

BAY AREA



WOODTURNERS
ASSOCIATION
A CALIFORNIA NONPROFIT CORPORATION
LOCAL CHAPTER AAW

May 2017

Volume 21, Issue 5

May Meeting-Robert Bley Demonstration
April 20, 2017 8:30 - 12:00 Noon

Many of our BAWA members have expressed an interest in learning how to do fractal burning. Well, now is your chance to see how this is done!

Robert Bley will be BAWA's featured speaker for the May 20th meeting. Bob's presentation will cover an introduction to "Lichtenberg (Fractal) Burning" which is a relatively new process found in the fine art-decorating of wood surfaces including woodturnings.



Basically, "Lichtenberg Burning" involves connecting two high voltage wires to a piece of wood, applying a salt solution to the wood, and turning on the power resulting in burning "fractals" into the wood. Of course, the process is much more complicated than this with a multitude of variables that affect the results.

Bob's presentation will focus on safety issues, equipment, and techniques developed to provide some direction over this process, which has a mind of its own and cannot be controlled. Various patterns achieved with different chemical solutions will be shown. Additional decorative fillings of the deep burned patterns such as stone will be covered briefly.

Bob has offered to do fractal burning on one of your woodturnings. If you have a piece you would like to risk "burning", bring it and, if there is time, he will use your piece for the burning portion of his demo. Pieces must be dry, finish sanded and have no finish on it. The one caveat is that he may not be able to "burn" all the pieces that members may bring. Some processes are fast, others very slow! So, please do not be disappointed if he is unable to do everyone's pieces.

Bob is also inventor and manufacturer of the Black Hole Dust Catcher sold through Craft Supplies and Packard. He will bring a few systems to sell at a 25% discount off the \$200 normal price for \$150 (no credit cards; cash or check only).

Bring your recent turnings for show-and-tell, look for bowl blanks for sale in the store along with our new BAWA polo shirts, T-shirts and hats. The wood raffle is still on hold, but should be restarted soon.





BAY AREA WOODTURNERS ASSOCIATION

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Club Meetings

Meetings are the 2nd Saturday of each month unless otherwise noted.

8:30 doors open for setup, use store and library, swap ideas, view displays

9:00—12:30 meeting and demo

Meetings will be held at the PHEC Woodturning Center, 1 Santa Barbara Road, Pleasant Hill, CA.

See bayareawoodturners.org/ for directions and club information.

BAWA Officers Meeting -

Officer meetings are open to all members. Contact Joel Albert if you would like to be on the agenda.

2017 Event Schedule

May 11-13	Utah Woodturning Symposium
May 20th	Bob Bley: Fractal Burning 8:30-12:30
June 10th	Brad Adams: What to do with Cutoffs 8:30-12:30
June 22-25	AAW Symposium (Kansas City, MO)
July 8th	Turn for Troops 8:30-12:30
Aug 6th	Summer Picnic 11:00-2:00
Sept 9th	Kalia Kliban 8:30-12:30

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
Joel Albert
president@bayareawoodturners.org

Vice President
Jerry Jakubowski
vp@bayareawoodturners.org

Secretary
Anna Duncan
secretary@bayareawoodturners.org

Treasurer
Peter Wolff
treasurer@bayareawoodturners.org

Member at Large
Kim Wolfe
memberatlarge@bayareawoodturners.org

President Emeritus
John Cobb
cobbemail@gmail.com

Pleasant Hill Adult Education (PHAE) Liaison
Jim Rodgers
Jlrogers236@comcast.net

Librarian
Cindy Navarro
librarian@bayareawoodturners.org

Membership Co-chairs
Hugh Bevin-Thomas, Karen Rice
membership@bayareawoodturners.org

Store Manager
Richard Kalish
storemanager@bayareawoodturners.org

Webmaster
Greg Ketel & John Cobb
webmaster@bayareawoodturners.org

Newsletter Editor
Louie Silva
newslettereditor@bayareawoodturners.org

Audio Visual

Woodmeister

Educational Coordinator
Jan Blumer
educationalcoordinator@bayareawoodturners.org

Pro Demonstrator Liaison
John Cobb
Cobbemail@gmail.com

Staff Photographer

Social Coordinator
TBA



President's Chatter

May 2017

I have been caught up in a new turning project, making a gavel and sounding block—all thanks to the presentation by one of our members, Andrew Baxter. It's become a bit of an obsession since it's a challenging project which combines design, wood selection, and both spindle and face-grain turning. My goal is to make 2 gavels, one for BAWA and lighter weight one for my Mother-in-Law who is still a practicing attorney and part time judge.

This has led me to start thinking about what I call the 3 Ps of Woodturning:

- Patience – Slow down and really give yourself time to *see* and *feel* how the turning is progressing. Notice how the curves flow, where your eyes focus, how it feels in your hand. Slow your tool movements down and keep striving to improve.
- Practice – So much of turning is about body memory and this requires repetition and awareness of your movements. Turning a piece down towards its final dimensions gives me a great opportunity to practice the movements I need for the final cuts. It is a great time to practice and I am always puzzled when I see people rush through this phase and miss this opportunity.
- Prototyping – I prototype the design and turning approach on a scrap piece of wood. The goal is to learn about the process, to see what I like in the design and what I don't. I need to see the shape develop, stumble through the turning challenges, and figure it out by *doing*. Others may be able to accomplish the same goal through drawing and mental rehearsal.

For a piece that I really care about, I find that I make 5-6 prototypes before I touch a piece of beautiful wood to turn into a finished product. The overall process can be a bit frustrating, but it is precisely the areas that frustrate me that I have to work the most on. Fortunately this is a hobby for me, I am not selling my work by the piece and I don't have to worry about how long it takes me to get a piece complete. What I really care about is how I feel when the piece is finished to the best of my abilities.

How do you approach a new project? What works for you?

For June's Show-and-Tell, a new President's Challenge:

Turn a pen or pencil from wood, acrylic or other material. Do something different, think about the 3 Ps of turning and hone your design and turning skills.

Black Hole Dust Catcher System

Our featured speaker this month, Robert Bley, is also the inventor and manufacturer of the Black Hole Dust Catcher System sold through Craft Supplies and Packard. Bob will bring a few systems to sell at a 25% discount off the \$200 normal price for \$150 (no credit cards; **cash or check only**).

For more info, go to:

<https://www.woodturnerscatalog.com/p/89/6387/HC-Black-Hole-Dust-Catcher-System?term=blck+hole>



Turned Frisbee Competition Returns to the August Picnic!

Join us on Sunday August 6, 2017 at Pleasant Hill Park in Pleasant Hill for our annual picnic and barbeque. By popular demand the celebrated Wooden Flying Disc Competition returns this year with two different events.



We'll have an event to see who can toss their wood turned flying disc the farthest and a second event to see who can get their wood turned flying disc to land closest to the target. Prizes will be awarded in each event.



Rules are few and simple:

Your flying discs must be lathe turned and consist of a solid disc with a recurved rim, similar to the original Frisbee flying disc;

Your flying disc must be solid, no holes in the middle and no rings similar to the Aerobie are permitted;

You get one toss for each of up to three discs in each event.

There is still lots of time before the picnic to design your entries; get out to the shop and get them turned. See everyone in August!



Turn for Troops in July

The July meeting is our fourth annual Turn for Troops event. This is great opportunity for club members to come in and turn pens that will be donated to US troops serving out of the country. If you have never turned a pen before, it is a great time to learn as there many experienced members who are willing to give you a one on one lesson. This year we have a goal of 170 pens and look forward to seeing everyone participating in this community service event for those who are called to serve our country.



April's Demonstrator: Mike Mahoney



The April BAWA meeting brought professional bowl maker Mike Mahoney as our second professional demonstrator of 2017.

Mike has demonstrated at most of the major international turning symposia and has pieces in collections and museums around the world. As one of the most prolific bowl turners in the country, he is the pioneer of handmade production bowl turnings on a grand scale, analyzing each step of the process to maximize efficiency. He takes great pride in the fact that all the wood he uses comes from urban sources such as tree trimmers and local communities. As a result, he produces thousands of bowls each year, starting with a chainsaw and big pile of logs and ending up with stacks of beautifully finished bowls headed to stores around the country.

Mike began his presentation describing how he got started with bowl turning. He knew from the outset that, if he was going to become a professional bowl turner, he would need to have a steady income and, in order for that to happen, he would have to learn from the very best in the field. He studied under Richard Raffan, David Ellsworth and others.



Mike also wanted to establish his own niche and not copy what others were already doing. Art was not his thing; however, creating things that people can use – everyday items – is where he set his sights. In addition, Mike learned the “science of wood.” He trained his eyes to see what was on the inside of a tree by looking at its bark. He also learned the characteristics of wood species. Since Mike is interested in making things that people will use, he likes selecting wood that is durable and can take the abuse over time. Cottonwood, for example, is very durable. Mike also discovered that penetrating oil becomes part of the wood and, therefore, changes the characteristics of the wood such as making it more durable. Finally, Mike emphasized that he is interested in protecting the environment and, as a result, he has no interest in purchasing wood or cutting down trees. Instead, he utilizes urban lumber, i.e., trees that have been cut down as a result of storm damage or other reasons before they can be used for firewood or ultimately rot.

When Mike discovers a fallen tree, he uses a chain saw to cut blanks; band-sawing results in lots of waste. Mike likes using quarter-sawn white oak because it is very stable. For example, after turning a quarter-sawn green wood blank, the bowl will not get oval as it dries; it will get smaller but remain uniform. Mike uses a 10% rule, i.e., the wall thickness needs to be 10% of the diameter (e.g., a 10-inch bowl needs to have a one-inch wall thickness).



A big part of Mike's business is rough turning core bowl blanks that he sells to other woodturners. He uses a McNaughton Coring Tool, which he next demonstrated.

Mike brought a large white oak blank that came from a tree 480 years old that could have qualified for the National Registry as the largest oak tree in the United States if it was on public instead of private property. He mounted the blank on the lathe using a screw chuck, turned a 3/16" tenon, flipped the blank and placed the tenon in a 5" Vicmarc Chuck. Mike explained that the strength in holding the blank in the chuck comes from the diameter of the tenon, not the length, and the friction between the top of the chuck and the tenon.

(Continued on following page)

April's Demonstrator: Mike Mahoney (cont.)

Mike then used the McNaughton Coring Tool to cut three smaller “nested” core blanks. The remaining blank still on the lathe was called the “mother bowl” – the largest bowl, which he then turned to its final shape. When forming the inside of the bowl, Mike said he uses sharp bowl gouges on the top 2/3 to get a smooth surface and only uses scrapers on the bottom third. After completing the inside of the bowl, he made a jam chuck, inserted the bowl into the jam chuck and removed the tenon. Regarding finish, Mike will use either his Mahoney's Walnut Oil or his own recipe for a wipe-on poly consisting of 1/3 boiled linseed oil, 1/3 mineral spirits and 1/3 gloss polyurethane.



The bowl Mike turned was a “calabash bowl.” He said the bowls he turns are always from green wood. The normal process is to take a green blank, rough it into a bowl shape that is 10% as thick as the diameter, seal it and store it for slow drying, which can take several months before the bowl can be turned to its final shape. However, Mike uses an alternative approach. He turns what he loosely calls a “calabash bowl”, which does not require the long drying process. The calabash bowl is essentially a baseless bowl carefully extracted from the log with voluptuous continuous flowing curves with no flat base creating a visual balance after the bowl has dried. And, since Mike is using quarter-sawn blanks, the bowl will retain its shape after drying.

Mike talked about carbon steel, and M2 and M4 hardened steel. He explained that softer steel will get sharper than harder steel, but harder steel will retain its edge longer. M2 is harder than M4 meaning that M2 can get sharper than M4, but M4 will hold its edge longer.



Mike's next project was to turn a platter out of Claro Walnut. He explained that the base on his platters must be at least 50% of the diameter.



Burial urns are also one of Mike's business lines including urns for dogs and cats. Mike's final demonstration was turning a hollow form urn with a threaded lid. He selected Claro Walnut for the urn and used Kelton Hollowing Tools to hollow it. He also demonstrated making a threaded lid for the urn using female and male thread chasers.

Everyone was amazed at how much Mike was able to turn in a matter of a few hours – the coring of the large blank, and the turnings of a large bowl, platter and burial urn with a threaded top. When encountering difficulties during the turning processes, members were impressed how quickly he was able to identify problems and immediately find solutions to them. In addition, everyone enjoyed seeing the process for turning/carving his “Sierra Cup” and the photos of his farm and the improvements made to the property. Overall, Mike's presentation was informative, upbeat, positive and entertaining.



Article 19: Trees of the Bay Area Region by Tony Wolcott *Acer palmatum* Japanese Maple

Most are familiar with this plant. You have seen it in various forms along the ground and as a green leaf tree, recognized by the smaller maple leaf shaped like a palm, hence the name 'palmatum'.



There are many varieties with colorful fruit (samara) and finely dissected leaves.

The first bowl I ever turned was from a Japanese maple. Typical of the soft maples (like box elder) this is so easy to work with. Fusarium wilt often kills a branch here and there or the whole tree; lines of incipient decay appear often in Japanese maple due to Fusarium. Even though this is a small tree, the tree form can reach a diameter of two feet in time. But small trees can be used for small bowls, a beautiful light color with subtle character. Spindle projects are very possible, branch wood works. Because this tree burns in hot sun and doesn't like wind, you may have to search for it. Like box elder, Japanese maple can be used as a filler wood when a light color is desired with other woods. Natural edges work as the wood is quite stable, moves little and with caution you can avoid splitting. Even roots turn nicely.

Acer palmatum, commonly called Japanese maple, is a deciduous shrub or small tree that typically grows to 10-25' (infrequently to 40') tall. It is native to Japan, Korea and China. General plant form is rounded to broad-rounded, often with low branching. Each palmate green leaf (2-5" long) has 5 or 7 but less frequently 9 pointed toothed lobes. Small reddish-purple flowers in umbels bloom in mid spring (April). The flowers are rather attractive close up, but are not particularly showy from a distance. Flowers are followed by samaras (to 3/4" long) in pairs. Samaras ripen in September-October. Fall color includes shades of yellow, red-purple and bronze. Cultivars (often grafted) are quite variable.



May Show and Tell



Jim Rodgers-Segmented Vessel



Gary Bingham-Two Dinner Plates



Dave Morris-Natural Edged Cedar Bowl



Anthony Strazhnikov-Aluminum Chisel Handle



Hugh Bevan-Thomas-Bowl



Paul Gorrow-Pen

(Continued on following page)

May Show and Tell (cont.)



John Lawson-Jewelry



Brad Adams-Madrone Bowl & Walnut Bowl



June 10, 2017 Presenter: Brad Adams “What to do with Cutoffs”

The featured speaker for the June 10, 2017 will be one of our fellow members - our own Brad Adams.

Brad goes through several tons of wood a month as a full-time woodturner, much of it being burl or highly figured wood. In his own words Brad explains, “Big bowls are my primary product, but I've got a dirty little secret. Although the big bowls are what puts money in the bank, it is the small stuff I make out of the cutoffs that pays the rent on my shop. In the process of sawing out my bowl blanks, I generate a lot of scraps - what I refer to as my ‘kibbles and bits’.”



Brad will demonstrate how he turns these scraps into useful and/or profitable items. He will show his methods for making ring holders, bottle stoppers, wine bottle coasters, ikebana vases, and perhaps small hollow forms if time permits.

Brad also stated that he has benefitted tremendously by his involvement in BAWA and now it's time to give something back to the club. We appreciate Brad's willingness to “step up to the plate” and look forward to his presentation in June.



Tips & Tricks

Book Review



by Cindy Navarro

Cindy will return next month.

CRAFT SUPPLIES 10% DISCOUNT ORDER

The 10% discount applies to any published price (including sale items, close-outs, etc.) on almost all items. Craft Supplies has a new catalog that includes new items with a different item numbering system. There have been some price increases as well so don't use old catalogs. If you don't have the latest catalog please look on-line to pick your loot and check prices and item numbers.

Orders are placed by filling out an electronic order form which is available on the BAWA website. E-mail the form to Dean Adkins (adkd@chevron.com) with all the requested information:

- Member name, phone number and e-mail address
- Catalog item number
- Catalog page number
- Item description
- Quantity ordered
- List / sale price (before 10% discount)

You can call Dean (925-998-4111) to place an order, but must follow up with an e-mail to confirm all the required information.

Rockler Helps BAWA Members

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



<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.

Good Deal From AAW!

BAWA members who have never been members of the American Association of Woodturners (AAW) have the exclusive opportunity to become AAW members for one year for just \$30, a 50% reduction on the \$60 rate. Only AAW chapter members who have never been AAW members are eligible, and the special rate is available only during the exclusive sign up period from April 1 through June 30, 2017. Join AAW at the reduced \$30 rate by going to:

<http://tiny.cc/AAWNewGen>



Membership News

By Tim Kennedy



Membership Update

BAWA now has 148 members.