



Volume 21

Number 4

April 2008

Next Meeting Details
Topic: Make a Vacuum Chuck
Speaker: Peter Teubel
Date: 3 April 2008
Vacuum chucking is *THE* way to finish off the bottoms of your bowls. Learn how it works, where to get all the parts needed, and how to make your own drum chucks to accommodate various situations and challenges. Even without vacuum, these chucks make excellent jam chucks. An actual drum chuck will be made, demonstrated, and given away to a lucky member.

Presidents Message.

Charlie Croteau

Spring is coming! Hopefully everyone has endured the winter season no worse for the wear.

Happy Spring! Our last meeting went much better. Thank you to everyone who helped to make it happen in a timely fashion.

Today we had our first field trip to the Hardwick Kilns. Friend and general manager Jason Ayer gave us the royal tour. About 22 good folks from our club turned out which was more than I expected. Jason took us through the process that an actual board would travel through while being processed at the plant. The sheer volume of wood moving through the plant is impressive. The Hardwick plant does between 12 and 17 million board feet per year. I'll keep this brief as I imagine someone else will give the details. My



favorite piece of equipment was a gang saw that was used to cut wood to length.

On another note, the club will be having a Chainsaw Jamboree on my land Sat. the 29th at 10:00 AM. This will be a POT LUCK, so bring something to share. (I'll be bringing the hot dogs unless someone tells me otherwise). All are welcome to come even if you don't have a chainsaw. Many hands make the work load light. Here are the directions to my land.

- 127 Thompson Ave. Putnam, CT

Take Mass Pike east or west to exit 10(Auburn) Take 395 south to exit 97 (Putnam) (at this exit you are now exactly 1 mile from my land) Turn RIGHT onto RT 44, go about 300 yards to first fork in road, bear RIGHT, go 100 ft. to Stop sign, Turn RIGHT, (this is Thompson Ave.) Go to top of hill, look for GREY HOUSE on the left. There is an opening in a large stone wall opposite this house. This is my land. TURN RIGHT into the drive, then right into the field. My cell, 508 579 9092 if you get lost. I will turn it on that morning. My home 508 756 2049.

Hope to see you soon.

NL Editor Message

Rick Angus

The heart of the club is in member participation. Please consider preparing a short article for the newsletter. This month we have a book review by Steve Reznek and another article by Joe Beaton. I

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have only a couple articles in my pocket for the rest of the year...so unless you want me to ramble on about some trite insignificant thing going on in my shop, please contribute an article. The rest of the club will be glad you did.

Al Faul is working diligently to reestablish a working video library; if you have a video/DVD from some month's back, please bring it to the next meeting so Al can lend it to another member.

An article about the Kiln Tour from one of the visitors would be especially welcome.

Minutes of March Meeting

Tim Elliot

Minutes of CNEW meeting 03/06/2008

We had two guests/new members:

- Chris Durkey
- Isaac Burk

Thanks to the Gorilla Glue company for providing samples of their new PVA wood glue to CNEW. Members wishing to provide feedback may do so at www.gorillatough.com through the "contact us" link.

Norma Hogan gave a treasurer's report. Our treasury had roughly \$8700 at the beginning of January. Since then, we have taken in some dues but also paid out proceeds to members participating in the holiday craft fair. At the end of February, our balance was \$3667.

Al Faul reported that many videos have been out for some time (note that the rental cost is \$2 per month, so there is an incentive not to keep them for ever). Please return any overdue club videos.

Dave Eaton announced that the AAW has approved an EOG grant for CNEW in the amount of \$500.

Dave also pointed out many new features on our website at www.cnew.org. In addition to being a great central resource for information of all kinds, you may also go there to pay dues, update your own contact info, find a schedule of upcoming events, view the inventory of our club library, and check if you're demonstrating for next month's meeting.

Thanks again to the members who hosted open shops last month.

Tonight was our first Learn-and-turn session prior to the regular meeting. Attendees had a chance to make a natural-edge goblet, led by Mike Souter. Next month Gene Spadi will lead a session on making pens. Please note that we need to be courteous to our woodshop hosts at the Craft Center - the shop is not open to us prior to 5:05 PM, and we need to leave

it very, very clean promptly at 6:25 so their evening class may take over.

Many of us remember longtime CNEW member Andy Motter, who recently passed away. Andy taught woodturning both at the Worcester Craft Center and the Homestead school, and owned woodturning supply company Butternut Tools. Andy infected many, many students with the woodturning bug over a lot of years. He will be missed. In lieu of flowers, we voted to make a \$100 donation to a local school, per the wishes of his family.

Thanks to Mike Stone for getting membership cards printed up for 2008. Many were distributed at the meeting; if you did not get yours, check next month.

Charlie researched the Crafts Emergency Relief Fund, which we have donated to in the past. Many recent beneficiaries seem to have been related to Katrina in the New Orleans area. We voted to again send a donation of \$100.

Several members helped review the book library inventory to cull the collection. Books that we will not keep were offered to members for \$1.

On Thursday, March 20, CNEW will have a field trip to Hardwick Kilns. This is a commercial kiln operation that processes millions of board feet each year. Meet at the kilns at 11 AM, or at the Worcester Center for Crafts at 10 AM to car pool.

Charlie Croteau is also offering a chance to cut wood on his property in Putnam CT. This event will begin at 10:30 AM on Saturday March 29. The address is 127 Thompson Ave, Putnam CT - 1 mile from exit 97 off 395. Contact Charlie if you need more info.

Frank White announced that many of the pieces in tonight's wood swap were from the collection of CNEW member Ray Hayden, who passed away in the Fall.

Homestead Primitives, a store selling wood furniture and other items at 408 River St (Rte 31) in Fitchburg MA, has offered CNEW an opportunity to demonstrate or sell sometime this Fall. Contact information: Roger at (978) 342-8083.

Thanks to Joe Harbey for his efforts at the Woodworks show in Springfield in January.

Mary Maguire now has a business that helps people set up websites. Contact her if interested.

Thanks to Charlie for his efforts to conduct the business meeting in the new, shortened format.

Program: Mike Stone on photographing your work

Book Review

Steve Reznek

“Turned Bowl Design” By Richard Raffan

The recent discussion of style and form and my commitment to write an article made me go back and get out my well-thumbed copy of “Turned Bowl Design.” First let me say that this article is a synopsis of Richard Raffan’s book, with a few of my own observations. I would hate to be accused of unreferenced plagiarism or sued for all the profit that I will make. Raffan is a “production” turner whose skill makes useful objects into things of beauty.

He repeatedly emphasizes a couple of points. Before I get into some of the more specific or technical details, let me stress them: “It is easy to produce a bowl that, by virtue of its rich color and/or wild grain patterns, will draw gasps of admiration. I have also heard many wood turners talk of revealing that which is hidden in the timber. This is all very humble, but it too often reflects a willingness to rely on quality of wood to carry a poorly designed or badly executed piece. Because all wood fades and mellows with age, I focus my attention on **form** and **tactile** qualities. Eventually they will be all that’s left, and if these aspects are found wanting no one will bother to keep the bowl. If you reach beyond the gloss of attractive grain and a polished profile, there’s a good chance that your bowls will not only feel good and function well, but grace the eye when not in use.” Another other important point that Raffan makes is that you should select your wood to fit your design. How many of us have made the bowl to fit the wood?

Before I get into design aspects let me inject another quote from the book. In the introduction he talks a little bit about pricing and therefore gets into how long it should take to turn a bowl once you have the wood.

Are you ready for this? “My formula works well on sizes greater than six inches. I simply multiply the diameter by the height and arrive at the approximate time in minutes. For example: six inches times three inches gives 18 minutes.”

The technical guidelines that follow need a big caveat - what looks and feels good is good, no matter how many of the rules it violates. If you think the Golden Mean generates too steep a bowl decrease the ratio of the height to the diameter.

What should the **profile** of the bowl look like? The answer is that there is no answer. Usually it is bad to make the arc a section of a circle. What Raffan calls an asymmetric profile, i.e. the curvature changes, will be more interesting.

The **Golden Mean** ratio—1:1.618—has somewhat magic mathematical properties—but the important point is that it seems to “look right,” at least to many people. If the diameter is 1.6 times the height, the bowl will look well designed. But this will look good if the sides of bowl are vertical or recurved to more than vertical at the rim and the bottom of the bowl is horizontal.



(Note: The book does a heck of a lot better at illustrations than I can do in Microsoft word.)

You don’t usually want the bottom or **foot** of the bowl to be round. This means that the bottom of the bowl meets the horizontal at some angle. If the angle between the horizontal and the “bottom” is small, then imagine how the profile would look if you continued the curve through the center and up the other side. Have the foot high enough to lift this continued curve “off the table.” If the intersection of the curve with the horizontal is fairly steep, the foot would have to be too thick. In this case you again imagine how the profile continues. You also decide how high you want the foot to be. The diameter of the foot is then determined by point at which the continued profile intersects the horizontal from the base of the foot. (Word does not have the resolution to show these things, but the book does.) A final word about feet: I have always made them as quite simple cylinders, or at best with a little outward curve. Raffan shows quite a few drawings where the foot has multiple-layers. The drawings look great, but all his photos show simple feet.

What about **wall thickness**? Let me start with a quote, “Achieving the right relationship between the inside and the outside profiles is at the heart of the bowl turners art.” Some the dos and don’ts: The side should be thicker at the rim and the bottom than in the middle. Sides that are thickest at the bottom and get thinner toward the rim are not nearly as good. Sides that have equal thickness all the way are not good, particularly if they are thick. If the side is thicker at the rim, the bowl attractively “shadows” the inside. Note also that Raffan cares a lot about how the bowl feels as well as it appears when you are not holding it. Getting the two profiles correct helps the “feel” a lot.

Now the hardest thing of all—how do you learn to make the correct inside and outside profiles? Again a quote, “You will have to commit a terrible deed which my students dread. You will have to cut your bowl in half. This is a common practice among potters. I am sure it accounts, at least in part, for the large number of excellent ceramic bowls.”

So what is the **bottom line**? There are three: read the book!; remember 1.6 and try making some bowls out of ordinary wood. Bite the bullet and cut them in half to see how you are doing.

Squaring a Pen Blank~

Reliability & Repeatability

Joe Beaton

Squaring a Pen Blank, Bottle Stopper Blank, or any Blank for that matter is important and will make your Turning efforts so much easier! Whether you're using Bushings, Jam Chucks or Mandrels, the set-up and accuracy factors are much improved with squared ends.

Most of us own a Disc Sander of some sort or another; and more than 95% come with a slot and Miter Gauge. The Delta Model SA180 1" belt & 8" Disc Unit comes with a Miter Slot for either application.

In order to simplify things, I made a Sled to achieve my ends; I made it from 3/4" Melamine that I had on hand. I attached a riser piece to the Miter Gauge; then attached a horizontal bed to the riser. The reason that I did it that way is so I can remove the bed and just use the Miter Gauge with a fence. Next I attached a runner 25/32" from the fence; that's because most Pen Blanks are 3/4". If for some reason, your Pen Blank is much smaller, use a shim to make snug. The beauty of this sled with the runner made from 3/4" stock is that you can leave the runner in place and butt a Bottle Stopper Blank on the other side to square off the face.

There are commercial products available starting at approximately \$40; however, these units are limited to Pen Blanks. A homemade jig can be customized to meet your needs; and, a 12" x 36" x 3/4" Melamine Board at Home Depot is less than \$8. Hey.... You've saved money and achieved some self-actualization in the process!!

As Mikey says in that Life Cereal commercial: “Try it, you'll like it!”

Show & Tell:

Will Hunt



While on "sabbatical," Will is experimenting with ways to make straight lines appear curved.

Steve Reznik



Mahogany bowl with multiple maple inlays

Dominic Leroux



Pair of "laminated natural edge" bowls

Buzz Hawes



3 segmented bowls with round plugs—one with translucent (epoxy) bottom.

Rick Angus



Salad bowl with carved feet

Jane Gardner



5 bowls from a single maple tree - 4 of them end-grain orientation

Mike Peters



Natural edge bowl based on open-shop-night experience

Joe Beaton



Birdhouse

Al Faul



Ash box with walnut top

Joe McGill



Hollow forms from class with David Ellsworth

Paul Charbonneau



Nut bowl with ship's wheel cracker



A Natural Edge Goblet from Learning and Turning/

Review of Rockler's New Pen Vise *Joe Beaton*

Those of us who make a lot of Pens have probably, through trial and error, tried a lot of Pen Maker's Visers. From Woodcraft, Penn State, Craft Supply and the old Rockler model, I'm sure we've all pulled our hair out at some point trying to get repeatability without moving the Vise. I mean, they all promised that feature = NOT. At least not in my experience! Even the Biltmore Multi-Axis Vise had to be moved every time a new blank was inserted.

Now, I'm sure good old "Yankee Ingenuity" came into play; I'll bet some Pen Turner's made their own Vise or Fixture to try and attain that ever elusive repeatability.

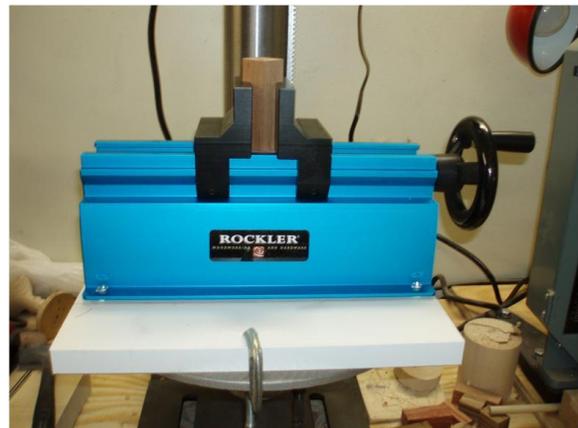
Well, Rockler has done it > Repeatability every time! The jaws on their new vise traverse in conjunction with one another and, other than opening and closing the jaws to insert a new blank, that's the only movement made! I did six Atlas Pen Blanks of various sizes (square) and species of wood. Dead on every time!

Now, I will say that when I swapped to 7mm Blanks, I had to adjust my table height; that required the Vise being realigned. Once done, I ran twelve Slimline Blanks without another adjustment.

Rockler has gone a step further. They provide a recessed area in the center and three sacrificial blocks; this prevents tear out. Another kudo as far as I'm concerned is that there is zero wander. On the 2 7/8" Atlas Blanks, the exit hole came out centered in the exact plane as the entry hole. You can't ask for any better!

So, if you're in the market for a new or upgrade on your Pen Vise, I highly recommend the Rockler!!

Cost is \$80. I bought mine when they sent their e-mail listees an on-line coupon for \$25% off.



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Central New England Woodturners
*A Chapter of the American Association of
Woodturners*



Find us on the web @ www.cnew.org

Membership Application

To join or renew membership, please complete this form and a check made payable to CNEW and bring it to a CNEW meeting or mail it to:

Treasurer, Central New England Woodturners
c/o Worcester Center for Crafts
25 Sagamore Rd.
Worcester MA 01650

Annual dues: \$20 including e-mail delivery of newsletter; \$25 for postal delivery of newsletter.

Name: _____
Street: _____
City: _____
State: _____ & Zip: _____
e-Mail: _____

Please check one category below

- New Member
 Returning Member
 e-Mail Newsletter (\$20.00)
 Snail Mail Newsletter (\$25.00)

Please let us know of your interests:

How long have you been turning? _____

What programs would you like to see at meetings? _____

Would you like to demonstrate at a meeting? Yes/No If so, what topics do you offer? _____