



As The Wood Turns Internet Version

November 2004



**CWTC Meeting 7 PM Second
Tuesday of each month**

**Location: Woodcraft
Supply Store, 1280 E.
Dundee Rd, Palatine
IL
847-774-1186**

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Curly From the President's Platter
By Paul Shotola

Can there be such a thing as too much woodturning? Can a person overindulge in their favorite avocation? Is it possible to have too many educational opportunities? I didn't think so, either, but the past month pushed the limits for me.

In the past month, we have had **David Ellsworth** spend a week with us, conducting a two day demonstration and teaching a pair of hands on sessions for a

dozen of us. S.O.F.A. was in town, and your club was instrumental in a series of live demonstrations of turning techniques for a crowd of 34,000 attendees. Our November club meeting was well attended, and nominations for two club officers were received. A small group met to discuss the AAW Chapter Collaborative, and progress was made on that front. The motor and drive on our Woodfast lathe were upgraded. About a thousand emails and phone calls were sent, received, forwarded and dealt with, checks mailed, and finally (Finally! your editor sighs with relief), this column was written.

Yes, I said 34 thousand people attended SOFA, and had the opportunity to see woodturning demonstrated by gallery level artists. SOFA is the premier event in for craft artists, with galleries from around the world displaying and selling work by the finest artists in every discipline. The Collectors of Wood Art put together a program that showcased your club, the AAW, and a dozen turners to provide live demonstrations at Navy Pier. The response was so positive that we're going to do it again next year. Thanks go out to everyone that contributed to making the event such a success.

David Ellsworth's demo and classes were enlightening to everyone who attended, and capped a great season of guest demonstrations put together by **Binh Pho**. Next year's schedule looks exciting, starting with **Ray Key** in March. We promise to have something for everyone next year, with demos for all skill levels and interests.

At the November meeting, nominations were received for the offices of Vice President and Treasurer. The nominees have submitted brief biographies to this issue of the newsletter to help you become better acquainted with them. Elections will be held at the December meeting. As always, your personal participation counts, especially at election time. There is more information on the December meeting in this newsletter, and I hope you can all attend.

Maybe in December I can catch my breath, get caught up on some shop projects and even turn the spindles for last year's toy box for my Granddaughter. I love the pressure, though, and I love being involved in your club and in wood turning. The opportunities for participation, education, and camaraderie are endless, and I hope all of you enjoy it as much as I do.

Until December, I urge you to be a participant, turn lots (finish those holiday gifts) and please, turn safely.

Paul Shotola
Email address:

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Weekend Master Turner Demo Schedule

To be announced

**Meeting Demonstrators
2005**

See **Fran Islin** to sign up to be a demonstrator.

December Meeting notes

Our December meeting (on the 14th) has a different format from the rest of the year. It's a time to relax, socialize with your fellow members, talk tuning, turnings and the turning world. Elections will be held for the offices of Treasurer and Vice President, but that's about all the business we hope to cover.

Bring a snack or appetizer to share, as all that turning talk makes one hungry. The club will provide beverages and place settings.

As December is a time to look back on the past (always with an eye to the future, of course) dust off your earliest turning project, and bring it in for the gallery table. It may be from 2003 or 1933; we would all love to see how you started. For contrast, bring in a recent project, or one of your favorite pieces, turned by you or another artist. The more the merrier, and we promise not to critique your early work too harshly!

Most importantly, bring your family. Spouses, children and grandchildren are all welcome. See you in December.

Paul Shotola

Email address:

Minutes of the July, 2004 CWT Meeting by Paul Cavanagh

President **Paul Shotola** opened the meeting at 7 pm and explained the usual house and safety rules.

Thanks to **Binh Pho**, **Steve Sinner** and **Carole Floate** for all of their hard work for this years SOFA exposition. If you didn't get to go, you missed a mind-blowing event. Steve and Binh had their own wall at Del Mano's Gallery exhibit! Plan to go next year.

Thanks to Binh for setting up the **David Ellsworth** demo. There were 55 attendees on Saturday and 30 on Sunday. David is a good teacher and makes to all look so easy—that's what you get from 20 years of practice.
Also thanks to Binh for a years of super demos!

Thanks to **Gary Hubbard**, **Jim Brooks**, and the others who rebuild and customized our Woodfast lathe. Great job everyone!

You probably know that at the 2005 AAW Symposium **Bonnie Klein** will be teaching a Youth Turning session. **Paul Shotola** announced that CWT will be providing all of the assistants that Bonnie needs.

November is nominations month and the CWT positions that need to be filled this year are the Vice President and the Treasurer. Nominations from the floor were:

Vice President: **Phil Brooks**

Treasurer:

Wayne Bernahl (incumbent)

Tom Sashko

Paul Cavanagh (currently Secretary)

Andy Kuby reminded everyone that CWT dues for 2005 are due in December. We had 3 new members and 5 visitors at the meeting.

Library News: **John Crissman** thanked those people that returned books, videos, etc. For those who still have CWT library items why don't you bring them back in December so you can have a guilt-free holiday and new year?

The Craft Supplies promotion for this month is 15% discount on all books. The promotion code is 04SPA AW10

Paul Shotola mentioned that there was a full page article about **Binh Pho** in a recent edition of the Sun Times.

Terry Rogers has a trunkful of walnut free for the taking. First come first served.

December meeting is the Holiday Party night. Please bring a dish to share and also Bring Your First Turning or a turning that really like so others can appreciate them.

Anyone who is interested in doing a demonstration of any aspect of woodturning or related areas, such as carving, finishing, decorating, etc., please contact VP **Fran Iselin**. No experience necessary.

The gallery was then reviewed by **Gary Hubbard**. His insightful comments were appreciated by all.

The demonstration was performed by **Paul Pyrik** who turned banksias pod holiday ornaments. He provided some tips about dealing with the strange-looking things.

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David Ellsworth visited the Chicago Woodturners on October 30/31st, 2004, to give a demonstration on the turning of hollow forms and bowls.

He showcased his turning technique with his signature bowl-turning gouge, as well as two hollowing tools with 10% cobalt high speed steel cutters. He also brought copies of his updated CD/videotape on using his bowl gouge and sharpening jig, which is dedicated to use with his 5/8" bowl-turning gouge with the parabolic flute.

The unique thing about Ellsworth's bowl-turning gouge is that the internal surface of the flute, when viewed end-on, is a parabolic curve, instead of a pair of straight lines that join at a radius in the base of the flute. Ellsworth claims that his design will facilitate chip clearance better than alternative designs. The Ellsworth signature gouge is available through Craft Supplies of Provo, UT from two different vendors: Crown and Henry Taylor.

WARNING: If you try to use the Ellsworth sharpening jig on a bowl gouge that does NOT have a parabolic flute (including the Glaser, the Henry Taylor artisan gouge, and most Sorby gouges), you will not get the same flute profile as you will with a gouge with the parabolic flute. In fact, you will get a "dip" in the flute, just before the tip. This dip is highly undesirable, as the objective is to obtain a continuous convex curve from the flutes down to the tip of the tool. Bottom line: use the Ellsworth sharpening jig **only** on bowl gouges with a parabolic flute.

Ellsworth sharpens his bowl-turning gouge much more often than most turners might. Using his sharpening gouge with a 1"-wide 100/120 grit aluminum oxide gray stone from Norton (available through MSC, which is Manhattan Supply Corporation, or McMaster Carr, for about \$22.00), he extends the cutting tool 2" beyond the tip of his jig. The base of the jig sits at a point that is 4" below the center of the grinder turning shaft, and 7" back from a line drawn tangent to the turning wheel, and perpendicular to the ground. As the grinding wheel wears down, maintain the 7" distance to the face of the wheel.

You can make a wooden "slide" for mounting the tip of the Ellsworth jig by taking a 3/4" board, 2" wide and 15" long, and cutting a center slot 7/16" in width on a band saw (or slot-cut with a router). The slot is used to permit a 3/8" carriage bolt to fit under the grinder's mounting board. The bolt is threaded from the bottom of the mounting board, through the slot, and captured on top by a washer and nut. This permits manipulation of the sharpening jig to accommodate the 4" and 7" distances cited above. Using the Ellsworth jig and bowl gouge, the results should give a 60-degree angle at the tip of the tool (when viewed from the side of the tool).

Note: the pivot point in the slide (where the base of the sharpening jig sits) is 4" below the center point of the grinding wheel shaft. (If you are using a 6" wheel grinder, the grinder may need to be blocked up on its base by a spacer board.)

Note: If you are using the Ellsworth sharpening jig with the Wolverine jig by Oneway, extend the gouge tip to 2-1/8" beyond the jig front, and increase the other dimensions to 4-1/8" and 7-1/8," respectively.

Mounting Techniques

For making hollow forms or bowls, there are essentially three different mounting choices: a chuck, a faceplate, or the use of a faceplate with attached scrap wood mated to the turning piece using gap-filling super-glue. Ellsworth actually prefers the use of a faceplate rather than a chuck, simply because the revolving piece is closer to the bearings in the headstock. This should, at least in theory, result in less vibration during turning.

Faceplates should be made of steel or cast iron. They should not be aluminum or pot metal. Ellsworth likes to use No. 14 self-tapping screws, 1" in length, for mounting the piece to his faceplate. A No. 14 is a rather large diameter screw, but they are available through MCLS or McMaster Carr at about \$13.00 for a box of 100. Tapcons® also work. They are made of hardened steel and are actually designed for mounting in concrete. **DO NOT USE** the black wallboard screws. They are too thin and fragile; they may break off in the piece you are turning.

If you are in the market for a faceplate, Ellsworth has a guy in Ranger, GA who makes them for a reasonable price (not specified). Ellsworth will provide you with a contact phone number if you e-mail him at DavidEllsworth@nni.com. Alternately, you can visit his website, which is www.Ellsworthstudios.com.

Bowl Gouge Technique

Ellsworth has an excellent CD/videotape entitled "The Ellsworth Signature Gouge" with Sharpening Jig (\$30). This tutorial, recently updated with an additional 17 minutes of footage, provides demonstrations on how to sharpen the bowl gouge and provides instruction on how to perform a roughing cut, slicing cut, shearing cut, and finishing cut-all with the same tool. Where other turners might use a roughing gouge to make a cylinder, a bowl gouge to establish the outside shape of the bowl, followed by a scraper to refine the final surface- Ellsworth uses only one tool! For roughing out the interior of a bowl, Ellsworth shows how to move the gouge in a plane parallel to the floor, with the gouge flutes at a 45-degree angle to the floor. The cutter is oriented at the center-line of the turning, and the handle is moved in an arc, but always in a plane parallel to the floor. For a finishing cut on the bowl interior, the same movement is used, except that after entry into the interior at the bowl lip, the tool is rotated so the flutes are level (flutes pointing toward the ceiling). This maneuver orients a thin cross-section of the cutter tip to be in contact with the turning, which results in a finishing cut on the bowl interior.

Once the interior of the bowl is established, Ellsworth uses a shearing cut on the bowl lip. Prior to shearing, he sharpens the bowl gouge. He then starts at the outside of the bowl lip, moving inward toward the lesser diameter. Use the shearing cut to eliminate the sharp edge formed by the intersection of the outside of the bowl with the lip.

On Sharpening

After using his jig to sharpen the signature bowl gouge, Ellsworth does not hone the edge. Why? Because he wants the fine burr on the edge of the tool-this is what makes it perform the shearing cut, in much the same way that a sharpened scraper held at 45-degrees to the rotating surface will perform a shearing cut. Ellsworth suggests, "Sure, you can hone a spindle gouge after sharpening with a conical

diamond hone or slipstone, but don't hone the bowl gouge."

On Tool Rests

Ellsworth likes the tool rests from General and Woodfast the best.

The Powermatic is the worst. The Oneway is nice, but the bottom area comes out too far to permit him to perform his shearing cut easily. He suggested replacing the tool rest on the Jet mini-lathe, as the thin construction is vulnerable to snapping under heavy load. Ellsworth did not feel the need to use a curved tool rest, as he has been comfortable with simply re-positioning a straight tool rest when necessary. He also likes to work with tool rests that have a 3/8" rod welded or glued to the top. Disclaimer: Ellsworth was not trying to endorse (or condemn) any given manufacturer's design. He simply was voicing his preferences, based on his own personal turning experience.

On Depth Gauges

How thick is your bowl? This is a question you will be asking yourself as you turn the wood down to its final thickness. To determine bowl thickness, Ellsworth prefers a hand-made device. He starts with a 30" length of zinc-plated rod, 3/16" in diameter, which you can get in your local hardware store or home center at a nominal cost. He then bends the rod into a near circle, with the two ends nearly intersecting at a right angle. The distance between the near intersection is adjusted to 1/8" greater than the desired bowl thickness. For example, if you want a bowl that is 1/4" in final thickness, make the near intersection 3/8" wide. You then slide the gap around the wall of the bowl, to see how close your turning has approximated the desired 1/4" thickness.

On Tailstock Centers

Ellsworth likes the revolving center by Nova from Craft Products (Part No. 9557200). For his work, he doesn't want a long point gouging into the wood. This prevents him from re-orienting the piece during the critical phase of turning the outside of the bowl. Once roughing out the shape is completed, the turner has a "design opportunity." The turner can orient the bowl in specific relation to passage of the pith or burl through the piece. For example, if the pith is present, a turner would likely want it to pass symmetrically through the piece. A short point on the revolving center facilitates the re-orientation process. A long point pushes the wood fibers aside, which potentially could lead to splitting of the piece, depending upon the pressure applied and final thickness.

Body Positioning

As a teacher of woodturning for many years, Ellsworth has become sensitive to body positioning at the lathe. A white-knuckle grip on the tool with knees locked is probably not the best way to approach turning. But this posture is exactly what not uncommonly happens with the neophyte woodturner. Instead, Ellsworth advocates approaching the lathe with the feet spread apart by about 30-inches, and the knees unlocked. The tool handle is positioned at the hip or belt-line, with the elbows moved inward, contacting the abdomen. As the cut proceeds, the body weight is shifted from one leg to the other, but the elbows and tool handle remain locked in position. The intention is to promote the idea that the arms and wrists don't do all the cutting; a fluid movement of the torso from one leg to the other is instead recommended.

One subtlety. A right-handed neophyte turner will often grip the bowl gouge with his left hand over the shaft of the tool, and thumb beneath the shaft. Ellsworth has learned that if you encourage the turner to place the thumb of the left hand **over** the tool shaft, along with the other four fingers, the turner often relaxes. At the same time, the turner is placing more leverage down on the tool rest, which is deemed more desirable than aggressively forcing the tool into the turning wood.

Conclusion

Ellsworth was superb. His tool technique was flawless. His teaching was logical and precise. He explained not only the “hows” but the “whys” of what he was doing, often anticipating the questions on the lips of his audience. His experience as a teacher of woodturning for over 30 years has given him insights for instruction that few demonstrators can match. If your ambition is to learn bowl turning or turning hollow forms, please give strong consideration to obtaining the Ellsworth Signature Bowl Gouge, the dedicated sharpening jig, and his CD/videocassette, *The Ellsworth Signature Gouge*. Armed with these, your learning curve will likely be much shorter than that of the neophyte who is without them.

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