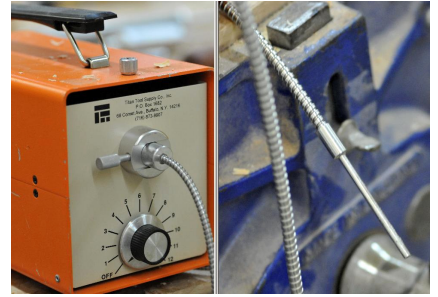


Several interesting tools from Paul Fennell

I could probably write a year's worth of YMMV articles from what I saw and learned at Paul Fennell's excellent demo for MCW. I mean, blind hollowing in the dark and judging wall thickness by the intensity of the light transmitted into the vessel via a fiber optic bundle? Whoa! That takes things to a whole new level. I know that JoHannes Michelsen uses transmitted light for his hats too, but it's still an awe-inspiring concept. The results are amazing. Just look at that wall thickness and regularity!



I don't think I'll be doing this at home, but there were many other nice, simple things evident in this demo that we can all take advantage of. I'm not saying Paul invented these things, but he is certainly using them to good effect, and if they're good enough for him, they're...

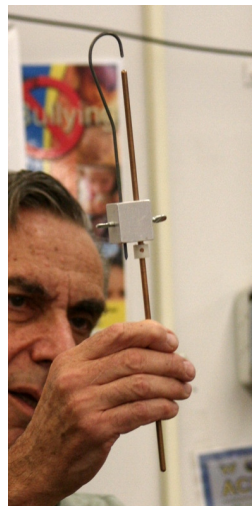
First, how about that nice little homemade multi-tip shear scraper with the teardrop cutter? It does a nice job in spaces that would be awkward to access with an ordinary tool, and it works without moving the tool rest. The round shaft permits it to be used easily at any angle. That goes on my "make" list.



Second, we have cross-shaped handles for improved grip on high-torque tools, like those angled hollowing tools whose cutting edge is not on the center line of the shaft. He starts with a square wood blank and just cuts out the corners with a table saw. Several of his cross handles have a slightly more complex shape with a little more material left in place at the base of the cuts for added strength near the shaft. This shape provides a good, firm grip with the fingers and thumb, rather than with the skin of the palm. I'm still a chicken and prefer an outrigger (torque arrestor) on my angled tools, but that's just me. Note: this photo is not

backwards – Paul does his hollowing with the lathe running in the “reverse” direction to provide him with a more comfortable arm position.

Third, we have Paul's "Jimmy Johnson" caliper -- a different type of homemade measuring tool that works well right around the difficult-to-measure shoulders at the necks of hollow forms with a small hole. The two sides slide up and down relative to each other in a central metal or wooden block tapped for set screws, and the measurement at the tip is transferred to an equal measurement between the block and a calibrated spacer mounted on the bottom of the straight side. Beyond the neck area, he uses traditional calipers. (Note: in the photo, Paul has not yet rotated the caliper to the angle at which the measurement will be made, down the axis of the vessel.)

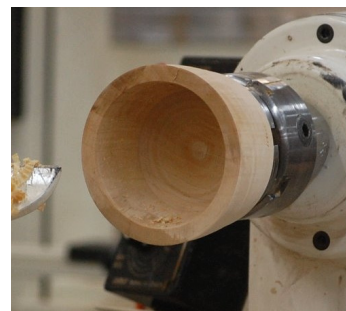


Fourth, just for fun, we have a "gun drill". I don't remember if he said where he got this thing, and I'm not going to go out and buy one myself, but what an idea! It sure works. I was unaware of these things till now, so I found this to be a novel approach. This one uses compressed air to clear the chips quickly and efficiently.

the piece. He often uses the same one over again for similarly-sized vessels. The fit can be adjusted in either direction -- by turning away a little material or by wrapping the vessel with a few rounds of masking



tape. This tool permits him to complete the bottom without leaving a nib that has to be sawed and sanded off -- that's a good thing. Push the vessel in to get a firm fit and then tap it with a tool handle to true it up, rotating it near the tool rest and looking for wobbles. The final cuts have to be done with a light touch because the vessel can shift if you get too aggressive. A little extra tape is there "just in case".



Sixth, we have this sweet little detail tool for cutting those super-fine decorative rings to finish the foot of a vessel. It's just a piece of 3/16" drill rod cut to length and ground with four faces into a pointed negative-rake scraper. [First grind the end into a symmetric wedge with two faces; then grind a small, shallow, triangular negative rake on the top; and finally, grind a flat, triangular-shaped bevel on the end (under the rake) creating the pointed tip, and you've got it.] The delightful mesquite handle is the frosting on the cake.



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