turning blank as it is spinning. Use lower speeds than you would for sound wood. Stop the lathe often and check the wood to see if your stabilization efforts are holding. Are any cracks getting bigger? Any new ones showing up? Stabilization is not a one-shot effort. You'll very likely have to revisit it a few times during the process of turning. Do your best to stay out of the potential path of an "exploding" turning—the line of fire. For instance, when starting your lathe,

Rotted oak burl, stabilized with Minwax Wood Hardener prior to turning.

don't stand in front of your turning as you reach for the start button. Position your-

self out of the path. If you have folks watching you, make sure they are also to the side of the potential flight path.

Be careful of mounting wood with rot, bark inclusions, or worm holes, since in its weakened state it will not be as strong or hard as solid wood. Thus, any tenon you make will likely compress more in a scroll chuck, resulting in a less-secure hold. Stop frequently to check the security of the work holding.

And certainly, as always, wear face protection. You might consider going beyond the common woodturning faceshield and opt for heavy-duty headgear that can take more impact.

Nature's toll on wood Rot

If there is too much rot, or soft punky areas of the wood, you might consider adding the piece to the firewood pile. It is a judgement call when considering just how much rot a piece can contain and still be salvageable. I have found that I can usually deal with a modest amount of punky wood. I use a wood hardener made by Minwax that I've found to work pretty well, although it's a bit pricey. You just saturate the punky areas with the hardener and allow it to dry, and the wood becomes considerably more workable. There are other wood-hardening products that I have not tried.

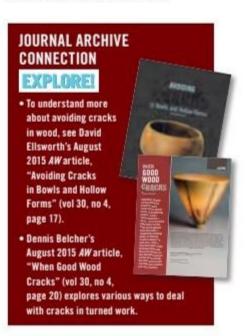
I'd be hesitant to use cyanoacrylate (CA) glue as a hardener for rot. It would be expensive, as rotted areas can sop up a lot of liquid. I'm also not sure how well CA-impregnated

wood would accept finishes, particularly dyes.

Small blanks can be stabilized with a resin like the commercially available Cactus Juice Stabilizing Resin, which is introduced to the blank before turning by way of vacuum. This process is very effective but is beyond the scope of this article. An Internet search for "stabilizing wood" and "Cactus Juice Stabilizing Resin" will yield informative results. Also, log on at woodturner. org to access Don McIvor's February 2014 AW article, "Stabilizing Wood: An Alchemist's Guide" (vol 29, no 1, page 22).

Spalting

Spalting is an early indicator of the decomposition of wood, often resulting in distinct zone lines, interesting coloration, and other features. Spalted wood may be quite solid, depending on how far along the wood has degraded, but look closely for punky areas that should be stabilized.



Cracks and bark inclusions

Cracks and bark inclusions may indicate seriously weak areas in a blank. Look over the blank carefully to decide if you think it's worth taking the risk. Small cracks and bark inclusions can be strengthened and filled. I often strengthen them with CA glue. Before applying any CA, saturate the region around the repair area with whatever clear coat you plan to use. This keeps the CA from spreading where you don't want it.

After squirting thin CA into a crack, I then fill it and follow that with another application of CA to saturate the filler. Use your favorite powder or fine granules as filler. I would never try to match the wood color: the results will always be a very apparent and unsuccessful attempt at matching the wood. Instead, use a contrasting material. I often use coffee grounds (sometimes mixed with a bit of coarse sawdust for a natural appearance). You can get metallic powders (brass and aluminum, for example) and other powder colors at art supply stores and through online sources.

Some turners also glue in wooden splines, stitches, or veneer strips to hold wood with cracks and voids together during turning.

Worm holes

I like worm holes. They give a piece character. But the worms generally don't do as good a job as I would like. They leave the holes packed with a material less dense than the surrounding wood. I've made some small scraping tools to scrape this stuff out. Personally, I don't like the look of filled worm holes. If you are going to scrape out the worm holes, it must be done before any stabilization media, finish, or glue comes in contact with it.





Wormy ash with padauk rim, with worm holes scraped out.



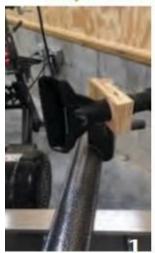
Amphora with worm holes and rot in mesquite, lacewood, purpleheart, and African blackwood.

Final thoughts

When working with wood with any of these naturally occurring characteristics, very sharp tools are required to minimize tearout. Sharpen often. You'll spend way more time making something out of "crappy" wood, but the results can be so rewarding.

Marty Kaminsky, a member of the Gulf Coast Woodturning Association and the AAW, has maintained a lifelong interest in photography, woodworking, and other art forms. An engineer by trade, Marty took up woodturning in 2000 and has taught and exhibited the craft widely. Marty can be reached at martykaminsky@gmail.com.

Banjo dust-hose mount





through the space in which the dust is being generated. The other is the proximity of the collection device to the source of dust. I came up with a simple vacuum-holding device for the lathe room at the Eureka Springs School of the Arts (Arkansas). Taking the place of the toolrest during sanding, this dust-hose mount is held in the lathe's banjo and can be set close to the source (*Photo 1*). The benefit of this banjo mount is improved flexible positioning, whether you are using a portable shop vacuum or a larger dust collector.

There are two critical factors in dust col-

lection. One is the volume of air passing

To make the dust-hose mount, turn a hardwood dowel to fit in your lathe's banjo. Leave the top section square so you can glue two flat pieces to it, as shown in Figure 1. I used a circle cutter to cut the hole for the vacuum hose, then attached those pieces to the post with glue and staples. The vacuum hose fits in the hole with a friction fit, so size the hole according to the hose you are using. The dust hood can be turned in the holder to any angle you want, and the mount in the banjo can be raised, lowered, or rotated for maximum effect.

-Doug Stowe, Arkansas



(Articles courtesy of AAW)