

BAY AREA



WOODTURNERS
ASSOCIATION
A CALIFORNIA NONPROFIT CORPORATION
LOCAL CHAPTER AAW

February 2015

Volume 19, Issue 2

February Presentation: Finishes with Ron Ashby



We all spend a lot of time turning the best pieces we can. Then we spend too much time sanding our pieces. But we generally don't devote much thought to the finish, yet it's the quality of the finish that most determines the beauty and marketability of the piece.

Do you ever have questions about finishes? What's the best finish to use for a particular turning? How to get the best possible finish on a piece? Which finishes are food safe? What kinds of dyes work best with which finishes? And my favorite, why does Tung Oil sometimes work and sometimes just bead up?

Our February presenter is Ron Ashby, a well-regarded expert in the field of furniture finishing and refinishing. Although not a wood turner, Ron is an expert in finishes and has been supplying finishes to turners for over 30 years. Ron will talk about environmental factors such as lighting, humidity, airflow and temperature and how they directly affect a finish. He will discuss the different kinds of finishes, their chemistry, which are food safe. He will also talk about how to prepare a piece for the best finish.

Ron would like to use the "show and tell" as an opportunity to answer specific questions club members have about finishes. If you have a piece that has given you problems, please bring it in.

More information about Ron Ashby can be found at his web site:

<http://www.shellac.net>

What is Shellac?

Shellac is an animal product, a resin secreted from the *Coccus lacca* (lac beetle), a scale that feeds on certain trees in India and southern Asia.

After hatching, the nifty little bug snoops around for a place to eat, selecting a stem or leaf as its breakfast counter. It has a sharp teensy beak, and it uses that to puncture the tissue of the plant, and settle in for a lifetime of sucking nourishment.

After feeding, the insect secretes a resin, which dries and hardens into a protective covering called lac. The lac is collected, crushed, washed, and dried. After cleaning and heating, it is drawn into thin sheets of finished shellac. The level of refinement, the timing of harvest, and source of the lac, determine the specification color that comes to you, the happy woodworker.





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

9:30—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 [John Cobb](mailto:John.Cobb@bayareawoodturners.org) if you would like to be on the agenda.

2015 Event Schedule

Feb 14th	Ron Ashby: Finishing Techniques
Mar 8th	John Cobb: Two Piece Hollow Forms 8:30-12:30
Apr 11th	TBA
May 23rd	Jason Breach (UK Turner)
May 25th	TBA Jason Breach Workshop
June 13th	TBA
July 11th	Turn for Troops 8:30-12:30
Aug 8th	BBQ
Sept 12th	Guilio Marcolongo(Tentative) 8:30-3:30
Oct 10th	Andrew Baxter: Xmas Ornaments 8:30-12:30
Nov 14th	John Beaver 8:30-3:30
Dec 12th	Holiday Party, Auction and Raffle 11:30-3:00

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.

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January meeting of the Bay Area Woodturners Association

Some random notes: The tree of the month presented by Tony was Red Eucalyptus.

Bill Mellberg and Jim Rodgers were presented with engraved gouges to honor their service to BAWA; Bill as past President and Jim for being 3 time past president.



Last December, Dean Adkins found a box which contained the original BAWA charter certificate, which he gave to club president, Bill Mellberg. BAWA was founded in October, 1989 and will be 26 years old this October. Merryll Saylan is the only founding member of BAWA that is still active.



Many presenters in show and tell displayed segmented bowls based on learnings from the Symposium held in San Antonio Texas in October and hosted by our own Jim Rodgers. Dave Fleisig presented a “weggie sled” he made based on plans from the symposium. Go to <http://segeasy.com> to download plans.

Jim Rodgers will offer a class in Beginning Segmented Turning at PHEC starting Thursday, January 22. Joel Albert is offering a class in making salt and pepper grinders starting Feb 3. Roz Harper is offering a class in embellishing with chalk paint January 22. Jan Blumer and John Cobb are offering bowl turning classes starting in February and March. See the Mount Diablo Adult Education web site <http://mdae-mdusd-ca.schoolloop.com/catalog> for class descriptions, times, and fees.

Jim Rodgers, January presenter: Basic Platters

“A platter is not solely a meat delivery vessel. It can also be a playground for embellishment.”

Jim took us through the basic steps to make a simple 10 inch platter. He started by attaching the blank to a glue block and mounting the glue block onto a faceplate. This presents the back side of the platter to the woodturner. After carefully trueing the edge a rebate is carved in the center of the blank that matches your chuck.



Jim stressed the importance of measurement. If you to know the thickness of the blank, the depth of the rebate, and the thickness you want the finished platter to be, you will indeed have a platter at the end and not a round piece of wood with a hole in the middle. Jim also stressed taking careful cuts and the proper technique for pull and push cuts with the bowl gouge.

After cutting the rebate, the piece is reversed and fitted onto a chuck. The glue block is cut away and the face of the platter is carved, keeping track of the thickness of the wood by periodically measuring the thickness.

Finally, the piece is reversed again onto a jam chuck or vacuum chuck so the back of the platter can be finished.



Trees of the Bay Area #9

Pseudotsuga menziesii

By Tony Wolcott

Political tree issues are a good way to start the new year. Wood is plentiful in the bay area. This does not just refer to California native trees but also to the hundreds of exotic species that have been planted here for over a thousand years. There is no reason to pay high prices for exotic turning wood imported into this area. In fact there are several reasons not to pay those prices.



If you do not know the source of your wood, there is a good chance you are supporting criminal removal of trees, cut down just for their economic value and at the peril of that local environment. This does not just refer to third world countries or to rain forest clear cutting. If you are buying redwood burl, you are supporting the massive wounding and eventual death of the world's largest trees. In the last year this has become epidemic. The local sale of burl wood, redwood or otherwise should be carefully investigated for the source.

Another reason for sourcing wood locally is to keep the industry local. There is no reason for long distance hauling of waxed over wood blanks. In a day we waste more good wood locally than what fits in a big semi-truck trailer. The notion of not wasting what we have is environmentally sound reasoning. Clean up construction sites and come up with cut-offs from four by six inch Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*). This wood makes excellent bowls and spindle projects. The City of El Cerrito removed an old bridge over Cerrito Creek, the salvaged redwood is choice heartwood. You will never find wood like that at Home Depot or even the reputable wood outlets.

John Cobb and I are taking out some others to visit the dump-off sites for tree services. This is an excellent source of local wood. With a little instruction one can find some great wood and come away with some wood blanks. Whether it is salvaging old wood from construction sites or following the sound of a neighborhood chain saw, this is how we make use of our local resources.

Getting back to our *Pseudotsuga menziesii*, the Douglas fir is one of our Gymnosperms or conifers. These are cone bearing trees with needle like leaves. Most conifers are evergreen, but some like the western larch (*Larix occidentalis*) are deciduous. Douglas fir is evergreen and is one of four genera that have pitch pockets and resin canals. So do not be surprised when you are working with this wood and you suddenly get a splash of pitch over your face. Or you may have a nice bowl sitting in the hot sun and at the end of the day your bowl is half full with resin. Pine is by far the worst for these pitch pockets. The family Pinaceae contains all four genera with resin canals – Pinus (pine), Larix (larch), Picea (spruce), and Pseudotsuga (Douglas fir).

(Continued on following page)

Pseudotsuga menziesii continued

Another not so subtle reminder that common names are problematic: Douglas fir is not a true fir, not a fir at all. Only *Abies spp.* are true firs. The Latin 'Pseudotsuga' means false hemlock due to the similarities of hemlock and Douglas fir. So, just to summarize, *Pseudotsuga menziesii* or Douglas fir is closely related to pines and spruces. They all have resin canals while true firs do not. The reason for the pitch pockets is immediate response to insect attack into the bark or wood. These trees literally drown the invaders, not exactly a well developed defense mechanism. Over the millenniums the gymnosperms have been outclassed by the sophistication of the angiosperms. We are witnessing the decline and eventual fall of the cone bearing trees.

The simple structure of the Douglas fir makes it easy to identify in many ways. Tracheids are the cells in coniferous wood. These cells are 100 times longer than they are in diameter. That makes for some pretty outrageous end grain. This wood often exhibits a dramatic difference between early wood and late wood, so as a child you could count the rings. As a bowl turner you might grow weary of the difference in density of early and late woods. Douglas fir is sometimes finished with sand blasting, and you can texturize the bowl quite nicely this way.

However, cones are the best way to identify conifers. The Douglas fir cone is squeezable. Each individual bract has a seed half way in and half way out of the bract. There are many Mother West Wind stories about nature. The one that goes with the Douglas fir cone involves mice. It seems that a large collection of mice were once frightened so much that they took quick refuge into the Douglas fir cones. If you look at the bract, you can see that a mouse was only able to get half way in. All you can see are the two back legs and the tail. The needles of the Douglas fir have two white racing stripes on the underside. The bark is craggy and quite thick. For all its construction value Douglas fir does not like to get wet nor does it like the dirt. Once this tree hits the forest floor it is immediately attacked by wood engravers, so be advised.

Douglas fir is a solid wood, quite strong but easily turned. The spectacular grain is eye popping. You will have to solve the end grain, and I have tried many techniques but none that I would recommend. Any help on this?

Post Script; Please notice that not once in the entire text was the word 'soft' used.



BAWA March Meeting with John Cobb



John Cobb will be our presenter in March showing a new technique for hollow forms that he has been developing. Hollowing out a block of green wood requires special skills, access to good wood and bunch of tools we don't necessarily have lying around. John's new approach uses dry flat stock and is mostly done with bowl gouges.

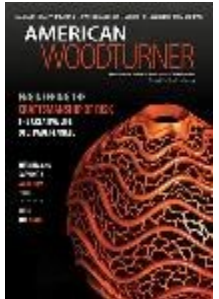
Once you have mastered the process, there is plenty opportunity to include pyrography, coloring, carving and segmented rings to put your own style on a piece. Of course we will also have show-and-tell (start working on that piece) and the renowned wood raffle.

March 8 from 8:30 - 12:00



COMING IN THE FEBRUARY ISSUE OF AMERICAN WOODTURNER

The February AAW journal should be reaching mailboxes this week. The following features and articles offer practical guidance with broad appeal to all woodturners.



- **Make a Decorative Inlay Pen** - Charles Mak describes an easy process for creating eye-catching pen designs.
- **Turning and Carving a Wave-Rim Bowl** - Capture the energy and sweep of a curling wave-form in your turned bowl, by Neil Scobie.
- **Turn the Knob** - Mike Peace demonstrates how to add spice and character to your project pulls with custom shapes and exotic woods.
- **Square Hollow Bottle from One Disk: The Evolution of an Idea** - Where do creative ideas come from? David Springett elaborates on the collaborative process he and Nick Agar followed to develop their unique designs.
- **Build a Shopmade Chuck for Offset Turnings** - An inexpensive, safe, and vibration-free way to turn offset patterns, by David Mueller.
- **Jewelry Made Easy** - Small is beautiful. Make something elegant and unique from your tag ends and scraps of wood, by Janice Levi.

EVENTS CALENDAR

The AAW lists upcoming events, including schedules for each regional symposium, on the online event calendar



AAW online event calendar is available at http://www.woodturner.org/events/event_list.asp

President's Musings

February 2015



When I started turning 5 years ago, I took a bowls class from Jim Rodger's school taught by Jan Blumer. It's a great way to learn the steps and techniques for turning a bowl in a safe environment. After spending 3 weeks turning my first bowl, we discussed finishing options and I couldn't believe what Jan said: "you will spend at least as much time finishing a piece as it took to turn it."

I had just spent three weeks laboriously turning this 6" bowl (stunningly beautiful dog bowl shape) and now I'm going to spend another three weeks finishing it? A month and a half for one single bowl? That night I opened the MDAE catalog and started looking at furniture or ceramics classes that would better suit my ADD personality. Six weeks for one piece was nuts.

Fortunately the following week we started a natural edge bowl and I was totally hooked on turning. I forgot about Jan's comment on finishing for the moment and thoroughly relished the process of hollowing a piece of wood with a bark rim flying around.

Not long after that class, I had a new bowl to finish so I grabbed a can of wipe-on-poly and proceed to put on a nice thick coat. Why put on 3 layers when I can put on just one heavy coat and let it sit overnight - easy short cut. I had just reduced finishing from Jan's ridiculous 3 weeks to a few hours - this finishing stuff is easy....

Well that bowl has long since been tossed out - not a surprise to anyone who has finished more than one bowl. A thick coat of poly is a great way to ruin a bowl. I have learned a few things since then by trial and error, casual discussions and reading online. What has finally dawned on me is that finishing is a skill just as much as woodturning. You need to apply knowledge, technique and the right products to finish a piece well. Yes it can be done in day or it can take weeks but the key is to do it right.

So to help BAWA members improve their finishing skills, we have asked Ron Ashby, who runs Shellac.net to come to our meeting this month and talk about wood preparation and finishes as it relates to woodturning. I first heard of Ron when I read a review of his presentation to Sonoma County Woodworkers and it was fantastic. I printed the article and keep in in my shop, it's the best resource I have for finishing. Ron brings a wealth of information to his presentation and we will also have a Q&A session to further answer specific questions in detail. We won't throw chips this month but I honestly believe everyone will learn valuable information about finishing.

A programming note: the BAWA calendar is in flux due to some unexpected developments. Just this week Michael Hosaluk canceled for April, Jason Breach's sawdust session is in jeopardy due to new MDAE rules and Glen Lucas canceled his September demo due to a conflict in his schedule. Our new VP for programming Paul Litzky had done a fantastic job putting our schedule together, unfortunately he gets to do it all again on short notice which is difficult at best. Thank you for all the time and effort Paul, it's definitely appreciated. If any members have suggestions for presenters, please see me or Paul.

I look forward to seeing everyone on Saturday. Remember to bring a piece for show and tell, especially if you want to talk about finishing ideas.

Turn On

John Cobb
President
Bay Area Woodturners Association

January Show and Tell



Mike Vergino—Two Segmented Bowls



Joel Albert—Jewelry Stand



Roz Harper—
Segmented Bowl
with Fused Glass



Walt
Deardorf—
Walnut Bowl



Avi Ben-Ora—Handled
Bowls



Gary Bingham—Ornament
Holders with Acorn Bird-
houses



(Continued on following page)

January Show and Tell



Bill Mellburg-
Decorative
Peruvian Bowl



David Fleisig-
Wedgie Sled



Steve Griswold-Hollow
Form



Bob Nolan-Walnut
Platter & Natural
Edged Bowl



Corwin Jones-Sphere and Pigtail Hook Tool



Bill Walzer-Two Walnut
Bowls



BAWA Classified Ads



For Sale:

Kennedy 6 drawer rolling tool chest
Two-tone brown wrinkle finish
13.5" X 20.5" X 29" High
Style 206-125633; \$200 OBO
Bill Mellberg Cell 925-699-8214
Home delivery included

Wanted: Magazines

Woodturning Design #4 Winter 2005
Woodturning Design #40 December 2012
Woodturning Design #41 February 2013

Contact:

Larry Brooks

lbextra@sbcglobal.net

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:

banjohead@comcast.net.

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

Newsletter Articles

Got a great idea you want to share with your fellow Woodturners? Whether it is a turning tool, turning technique, finishing process or anything at all related to turning, your BAWA newsletter can always use an article. If you have pictures, all the better. If you need help writing it up or taking pictures, we're here to help. That's what our club is all about - sharing.

Contact:

Louie Silva

Email: newslettereditor@bayareawoodturners.org



CRAFT SUPPLIES 10% DISCOUNT ORDER

The 10% discount applies to any published price (including sale items, close-outs, etc.) and there's no tax and S&H is free 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.