Central New England Woodturners

The CNEW SKEW

Volume 17 Issue 8 August 2004

August Editorial—A Mixed Bag

Special points of interest:

- August Editorial
- Contact Points for New Officers
- Reports & Coming Events
- *2004 Picnic* Pictures by Emilio Iannuccillo

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Selling Woodturnings—Wrap-up.

Some may feel that since they would not be doing anything else, their time is really free. The point is that the time invested in preparing "free wood" could equally have been spent in making turnings from purchased wood. Clearly such efforts would have provided additional income beyond the cost of the raw materials. Time is never really free– all of us have only a fixed amount of time available. Much of this is consumed by necessary activities ranging from paying work to recreation of varying types. If your woodturning activity is really a hobby, then it falls into this latter category. If the goal is to produce income, then it does not.

I haven't had much feed-back from this series which is somewhat disappointing. An exchange of opinion on articles of this nature is what provides the most stimulating reading. Comments?

The Annual August Picnic.

Thanks to the hospitality of Reid and Beth, many of us enjoyed a day of leisurely camaraderie and good food. In spite of your editor's penchant for inserting incorrect dates in the newsletter (*mea culpa!*) everyone seemed to determine when and where it was. The day was really beautiful until the late afternoon. The food was both plentiful and varied. Reid prepared ribs which were terrific, as was also the smoked turkey and salmon. A plethora of delicious side dishes and even more delicious desserts would have tempted anyone's palette!

Reid and Beth are also involved in gardening of all types including growing rare and unusual bromeliads. Extensive flower gardens surrounded the house providing visual stimulation as well.

Enhancing the day's activities was an unbroken stream of conversation which mostly centered on turning and related activities. I did see a group of wives in their own round circle, but maybe they were also talking turning! Dennis Daudelin provided a valuable stream of information about the Orlando symposium and a number of tools and other articles purchased at that show. Most of these seemed intriguing to me and I am sure that all of the club members would also like to hear about them. How about a special *Show and Tell* at the next meeting, Dennis?

Many of us also had an opportunity to see Reid's workshop. Spacious is not the word for it! Almost the entire

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The President's Message

Beth and I enjoyed hosting the CNEW picnic on August 7. We had a turnout of about 24 people including spouses. CNEW members bought a nice variety of appetizers, salads and deserts to complement the main dishes. We also had a fine collection of *"yard ornaments"*, which were photographed for the newsletter.

Beth and I left for a 6-day vacation the following day, with a 2-day stop in Philadelphia and four days on Chincoteague and Assateague islands in Virginia/Maryland. While we were in Philadelphia we had a chance to visit the *Wood Turning Center*, which is primarily supported by donations including one each year from CNEW. For CNEW members who haven't visited the *Wood Turning Center* it is located at 501 Vine Street, which is within easy walking distance from other Philadelphia landmarks like the Liberty Bell.

The first floor of the *Turning Center* has a changing exhibit of woodturnings. Right now there is an exhibit of works from the *2004 International Turner Exchange.* The basement of the *Wood Turning Center* houses the permanent collection, which can be viewed by request. The permanent collection contains pieces turned by a large number of well known turners including Ray Key, David Ellsworth, John Jordan, Ron Fleming, Ed Moulthrop, Bob Stockdale, Rude Olsonick plus many others. I highly recommend a visit to the *Wood Turning Center* if you are in the Philadelphia area.

Chincoteague island, which is adjacent to the Assateague Wildlife refuge does not seem to be a hotbed of woodturners. Instead, decoy carving (ducks plus many other shore-birds) is the popular local woodworking hobby. This small island has a decoy museum, including a large gift shop, plus at least 3 other shops that only carry wood decoys. One store had decoys from over 100 local carvers. The better-carved and painted decoys ranged in price between $250 and $500. We didn't buy a decoy, but it was a good opportunity to appreciate a different form of woodwork.

Reid Gilmore

Annual Elections

Before you know it, the annual elections will be upon us. In order to function properly, a dedicated nominating committee is required. If you are interested, or know of someone else who is interested either in running for elected office in the club or in being a member of the nominating committee, please let us know. Contact the President or any of the other officers and we will get a jump on the matter before the elections get a jump on us! None of the elected positions are that difficult. Further, the positions on the nominating committee insure that those members will not be able to run for office. What a neat way to serve the club and also get out of the field of fire.

Next Regular Meeting Thurs. Sept. 2, 2004!

Peter Teubel will demonstrate deep hollowing of vessels. As usual, *Show & Tell* and the perennial *Wood Swap* will be featured after the business meeting. Bring your work and some wood for the club.

Editorial/Report—Mixed Bag

(Continued from page 1)

cellar is devoted to the shop. Enough to make anyone envious! Certainly I was, considering that when I want to turn around in my shop I have to back out first. This was my first club picnic, so I can't comment on past affairs but I can say that I won't miss any future picnics if I can help it.

The Band Saw—Headaches and Solutions.

During the course of preparing blanks for turning including several different species, I spent several hours cutting with my band saw. Like many others, I have a 14-inch Delta (or Jet, etc.) equipped with a riser block. This is not an ideal solution, at least not in my mind. Most 14-inch saws are underpowered and I have yet to see one with a table properly sized for handling half-logs that will eventually become 16-inch diameter blanks. What this means is that you are handling a half-log measuring about 18 inches across and 22 or so inches long, so it can't be cut on the inboard side and treacherously overhangs the outboard side. It will usually be about 9 inches tall, so the riser block is a necessity.

Power is the first issue, and probably the easiest to resolve. Many band saws of this size are equipped with 3/4 or 1 Hp motors. The former size is borderline adequate for the 14-inch saw without a riser which is usually used for sawing up to 2-inches or so in thickness. Once you attempt to re-saw six-inch thick timber, it is hopelessly inadequate. The solution in this case is to simply add a new(er) and larger motor, modifying the pulleys and belts as necessary to accommodate the new motor speed. The cost for this update will range from free (watch that word again!!) to a few hundred dollars, depending on your needs and desires. If you are lucky enough to have one of the newer Delta machines, it is probably equipped with a 1-1/2 Hp. motor which may serve marginally with timbers of the size mentioned previously. Better still would be a 2-Hp motor. The question is whether that 14-inch saw is going to perform adequately over the long haul, given the work we are going to do with it (as outlined above).

The second issue, that of table size is more easily handled, but again, not without its costs. An auxiliary table of suitable material is a relatively simple task. Given the average woodworker's desire to build a new jig whenever possible, it's probably a welcome undertaking as well.

Figure 1, below, represents a possible solution, viewed from the bottom. It is a piece of plywood 21 inches square with an appropriate slot for the blade and an added piece of maple (or other fine-grained hardwood) on the underside of the panel which rides in the cast-iron table slot.

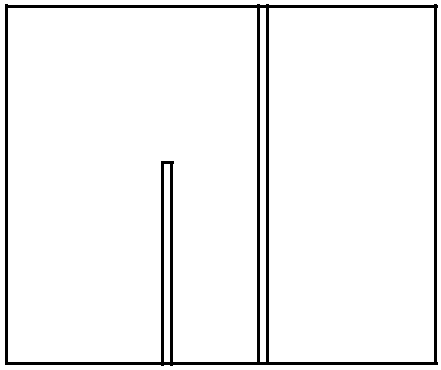

Fig. 1 Auxiliary Table (Underside)

Dimensions are not shown because they will change with the make and model of the saw.

CAUTION: Be aware that some method must be used to fix the aux. table to the cast iron saw table to prevent the former from rocking when a load is placed on it.

The downside of this solution is the loss of height which will occur by its addition to the top of the saw table. Three quarters of an inch is not much

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but I have found many instances where I needed both the three quarters inch and the table jig.

The third issue is of interest even to those who may not handle such large pieces of wood that require an auxiliary table. During the course of trimming these large hunks of wood to useable blanks, I went through several saw blades. Cutting green wood with a band saw, in apparent contrast to turning green wood, produces an abundance of heat.

I used the word apparent because it always seems that turning green wood easily produces long and thick shavings. The heat involved here is not apparent until one attempts to "hog" heavy shavings or core large bowls. In these cases, one can easily observe not only shavings but steam as well. Withdrawing either the gouge or, especially, the coring tool and misguidedly touching the end of the tool will acquaint the user with the very real presence of heat! Water boils at 212 degrees Fahrenheit and no doubt sap boils even higher. At 300 degrees, the temper of a carbon steel band saw blade begins to be drawn, and with it, the blade's ability to maintain sharpness.

All this to introduce the fact that I went through four band saw blades before I completed my work on these half-logs. To be sure, not all of this was due to problems with the saw blades. Some of it was of my own making and I will get to this in due time. Evidence to the contrary notwithstanding, I had assumed that heat should not be a real problem in producing these bowl blanks. In fact, it is and it should have been apparent when it became necessary for me to really lean on these pieces of wood to get them through the blade. Now, every one of these blades was as sharp as a hound's tooth when I started but none of them lasted nearly as long as I had expected before it was necessary to replace them.

Of the four blades I used, all of them were carbon steel blades, either 3/8 or 1/2 inch wide with either 3– or 4 TPI. One of these was a *Timberwolf* blade procured at a trade show (ca. $20). Another was reportedly the same though not in the commercial *Timberwolf* packaging but obtained directly from Suffolk Machinery, (ca. $17). The remaining two blades are from *Tuff Tooth* in Canada. These latter two are called "Furniture Blades" but are highly recommended for greenwood sawing ($12-14). In all cases, I tensioned the blades as recommended by the provider, using either the "flutter" method or the defection method. All of these blades seemed equally sharp at the beginning of use and none of them really outperformed any of the others. The only exception to this was during the processing of some ash which caused large amounts of resin to build up on the blade. This blade was cleaned up with CMT-2050 and returned to service with no further deviance from the other blades.

I mentioned all this in an email to Louis Iturra (of *Iturra Design*; 888-722-7078; *kalll@comcast.net* [that's 3 *els*, not 1's]) who told me of the 300 degree issue and recommended the use of a *Lenox Promaster II* (bimetal blade) which should stand up to 1200 degrees before losing temper and last up to 10 times longer than a carbon steel blade (at 2-3 times the cost of the other blades I used). Iturra also sells the *"Bladerunner"* blade recommended by *Fine Woodworking* (FW calls it the *Wood Slicer*) at about half the price of the other vendor. I am going to try these blades and I will report back on my findings.

Earlier, I mentioned that some of the problem was of my own making. I found that when I exerted too much pressure on the wood the blade bowed, even when the tension was properly set. Unfortunately what happened was that the saw blade contacted the table insert and in that case, completed the destruction that the sawing initially produced. Avoid this problem by replacing the metal table insert with one of the many available plastic zero-clearance units. They are cheap enough, ranging from less than $2 each to $5 or more.

Finally, it's real easy to find yourself exerting a substantial amount of force to push that heavy piece of timber into the blade. Naturally, it doesn't start out that way; it just slowly increases until you are past the point of safe maximum force. Once I found myself pushing so hard that the blade was forced off the center of the tire and before I knew it, the blade con-

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Yard Art was the Picnic Challenge

but attendees seemed more interested in the eating and talking challenges!

Luke Mann Demo

Sponsored by our sister club, ART of Woburn, this demo was arranged by Bobbi Tornheim with help from several other members of that club (some of whom, including Bobbi, are also members of CNEW). Lunch was provided for an additional fee.

Attended by some thirty interested turners from the area, we all enjoyed an informative afternoon of instruction by Luke Mann of Vermont. The subject being discussed and demonstrated was square bowl turning.

Luke turned a rectangular bowl measuring about 11 by 14 inches and finishing about 3 to 4 inches thick. Upon completing the turning of the maple bowl, the feet were formed by judicious use of a *Lancelot* grinder, first with a chain-saw blade and then with a tungsten carbide *Kutzall* disk. Luke finished the bowl by ebonizing the bottom and edges with a solution prepared from steel wool and vinegar and further enhanced the bottom by torching. (The pictures on this page were provided by Dave Eaton.)

Norman R. Mancuso

Samples of the rectangular bowls as produced by Luke Mann

The same work illustrating the typical 3-footed bottoms with various finishes

Luke introduces the subject of the demo (left) and mounts the work piece (center) before an interested audience (right).

Above left; the face of the bowl is turned, including a tenon for the chuck. *Above center*: the base of the bowl is turned producing the ring from which the three feet will be carved as shown in the photo above right. *Left*, Luke discusses the formulation and application of the ebonizing solution (right). Luke estimated that he would produce three such bowls in the three hours spent on the demonstration.

We are always looking for articles, book & video reviews, etc. Send them via mail or email (see page 2) to the Editor. The deadline for *ALL* inclusions to the monthly newsletter is the 15th

Coming Events

Oct 30,31 Adirondack Woodturners Symposium
Empire State Plaza Convention Center. 518-753-7759 or *kevans1@nycap.rr.com* for information.
Thurs. Sept. 2, 2004 CNEW Meeting
Deep hollowing of vessels by Peter Teubel
Thurs. Oct. 7, 2004 CNEW Meeting
Christmas ornaments and other small turnings by Frank White.
Thurs. Nov. 4, 2004 CNEW Meeting
Pepper mills by Dennis Daudelin and George Whippen.
Thurs. Dec. 2, 2004 CNEW Meeting
Annual Holiday Party with gift swap.

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tacted the guard. Clearly, heat helps this happen too. And the harder you push, the more heat is produced. No one makes a plastic blade guard!

Another bowl turning problem which can be solved by judicious use of the band saw relates to the balancing of the work piece which must be done before efficient turning can be accomplished. Anyone who has turned an out-of-balance work piece can attest to the substantial effort and time spent on bringing that blank into balance. While it can be done using the bowl gouge, it is an extremely slow process and the repetitive "clunk….clunk….clunk" as the gouge takes a small bite with each revolution is disconcerting, at best.

Faced with this problem, I built an angular jig (What? Again?!) as shown in a side view in the diagram to the right. The jig "A" consists of an inclined plane with a piece of hard maple which slides in the band saw table slot. A small brace is placed at the low end of the foot to prevent the blank from sliding off the jig. The bowl blank is placed on this jig and the high spots are removed by causing the band-saw blade (B-C) to pass through the blank as shown. After each cut, the blank is rotated on the jig and another cut is taken. After several cuts, the high spots causing the imbalance are removed. As many cuts as desired may be taken. At first glance the user may justly question why the band saw's tilting table is not used to achieve the same end? First of all, the table probably doesn't tilt the right distance in the right direction. Secondly, the user is constantly fighting gravity to keep the blank on the tilted table. This jig solves both of these difficulties.

However, there are two problems with the jig. First of all, the height of the blank and the jig may exceed the cutting height available. Secondly, the angle of the jig may cause the "balanced" blank to take on an undesirable shape with a tall blank becoming almost conical in shape. In practice, this can be gotten around by building two jigs, one at 30 degrees and another at 45 degrees. My experience has been that most blanks except the tallest will work well with 30 degrees. This is probably a question of preference and the nature of the blanks that you are dealing with.

Finally, the real questions are: Does it work well and does it really help? Both questions can be answered, more or less, with the same response. It helps tremendously by increasing the speed at which you can begin to turn and by equally reducing the amount of time spent eliminating any re-

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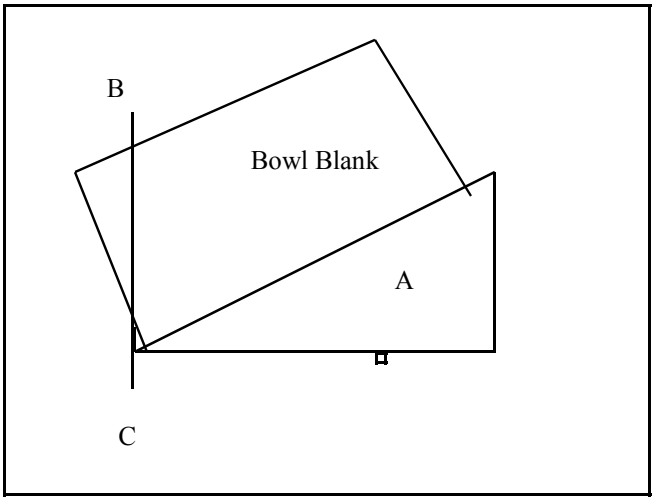

Side view of the Inclined Plane Jig used to trim off imbalances in a bowl blank. The jig must be sized correctly for the band saw on which it is to be used. **Caution: The saw table must have a slot in which the jig can travel**.

The CNEW SKEW

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Fold line

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maining imbalances. It works well depending upon the nature of the blank. Caution is still needed in its use and care must be taken in the design and building of the jig. Avoid any nails or brads in the foot brace mentioned above. You can be sure that you will spoil a good blade when these nails are in the path of the blade as they surely will be at some future time. The size of the jig should correspond roughly to the size of the blanks being used. However, remember that if the jig is made too large, you may encounter some additional problems with balancing both the jig and the blank when it approaches the maximum travel beyond the saw blade. In fact, this jig can be used with the extended table mentioned above but be certain to remember that the oversized table will require a slot of its own. This obviously cannot be located directly above the cast iron table slot in a three-quarter inch thick plywood table. A scale drawing of the two jigs will show where this problem arises.

Norman R. Mancuso

Letters to the Editor

None

Book Reviews

None

Video Reviews

None

Comments and Suggestions

None

Get the Message?……..