



# TURNING TIMES

Newsletter of the  
**INLAND  
WOODTURNERS**



August 2007

## NOTES FROM THE MEETING OF SUNDAY 19 August 2007 from your notekeeper Pall Bohne

### The Gang's all here!

Our August meeting was a huge success if you gage such things by the number of people who show up for it. We had most of our regular folks and seven new people. We filled up all the tables and chairs which are normally in the room, and had to go searching for extra chairs so that late comers could sit down. We may have to look for a new larger room to meet in.

Among the new folks were **Art Majenus** from Hemet, who has the ability to make hats, t-shirts and tote bags with our club logo; **Kyle Toth**, a young man from Temecula, who came with Richard Bull, our old friend who lives close to Kyle; **Cory McIntyre** came alone from Desert Hot Springs but promises to bring his wife next time; **Chuck Forsyth** came from Norco. **Maria Hurtado** came with Dave Morgan and lives in Alta Loma. **Norma McConnell** came from Rancho Cucamonga along with her friend **Paul Hermann**, who hails from Fontana. Welcome to you all.

### Some Announcements

Our president Matt Heffron, says that we are in for a treat early next year. It seems that **Jimmy Clewes** is coming to our club to put on a demonstration of his skills. This announcement brought a lot of enthusiastic comments from some of the folks in the room. I personally don't know much about him and what sort of turnings he is famous for, but the enthusiasm voiced around the room leads me to believe that I've been missing out. We will look forward to next January or whenever it is to take place.

Matt also pointed out that on **Saturday, September 15th** some of the club members are going to demonstrate lathe turning on the sidewalk in front of the *Rockler Store at Ontario Mills*. This starts about 9am. Club members are encouraged to bring their tools and perhaps some wood to show the public how they too can get involved with woodturning. With all the demonstrations at the wood working shows these days, you really can't say that the tools and techniques of an

amateur woodturner are unknown. Many would like to try their hand at it and perhaps just need to know that a club such as ours is nearby to help them.

Perhaps you are a beginner yourself and would like to be able to ask questions about the craft that you are not familiar with, or perhaps you would like to try your hand at the lathe while someone stands right by your side and guides you through the steps of making a turning. Even if you don't demonstrate just your presence on that day is welcome. Perhaps just your being there can be an opportunity to encourage some folks to take the plunge and get into wood turning. That's why our club was started all those years ago, to answer questions about woodturning and find where you can buy the proper tools for the craft. I can remember my first sight of a *Craft Supplies Catalog*. What a revelation! How I drooled over those tools. And little by little I got some of those high speed tools to help me turn better and safer. So, let's support the demo at Rockler on the 15th. Generally, there are smaller lathes there, but there also may be a medium sized one too, if you want to turn a larger bowl instead of pens and small boxes and bowls. Any questions? Call Darrell Harris at (909) 987-3003.

**Steve Dunn** announced that next month he would have a huge load of maple burl for sale before and after the meeting. It will be somewhat green but that's the way we like it. Matt also announced that **Aaron Brothers** art suppliers have sets of *Prisma Markers* on sale for 50% off, if you hurry.

### The Challenge

The Challenge this month was to bring in a pen you've made. You'll recall that a couple of months ago we had a demonstration of pen turning by **Pete Champagne** who is an expert in the business. Well, it seems we have a whole lot of club members who are very good at the business. Most of us start off in a small way and either give it up after making pens for all of our friends and relatives, or, really go in



### Officers

**President:** Matt Heffron  
heffron@alumni.caltech.edu  
**Vice-President:** Darrell Harris  
streetroder57@hotmail.com  
**Secretary:** Pall Bohne  
pwbohne@verizon.net  
**Treasurer:** Bob Nay  
cheri.bob@verizon.net  
**Librarian:** John Stoner  
jstoner@surfside.net  
**Membership and Official  
Photographer:**  
Diana Williams  
dwilliams7888@sbcglobal.net  
**Newsletter:** Ron McKinley  
bushmanpilot@yahoo.com

for it in a big way and make them at a profit. Some of us just want to keep up with the latest innovations in the pen making business. No matter what your interest is, anyone with a lathe can have a good time making these useful items.

The Challenge really brought out some interesting variations and showed a good cross section of the pen making industry as of today. Just this week I got a catalog

from *Penn State Industries* showing their latest offerings of pen and pencil tools and supplies. They are just one of many suppliers of these tools and materials for pens. Have you seen the rattlesnake and corn cob pen blanks?

First up to answer the Challenge was **John Stoner** with a rack of eight pens resting in a casual fashion, just inviting a person to pick one up and get the feel of it and to admire the craftsmanship. Most of these racks which hold a bunch of pens can be had in the same catalogs which feature the pen supplies. John also showed 4 other pens for a total of 12.

One of our newer members, **Barbara Stark**, showed a pen she had turned from cherry wood. Alas it was still unfinished. She wanted to hear what the other turners were doing to put the final finish on their pens. She said that she had been experimenting with various finishes. I'm sure that after this meeting she will have a better idea of what she will use in the future.

**Pete Champagne** showed a varied group of *Slim-line* pens using French polish made by *Mylands* as a finish. The traditional French Polish is basically shellac

and alcohol applied with a soft rag using friction to bring out the shine. One of the features that Pete uses as a sales incentive is to put a small piece of paper in the box that accompanies each pen that describes the

wood she used and how to keep it looking like new. This small descriptive paper can easily be made on a computer along with a laser printer. Great idea, Pete.

Next up was **Gary Bingham** who showed two pens turned from black walnut and purpleheart. He says that he used kits supplied by *Craft Supplies* of Provo, Utah. They probably also supplied the *Hut Crystal Coat*, the liquid friction polish and the *Hut* wax he used to finish the pens.

One of the most unusual pens to show up in the Challenge was one using rattlesnake skin under a layer of clear resin and CA glue. This was made by **Don Ogle** of Ontario. The pen used one of the so-called *comfort ends* where your fingers wrap around the pen. This material is a soft rubber or plastic and is generally black in color. Don also showed a pen of the sierra style and one that his wife decorated by hand using some colorful paint.

**Scott Fruchter** made a pencil using acrylic stock instead of wood. He chose purple as a color and finished it with *Mylands* friction polish. **David Lawrence** used six different woods and several styles of mechanisms. He used black palm, spalted tamarind, redwood burl, sycamore burl and box

elder dyed black. He, no doubt, got a lot of experience cutting these different woods and then finally finished them with friction polish.

As we know, **Bob Rapp** is an old hand at making pens and this time around he showed an array of acrylic bodied *Rollerball* pens of the *El Presidente* and *Baron* styles. Using acrylic blanks means that you don't have to put a finish on the pens; sand first, and then polish them with a buffing wheel and the appropriate compound. Bob used four different colors in making these pens, and used the deluxe platinum fittings.

**Rick Mills** is the turner who has developed a way to put words and/or pictures on the brass tube used in making pens. We have seen his work in recent months.





This time he showed some pens of the *desk pen* variety. The set consists of wooden straight pen and a holder which sits on the desk. He says that he got the parts kits for these pens from *Craft Supplies*.

Next up was **Darrell Harris** with six pens he had made from a variety of woods. The woods he used were box elder, buckeye burl, redwood burl, pink ivory, and one unknown wood. He also used a piece of *Dymondwood*. Friction polish was used on the woods, but only a good buffing being necessary for the *Dymondwood*.

**Dave Wadleigh** showed three boxes of pens he had made, all very colorful. However, what caused most comment were the boxes he displayed them in. They were identical wooden boxes with the word "COHIBA" on the top, and each box would hold about eight pens. It came out that they were empty cigar boxes. Judging by the boxes the cigars must be very expensive. Nevertheless, the empty boxes worked well to display his beautiful pens.

**Maria Hurtado** was at our meeting for the first time, but she came bearing an unfinished pen she was working on. In fact, it was still attached to the mandrel. Perhaps next month she'll show us the finished pen. She is a friend of the Dave Morgan family and apparently Dave's enthusiasm gave her the impetus to try to make her first turning. Keep on turning Maria.

Flat top pens came in for a lot of comment because **Matt Heffron** brought up the subject in showing his *flat top pencil*. He claimed that the design of the flat top pens is faulty, and several others spoke up to agree. There are apparently still problems with that style of

pen kit. It may be that the instructions are at fault, so watch out if you buy that style.

**Larry Cooper**, one of several turners in the high desert, brought in three pens turned from box elder. And a fellow named

**Ed** showed a group of pens he'd made and displayed them in a velvet folder. Ed also talked about a *teachers pen* which has both red and black ink cartridges. Finally, your notekeeper showed a *Sierra Pen* with a laminated wood body. Thus we concluded that turning pens is something that anyone can do if they have the smallest of lathes or a large one.



## Show and Tell

*Show and Tells* this time was to be a show of *jigs and useful homemade tools* which help a turner in their efforts to become better turners. Not that all the items were to be of that nature. We had a good selection of turnings too.

In this latter category **Bob Beckel** showed five of his recent pieces. Three of them were hats, two mini hats and one which was full size. Two bowls were shown next, a Carolina cherry bowl, and a shallow ash bowl or a deep ash platter, depending on your viewpoint. There was some discussion on the ash item.

**Dave Morgan** has been touring the Aegean Sea with his wife the travel agent, and didn't do much actual woodturning but he brought some remarkable pictures back. These were not ones he took with a camera but one made up of many small pieces of colored wood, a marquetry sort of thing which has been going on in Greece for many years.

While **Pete Champagne** has mostly shown her lathe skills in making highly finished pens, this time she brought in an irregular piece of apricot wood with a round cavity turned in it. These sorts of turning where regular shapes are contrasted with irregular can be very interesting, especially if the turned part it is smooth and polished to contrast with the natural wood.

**John Love** brought in a highly finished tall vase turned from avocado wood. The six inch diameter by nine inch high turning was finished with Deft lacquer.

A new book is always a welcome topic with me, and when **Gary Bingham** held up *Small and Miniature Turnings* my eyes lit up. But alas, I wasn't fast enough to get up to the table afterwards to have a look at it before Gary took it away. In addition to the book Gary brought in a miniature vase in oak. It was only two and a half inches high, and finished by staining the oak and then giving the small turning a clear gloss finish and a wax job. No doubt the vase was inspired by his new book. Gary also showed a plywood jig he uses to turn vases, but this particular jig was not used to turn the miniature vase. The jig is used to steady the wood while hollowing out the insides. Gary also has explored the drying of wet woods using a microwave oven and is now quite comfortable using the technique up in the very dry high desert, where he lives with his wife and new *One-Way* lathe.

While **Dave Holzberger** was not with us physically, he was there by means of one of his jigs brought in by Darrell Harris. Dave got a small *Jet mini* lathe last year



and had to make a jig for it to steady pieces of wood when he makes the hollow vessels he is known for. Dave has a large steady rest for his large *Woodfast* lathe, but steady rests don't seem to be available for the mini lathes. So, he made one out of Baltic birch plywood using all his other woodworking machines, following the general pattern of his larger metal steady rest. Dave also has metal working machines if he needs them in making jigs and such.

**Darrell Harris** went on to show some of the jigs he has made to make life easier at the lathe. First he showed a jig to hold hollowing tools which have flat handles rather than round handles. The jig itself was welded up from metal and holds those flat wooden handles steady but still allowing them to be able to move in and out of the vessel while you're hollowing it. Darrell also showed a sanding jig, a tenon making jig, some homemade wooden faceplates but with a metal nut embedded in the wood which fits the headstock threads of your particular lathe. Jigs to make inside-outside turnings were also shown. I'm sure these jigs will spark a lot of activity in the near future by members who want to save money and have the pleasure of saying that they made it themselves. Thanks Darrell.

**Dan Fontaine** spoke of his *Graduate Lathe* which he bought used recently on the Internet, but with some missing parts. The parts were fortunately available from England where the lathe is made, but getting the parts shipped by sea cost him more the parts themselves! Just think what airmail would have cost! But overall, I imagine that the lathe was a good buy over the cost of a new one, as the lathe is a rare one here in the U.S.

**John Stoner** showed another way to make threaded faceplates for your lathe. He found that the Beale Company makes large taps for use in wood. It is just a matter of getting the tap which matches your lathe's headstock threads, and then drill and tap the block. Then put the wooden threaded block on the lathe and turn the faceplate to any size you need. Great idea, John.

Most of us have seen the pens made by **Rick Mills** which have words or pictures under a clear layer of resin. Well, Rick was there to show us how he does this tricky business. First of all you need a small plastic box, such as a Tupperware brand box about 3x5 inches and a couple of inches deep. His sample was large enough to hold four sections of the pens tubes while they are being cast in resin. The brass tubes are held in place

with machine screws and nuts, carriage bolts and nuts, or even long wood screws through the tubes and run into a small block of wood. The whole idea is to hold the tube off the bottom of the box and spaced apart enough to be able to saw the hardened resin apart the next day. You want to keep the box small so that you don't waste the casting resin, which costs somewhere around \$40 a gallon, plus the catalyst.

Rick suggests that you spray paint the brass tubes before you attach the words or pictures, unless you like the looks of the brass tubes around the words or pictures. He uses white paint, but you can think about what harmonizes with the words or pictures. A light blue may look good too. The resin and its catalyst is mixed together and poured in the box covering the tubes with enough resin so that the tubes are about in the center of the wet resin. Let it harden and next day cut the block of resin into long resin covered blanks like the ones you buy or make in wood. Rick says that you can use the box more than once, getting four blanks at a time for the two part blanks. If you want to cast the longer blanks it will require that you set the tubes the long way in the box. If you need more information ask Rick next time you see him. My account is just to whet your appetite in case you missed the last meeting. And by the way, Rick showed a nice bowl he turned from camphor at the beginning of his presentation. Thanks Rick.

**Dave Wadleigh** brought in two of his recent turnings. The first one was a bowl, and said that it was his first one. He also showed a bud vase. Being that he is into making pens in a big way, the jig he made for cutting the blanks to the correct length is, no doubt, very useful. However, it is apparent that Dave is spreading his wings and expanding his horizon. Can hollow vessels or segmented turnings be far away?

Our old friend **Richard Bull** has been giving turning lessons to his young neighbor **Kyle Toth**, who is but seventeen years old and a beginner at turning. Kyle brought in three segmented bowls he had made.

We were very impressed. Two of the bowls were made from walnut and mahogany segments, and the other was made from segments of red oak and poplar. They were about nine and a half inches in diameter.

All segmented work begins with a lot of cutting of the wood into strips and then into segments. A jig was used on a miter saw to make the segments come out the





segments were not as involved as is possible to make them, but even with just a coats of mineral oil, or in one case, bees wax, it was apparent that the segments fitted nice and tight. Here is a fellow who is not satisfied with "close". One of the bowls sported a light colored star shaped design on the bottom of the bowl which



right length. I'm sure it was more complicated than that. Maybe we'll get a better idea at a later date. There are, of course, books to guide a person in the critical business of making the segments. These was cut and glued in beautifully. We'll expect great things if Kyle continues to turn. He, and his mentor Richard, got a sincere round of applause after his brief comments on this remarkable segmented bowl work.

Next up was our president **Matt Heffron** with a large platter made from a colorful piece of carob. It was thirteen inches in diameter and finished with *Min-Wax Wipe-on Poly*. Matt also talked about two jigs he brought in to show. Both were for doing a quick but neat job of drilling and assembly of pens.

**Scott Fruchter** showed us his first lidded box. It was turned from maple and finished with shellac. Scott also showed how he cuts parts for a segmented turning on a table saw. His jig holds the wood safely so that you end up with just as many fingers as you started with.

**Jim Powell**, who is kinda new to our club, showed his turning containing a music box. I don't recall if he said where he got the movement, but there are several sources for these movements.



**Chet Lewis** showed us a very useful jig used to center a lazy-susan bearing between the two pieces of wood which generally make up the L-S. We were all very impressed. If you missed hearing about his way

to get everything right on the money, ask Chet about it the next time you see him.

We had more than usual examples of segmented work at this particular meeting. **Bob Rodriguez** made one which he called a *jar*. That title almost demands a *lid* for the jar. Maybe next time we'll see the jar complete with lid.

**Jim**, I don't recall which Jim that was, also made a jig to cut the pen blanks to length. He also showed a jig to drill the shallow holes used in installing European type hinges. There are ready made ones available but this was his answer to the high price of ready made jigs. We can all relate to that.

Our machinist friend **Kurt Baruch** showed us some of the tools he's made over the years, also to beat the high cost of ready made tools. More to the point, he told us where we could get some useable sizes of high speed steel to make tools from at a reasonable cost. The place is *Industrial Pipe and Steel (IPS)* in South El Monte, at 9936 Rush St.—open Saturday mornings too.



Kurt told about how he was browsing among his grandfather's tools back in Germany in the thirties and found an unusual tool which is easy to make from a piece of square HSS of about 1/4 to 3/8 inch square material. The final shape of the tool is a lozenge. That particular tool is found in most showings of tools used for turning brass and other harder metals by hand. It is very useful in turning hardwoods too. The tool is shown on page 330 of Holtzapffel's book "Hand or Simple Turning", Holtzapffel calls the tool a *graver*. Anyway, Kurt ran across such a tool about seventy years ago and found it useful. He showed a beautiful example of the tool he had made from a piece of HSS from IPS. I suppose that other long pieces of HSS can be had from other industrial metals dealers. I know that I got a 3/8 inch square by 8 inch long piece from *Bill's Industrial Tools* in Ontario some years ago.

Kurt also showed a tool called a "square hole tool bit sleeve". 10 sizes of the sleeve are available from Jurgens, a tool supplier whose items are carried by industrial tool dealers like IPS and Bill's. These are dealers I'm familiar with. They can order these sleeves for you, if they are not in stock.



I don't believe you can order direct from Jurgens. Kurt showed two more interesting tools he had made: one was a scraper tool of hardened steel for cleaning burrs or even glue from hard to reach places.

Another was a tool used to clean the threads of a chuck before screwing it on the headstock. This last item was made from a piece of steel welding rod. He gave me one some time ago and it works as advertised. Thanks Kurt, for your input and reminiscences from the old country.

**Richard Bull** showed a mandrel used to mount a piece of wood to turn Christmas tree ornaments. I must admit that I didn't quite grasp how it worked, but if I need one I know who to call.

**Doug Betts** showed a seven inch diameter bowl he'd turned recently from box elder. It had a red streak in the wood giving it more character. It was finished using Wipe-on-Poly, by *MinWax*, I suppose. Does anyone else make the stuff? Doug also made a plywood jig to cut the small pieces of wood used in making segmented turnings. Another jig was made to help in gluing up the small pieces into layers. Sanding and assembly of the layers is the next step and Doug had an answer for that too. He had a sample of such a layer before it is glued onto the bowl, which starts at the bottom and goes up.

Next up was **Larry Cooper** with two segmented turnings. He says the first one had 408 pieces of various woods and a few bits of Corian! The second turning was a segmented hollow vessel, with an unknown number of pieces. Unknown because he hasn't got around to counting them. Here's another thought. Why do we always give the number of pieces in a segmented turning? Is it to impress the folks? Apparently so. No matter how many pieces they have Larry, they both are beautiful.



Someone named **John** made a really large tool for deep hollowing. Someone in the audience called it a "Texas tooth pick". It lacked a handle, but it may not need one as there is good leverage even without a handle.

Finally, your notekeeper **Pall Bohne** got up to explain his inability to make anything over 14 inches in diameter; an old *Shopsmith* which has been converted to a hybrid lathe with 12 speeds and a tailstock which moves toward the headstock. Those of you with a *Shopsmith* will recognize that these are not common attributes of a normal old *Shopsmith* made in San Francisco back in the mid-forties. I've also welded up some special tool rests to get into small areas like boxes.

One other recent modification was to the screw center which goes on the headstock. The old *Shopsmith* screw center used a common woodscrew to

drive a small turning. I replaced that center with the superior *Glazer Screw Center* years ago and never used the *Shopsmith* screw center again. But, I found a use for the old *Shopsmith* screw center. I modified it to make a *cup drive center* which allows you to have a catch with your tool and not ruin the turning. With the cup drive center a catch just stops the wood from spinning while the center keeps spinning. No harm done. I think it was Dick Sing who showed us that tool, which is available for most lathes which use a Morse taper spindle. The *Shopsmith* has a solid spindle of 5/8 inch diameter. I had to bore out the *Shopsmith* screw center to take a cup screw center, which is made by several manufacturers. Just make sure you have the cup center before you do the boring, so that everything fits snug. Any questions?



### The Challenge for Next Month

The Challenge for next month is to make anything in the way of a turning your little heart desires, at any size, color or wood (or even a non-wood). Your only problem is to come to a decision of what to turn. It's up to you!

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#### Editor's Note:

We need to flesh out our website with some articles and tutorials that members can download. If you have a special way of doing something that you think other members could use, write it up, take some pictures and get it to me and I'll put it in a PDF file that can be downloaded.

Old hands and newbies will benefit from your knowledge and technique. Contact me at 760-247-5680 or [bushmanpilot@yahoo.com](mailto:bushmanpilot@yahoo.com) —Ron McKinley

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