

The Lathest News

Golden Triangle Woodturners

July 2007

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A Chapter of the
American Association
of Woodturners



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We meet the first Monday of each month at 7:00 pm

East Craft Room
The Center for Visual Arts
400 East Hickory
Denton, TX

(located at the corner of Bell Avenue and Hickory)

Next meeting - July 2nd

Phil Joines Featured Demonstrator for July

Phil Joines is the founder of the GoldenTriangle Woodturners and long time local artist. He has a shop in Krum and other than summertime, hosts the hands on workshops the first Saturday after the club meetings.

Phil has been turning for about 12 years and mutilating flat boards for about 25. Besides developing his own version of the captive boring system, for the last 4 years or so he has been making and restoring both turning and flathead tools on a regular basis. Phil is one of the few people that know you can take a log on a airplane as carry on luggage as long as you tie a rope around it for a handle!

He turns everything from small jewelry, Christmas ornaments and bowls on a mini lathe up to bowls and platters several feet in diameter on a home-made lathe made from an engine block for weight and security.

This month, Several members of our Club will be in Portland for a large Symposium, so we are going to try to make this months demonstration a bit more interactive. Phil will be doing a tool sharpening demo. Included will be all types of turning tools, plane irons, bench chisels and carving tools.

Phil will show methods for using several jigs on a grinder but will also include home made jigs, a 1" wide belt sander with fine grit belts, scary sharpening and several handouts.

Members are encouraged to bring tools they have been having trouble with and Phil will see what can be done with them.

We look forward to seeing you at the meeting !!!



president's platter

While you are reading this I will be joining several other club members and will be heading to Portland for the AAW symposium this year. I, like many other attendees, am looking forward to a time full of camaraderie with fellow woodturners and friends, learning new techniques, meeting club members from around the country and checking out all the cool stuff to buy in the vendor area.

I am sure you will enjoy this month's demonstrations. Not only will it be educational but will allow for hands on instruction and the ability to get some of your tools sharpened and learn how to do it yourself as well. There is expected to be a demonstration followed by several people doing hands on work with Phil instructing them as well.

If you get a chance check out the new look of the GoldenTriangle Woodturners Website. The site has needed an overhaul for some time now, and CJ Solberg has volunteered to set it up. The initial design is now on line and will continue to have content added over the next few months. Check back often, this is exciting news.

Everyone have a safe and happy 4th of July holiday. Enjoy it with family and friends and hopefully you will get the time to throw a few shavings as well.

Safe turning and I will see everyone when I return from Portland.

-- Pete Tkacs (2007 GTW President)

SWAT update

This will be the sixteenth event and it promises to be the best one yet! This year it will be held October 5-7, 2007 in Wichita Falls, Texas at the city's Multi-Purpose Events Center (MPEC), and will feature five outstanding national/international lead demonstrators, an excellent regional lead demonstrator and twelve local demonstrators, who promise to thoroughly engage you.

Lead Demonstrators:

- Cindy Drozda is well known for her elegant hollow vessels and lidded containers.
- J. Paul Fennell is recognized as the master of geometric pierced hollow forms.
- Stuart Mortimer holds the authenticated world record for the largest bowl turned from one piece of wood.
- Al Stirt is one of woodturning's treasures, although he considers himself a "simple bowl maker."
- David Marks creates work with painted and patina surfaces that "evoke a sense of time and mystery."
- Stacey Hager is a Texas legend as a woodturner, an excellent toolmaker and an outstanding teacher.

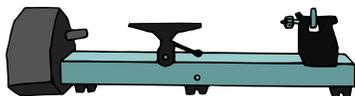
You can learn more about all of the turners by visiting the SWAT [Demonstrators page](#).

This year our club will be asking for volunteers to help stuff the registration packets prior to the symposium. Anyone can assist, please see Gil Lhotka at one of the meetings or email him to volunteer. (glhotka@verizon.net)

Steve Worcester - May Demonstration



Turning Tips & Info



The following is part of a multi part series on Finishing Secrets. Last month featured Sanding Secrets and the 5 rules of sanding. This month features finishing of Bare wood and Food Safe finishes.

Bare Wood?

Why is it necessary for us to always put something on a piece of wood. There is a good argument for leaving the surface of some wood bare, with no finish?

We are often looking for the finish that will change the color of the wood the least. If we don't put anything on the wood, there is nothing to change its natural color, other than the wood itself. Any color change that does occur will be from the natural exposure of the wood to light and air.

And then there is the matter of "food safety". Since there is nothing on the wood, there are no concerns about whether or not the finish is safe for use with food.

Application of the no-finish (ON the lathe)
The following is described as though the work was being done on the lathe.

Dry sand through 600-grit following the techniques described in last months issue.

Moisten the wood surface with a damp paper towel. "Damp" is defined as being saturated with water and then wrung as dry as possible.

Allow the wood to dry for several hours to ensure that all of the moisture has evaporated, not just that on the surface.

A hair dryer or heat gun will speed this process.

WARNING: Do not let the wood get too hot. If you can't hold your fingers on it, it is too hot.

Lightly hand-sand with 600-grit. For a very high gloss surface, follow by hand sanding with 1000, 1500 and 2000 grits in both directions.

With the lathe running as fast as it will go, burnish the wood with a piece of grocery bag paper. Reverse the lathe, and do the same thing in the other direction.

Application of the no-finish (OFF the lathe)
You can do the same thing with the lathe OFF, or on the workbench. The difference is that you will have to work harder.
Dry sand with power sanding discs through 400-grit.

Moisten the wood and allow it to dry.

Lightly hand sand with 400 grit, followed by hand sanding with 600, 1000, 1500, and 2000 grits.

Burnish with the grocery bag paper by rubbing the paper rapidly across the wood.

Maintenance of the "No Finish"

In the traditional use of the word, this is not a finish. We have put nothing on the wood. There is nothing to protect the wood from airborne moisture, chemicals, and organisms.

An annual buffing with a natural bristle scrub brush will clean the wood surface and compact the wood fibers. Do not use a brush with synthetic bristles because their ends are cut sharp, and can scratch the wood surface. I use a brush that is sold for horse grooming.

Food Safe?

We are always looking for two (2) things in a wood finish, one that is "food safe", and/or one that is waterproof.

What is "Food Safe" We need to be able to answer a question about food safety with a confident, "Yes". No explanation. No qualifications. We have already lost the sale if we have to explain the chemistry of the finish we have put on a salad bowl.

"Food safe" is always a concern, and a source of confusion among woodturners who are making salad bowls. Our concern is because we don't want to be sued for poisoning someone. Our confusion is because there are a few finishing products labeled as "food safe", and this implies that those not so labeled are not. The realities are that there is no difference in their ingredients, and that no woodturner has yet been sued because of something they used to finish a bowl.

Another important fact in this discussion is that most of the public doesn't care and never asks because they understand as much or more about using wood with food than we do. Some of the public is confused because our food supply has been the topic of wrong and conflicting information in the press and other media. Then there is the smaller group who want to believe that we are trying to do them harm; and for them, there is no acceptable of explanation. Unfortunately, these are usually the same people who want to use a wooden bowl for their vegetarian diet. Also for them, I have a solution that I will discuss later.

As woodworkers, we have been told many times that all finishes are "food-safe" to eat from or children to chew on after the solvents have evaporated, and that 30-days is the recommended waiting period. I prefer the rule that says, "It isn't ready if it smells like paint", because some of the thinners we use may take longer to

evaporate in cool or moist weather. Again, we need to be able to answer, "Yes", to the question about food-safety. If it doesn't smell like paint, that question will never be asked.

Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval. What does it really mean?

FDA approval of a finish has reached the status of a Urban Legend among woodturners. But do any of us really know what it means? Let's get two things straight to start with.

The FDA does not "approve" anything. The FDA is a Federal regulatory agency. As such, it writes rules and regulations; and it has written regulations for the use of oil and varnish wood finishes with food. These can be found in Code of Federal Regulations, Title 21, Part 175. These regulations are available on the Internet or at a large public or University library.

These regulation only apply to oils and varnishes. Shellac is addressed in the Regulations as it is used as a coating on food and medicines, but not as a surface finish on wood. Lacquers, epoxies, and the non-drying oils are not covered under the Regulations.

What do these Regulations say??

There is a long list (10 pages) of the materials that may be used for finishing wood. The list includes every common oil, resin, dryer, or additive that we could use in a wood finish, and a lot of things that we have never heard of before. Lead and Mercury are not included.

There is a specified series of tests to prove that every batch of the finish cures properly and no foreign materials or contaminates.

And, the concluding notes state that there is no 100% guarantee of safety because of individual differences in tolerance and

allergic reaction to any of the listed ingredients

What do these Regulations mean to us??
I came to four (4) conclusions:

- These FDA Regulations are much ado about nothing. EVERY oil and varnish finishing product that we can use on the wood is "safe" because all of their ingredients are on the list.
- A product label saying "FDA Approved" has no meaning because any finish made from the listed ingredients is in compliance with the Regulation.
- I have found no finishing product that has conducted the specified tests for purity, regardless what they have posted on the label of their container.
- It is not an absolute 100% safety statement. Someday, somewhere, somebody will be found with an allergy to whatever product we put on the wood.
- The FDA Regulation applies only to drying oils and varnishes. We don't know about shellac, lacquer, epoxies, and the non-drying finishes such as Mineral Oil. They are not included in the FDA list of approved ingredients, and there has been no communication from the FDA on any of these finishes. Shellac is covered in the Regulations as a food coating, but not as a wood finish.

What about the Drying Agents??

A lot of discussion has taken place on the Internet, and wherever woodturners gather, about the safety of the metallic dryers that are used in oil and varnish finishes. Except for the finish that is a pure Nut Oil or Raw LinseedOil, everything we can buy as a wood finish has some drying agents added to them. Without the addition of these dryers, these finishes

would take weeks to cure, and some of them would never cure. Even the Nut Oils, like Tung and Walnut, can benefit from the addition of a little dryer.

These "drying agents" are in the form of metallic salts, and many folks just assume that they are harmful to our bodies when ingested. Lead driers were once commonly used in finishes, but they have been removed from our oils and varnishes since the late 60's. Other metallic dryers, including salts of cobalt, manganese, and zinc, continue to be used in all varnishes and oil finishes. There is no indication that these driers cause health problems and they are included in the list of FDA ingredients.

Cured finishes are not digested, but pass through our body unchanged. Any very small amount of dryer is captured in the cured finish would also pass through our body with the finish. The emphasis is on the word CURED.

Food Safety?

There are several things we could do. We could be overly sensitive to the remote risk of somebody having a problem with something we have put on a piece of wood. Or, we could ignore that problem and hope it will stay that way. Instead, I have taken a more practical approach because a lot of the buyers of wooden salad bowls are those same people who are overly concerned about "safety".

The "Traditional Finish", My 1st Choice
My first choice is to finish the inside of the salad bowl as I would the outside, with an oil/varnish finish. This the preferred option for people buying a salad bowl. I just make sure that it doesn't smell like paint, and the question about food safety never gets asked. Most folks prefer a "finished" bowl.

I have two (2) solutions available for those who are concerned about the safety of the finish. There are enough of these folks that I don't want to lose a sale because of their concern for safety.

My first choice for finishing the inside of a working salad bowl is BARE WOOD, and it may be the ultimate in food safety for all things we turn for use with food or beverage. Wood has its own natural ability to absorb and become a part of its environment. We can learn something from our ancestors who used wood for food utensils, drinking goblets, and bowls for a thousand years before our modern finishing technology was developed. The wood was preserved because it was saturated with the oils and fats from the foods that were served in them. The wood absorbed its environment and developed a durable and beautiful patina from daily use. Some wood species were avoided when the wood itself was known to be toxic.

I find that it is much easier to explain the merits of "no finish" than a "food-safe" finishing product to a potential user. I show them a well used salad or serving bowl, and explain that they, and the foods they serve, are a part of the final "finish" on the wood. This argument is made easier because most folks are familiar with using wood in their kitchen as spatulas, cutting boards, tongs, etc.; and all of these are bare wood that they can sanitize with a weak bleach solution. They are also familiar with fruits and vegetables being shipped in wooden crates, again without a finish on the wood.

It is always an option to finish the OUTSIDE of a useable salad bowl with a durable finishing product such as Tung Oil/Varnish, and leaving the inside as a bare-wood natural finish.

The Edible Finish

Another solution to the safety issue is to use something on the inside of the bowl

that is known by all to be edible. My preference for an edible oil finish is any that offers a pleasant aroma to the bowl, and doesn't become rancid with age. Hazel Nut oil offers both of these. A true Citrus Oil is also a good choice. Do not use the products sold as "Lemon Oil Finish", because they are nothing more than Mineral Oil with some color and odor added to it.

I like to use Sunflower (not to be confused with Safflower) Oil. It will not become rancid, and the first person with an allergy has yet to be discovered. It can be given a more pleasant odor with a few drops of Lemon or Orange Extract.

A coating of natural beeswax can be used as a safe temporary protection that adds a soft gloss and a pleasant aroma to the wood surface. Richard Raffin recommends using candle wax (paraffin). Either will rapidly wear away, leaving the wood to develop its own patina through continued use, and the recommended frequent applications of salad oils.

I also like to use a Lavender Oil Wax that is imported from Great Britain. It is an excellent wax, and has a pleasant aroma. We could accomplish the same thing with the addition of a few drops of Lavender Spike Oil to our Carnauba paste wax.

I have been pleasantly surprised what a little "aroma therapy" will do for bowl sales. A buffed coating of a scented wax will also help the sales of bowls with the traditional finishes.

The Water-proof and Alcohol-proof Finish
We are always looking for a finish that can be used for serving wine and other alcoholic beverages. We want a finish that will give our turned goblets and drinking vessels the same durable, waterproof, and washable glass, china, or plastic. No matter what we do, our mistakes are more obvious than ever, the finish isn't

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permanent, and it definitely doesn't stay waterproof, and we still wonder whether it is safe to use with food.

The closest we can get to truly "waterproof" are the harder film finishes, such as a Polyurethane Resin or an Epoxy. They form a hard waterproof coating on the wood. However, they are not "vapor proof". That same exposure to air and sunlight that will turn a clear epoxy yellow with age will also allow some amount of water vapor through into the wood. The wood will expand as it absorbs this moisture vapor. It will also expand from the heat from a hot liquid. Hairline cracks will develop in the hard surface of the finish. These cracks will let the liquid under the coating, and it will happen faster if it is alcohol. Nothing looks worse than a gloss finish that is coming off, and our concerns about food safety continue.

Tips Courtesy of Russ Fairfield.

Credited to "a series of articles" by Russ Fairfield
<http://www.woodturnerruss.com/>

To order instructional videos from Russ, please visit the website above.

Cottonwood Logs

I have located some large cottonwood logs that are easily accessed in southern Grayson county. They are 17-20 inches or so in diameter (not including the bark). They are long and no limbs. The county cut them after a storm and dragged them out of the creek. I have green turned some nice bowls ranging from 14-19 inches in diameter. They make nice salad bowls. If anyone is interested in obtaining some cuts let me know and I can give specific directions to locate them. They are in the county road right-of-way. If you want some cuts but don't have the equipment to cut the logs into blanks, I can provide that service for a reasonable fee. I usually cut the log into 24 in sections, remove about 2 in that contains the pith and cut a slab off the back. This gives blocks 24 in long, 17-19 in wide and 6-8 in thick. Of course I can cut them smaller, but these are about as large as I can handle

Thanks
Martin
mhbeauford@cableone.net



June Bring Back Winners

There were lucky members of our club that were winners of "bring backs" at the June meeting. It is now their turn to bring back an item (turning) that will be raffled at the August 6th meeting. Good luck to all !!!
If you were a Bring Back winner at the last meeting, please be sure to bring back an item for the July Meeting.

Photos From the June Meeting





Calendar

July 2	Monthly Meeting at Greater Denton Arts Council, 7:00pm.
July 17	Monthly Board Meeting, 7:00pm. All members welcome to attend.

Officers

President:	Pete Tkacs (940) 271-4728
Vice President:	John Solberg (940) 387-3089
Treasurer:	Chris Morgan (972) 977-8705
Secretary and SWAT Representative:	Gil Lhotka (940) 898-9925
Newsletter Editor:	Gil Lhotka (940) 898-9925
Membership Chairman and Demonstrator Selection:	John Solberg (940) 387-3089
Activities Chairman:	Eddie Charba (940) 455-5055
Immediate Past President:	Gene Colley (940) 241-2331