

## Symposium Tips for First-Time Attendees

Excerpts from comments by J. Paul Fennell, Jerry Brownrigg, Norm Hinman, Brad Packard, Kelly Dunn, Alan Lacer, Bonnie Klein, and Blake Hickerson, drawn from a Spring 2006 article in *American Woodturner* and more.

This is a place to make new friends, and these friendships may last for the rest of your life. Strike up conversations and attend social events. Participate in a Special Interest Night (SIN) event on Friday night.



Study the schedule of presentations ahead of time (see [www.woodturner.org/sym/sym2008/Grid.pdf](http://www.woodturner.org/sym/sym2008/Grid.pdf)) to make the choices easier at the symposium. It's impossible to see more than a small fraction of the demonstrations, so choose the ones you think may offer the most with respect to your needs and interests. Be flexible -- don't be afraid to make adjustments to your plans, based on your experiences and comments from your co-attendees and friends, as the event proceeds. If you sit in on a demo and decide it is really not for you, move on to another demo.

Take a digital camera, extra batteries, and extra memory cards or a laptop computer. Between the demos and the Instant Gallery, you could be taking many hundreds of photos each day.

Take a notebook and several pens; make an accurate set of notes! No matter how good your memory is, you won't remember three days worth of details.

While observing the Instant Gallery, take a good set of pictures and notes. This is for inspiration, not for the purpose of copying. Don't miss the very important Instant Gallery *critique*. You will learn so much.

One of the great values of coming together is the ability to walk up to some of the best turners in the world and ask a question. This is a friendly community -- do not be intimidated about asking a well-known turner for advice.

Plan on looking critically at products in the trade show. To see and handle the real thing, and be able to ask questions, is far better than any catalog. Take it slow at the trade show. Do not think it will all disappear if you do not buy something on the spot. Ordering items after you return home means you will have to pay shipping, but this will be at least partially offset by not having to pay sales tax on items you might have purchased at the show.

Demonstrators will leave life-long impressions. When you return home, you will be motivated by what you have experienced during this incredible event. Prepare to put what you have seen and learned into immediate action after the conference. Turn, turn, turn!

*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*

