

Established 1987

First Woodturning Club in New England, AAW #26

**Next Meeting
May 4th 2017
6:30 PM**

**Learn N Turn
Richard Hunt
Coffee scoop**

Demonstration

President's Message April, 2017

President's Letter, April 2017



During March I had two students participate in an introduction to woodturning class at my home, through my local high school's adult education program. It was a lot of fun for me, and I think for them. The class was four 2-hour sessions and the time each evening flew by. Once we had covered safety issues and the ABC's of tool presentation, they began shaping the outside of the bowls and did a nice job. Session two focused on hogging out the inside of the bowls and that is when the trouble started! One student had a pretty bad catch that ripped the tenon off the chuck, and the other student's bowl turned into a funnel because I failed to have him check the depth of his last few cuts. However, I think the best lesson developed from those two mishaps. The student whose bowl lost the tenon was ready to give up on it but I was not. After trying a couple of different ways to re-chuck the bowl we settled on flattening the bottom and affixing a glue block. The bowl was saved! The funnel bowl issue was solved by the student turning a contrasting piece of wood to be used as the base and the contrast of the wood on the inside of the bowl was pleasing. What I found rewarding was that when it came time for them to start on their second bowl that moved through all of the processes so quickly that I spent my time preparing more blanks. Overall, it was pretty neat.

Earlier this month I was contacted by someone who found my name on our club website. He wanted to purchase his first lathe and had some questions. Since he lived not too far away I invited him to my shop to spend some time talking woodturning, tools, lathes, etc. He also spent time doing some basic turning. We spent a very pleasant three hours together. He seemed grateful for my time and I was glad for the company.

Open your shop to others. Invite a new club member who is just getting started to spend some time with you in your shop. Share with her or him your knowledge, thoughts, and skills. You will be rewarded many times over.

Special thanks to all of those who have been working with Erica at the Mary Wakefield Trust in Milton. A number of folks went there earlier in the year to harvest some wood and Todd and Guillermo are going soon to cut down the trunk that is covered with burls. Rick has taken the lead in working with Erica Max in organizing the show and demonstration and I am very grateful to everyone for helping out on this.

I will have to miss the May meeting because grandparent duties again have me traveling. However, I will be back for the June meeting.

Keep turning, be well,

Joe

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Minutes April 6th, 2017 Meeting

Mike Smith, Secretary

President: Joe McGill

Treasurer: Beginning balance \$ 6,958.24 ending balance \$ 7,740.52

Learn N Turn: Coffee Scoops coming up in May

Int. VP

Attendance: On a rainy-raw night 35 members+/- with 4 guests

- Meeting called to order at 6:30 pm by vp Steve Reznek, in President Joe McGill's absence.
- Treasurer report read and accepted.
- Minutes accepted.
- Learn and turn was well attended, a thank you to Frank White for offering instructions
- Congratulations were offered to Reid Gilmore, Rick Angus and Mike Smith for receiving awards at the symposium.
- Steve reported the city of Worcester is looking for someone to create a block sculpture for Worcester common. Contact vp Steve Reznek if interested.
- A vote was taken and passed to accept the new bylaw changes.
- A big Thank you to Ralph Viscomi for and all others who worked to complete this task.
- Ben Kline gave an update on the search for a meeting spot.
- If anyone knows of space that might be available please contact Ben.
- After much discussion a vote was taken on whether to go forward with changing the club logo or leaving things as is. The vote was 18 against changing/13 for changing. (Stay tuned)
- Meeting adjourned 7:pm

Mike's Demo

Tool Making



Grinding & shaping the steel



Heat Treating until de-magnetized



Quenching in vegetable oil



A usable custom tool



“Show’n tell”



Fraser Mac



Reid Gilmore



Richard Hunt



Ross
Farrugia



Peter
Maynard



Eric White



Mike Smith



Paul Grenier



TOTALLY TURNING 2017

“Totally Turning 2017” symposium was Saturday and Sunday April 1st and 2nd again at Saratoga Springs, NY. I tied in with Mike Smith, Peter Wilcox and Mike Stevens, and traveling there on Friday was a challenge. Sleet, fog and freezing rain met us in higher elevations of the Berkshires and continued into the evening. But we prevailed. I have attended this symposium for the last 3 years and bad weather snow, rain, etc. - repeated itself all three years. The sun returned on Sunday and we could finally stroll down Broadway and take in the sights in some comfort. Saratoga Springs is a fun place to visit with many cultural and recreational activities that blossom mostly in the summer

The symposium itinerary is mainly two days of “rotations” or demonstrations, a gallery of wood turnings, and a vendor area. Items for the gallery are submitted and juried. Congratulations should be given to Mike Smith and Reid Gilmore from our club who won awards for their turnings. Mike was awarded a blue ribbon and Reid a special award from a benefactor. The quality of the wood tunings was outstanding.

Several of the demonstrators were nationally renowned, notably David Ellsworth and Jimmy Clewes. Others were regionally located and quite experienced. Rick Angus from our club was one of them. Jimmy Clewes always puts on an entertaining turning session and keeps everyone alert with his jokes. I spoke with him outside the hotel as he took a smoke break and learned about the problem of turning green wood in Los Vegas, his new home, when temperatures are 115 degrees F. There were many demonstrations on bowl turning but there were also other interesting ones on topics such as finishing vessels and inlays. There was little on Pen Turning and Segmented Turning although I was curious about a session called: “101 projects that can be done with pen blanks” done by Lynda Zibbedeo. I think sometime soon I will try, for example, to turn small mice and birds. Rick Angus was entertaining during his demonstration on goblets and we all learned about the problem of “turning around the pith”. (Be careful)

For the first timer, look for the next symposium (2018) web site early in January so you can book into the host hotel, Saratoga Hilton, at a special symposium rate.

Richard Hunt



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Spalted Wood

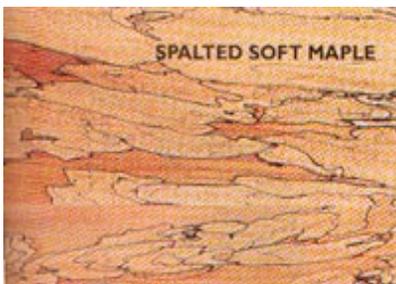
By Alan Lacer

When wood is captured somewhere between the extremes of being completely sound and fully rotten, it can display magnificent beauty. The discoloration, prominent black lines and changes in texture that occur during the decaying process are known to woodworkers as spalting.

Spalting is a by product of the rotting process that is carried out by a vast army of stain, mold and decay fungi. They are abundantly present in the air and soil, waiting for favorable conditions and a suitable host. Generally, wood moisture content of at least 25 percent, temperatures from about 40 to 90 degrees F, air and food (especially abundant in sap wood) are what the fungi need. A tree or branch freshly fallen onto a damp forest floor in warm weather is asking for it.



Lighter colored woods offer the best canvas for nature's graphic work. Hard maple is viewed as the king of spalted woods, although sycamore, persimmon, red and white oak, elm, pecan, birch, buckeye, apple, magnolia, beech, holly, hackberry, box elder and the sapwoods of walnut and Cocobolo are favored by woodworkers as well.



Where to Find Spalted Wood

You can purchase spalted wood usually maple from specialty lumber and mail order suppliers (see Sources, p. 53). Turning blocks are most easily found, but a few suppliers offer boards when they can get them.

Hunting spalted wood is like panning for gold, lots of searching for that one precious nugget. Logs rotting on the forest floor, dead limbs and entire dead standing trees are excellent sources. You can also hunt for hidden treasure at a community bone yard of removed trees, and don't overlook the bottom of your old firewood pile.

Make Your Own Spalted Wood

Woodworkers commonly use these methods to cause wood to spalt. They will work most effectively if the temperature is kept where the fungi will thrive, between 60 and 80 degrees E Monitor the spalting progress monthly the optimal conditions you've created can make it happen fast.

Place a freshly cut log section 2 to 3 ft. long upright on the bare ground. Put a shovel of dirt on the top end and cover it loosely with black plastic.

Bury a log, freshly sawn green boards or green rough turned bowls in damp sawdust containing pieces of rotten wood with active fungi. Keep the sawdust moist.



Use plastic bags or plastic garbage cans to hold short sections of green wood or rough turned bowls. Adding some soil or rotting sawdust may speed the process, although the fungi already present in the air or on the wood surface is probably enough to get it going. Leave the bags or cans with a small opening to allow for some air exchange.

Spalted Wood, continued

You can saturate soft areas with a liquid hardener. Where the wood is only marginally soft, a spot coat or two of clear shellac or nitrocellulose sanding sealer may harden it sufficiently. A really punky spot will require cyanoacrylate (CA) glue (the thin, watery type) or a product made to stabilize rotten wood. There are a number of them sold as wood hardeners at hardware stores. It may take for several generous applications to treat each bad spot. These hardeners are effective, but they have side effects. They fill the wood cells, so surfaces treated with them can't be glued and oil finishes don't take well because they can't penetrate. Solvent based hardeners and CA glues darken the wood considerably. I like Protective Coatings Petrifier. It's a water-based hardener that doesn't discolor the wood, yet seals and stiffens effectively. It's an excellent choice for troublesome soft spots.

You should be able to work the stiffened surface with edge tools make very light cuts or with abrasives, taking care to provide a firm, flat backing for the sandpaper. Some turners use body grinders or stiff-backed sanding discs and work the piece while it's spinning on the lathe. For flat lumber, an abrasive planer is, an excellent option, followed by a random orbit or pad sander. If you sand by hand, use a sanding block to give firm support to the paper.

How to Stabilize Spalted Wood

Remove those things the fungi need to grow, and you'll stop its progress. One method is to lower the wood's moisture content. Wood below 25 percent moisture content, when kept in low relative humidity, is not likely to decay or even stain. Accomplish this by air or kiln drying, placing smaller pieces in a microwave or finish turning if the piece was a rough turned bowl. You can also raise or lower the wood's temperature. Spalting rarely occurs above 90 degrees F and stops below 32 degrees E Some turners store blanks in a freezer prior to finish turning. Finally, you can restrict the air no air, no decay. Logs submerged in water, for example, do not decompose from 'fungi. Tightly wrapping the wood in several layers of plastic will restrict the air and slow the growth of the fungi.

Working Properties

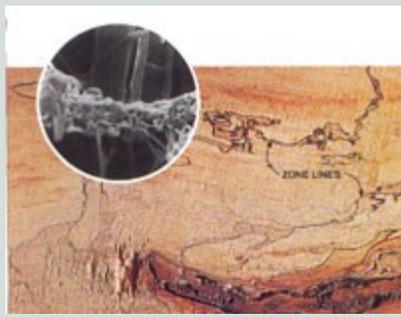
If you're lucky, you'll catch the spalting at the right time, before the cellular structure of the wood deteriorates, and you'll be able to work the piece without any trouble. Sometimes, however, the material will have areas that have become soft and punky. These areas have no strength and defy normal woodworking strategies. They will crumble, tear out in chunks or leave a wrinkled appearance when you try to cut or plane them. They refuse to be glued together, and leave you with a cratered; uneven surface when you try to sand. Though not suitable joinery, these soft areas can often be stiffened enough to finish so the piece of wood can still be used decoratively.

Working spalted wood safely

There is anecdotal and some medical evidence substances from wing wood are a health threat. Allergic reactions and some serious lung diseases have been traced to spores and fungi that inhabit rotting wood. The effects on an individual woodworker depends his or her tolerance to the spores and fungi, the concentration of in the environment and the length of exposure. Persons with weakened immune systems, lung illnesses who show signs of allergic reactions to the spalted wood should avoid the material altogether. One must err on the side of caution when working spalted wood. Freshly sawn green material with active spores and fungi, of even air dried material, is potentially hazardous. Kiln drying, by turning up the heat and moisture, will actually kill both fungi and spores.

To avoid breathing spalted wood dust, I strongly recommend that you wear a respirator not a nuisance mask and have an effective point of origin dust collection system or a self con? air filtration helmet. Avoid prolonged contact with your skin, and clean your work area thoroughly, following any work with spalted wood.





An active fungus colony surrounds itself with a chemical and physical barrier that defines its outer boundaries. Filaments of the fungus pack and swell in these regions and exude generous amounts of pigmented material that usually appear as black lines. The material in these "zone lines" protects the colony from attack by bacteria, insects, and other fungi, and assists in maintaining a desirably moist atmosphere. Inset: Electron microscope view of a fungus zone line in front of wood cell structures.

Finishing

You are likely to encounter three problems when you finish spalted wood: Splotching, yellowing and excessive darkening. The whiter woods which usually have the most dramatic examples of spalting can turn quite yellow with certain finishes, and because the soft areas act like end grain or even a sponge, splotching or excessive darkening can result unless the piece is sealed first.

An effective weapon against splotching is clear, dewaxed shellac used as a sealer. (Spray cans of shellac are thinned and dewaxed.) Cover the entire piece with a thin coat and let it dry. Then recoat dull looking areas until all surfaces have a uniform sheen. You can use almost any finish as a topcoat over dewaxed shellac after it's been sanded.



To minimize yellowing and darkening, use a surface finish like clear shellac or lacquer. Waterborne finishes dry clear and don't yellow with age. If the piece is primarily decorative and has few, if any, soft areas, clear wax is appropriate.

If you don't mind the yellowing and darkening, use your favorite oil finish, but be prepared to make many applications to the softer areas. Experience has taught me that an oil finished spalted piece will appear rather muddy and uneven at first, but will look better as the finish cures, which can take weeks or even months. Some oil finishes (such as General Finishes Seal-A-Cell Step 1, see Sources, below) are essentially a thinned, light colored varnish, and will not yellow as much.

If you are looking for a challenge, and effects that often surpass the wildest woods from the tropics, spalted wood may be your ticket. Each block of wood has its own unique properties that must be judged and worked on its own terms. Use spalted wood and your work will never go unnoticed. Use it well, and you'll produce a real showstopper.

Central New England Woodturners

A Chapter of the American Association of Woodturners



Officers for 2017

- President:** Joe McGill , Sudbury, MA 978-443-5322, joemcgill96@gmail.com
- External VP:** Rick Angus, Moosup, CT 860-564-3660, rick.angus@gmail.com
- Internal VP:** Steve Reznek, Concord MA 978-287-4821, stevenreznek@gmail.com
- Treasurer:** Todd Heino, Natick MA 508-736-1117, tvheino@comcast.net
- Secretary:** Mike Smith, Hopkinton MA 508-435-4715, whitehallwt@verizon.net
- Newsletter Editor:** Paul Occhipinti, Princeton, MA. 774+641+7301, pocchipinti@missione4.com
- Photographer:** Fraser MacMannis, Mendon, MA. 508-244-2707 fmacmannis@gmail.com
- Librarian:** Roger Boisvert, Fitchburg, MA. 978-852-2636, rogerboisvert48@gmail.com
- Project Goodwill Coord:** Charlie Croteau, Worcester MA 508-756-2049, cpcroteau@verizon.net
- Woodturning Sales:** Reid Gilmore, Upton MA 508-603-1248, reid.gilmore@umassmed.edu
- Learn 'N Turn Coord:** Richard Hunt, Auburn MA 508-832-4425, rhrghunt@gmail.com
- Videographer:** Bob Pacini, Holliston, MA 508-429-7759, rpcpo78@msn.com
- Club Store Manager:** Kevin Nee, W. Boylston MA 508-835-4301, kpni@charter.net
- Big Name Demo Coord:** Rick Angus, Moosup, CT 860-564-3660, rick.angus@gmail.com
- Club Project Coord:** Steve Reznek, Concord MA 978-287-4821, stevenreznek@gmail.com
- Membership:** Ralph Viscomi, Boylston, MA. 617-513-1680, rviscomi1@verizon.net
- Webmaster:** Dominic Ryan, Littleton, Ma. 617-347-1383, m.dominic.ryan@gmail.com



Membership

To join or renew membership, please complete the form below and a check made payable to CNEW and bring it to a CNEW meeting, or pay online at the CNEW website under "join/renew" or mail to: Treasurer, Central New England Woodturners
c/o Todd Heino, 148 Howe St, Natick, MA 01760

Membership Application

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