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**SHERMAN SEGMENTED BOWLS**  
FROM A VARIETY OF WOODS  
TOO NUMEROUS TO MENTION

**NEXT MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT**

**MARCH 2009 MONTGOMERY COUNTY WOODTURNERS MEETING...**

**DATE** Thursday – March 12, 2009

**TIME** 7:00PM – 9:00PM

**LOCATION** The Woodworkers Club  
4950 Wyaconda Road  
Rockville, Maryland 20853  
301/984-9033



**AGENDA** 6:30-7:00 — Bring a chair, if you wish... please be sure to wear your name tag... meet and greet other members... register your items for *Show & Tell* with Richard Webster... make your bid on *Silent Auction* items... sign out and pay Clif Poodry for videos from the club's *Lending Library*.

7:00-7:30 — Business meeting... *Show & Tell*.

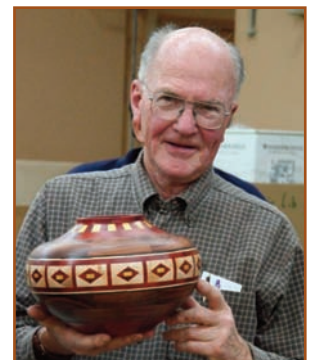
7:30-8:45 — PROGRAM – *Stan Sherman* will demonstrate his techniques for designing, constructing, and turning segmented vessels and bowls.

8:45-9:00 — Pick up and pay for any of your items from the *Silent Auction*... help pack up and clean up the space.

**MARCH DEMONSTRATOR — STAN SHERMAN**

Stan Sherman's woodturning career (in his own words) is recent and brief (but exceptional, in the Editor's opinion). It began when he purchased his lathe in 2007, took a few classes (one with Clif Poodry), and began turning a variety of objects.

After experimenting with cups and bowls in oak, cherry, maple, hickory, beech and several "exotic" woods, he gravitated toward the challenges of creating segmented pieces. Since focusing on segmented turning, he has sought to gain skill in the design challenges offered by fabricating and turning objects using several wood species combined into the workpiece.



Prior to woodturning, he engaged in a number of carpentry and finishing projects as avocations. Stan is an emeritus member of the faculty in Business Administration at the George Washington University.

## PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

PHIL BROWN

**S**PRING is always a good time for crafts. We just had the **American Craft Council Baltimore Show**, at which there were several excellent Woodturners' displays. The **Smithsonian Craft Show** is coming to the Building Museum April 23 to 26 (see comments elsewhere in this newsletter). Over that same weekend, the **James Renwick Alliance** (a support organization for the Smithsonian Renwick Gallery) will honor **David Ellsworth** with an award as **2009 Master of the Medium in the Wood/Furniture** category. More information can be found at:

[www.jra.org/Get%20Involved/SpringCraftWeekend.html](http://www.jra.org/Get%20Involved/SpringCraftWeekend.html) and [www.ellsworthstudios.com/david/spiritvessels.html#](http://www.ellsworthstudios.com/david/spiritvessels.html#)

For a reference to these and other area openings and activities that weekend see: [www.craftweekdc.com](http://www.craftweekdc.com)

From May 30 through July 11, the **Creative Crafts Council** will hold its Biennial Exhibition in the Mansion at Strathmore. While most of the beautiful pieces shown will be in other media, there will be some turned wood. And there could be more if you get your application in by March 20th.

*Craft in America – Expanding Traditions* is on its final and fourth stop at the **Fuller Craft Museum** in Brockton, Massachusetts until May 25, 2009. This traveling exhibition is associated with the 3-part Peabody Award-winning and Emmy-nominated PBS television series of the same name. There is some very nice turned work and wood furniture in the exhibit. If you will be in the Boston area, then take a half day to go to Brockton. This is a must see exhibit for anyone who enjoys and appreciates craft-art. More information can be found at:

[www.fullercraft.org/exhibitions.html#CRAFT](http://www.fullercraft.org/exhibitions.html#CRAFT)

**International Expositions of Sculpture Objects & Functional Art – SOFA New York**, billed as *The World's Foremost Fairs of Contemporary Decorative Arts & Design*, is on April 16 to 19 at the Park Avenue Armory. Coming from Los Angeles, del Mano Gallery will have an outstanding booth of turned wood on display. For all lovers of fine craft, a visit to SOFA New York, SOFA Chicago, and now SOFA Santa Fe, should be on your to-do list at least

once. The SOFA website address is:

[www.sofaexpo.com/NY/2009/index.htm](http://www.sofaexpo.com/NY/2009/index.htm)

To hear a brief 2006 interview with Matt and Philip Moulthrop, go to [www.sofaexpo.com/NY/2009/artist.htm](http://www.sofaexpo.com/NY/2009/artist.htm) and scroll down to them. (Footnote: With the economic mess, can we count on SOFA continuing?)

Only a few of our members are selling or trying to sell their turned work. Unfortunately these are not the good times when the public expends discretionary income. And as a result, the **Artisans Center of Virginia** in Waynesboro has closed their gallery and retail operation after nearly a decade in that community. For several years, that was an important outlet for at least one CAW member.

On February 22nd the *Washington Post* METRO SECTION ran an article, along with five color pictures, on the eagle-cane joint project of Capital Area Woodturners and Northern Virginia Carvers.

Enough on the craft scene. Our club continues to evolve with good programs and changes in membership, volunteers, and officers. I'm looking forward to the **Forest Glen Annex** Wood Shop teaching endeavor developing into a meaningful community service project.

With continuing support for meetings from the **Woodworkers Club**, owner **Nick Satturo**, and manager **Jevon Wolfe**, our treasury has grown, providing resources for future possibilities. We have expanded our board by including the Webmaster, **Bert Bleckwenn**. New member, **Stan Wellborn**, is bringing our Group Purchase and discount information up-to-date. **Tim Aley** has agreed to be Secretary, but we need an Assistant Secretary to prepare minutes for the newsletter for those few meetings Tim might miss. And we need a helper to assist Hal Burdette with the *mechanics* of taking out **Show & Tell** staged photos. I hope at least two members will volunteer to help with these tasks.

I look forward to the March segmented turning demo by our own **Stan Sherman**. *Come join us.*

## EXHIBIT & RELATED NEWS

PHIL BROWN

◆ The eleven members lending pieces for the **Quince Orchard Public Library** exhibit are Tim Aley, Phil Brown, Don Couchman, Eliot Feldman, David Fry, Stuart Glickman, Gary Guenther, David Jacobowitz, Ed Karch, Donald Van Ryk, and Ilya Zavorin. The exhibit is up for viewing to March 30th, the library is at 15831 Quince Orchard Road, Gaithersburg.



PHOTO BY TIM ALEY

◆ The **Smithsonian Craft Show** will be from April 23rd to 26th, at the Building Museum, 401 F Street, NW in Washington, DC. You can take the Metro Red Line to the Judiciary Square Station, try to find street parking, or use nearby parking lots/garages at the Verizon Center's 6th Street entrance and at the corner of 7th and H Streets. Only a few woodturners will be present: **Charles Faucher**, **Simon Levy**, and **David Nittmann**. More details are at: [www.smithsoniancraftshow.org/indexmain.asp?content=welcome](http://www.smithsoniancraftshow.org/indexmain.asp?content=welcome). Go to the right-side menu, click on wood, and on images of the objects shown to see examples of their work. Pay particular attention to the Levy pyrography work, it is amazing.

◆ **Creative Crafts Council** will hold its juried Biennial Exhibition at the Strathmore Mansion in Bethesda, Maryland from May 30th through July 11th. Members of the James Renwick Alliance will be jurors. For turners wishing to market their work locally and to be locally recognized, this is an important and quality exhibit. March 20th is the application deadline. The application is available under Artists at [www.creativecraftscouncil.org](http://www.creativecraftscouncil.org). If you are unable to download the application, ask me for a copy.

◆ Seniors are welcome to enter the **12th Annual Jewish Community Center** senior adult art exhibit, *A Lifetime of Perspective*, May 17th–31st. Delivery is Tuesday, April 28th. Call Kandy Hutman, 301/348-3864, for an appointment to show her up to three of your turned pieces. Space will limit the number of your pieces chosen. There is no charge to enter and no commission taken on sales. The exhibit is made possible through the support of the **Deena & Jerome Kaplan Family** in memory of Deena's parents.

◆ The **Arrowmont 2009 Catalog** is out with eleven woodturning classes of one week duration scheduled in June, July, and August. Instructors include **David Ellsworth**, **Michael Mocho**, **Jean-Francois Escoulen**, **Beth Ireland**, **Mark St. Leger**, **Nick Cook**, **Warren Carpenter**, **Avelino Samuel**, **Jerry Kermode**, **Binh Pho**, **Joe Ruminski**, and **Art Liestman**. These classes will be followed in September and October with one week and weekend workshops. See their schedule at: [www.arrowmont.org/registration/commerce.pl?page=summer2009-grid1.html&cart\\_id=](http://www.arrowmont.org/registration/commerce.pl?page=summer2009-grid1.html&cart_id=)

◆ The **Children's Inn at NIH** needs a volunteer for construction of a wooden outdoor phone box used for night entry. The original box was custom made many years ago. The box measures approximately 12" x 12" x 15" and is representational of the Inn's architecture, including a cedar roof and siding, and stone foundation walls on all four sides. This piece of functional outdoor art has sadly decayed beyond redemption. **Rick Sniffin**, Facilities Manager at the Inn, would like to find a woodworker willing to reconstruct the phone unit. The Inn can pay only for materials. If you are willing to take on this project, please call Rick at 301/451-9457, or e-mail him at [rsniffin@mail.nih.gov](mailto:rsniffin@mail.nih.gov).

[The Children's Inn at NIH is "a place like home" for families and their children who take part in medical research protocols at the National Institutes of Health Clinical Center. Since 1990 they have served over 6,500 children, providing a place to stay, activities, and emotional comfort. Their operational funds are provided entirely by private donors.]

## MEMBER NEWS

PHIL BROWN

**THE WOOD TURNING CENTER** in Philadelphia will be exhibiting “selections from the collection” donated by **Joe Seltzer** from March 6th to April 11th. The exhibition includes a donated 7" piece by **Phil Brown**, finished in 1997, and a second recent piece available for purchase.



PHIL BROWN

- **PHIL BROWN** will demonstrate turning at the 4th grade Colonial Fair at Arcola Elementary School in Silver Spring on March 4th.

- **CLIF POODRY** teaches a one-day **Beginning Bowl Turning** class at the **Woodworkers Club** in Rockville, Maryland on March 21st, May 16th, July 25th, and September 19th. He alternates to a two-day **Advanced Bowl Turning** on April 18th & 19th, June 20th & 21st, and August 15th & 16th. For more information, see:

[www.woodworkersclub.com/practice%20class1.htm](http://www.woodworkersclub.com/practice%20class1.htm)



CLIF POODRY

- **MARK SUPIK** offers a full-day Saturday class on between centers turning on March 14th, March 28th, April 11th, and May 16th at his Baltimore shop. The Oliver lathes are a treat to see and use.

For details on availability and other classes (several new classes have been added recently), call 410/732-8414 or log on to: [www.marksupikco.com/School/schoolwinter08-1.html8](http://www.marksupikco.com/School/schoolwinter08-1.html8)

- **LATHE FOR SALE** – Powermatic Lathe Model 90, circa 1975. Set up for 3-phase 220 volt. Runs well, variable speed, 3 face plates & 2 tool rests included. The lathe is set up and available for a “test drive” at Mark Supik & Company – #1 North Haven Street – Baltimore, MD – 410/732-8414. **PRICE \$1,200.00**



- **ELIOT FELDMAN** gave a demonstration at *Discover Strathmore* on Sunday February 15th.

**DON'T BE SHY – PROMOTE YOURSELF.** Let us know about your wood turning activities so they can be included in the newsletter each month. Send your information to Phil Brown at [philbrown@comcast.net](mailto:philbrown@comcast.net), or call 301/767-9863 OR to Michael Blake at [mb7298@comcast.net](mailto:mb7298@comcast.net) or call 301/589-1815.

## FINANCIAL REPORT

BOB BROWNING

MCW Bank Account Balance on February 28, 2009..... \$ 3,517.07

## MEMBERSHIP REPORT

STUART GLICKMAN

At the end of 2008, there were 73 people on our active membership roster.

As of February 28th, 52 have renewed and 21 have yet to do so, plus we have added 2 new members.

If renewing has slipped your mind, please be sure to see me at the March 12th meeting OR make your \$20 renewal check payable to MCW and mail to me at → 2896 Glenora Lane – Rockville, MD 20850

## FEBRUARY MEETING MINUTES

TIM ALEY

**P**RESIDENT Phil Brown welcomed 30 members and guests to the February meeting. A large table of *Show & Tell* items were checked in by Richard Webster and Hal Burdette photographed them, with help from special guest Carol Burdette.



A wide variety of items were donated for the *Silent Auction*. The highlight was 9 squares of Figured Bubinga donated by Michael Blake. Elliot Schantz donated two Rosewood logs and a large Norfolk Island Pine log. Marcus Sims donated a split log piece of Spalted Cherry, Richard Webster donated a half log of Spalted Oak, Phil Brown brought a piece of Apple, and Mike Mills donated a face shield.



Stuart Glickman collected dues from two new members – Paul Simon and Curt Mullholand.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The Bethesda Library exhibit pieces were returned at the meeting. All participants were encouraged to display their items in the March display at Quince Orchard Library in Gaithersburg.
- Ed Karch has had to step down as Secretary and Tim Aley agreed take the position. Tim will miss a couple of meetings and a volunteer is needed to fill in as Assistant Secretary.

- Stan Wellborn provided a sign up sheet for the Hartville Tool Discount Program. A minimum of 20 members are necessary to participate to get the 15% discount. If you would like to participate please e-mail Stan at: [s.wellborn@starpower.net](mailto:s.wellborn@starpower.net)



- Mike Colella has had to resign as photographer for *Show & Tell*. Hal Burdette will continue to take pictures, but he will miss some meetings. We need a backup photographer who can also edit the shots for use in the newsletter and on the website.

- Bert Bleckwenn reported on the Forest Glen Annex project to teach woodturning to veterans. [More information on page 10.]



- Elliot Schantz reported on a One Way Sit-Down lathe for sale in Ft.Lauderdale as a possible option for Forest Glen Annex use.
- Eliot Feldman will be demonstrating at *Discover Strathmore* on Sunday February 15th.

Phil Brown suggested making the Webmaster an officer. This is done by amending the MCW Bylaws, which are on the website for viewing. The Webmaster is responsible for developing and maintaining a MCW website to inform members and the interested public about meetings, newsletters, programs, and information related to and in support of the MCW educational purposes. The Webmaster will work in coordination with officers and contributing members, and train and coordinate with an assistants in developing and maintaining the website. Phil proposed adding “Item M. Webmaster” to ARTICLE VII - OFFICERS. The amendment as read, was moved, seconded, and passed by unanimous voice vote.

A lively *Show & Tell* discussion was run by Richard Webster.

Program Chair Gary Guenther introduced MCW member Ed Karch for his third demonstration.

## FEBRUARY SHOW & TELL

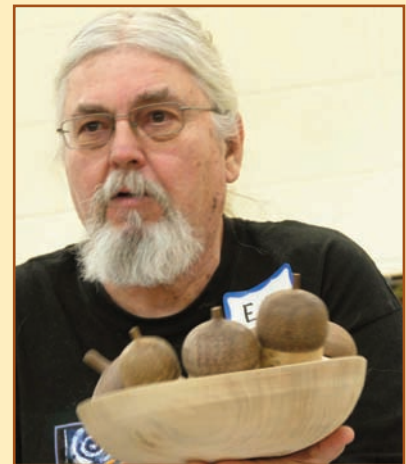
HAL BURDETTE/STUART GLICKMAN



**RICHARD WEBSTER**  
11" x 3" NATURAL EDGE BOWL  
[SPALTED MAPLE, WITH TURQUOISE INFILL]



3" x 1 1/2" MAPLE BOWL [GESSO & EGGSHELL]



**ED  
KARCH**



**BOWL FULL OF NUTS** EACH "NUT" IS A LIDDED BOX  
[WALNUT, ASH, BEECH]

## FEBRUARY SHOW & TELL

HAL BURDETTE/STUART GLICKMAN

### TIM ALEY



ABOVE – 5" x 3 1/2" BOWL & 8 1/2" x 4 1/2" NATURAL EDGE BOWL [BOTH WALNUT]  
LEFT – 6" x 4" BOWL [HOLLY ROOTBALL]

### JERRY MAUCH



3" x 1 3/4" RING HOLDER [COCOBOLO]

### DON VAN RYK



7" x 3 1/2" BOWL [WALNUT]

8" x 3 1/2" BOWL [WALNUT]



## FEBRUARY SHOW & TELL

HAL BURDETTE/STUART GLICKMAN

### ELIOT FELDMAN

NATURAL EDGE BOWL 6 1/2" x 5" [MESQUITE]  
VASE 7" x 4 1/2" [NORFOLK ISLAND PINE]



### PHIL BROWN

FLARE BOWLS TOP - 17 1/2" x 5" BOTTOM - 15" x 4"  
[SPALTED RED MAPLE]





**FEBRUARY SHOW & TELL**

**HAL BURDETTE/STUART GLICKMAN**

**STAN SHERMAN**

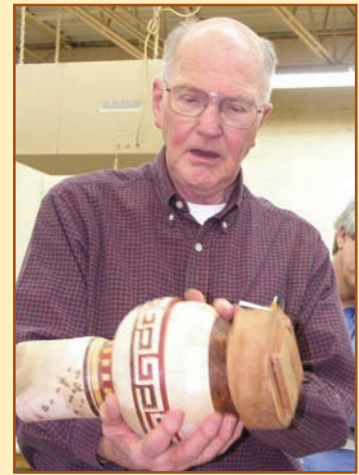
SEGMENT SECTIONS USED TO CONSTRUCT THE FINAL VESSEL



TOP



BOTTOM



**ELLIOT SCHANTZ**

5" x 3" VESSEL, IN PROGRESS [BURL]



**MCW OUTREACH****BERT BLECKWENN****WOUNDED WARRIOR SUPPORT**

**E**FFORTS by MCW to support our wounded warriors recovering at Walter Reed Army Hospital or Bethesda Naval Medical Center through the **Forest Glen Annex Arts & Crafts Center Woodshop** are progressing. Recent activities include:

**♦ Connecting With Wounded Warriors**

**Chris Wright**, the Arts & Crafts Center Woodshop Manager has been successful in reaching out to Walter Reed Army Hospital outpatient recovering warriors. He conducted a successful introductory shop session with several outpatients on February 10th where they had an opportunity to be exposed to turning and wood carving.

On March 3rd, Chris conducted a pen turning session and I was able to provide mentoring support. Three outpatients successfully completed their first pen and are excited about coming back for more. Because of shop limitations, both Chris and I used our own pen turning equipment and additional warriors could not turn because of a lack of lathes, tools, and accessories.

I spoke with the **art therapist care provider** and found a promising level of receptivity for woodturning and MCW's involvement. So, I am more encouraged than ever that MCW will be able to support the Arts & Crafts Center efforts to provide help to our wounded warriors. Based on the early success, future Wounded Warrior sessions are now scheduled for every other Tuesday with increased demand for capabilities anticipated.

**♦ Improving Arts & Crafts Center Turning Facilities**

I am volunteering time every Tuesday at the Woodshop and have been doing routine maintenance and minor enhancements to the turning facilities, providing mentoring support, and conferring with Chris Wright on areas where MCW might provide further assistance. Other volunteers will be asked to pitch in as this program evolves and specific new opportunities arise.

**♦ MCW Demonstration & Workshop Capabilities**

I have enhanced my Jet VS Mini-lathe so it is now portable enough for any needed demonstrations at Walter Reed or Bethesda Naval Hospital. Also, I plan to bring my mini-lathe to the future training sessions at Forest Glen so additional Wounded Warriors can be supported. (I am also willing to make the mini-lathe available for any MCW Demonstrations that might arise.)

**♦ Donations of Equipment, Tools & Accessories**

Michael Blake donated his Jet Mini-lathe, which brings the Woodshop up to a current complement of three lathes, with two small enough to support potential demonstrations at patient locations at the Walter Reed or Bethesda Naval Hospital facilities. I have also donated turning blanks and exotic wood pen blanks.

Any MCW members who have turning tools, live centers, drive centers, chucks, any other kind of useful equipment, and/or bowl and pen blanks are encouraged to donate whatever you can spare to the Crafts Center.

**♦ AAW Grant Status**

MCW's \$1,500 Grant Request is currently under review by AAW, with an anticipated announcement of grant awards set for the April timeframe. A positive outcome for our grant request is far from certain.

**♦ MCW Volunteers & Donors**

Members who are already volunteering time or have donated items include myself, Michael Blake, and Jerry Mauch. Other members who have expressed an interest in volunteering are Phil Brown, Clif Poodry, Elliot Schantz, and Don Van Ryk.

Anyone who is interested in volunteering time or donating turning-related tools or accessories, please contact me at [bableck@gmail.com](mailto:bableck@gmail.com).

## FEBRUARY DEMONSTRATION

MICHAEL BLAKE

**E**D KARCH is a woodturner who looks at things from a vastly different perspective. Of course, the other important word that springs to mind to describe Ed is – artist. He chose to title his demonstration as *Earth, Bleach & Fire*, but those in attendance were fortunate to hear and see a bit more.

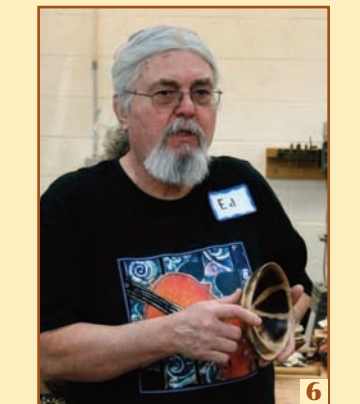
The underlying concept Ed demonstrated was how to enhance turned pieces with techniques he discovered in his 20-year career as forester working in 23 African countries. His inspiration also comes from textile patterns and processes used by the bogolon makers in Mali. [1] Different color tones can be developed in turned wood, masked with mud, treated with bleach, and scorched with fire. [2]

The first thing Ed emphasized in his naturally no-nonsense way is **all three of these techniques can hurt you**. BLEACHES can damage your eyes, your skin, and your clothes. Read the label. Wear gloves and safety glasses. FIRE's dangers are obvious, but in addition take three other safety steps... First, clear the work area of other combustibles. Second, always have a fire extinguisher within easy reach. Third, pay close attention to your hands and clothing in relation to the flame location. EARTH (MUD, in this case) when heated with a direct flame can start spitting and shooting around quickly and unpredictably. A full face mask and long sleeves are advisable. [3] [4] [After all that, why is this man smiling?]

A 2-part bleach solution can be used to create a variety of colors and tones. When applied and left to dry, the effect will be to lighten the wood. But when the bleach solution is applied and heated with a torch, the opposite effect is achieved. With open-grained pieces, the bleach concentrates in the pores and when heated you can get a very dramatic two-tone effect. [5]

The Earth(Mud)/Fire techniques Ed next demonstrated have been in use for centuries in cultures around the globe to decorate things made out of plain woods. The bowl shown here is an example of using mud as a “mask” and fire to create color. [6]

Woods that work best are *diffuse porous* – maple, cherry, pear, apple, holly, and poplar.



## FEBRUARY DEMONSTRATION

MICHAEL BLAKE

The earth/mud Ed uses as a “resist” is actually **Potter’s Clay**. This kind of mud has all the characteristics you need to resist fire...

- Consistent particle size, no chunks.
- Low levels of sand and loam.
- High level of clay.

Water is added to the potter’s clay to achieve a consistency somewhere between pancake batter and biscuit dough. Ed also described the consistency he wants as “thin drywall mud”. (All these terms being somewhat subjective, the message is to play around with the mix until you get something that works.) Ed mixes his mud in an old blender he found at a yard sale. Good tip!

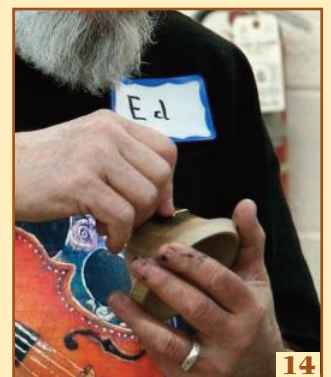
The mixture can be applied with a pastry bag and appropriate tip, but Ed uses a **plastic mustard bottle**. And not just any old mustard bottle, but **Plockmans** brand mustard. After trying several ketchup and other mustard bottles, Ed found that the Plockman bottle has just the right size hole in the nozzle and fits his hand perfectly for easy control and accurate application. [7]

Next, using a butane, propane, or MAPP gas torch, Ed uses light passes of the flame to avoid burning the wood too deeply. [8]

Then spray water on the entire charred area [9] and carefully wipe off the mud [10]. It is important not to sand the mudded/charred area to avoid smearing the carbon. For a finish, natural waxes like beeswax can be rubbed in, but avoid any waxes that contain solvents (floor waxes). Tung oil-based finishes will penetrate and harden the charred area and can be worked to a glossy finish if desired.

As a two-part finale, Ed showed us how to apply Gesso [11], followed by Hide Glue and Eggshell [12], to the outside of a plain cherry bowl for a unique and spectacular look. Then he drilled small holes in a bowl part way through [13] and created a “staple” from copper wire to insert in the holes. Multiple staples can be used to create a variety of patterns. [14]

Thanks to Ed for an entertaining, informative, and eye-opening program.



## YOUR MILEAGE MAY VARY

GARY GUENTHER

## BLACK IS BACK

**L**IKE many woodworkers, I started with the feeling that I wanted to “show off the wood.” You may still see that as your primary, or only emphasis. That’s fine. (Think, for example, about Phil Brown’s amazing, signature “flares”.) That’s pretty much all I’ve done to date, and I still find it of great importance. But I am intrigued with the prospects of embellishments, and I aspire to colors, textures, carving, burning, and more. It’s natural, after turning a number of “pure” pieces, to be interested in doing something different – something more artistic.

In our second MCW demo, we saw some amazing colored pieces by Doug Pearson. Ed Karch surprises us on a monthly basis with his imaginative augmentations of turned objects. In an earlier demonstration, Ed showed us pyrography and piercing. At our February meeting, he expanded our minds with many new techniques, including charring. I take this opportunity to highlight a topic that has intrigued me for some time – the color black.

Black pottery comes to us from early traditions in China, Greece, and Egypt – later through Peru, Italy, Portugal, and Eastern Europe, among others. Early in the 20th century, Maria Martinez of the San Ildefonso Pueblo in New Mexico became world renowned for her modern version of “black on black” pottery. (If you are not familiar with her work, look her up in Wikipedia, and Google some images.) Similar works also come from the neighboring Santa Clara Pueblo, from Mata Ortiz and Oaxaca in Mexico, and from Lithuania, Portugal, and elsewhere. Blackware represents an honored custom. Woodturners are now also following in this tradition, as evidenced by like last year’s AAW exhibit *Woodturning in Basic Black* (see [www.woodturner.org/gallery/aaw\\_exhibits/Black/BasicBlack.htm](http://www.woodturner.org/gallery/aaw_exhibits/Black/BasicBlack.htm)).

Molly Winton, a woodturner in Washington State, is achieving well-deserved recognition for her carving, burning, textures, and exquisite black-on-black pieces incorporating all these techniques (which begin, of course, with outstanding designs

COVER FOR AAW EXHIBIT WOODTURNING IN BASIC BLACK



and perfectly-turned forms).

Why turn wood black? Wood can be very beautiful on its own, and we treasure burls and spalting and grain patterns and contrasts between heart wood and sap wood, but it is also a working medium for artists with tools. A piece of wood is a blank canvas. Making it black emphasizes the form and subtle gradations of detail that vary with lighting and orientation. We see shape, as well as reflections and shadows. The subtleties catch our eyes. Black is not a single color but can carry shades of green, blue, purple, and brown. The wood can still present its grain structure. Surface elements and textures stand out like never before. Plain woods with little inherent interest of their own can take on an array of new, attractive characteristics.

Black is a natural color for some woods. Ebony (*Diospyros ebenum*, and several other *Diospyros* species) and African Blackwood (a.k.a. “mpingo”, *Dalbergia melanoxylon*) are traditional woods prized for furniture, flooring, carvings, knife handles, chess sets, pool cues, walking sticks, and musical instru-

## YOUR MILEAGE MAY VARY

GARY GUENTHER

ments (such as clarinets, oboes and various “pipes”, piano keys, fingerboards, tuning pegs, etc). Woodturners use them for finials, pedestals, and inlays, among other things.

Unfortunately, these species are now endangered and very expensive. This does not mean that we, as woodturners, must do without black. There are many simple, practical, inexpensive ways to make common woods black, or to add black, to suit our needs. The problem is knowing how to select one, or several, of the many methods, for experimenting to find your own personal favorites.

The purpose of this article is to encourage you to give ‘black’ a try by presenting some of these techniques so you are aware of them and can make an educated choice for how to begin. It is important to note that these methods result in substitutes, not in replacements, because ebony and African blackwood are very hard and dense (their heartwoods both sink in water), and they have other unique turning characteristics that will not be reproduced by artificial techniques.

I will briefly discuss black dyes, inks and markers, vinegar and steel wool, charring, black paint, black shoe polish, and woodburning (pyrography), as well as resists for defining the colored areas. You can probably think of others. Whole articles could be written about each topic – this will be just a quick introduction to some simple concepts. Play around and have fun with them. [NOTE: Some of the following information comes from the participants of the April 23, 2008 WoodCentral chatroom on this topic, hosted by Steve Russell – the link is no longer active.]

### BLACK DYES

Dyes are “in solution”. They do not involve pigments or colloids that cover the surface. They are best used on all-black pieces because they spread through the pores and can bleed into unexpected locations. When using dyes, the wood grain shows through clearly. Alcohol-based dyes will not raise the wood grain but it is reported that they may be less color fast than water-based dyes. Application is

by any means you choose – paper towels, brushes, rags, immersion, etc.

A number of aniline dyes are available in craft stores with various carriers such as oil, water, or alcohol. You can add red or blue to the black to change its appearance. Once applied, they can be resuspended with like sol-



**BLACK VESSEL**  
TURNED, TEXTURED, BRANDED & DYED  
WITH FIEBINGS LEATHER DYE  
BY MOLLY WINTON

vents, even after drying (not good), and they are reported to be toxic. One example is alcohol-based leather dyes such as Fiebings ‘USMC Black’, which can be obtained from Tandy Leather Factory at [www.tandyleatherfactory.com/home/department/Liquids/Dyes/2100-114.aspx?feature=Product\\_3](http://www.tandyleatherfactory.com/home/department/Liquids/Dyes/2100-114.aspx?feature=Product_3) or from a shoe repair shop. This is said by some to be “nasty stuff” for which a respirator and chemical-resistant gloves are needed. Others feel it is “no big deal.” You decide.

Water-based “clothing” dyes, such as RIT, are a lot safer and quite inexpensive. Silk dyes have been recommended. Water-based dyes will raise the grain, so you’ll want to raise it with water first and sand it back before the application of the dye. These dyes may have a tendency to be more light fast.

There are some “metal complex” dyes out there, such as TransTint, that are said to be very color fast and may be worth investigating. These can be mixed with water or alcohol but are quite expensive. They advertise an “ebony black”.

### MARKERS & INKS

Permanent, “archival” black markers act like dyes and can be used for small pieces or details. They are expensive and don’t work very well over large areas because of uneven application.

India ink is a thin, colloidal suspension of carbon in water and is quite versatile. It can be airbrushed on, or simply brushed on or padded on with a cloth. Like dyes, it is best used on all-black pieces because it can bleed extensively. India inks often include shel-

## YOUR MILEAGE MAY VARY

GARY GUENTHER

lac as a binder. One of the beauties of India ink is that after several coats, the carbon buildup can be burnished to a soft luster with a paper towel or a stone or a steel rod. (This doesn't work well with dyes.) You can chose to burnish some parts and not others to create subtle patterns. This could also be done before application of the ink to achieve a subtly different result.

"Drawing ink" can also be used. These are typically soluble dyes with shellac as a binder. They can be thinned with water and are typically permanent to light. (One brand is Windsor & Newton.) Several coats are generally required. Both of these inks react well under an oil finish and do not spread when the oil is applied.

## VINEGAR &amp; STEEL WOOL

The term "ebonizing" is traditionally associated with the use of iron and vinegar to make a solution that reacts chemically with the tannins in wood to darken it. (This has the same chemical basis of the historic iron-gall inks.) Resulting colors vary tremendously from wood to wood, typically ranging from brown to black. Oak, cherry, ash, butternut, and walnut are high in tannin. Tannic acid (in the form of tea) can be added to the wood first to enhance the effect, particularly in low-tannin woods. This method can produce interesting "dark" or "aged" effects in woods that don't blacken. This can be an effective technique, particularly with multiple coats, but not everyone is happy with the results.

The procedure involves soaking a piece of oil-free steel wool (or rusty nails) in vinegar (uncovered) for a few hours or days, depending on who you listen to (I recommend the latter). Filter or strain off the clear liquid and use it to "paint" the wood. The resulting color darkens as it oxidizes with oxygen in the air. The reaction is not instantaneous but should go to completion in a few minutes. Repeated applications may be necessary to achieve desired results. The solution soaks into end grain more than into side grain, so the result may be blotchy. Small pieces tend to look better than large pieces. This method can be

combined with others as needed. Make only what you can use – it doesn't keep well. This color/stain can be removed with the application of lemon juice -- much as you can use the latter to clean the black stains off your hands that you get from touching the tool steel when turning wet tannic woods like oak.

## CHARRING

"Flaming" a vase, a bowl, or a platter can produce a terrific ebony color, but care must be taken when applying heat, with frequent cooling cycles. A wide variety of torch types, sizes, and shapes are available, from the familiar *Propane Torch* to newer *Butane Micro Torches*. It's a good idea to have several



ED KARCH CHARRING A VESSEL WITH A MAPP TORCH

sizes with adjustable flames. The larger versions are good for blackening large areas, while the small ones can be used to "paint on" black designs much like an artist would apply color with a brush.

If you torch a surface that has fine detail, like beads with deep gullets, you have to use an adjunct to color the gullets because the fire will not penetrate these deep areas effectively. On textured surfaces it will burn the top and not the bottom of the texture, which can be attractive if done purposefully. Burning can also be used to darken, highlight, or remove the soft areas of growth rings. This can be very effective in coarse-grained woods like ash and oak.

Ed Karch showed us that bleaching before burning can increase the contrast ratio. He also demonstrated the use of "mud" as a resist to define patterns that will remain unburned. Charred areas can be brushed, burnished, waxed, and finished in many different ways to create your own unique, decorative patterns in the wood.

## YOUR MILEAGE MAY VARY

GARY GUENTHER

**BLACK PAINT**

Black gesso has an acrylic base and is quite thick, so it won't bleed through or let the grain show through, unless used as a thin wash. This has a very flat, heavy finish that can be cut through (sgraffito) but probably cannot be burnished.

Liberon makes a selection of "earth pigments" (including "vegetable black") that are natural earth powders for coloring. They can be mixed with various carriers and do not dissolve but are held in suspension. They have been recommended by some artistic woodturners.

**BLACK SHOE POLISH**

Black shoe polish is a wax that can be used to fill open grain as a dark "highlight", or as a general dark overcoat. If you want to put a finish over it, seal it first with a coat of shellac.

**WOODBURNING (PYROGRAPHY)**

A woodburning tool can be used with a variety of tips for small features, patterns, textures, and designs, but it is not appropriate for plain, large-area work. Pyrography can be used to outline areas for sealing and defining areas to be colored in other ways.

**RESISTS**

If only a portion of the vessel is to be made black, a method is needed to define the extent of the black area. For some forms, very straight edges are important. Rims, bands, and end grain are particularly susceptible to overflow or bleed through. Liquids can wick through the wood pores and come out in surprising places – even on the opposite side. One method constraining liquids is pyrography; another is the use of finishes. A burned line can seal pores and act as a barrier. Several well-dried coats of finish will plug the pores and retard bleed through.

Use unlike materials – for example, alcohol-based dyes might penetrate alcohol-based sealers (such as shellac, particularly if it includes stearic acid). A clay or 'mud' resist (to be removed later) can be applied in patterns to prevent charring, as we saw in Ed Karch's February demonstration.

Unintentional resist action can be a disadvantage, as well. If the surface to be blackened by a liquid product has any residual wax or finish, the dye will not penetrate fully or evenly and can result in blotchy appearance. On the other hand, a dye may look (undesirably) different on side grain and end grain (blotchy again), and a partial sealer coat can help even this out. For this reason, plain, tight-grained woods are often selected for blackening. Clearly, experimentation, practice, and knowledge of your woods will improve performance.



ED KARCH APPLYING MUD FROM HIS FAVORITE MUSTARD BOTTLE APPLICATOR

A good method at a rim or boundary, if the black does not penetrate too deeply, is to re-turn after blackening, to produce a crisp new edge. (This takes planning so as not to remove a needed chuck tenon or some other support method.) Purposely cutting through a blackened surface to reveal the wood underneath (with a tool or by sanding) is a nice way of adding patterns (sgraffito) or emphasizing textures.

*Always use common sense. Things that work in one situation may not work in another. Follow all Safety Rules. If it feels wrong, it probably is – stop and rethink. Your Mileage May Vary.*



## FUTURE DEMONSTRATIONS

GARY GUENTHER

### ► March 12th – Stan Sherman – Segmented Vessels

We have all enjoyed and admired Stan's outstanding segmented vessels. Stan will explain his methods for overall design, cutting the segments and sections, and the gluing sections together. Finally, Stan will demonstrate his methods for holding his pieces on the lathe securely and show us how he shapes and hollows his pieces to achieve his always intriguing and often spectacular results.



### ► April 9th – Phil Brown – Design Elements & Turning A Signature Flare

It's time for our Founder and President to show us how he makes his spectacular and coveted flared vessels. I also think it would also be a good idea if we heard some words about good form and design elements in general. Phil will fill the bill.



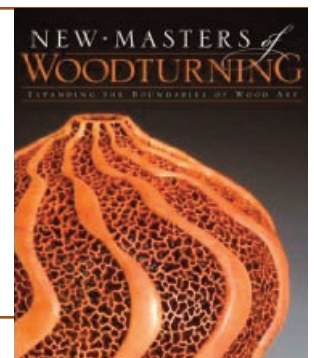
### ► May 7th– Barbara Dill – Multi-Axis Work

Barbara left the nursing profession in 1989 to become a professional woodworker and became a full-time turner and teacher after a class at Arrowmont. She is known locally for her beautiful salad bowls and hollow forms from local woods and teaches at the Visual Arts Center of Richmond. Currently, she is fascinated with the adventures of multi-axis spindle turning, which she demonstrates via a conceptual model that helps clarify the tools, techniques, and results. ([www.barbaradill.com](http://www.barbaradill.com))



### ► August 6th – J. Paul Fennell – Creating a Work of Art – Design, Hollowing, Carving, Piercing, and Finishing.

Paul is a Charter Member of AAW. You can see his work on the cover of (and inside) the recently issued book "New Masters of Woodturning" and at [www.jpaulfennell.com](http://www.jpaulfennell.com). If you attended our meeting at Jerry and Deena Kaplan's house, you may remember Paul's exquisite *Woodturners Wifflebat and Ball* in the Library. Try to plan your vacation time so as not to miss this demo – you will not regret it.



### ► November 12th – Warren Christopher – Bowl Turning.

Warren Carpenter found his passion in woodturning in 1999. He says: "There are few things better than finding a burl and figuring out the best way to turn it into artwork." Warren is a past president of the Carolina Mountain Woodturners and a frequent teacher of woodturning in a number of venues including Arrowmont. He exhibits in many galleries in the Southeast and also owns his own gallery in South Carolina. Warren has a unique sense of humor and teaches with tremendous energy. He will show us some interesting aspects of bowl turning based on a burl or crotch piece.



If you have suggestions for future demonstrators, or would consider demonstrating yourself, please contact Gary Guenther by e-mail at [gary.guenther@att.net](mailto:gary.guenther@att.net) or call 301/384-7594.

## AAW OPEN LETTER

CASSANDRA SPEIER

Dear Capital Area Woodturners,

I recently had the privilege of attending my first AAW Board meeting in late January. The meeting was held in Albuquerque, New Mexico, the site of AAW's 23rd Annual National Symposium. The meeting was multi-purpose in that we worked on the business and strategic planning of AAW and continuing the work needed to produce the annual symposium. Board members had the opportunity to tour the symposium venue, which is beautiful, spacious, easy to negotiate, and across the street from the host hotels. This year's symposium is going to be a great one! And, it will be great for so many reasons:

- An amazing slate of 50 demonstrators with 140+ rotations
- Special exhibits such as *The Spindle*, organized and presented by the Professional Outreach Program
- *Spirit of the Southwest*, the juried exhibit for AAW members focusing on the Southwest's geography, culture and history
- Resident's artist program featuring Jean Francois Escoulen
- The always popular and fun *Food Affair & Auction Gala*
- Lastly, this year's symposium will be great because of it's location... **Albuquerque**

Albuquerque is a great city thriving with true Southwestern spirit, more than 300 hundred years of history and a unique blend of cultures making it one of the most colorful cities in the United States. It is at once playful and laid back, with a classy bohemian personality resulting from a combination of Latin, Indian and European flavors. It is a modern city of a million residents where both the opera and Old Town are equally celebrated. The downtown area, where the symposium will be held, offers sassy, margarita filled nightclubs, cool lounges and every corner of the city is bursting with restaurants serving countless variations of the spectacular local cuisine. Albuquerque is home to more than 100 local art galleries, studios and theaters ([www.collectors-guide.com](http://www.collectors-guide.com)), many of which are within walking dis-

tance from the host hotels and convention center. There is even a museum dedicated to celebrating the rattlesnake... the **Rattlesnake Museum** in Old Town.

Renowned Santa Fe is a mere 1½ hours driving time, and now Albuquerque hosts the **New Mexico Rail Runner Express** ([www.nmrailrunner.com](http://www.nmrailrunner.com)) making the trip easier, faster and at \$8 roundtrip, very affordable. So if you haven't yet registered to attend the symposium, do so ASAP, and prepare to immerse yourself in the rich culture and history of Albuquerque where, with 310 days of sunshine, every day is paradise!

The board members also had the privilege to meet with members (John Ellis, Rich McCartney, Tom Cour, Al Mirman and Michael Mocho) of the local club, New Mexico Woodturners ([www.nmwoodturners.org](http://www.nmwoodturners.org)), whose members will in large part be responsible for providing most of the local volunteers and logistics so important for a successful symposium. **Charles Swift** attended, driving from Lubbock Texas, a great commitment. So, NMWT, thank you in advance from AAW and its members for all the time, energy and back labor to be invested by your members. It cannot happen without you!

Be on alert for the next edition of the *American Woodturner Journal*. It is the first edition produced by renowned woodturner/sculptor **Betty Scarpino**. I had the privilege of seeing an advance mock up, and I can tell you it is wonderful. Be sure to savor each and every page.

The 2008/2009 AAW Resource Directory should be arriving on your doorstep soon. Enclosed with the directory will be your AAW Membership Card. Be sure to look closely to avoid inadvertently missing your membership card.

Lastly, and to reiterate **Malcolm Tibbetts** advice in last month's *Letter*... if you haven't renewed your AAW membership, I encourage you to do so as soon as possible. AAW is able to be a significant world-wide organization because of your membership!

Happy Turning!

CASSANDRA SPEIER  
BOARD MEMBER

## CLICK IT

GARY GUENTHER

**RECOMMENDED WEBSITE** – [www.hobbitouseinc.com/personal/woodpics/indextotal.htm](http://www.hobbitouseinc.com/personal/woodpics/indextotal.htm)

**T**HIS month's site is an unbelievable compendium – obviously a labor of love – by Paul Hinds, a woodturner with over 20 years experience. This basically non-commercial site currently lists 694 different types of wood and includes 19,291 unique pictures of those woods. 12,456 of those photos have enlargements. In addition, there are over 60 full or partial “fact sheets” (with more coming).

Paul's goals are to show, with accurate color and detail, pictures of every species of common and exotic wood he could get his hands on (and some he couldn't). The site includes several links, including one to a cross-referenced table of common and botanical names including over 9000 names. The fact sheets contain botanical and common names

and information on the tree, type, color, grain, texture, properties, workability, durability, hardness, strength, finish, stability, bending, odor, taste, sources, uses, weight, drying, availability, and cost. I think that pretty well covers anything you might want to know.

For its very large size, the site is quite easy to use, with the ability to search by letters of the alphabet leading to pages for each wood type. Or, you can just scroll down and look at the excellent, alphabetical images of wood chips. Amazingly, I can use this site effectively and without frustration with only a 56k modem, so don't fear it because of its size. Jump in and look around. If you're like me, it will be a while before you come up for air.

## TURN THE PAGE

GARY GUENTHER

### The Art of Turned-Wood Bowls: A Gallery of Contemporary Masters – and More

As a woodturner who began in the 2000's, I am very interested in the history and roots of our passion. Who were the pioneers, and how did we get to where we are today? What was happening in the 70s and 80s? Who were the pacesetters? What shapes were they turning? What woods were they using? Are they still working today?

Edward Jacobson created a unique and comprehensive collection of wood bowls and vessels, masterpieces made by then-contemporary American turners. This book highlights the early careers and beautiful works of the likes of David Ellsworth, Stephen Hogbin, Todd Hoyer, Bill Hunter, Ron Kent, Mark and Melvin Lindquist, Ed and Philip Moulthrop, Dale Nish, Rude Osolnik, James Prestini, Al Stirt, Bob Stocksdale, Jack Straka, Del Stubbs, and more. This book will bring hours of reading and viewing pleasure and remains even today a source of inspiration for our efforts at the lathe.

This book came highly recommended and does not disappoint. In 1985, Jane and Arthur Mason viewed the Jacobson collection at the Renwick Gallery and became interested in turned wood objects. Their collection is now famed (see the review of their book in the December 2008 MCW Newsletter).



- By Edward Jacobson
- Published by E. P. Dutton, Inc. ©1985
- 88 pages  
Illustrated in color.  
B&W historic images of turners
- Hard cover  
(11¼" x 8¾")
- Available used from Amazon resellers for \$20

## MCW MEETING SCHEDULE – 2009

Meetings are held on the Thursday before the second Saturday each month, from 7:00-9:00 PM, at the Woodworkers Club in Rockville, Maryland. See our website for a map to the meeting site.

<b>2009 MEETING DATES</b>	<b>JAN 8</b>	<b>FEB 12</b>	<b>MAR 12</b>	<b>APR 9</b>	<b>MAY 7</b>	<b>JUN 11</b>
	<b>JUL 9</b>	<b>AUG 6</b>	<b>SEP 10</b>	<b>OCT 8</b>	<b>NOV 12</b>	<b>DEC 10</b>

## MCW'S TURNING JOURNAL

A monthly publication of Montgomery County Woodturners – An American Association of Woodturners (AAW) Chapter.  
Editor: Michael Blake – Phone: 301/589-1815 – Email: mb7298@comcast.net  
We're on the Web at: [montgomerycountywoodturners.org/](http://montgomerycountywoodturners.org/)

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Candid Photography	Gary Guenther	gary.guenther@att.net	301/384-7594
S&T Recording	Richard Webster	gtjazz@comcast.net	301/251-1605
Wood Identification	Ed Karch	ekarch@karch.com	703/631-3263
Exhibit Committee	Phil Brown, Hal Burdette, and Clif Poodry		

## MEMBER DISCOUNT PROGRAMS

### ROCKVILLE WOODWORKERS CLUB – [woodworkersclub.com](http://woodworkersclub.com)

MCW and other club members, remember to support the Woodworkers Club by purchasing turning supplies during our meetings and save 10% on the retail price.



### 2SAND.COM – [www.2sand.com](http://www.2sand.com) or call 301-897-1590

2Sand.com is a coated abrasive specialist focused on fast service and fair prices that provides superior sanding discs, sandpaper sheets, and woodturning tools to woodshops. MCW Member Discount is 10% (discount code available in the restricted area of the MCW Website)



### CRAFT SUPPLIES USA – [woodturnerscatalog.com](http://woodturnerscatalog.com)

Club members can save 10% on all finishes & disc abrasives from Craft Supplies USA. Just mention your club name and save, all year long. You can always see current club specials by clicking on the members login button on their homepage. New 15% specials are updated on the 1st of the month, which can be accessed by using on the link above and going to the club member login located on the lower right portion of the page.



### HARTVILLE TOOL CLUB – [www.hartvilletool.com](http://www.hartvilletool.com)

Members get a 15% discount, with MCW receiving a 3% rebate. If you have not signed up for this program, let Stan Wellborn know you want to do so. He will let Hartville know you are an MCW member and sign you up. Catalogs and ordering instructions are available or at meetings.

