



Natural Edge Winged Platter with Carved Feet an IRD with Rudy Lopez

From Rudy:

"I will be turning one of my natural edge wing platters with feet from a crotch section. Emphasizing the two most important fundamentals of turning, sharp tools and good tool control I will cover the basics of bevel supported verses non-bevel supported cuts. This should help you improve your technique on interrupted cuts, which will help you achieve a clean smooth finish from the tool that will greatly reduce sanding. In case you don't quite get that perfect bowl gouge cut I will explain sharpening and using negative rake scrapers to clean up the surface. I will demonstrate the tools and techniques I use to carve feet on my platters and bowls and the simple method I use to return the platter to the lathe after carving to clean up possible mistakes in the carving. We will discuss design and layout considerations regarding Limb orientation, features and flaws in the wood. Different techniques for sanding wet wood both on and off of the lathe, along with some helpful hints to help make turning thin interrupted cuts easier will also be discussed."

ABRDGE IN TIVE

Reflections on Creative Evolution

Steve Loar



have an acute affliction, but I am certainly not alone in having it. Many in the contemporary woodturning field share and even embrace this affliction. I call it Utility Deficit Syndrome (UDS). As I consider and plan useful turned objects like bowls. platters, and rolling pins, my brain switches into "what-if" mode before I can even begin the work. I appreciate the skill required to make utilitarian pieces well; simple beauty is not easy. But no matter how great a part of me aches to make useful things, the effort always ends up the same: I consider ways of subverting the process in favor of artistic expression.

My use of the lathe is not the entertaining, stress-relieving experience many describe. I can't put a piece of

material on the lathe and just turn a shape. Much of the time, I try to express some sort of story, feeling, action, or relationship. Such is my UDS.

My thirty-six years of teaching design and woodworking have provided me with a multitude of ways to think, consider, revise, and expand my ideas. The adrenaline rush of creative problem-solving, exploration, and risk is at the core of why I make things.

Embracing UDS

I first became aware of my UDS "condition" many years ago, when my local chapter hosted Richard Raffan. As one of the early successes in professional contemporary wood turning, Richard spoke from a position of experience and authority. So when he discussed his

use of wooden dishes and bowls, like for breakfast with milk over cereal, my mind reeled: "He puts milk in a wooden bowl, then eats out of it? Then he washes it and uses it again later?" I was struck dumb. It had literally never occurred to me that some one would actually use wooden objects for food. As the years passed and I learned of the utilitarian history of woodturning, with its almost exclusive dedication to useful objects, I beg an to see how differently some of us were looking at this common tool—the lathe—and its potential.

Fortunately, the post-industrial-arts wood turning community has accepted that I—and others with UDS—are driven to take artistic risks. Even a casual perusal of the Instant Gallery at an AAW Symposium shows the extent to which

the contemporary field has been afflicted with UDS. You still see useful bowls, plates, and jewelry, but there are far more objects that *refer* to utility—objects that announce themselves as things one would never dream of using for cereal with milk or oily popcorn or scratchy tortilla chips or a big family portion of steaming hot pasta, but which nonetheless function in the emotional, expressive realm of artistic sculpture.

Take, for example, the round turned vessel. It can be serene and beautiful, but its ability to engage the viewer is tested by the viewer's impulse to pick it up and look at its bottom. A round object, by default, communicates a uniformity of shape and mass, so it requires something more to engage us in visual inquiry. This "something more" could be a pattern or other embellishment. But if the pattern simply compounds our sense of uniformity and regularity, then we perceive that there are no surprises to be had. The very nature and wonder of wood grain can induce viewer engagement, but most often by happenstance. In order for a work to be more engaging, the perfect roundness of woodturning has to be modified into non-roundness and/or regular surfaces have to be made irregular.

Additional processes like pyrography, carving, and color are the tools of UDS. They fulfill a desire to add a personal attribute to a relatively an onymous, round form.

From industrial to arts

Introductory junior-high-shop classes had whetted my appetite for making things—practical, useful things.

Thorough instruction, rigorous expectations, and good machines during this time gave me the confidence to later undertake a college minor in industrial arts, where I discovered woodturning. I majored in studio art, which exposed me to many ideas and techniques, but the bulk of my education was still based in the rigor and reality of useful things.

IN SEARCH OF "UP"

Split Vessel 2, 1984, Spalted maple, cherry, paint, 22" × 12" (56cm × 30cm)

Collection of Dr. Irving Lipton

Along with a desire to convey motion, I began to investigate ways to elevate my works. Here, I used removeable inserts to create calculated, pre-finished channels through the piece, which I hoped would alter the static mass of the pedestal and bowl.





Wak This Way, 1985, Walnut, cherry, bubinga, acrylic, 10" × 12" (25cm × 30cm)

The bubinga nubs inside Walk This Waynegate much of the utility of the bowl, raising the enduring philosophical question, Why? inherent in much of my work.



Tiansformed for Robyn, 1986, Spalled maple, bubinga-veneered hardboard, paint, 13" × 16" × 12" (33cm × 41cm × 30cm)

Collection of Robyn and John Horn

This background—combining the skills of making with contemplative expression—was the creative and technical foundation from which I explored what contemporary woodturning might look like. Thus, it felt natural for me to be one of the early investigators of sand blasting, color, texture, complex compositions, narrative, and collaboration.

Already a fan of Frank Frazetta, the pivotal *ah-ha!* moment for me was

seeing the work of Roger Dean in 1977. I thought, "This is so futuristic and filled with action—why can't woodturning do this?" Both artists conjured in me a profound sense of power and movement. I was inspired to engage in a personal search for what woodturning might be.

The question, What are the possibilities of how a work might look or feel? was central to the evolution of woodturning into its post-industrial-arts expression

woodturner.org 45



COLLABORATING WITH CASTOFFS

Steve Loar, with cast-offs from Mark Sfirri, On the Road to Dali-Wood, 1993, Oak, box elder, curly willow, redwood, Corian®, mixed media, paint, dye, verdigris, 30" × 10" (76cm × 25cm)

Photo: Mark Sfirri

Collection of Marina Kaiser

This piece began my use of rejects/discards from other turners. Woodturner, sculptor, and educator Mark Sfirri had sent me an early, experimental, off-set-turned table leg. I immediately perceived a figure in the leg. My wife was aghast when I proceeded to cut off the square end.



Steve Loar, with cast-offs from Mark Sfirri, Linda Van Gehuchten, Stephen Goetschius, Christian Burchard, and Steve Sinner, Message in a Bottle, 2008, Various hardwoods, rust, cast-off student prints and plates, 30" × 96" × 48" (76cm × 244cm × 122cm)

Message in a Bottle was a temporary assemblage of cast-offs, a physical sketch of sorts never realized as a permanent work. Rock songs have inspired much of my work, and "Message in a Bottle" by The Police was one of several "symphony," or "song cycle," concepts that led me to try expressing the time-based nature of music assomething physical.







Steve Loar, with cast-offs from Stoney Lamar, Composition in Black, White, and Red The Indiscretion [The Geisha], 1994, Red maple, elm, pine, walnut, sycamore, Corian®, mixed media, 34" × 24" × 17" (86cm × 61cm × 43cm)

Photo: Jamey Stillings

Collection of Jerome and Deena Kaplan

The concept for this piece came when I first saw a partially turned piece on Stoney Lamar's burn pile. My reaction to this cast-aside block was a vivid memory of a *National Geographic* cover showing a closely cropped image of a Geisha's face.



Steve Loar, with cast-offs from Robyn Horn, River Geode, 2005, Primavera, cocobolo, maple, mixed media, 10" × 13" (25cm × 33cm)

After I repeatedly told Robyn Horn that her work would be energized by the addition of color and texture, she gifted me three entirely completed *Pierced Geodes*. This piece uses a fragmented sphere to conjure the swirl of a fish passing through sunlit water.

Photo: Jerry Anthony



Steve Loar, with cast-offs from Mark Sfirri, David Ellsworth, John Jordan, and Kim Conover-Loar, ... and they came bearing gifts, 1994, Mahogany, ash, box elder, redwood burl, purpleheart, mixed media, 53" × 38"× 24" (135cm × 97cm × 61 cm)

Photo: DuBois/Tower

Collection of Fleur Bressler

I was able to fully achieve my vision for this piece when I described to David Elsworth a large thin sweeping cape and he gave me a finished piece that had been returned split in half from a would-be buyer. Yeas earlier, I had bartered with John Jordan for one of his earliest footless bottles.

and has been a theme of my own life's work. Consider that the first exhibition focusing on woodturning did not take place until 1981, and the AAW wasn't founded until 1986. In short, there was no "woodturning movement" before 1981. Those of us who were developing a language of new techniques and forms generally didn't know about each other. David Ellsworth and Albert LeCoff called me to discuss my piece, *Spacelander*, which was in that first exhibition. Their call was an impetus, an authorization if you will, to continue with my mission of exploration.

Having tilted *Spacelander's* UFO-like mass and inset an off-center dish, I had taken an important but unintentional step in chasing the powers of artists Roger Dean and Frank Frazetta. I had created a sense of motion and direction.

In subsequent work, I became infatuated with four goals: give the work a sense of rising up, entice the viewer to move around the work, abandon symmetry, and use scale rather than size to engage the viewer. The synthesis of skills, experiences, and personal goals would result in a big leap for me—and for other woodturners like me at the time. Our story, in retrospect, is part of the bridging into what we now know as contemporary woodturning.

Experimental collaboration

In 1991, I taught "Woodturning: Off the Ground" at Arrowmont, where I encountered a number of emerging luminaries. Later that year, Mark Sfirri sent me a table leg that was one of his first experiments into offset turning. He had signed it as a researcher's postcard to a friend. Given my UDS, I instantly saw a figure within the table leg and, much to my wife's alarm, proceeded to cut off the top. Similarly, I had "seen" a Geisha's head in a partially turned, massive Stoney Lamar attempt. This large experimental turning had been sitting atop a rubbish pile, ready to be burned, when he allowed me to take it. These two

I recognized that myfriends were some of the most important pioneers of contemporary woodluming and that their cast-offs were some of the most important research being done at the time.

objects set me on the course of working with other people's discards.

I went about creating new work from "shards." Sculptor Isamu Noguchi's observation that he "collaborated with the material" struck a chord. Far from just taking what others were throwing away, I recognized that my friends were some of the most important pioneers of contemporary wood turning and that their castoffs were some of the most important research being done at the time. I saw their rejects as the sketch that is rendered prior to the grand painting or mural.

I increasingly found myself excited by the material's character, not as a board or block that might hold a form within, but as a shape unto itself. That chunk might be a Mark Sfirri experiment, a piece of redwood from David Ellsworth, an unsold geode by Robyn Horn, or a cracked sun hat by Johannes Michelsen. Most importantly, I was being entrusted to use these shards to make exhibition-quality art. If I couldn't succeed, I promised to burn the pieces, which I have done, painfully, several times. While I was "collaborating," I worked alone and on my own terms, but the sculptures were inspired by a deep appreciation for my contemporaries; I was paying homage to our place in history. This phase of work culminated in 2008, with a large "sketch" called Message in a Bottle. This piece used shards from at least ▶

woodturner.org 47

six turners, dumpsterized student work, and even rusted panels.

Live collaboration

The Center for Art in Wood's 2013 call for proposals for the *Bartram's Boxes Remix* exhibition began a new phase of interactive collaborations for me—with live people, rather than just their materials. I was ready for something new and turned to a former student who was particularly skilled in working with tissue

and reed. I approached her with rough sketches of a translucent shell embracing a turned wooden lingam made from wood from the Bartram's Garden Arboretum. Given the ease of cell phone cameras and texting (in addition to actually talking), we met only once mid-course to discuss our venture. My student's form brought light/shadow, interior/exterior, gesture, and bulk to my isolated column within. We titled the piece Chloris and Flora.

Later, I collaborated with Dixie Biggs, following a casual comment that we could make something daring for the AAW's 2016 member exhibition, Turning 30. An early theme that was retained in Dixie's portion was the idea that common trees like oaks and maples are threatened. We ultimately agreed to attempt a sense of the exotic. We went back and forth with talks and photos with a banter that was easy but with a frankness often requiring compromise. Much time was spent just clarifying what the other was meaning. It was great fun. I think the resulting sculpture combines the familiar with the unfamiliar and the literal with the abstract

The next level of collaborative challenge for Dixie and me will be coteaching at Arrowmont this summer. The class, "Techniques for Developing Original Surfaces," will merge the large areas of overlap in our experiences with design, wood, and patternmaking. My contribution will include lessons of formal design, composition, and brainstorming distilled from decades of college teaching, and Dixie will bring a more intuitive but literal sense of design and her well-known skills in power carving. To learn more about Dixie Biggs, see Michael McMillan's profile article on her in the December 2016 issue of AW.

The goals of woodturning have evolved significantly. My contemporaries and I were fortunate to have been present and involved during a critical bridging period. How will woodturning evolve from here? What is the next bridge to cross, and who will lead the crossing? What collaborations will engender discovery?

Steve Loar recently retired after a multifaceted career of university teaching and administration. He was most recently the Director of the Center for Turning and Furniture Design at the Indiana University of Pennsylvania. He has contributed frequently to American Woodturner and has been honored by the AAW for his mentorship. Steve can be reached at slowtech42@gmail.com.

COLLABORATING WITH PEOPLE



Steve Loar and Christina Cassone, Chloris and Flora, 2013, Lingam is poplar (from Bartram's Garden), walnut, mixed media; shell is reed, tissue, 30" × 17" × 17" (76cm × 43cm × 43cm)

Photo: Heather Tabacchi

A collaboration of media, *Chloris and Flora* explores containment, as seen in the elaborate boxes that early U.S. botanist John Bartram used to ship young plants abroad. The composition evokes an enclosure, an embrace, and relationships. The viewer is invited to pause and consider the complementary duality of two personalities joined in a dance.



Dixie Biggs and Steve Loar, with contributions by Christian Burchard and Kim Conover-Loar, Undscovered Symphony, 2016, Bleached jacaranda, maple, cherry, 32" × 10" × 14" (81cm × 25cm × 36cm)

Photo: Randy Batista

The author's collaboration and synergy with Dixie Biggs has led to a course the two will co-teach at Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts this summer. For more, visit arrowmont.org.



News from the American Association of Woodturners

Compiled Heather Marusiak

Call for Entries: "Beginnings" 2025 AAW Member Exhibition

Submission Period: January 1, 2025 to March 15, 2025

The theme for the 2025 AAW member show is "Beginnings". Each year, our goal is to host a Symposium exhibition that showcases and celebrates the full scope of excellent work being created by our members, from skillfully-crafted traditional turnings to innovative sculptures that push the boundaries.

This year's theme also reflects our Symposium host state of Minnesota, home to the headwaters of the Mississippi River. As always, artists are encouraged to interpret the theme for themselves. When you think of a beginning, what comes to mind? Do you already have a piece that reflects the theme perfectly? If it was made between March of 2023 and March of 2025 it is eligible!

Entry fee is \$25 for up to three pieces.

Click here to learn more



News from the American Association of Woodturners

Compiled Heather Marusiak

Ways to Save on AAW Symposium Registration



Registration is open for the 2025 AAW International Woodturning Symposium! Join nearly 2,000 other woodturning enthusiasts June 12-15 in Saint Paul, Minnesota at the best rate possible by registering now with these great ways to save:

- Register by April 11 to get the early bird rate and save up to \$120
- AAW Members get an exclusive discount of \$70 off
- Request a Chapter Group discount to save \$40

Click here to learn more or register



News from the American Association of Woodturners

Compiled Heather Marusiak

AAW Forum Highlights



Stewart Furini
Pathways 3



Crystal Rabbon

Spalted Japanese Maple

Bowl



Dave Roberts
The Group of Seven
14" - 30"



Phil Hamel
Thanksgiving Challenge
Mini Cookie Jar

Apple 7" x 5"

Want to connect with other woodturners? Sign up for the AAW Forum, a member moderated online community ideal for sharing work, ideas, and obtaining feedback from other woodturning enthusiasts. You can upload photos, converse with other woodturners, and maybe even see your work as a "Turning of the Week."

Click here to learn more



News from the American Association of Woodturners Compiled Heather Marusiak

Don't Forget!

- The AAW member <u>Remote Demonstration</u>
 <u>Calendar</u> features online woodturning demonstrations presented by AAW members.
- The AAW WIT (Women in Turning) Committee agrees that to further its mission to increase participation of women in the field of woodturning, it will work with chapters to help grow the number of women in AAW. Currently, women comprise less the 9% of AAW membership. To encourage women to join AAW, the WIT Committee offers a limited number of WITsponsored half- and full-price AAW memberships to women for a one-year, full "General" AAW membership. For more information, contact Heather Marusiak at heather.marusiak@gmail.com
- To become an AAW member, or to renew your AAW membership, please visit: <u>AAW Membership Home.</u>



Wednesday, Dec. 18 at 12:00 PM in the back room of

VISTA DRIVE IN

1911 Tuttle Creek Blvd, Manhattan, KS 66502



...Food! ...Friendship! ...Woodturning!



Recorded by Barbara Drolet

Nov 2, 2024, 9:00 am at Rock Creek High School, Saint George, KS.

A total of 26 people attended in-person, including two guests, and one attended via zoom.

Officer Reports:

President – Tom Shields: Today Steve Bietau will give a hollowing demonstration. In December, we will have an IRD with Rudy Lopez. In January, Tom Boley will demonstrate spindle turning and in February, Randy Zelenka will give a demonstration (TBD).

This month the membership votes on the Club's Board members. As with any club it is often difficult to get volunteers. Often just a few people are willing to step up, but they get burned out. Thankfully, several 2024 officers are willing to serve another year. They include President - Tom Shields, Vice President - Tod Salfrank, Secretary - Barb Drolet, Treasurer - Ross Hirst, Programs - Tom Boley, and AAW/WIT Liaison/Newsletter - Heather Marusiak. Heather will be moving to Colorado mid-year so we will need someone to take over AAW/WIT Liaison and the newsletter at that time. Steve Bietau has agreed to serve as Operations officer. A motion was made, and seconded, to accept the nominated slate of officers for a single vote. The membership unanimously voted in the nominees.

VP – Tod Salfrank: No report

Secretary – Barb Drolet: No report

Treasurer – Ross Hirst – The Club treasury balance is \$3064.41 with \$99.76 in petty cash. Dues for one member are in hand and will be deposited soon, so the total balance is \$3204.17. Dues are due and remain at \$40 for 2025. We currently have 42 members for 2024 and are hoping to at least stay at that level. Membership cards will be available next month. Be sure to check out the silent auction today.

Programs – Tom Boley: No report - absent

Operations – Robert Kloppenborg: Thanks to those who helped with the Pumpkin Patch Arts & Crafts event in Manhattan. We had many good interactions with people stopping by. Thanks again to Steve Bietau for the use of his tent to give us shade. Next year, the first event will be the Meet the Makers hosted by the Manhattan Discovery Center during spring break.

AAW Liaison/WIT/Newsletter— Heather Marusiak: Links to the current AAW and WIT events are in the newsletter. The WIT exchange presentations are today at 3:00 PM. It is free to register and you can watch it later if needed. AAW has a sweepstakes going on for the next symposium in June in St. Paul, MN which includes a 3-night stay, \$350, a ticket to the banquet, symposium registration, and a free AAW membership. Must enter by Nov. 15th. Thanks to those who have



Recorded by Barbara Drolet

made wig stands. Heather will continue to collect them on behalf of the Club and send them to her contact in MO.

Show & Tell: Presenters included: Vaughn Graber, Victor Schwarz, Matt Gish, Dennis Biggs, David Delker, Tom Shields, and Steve Bietau.

Demonstration – Club member Steve Bietau demonstrated hollowing techniques. Steve recommended several digital, online, and print resources for hollowing. "Ellsworth on Woodturning" and "The Art of Turned Bowls" by Richard Raffan were specifically mentioned. Steve discussed preferred hollowing tools, the use of compressed air, and the importance of practice. In terms of difficulty, turners should consider the size of the opening and the height of the piece. Starting with a short vessel with a large opening is best. If using wet wood, be sure to true it up anytime you remove it from the chuck or as it dries while turning. Steve illustrated the technique of taking out areas then smoothing the inside walls while making your way to the bottom of the vessel, and also demonstrated and discussed the Trent Bosch stabilizer laser bar system. A rubber chucky was used to reverse the piece to finish the bottom.

The next meeting will be Dec 7.

Meeting adjourned at 11:55 AM







































Vaughn Graber







Victor Schwarz







David Delker







Dennis Biggs







Matt Gish





Tom Shields





Open Call for ALL to Participate: WIT Wig Stand Initiative

The AAW Women in Turning is encouraging all chapters to join in a national project to turn wig stands at no expense for the recipients. The wig stands are donated to local partnering organizations that give away free wig stands to those in need. The partners may be hospitals, oncology clinics, cosmetology programs, or other organizations that support people undergoing cancer treatment. The goal is to give back to our community, especially as cancer has likely impacted each of us, our family, or our friends.



Wig stand requirements:

Top: 1 1/2"–2" thick x 5" diameter disk Base: 1 1/2"–2" thick x 6" diameter disk

Stem: 10"-13" x 1.5 x 1.5 block

- Any species of dry wood will work for this project. It may be solid or glued.
- Stand must be smooth and free of any sharp, jagged edges.
- Stand may be naturally finished or artistically embellished.
- Stand must be finished with POLYURETHANE.
- This is an ongoing project with no deadline for completion.

Please bring completed stands to our WIT Liaison, Heather Marusiak, at any of our monthly FHW meetings.



Rock Creek High School Home of the Flint Hills Woodturners 9355 Flush Rd, St George (Flush), KS 66535

From Manhattan:

Take HWY 24 East toward Wamego to Flush Road. Flush Road is 5.7 miles from the McCall/HWY 24 intersection and is flagged with a speed limit of 60 mph. Go left (North) on Flush Rd for 7.2 miles.

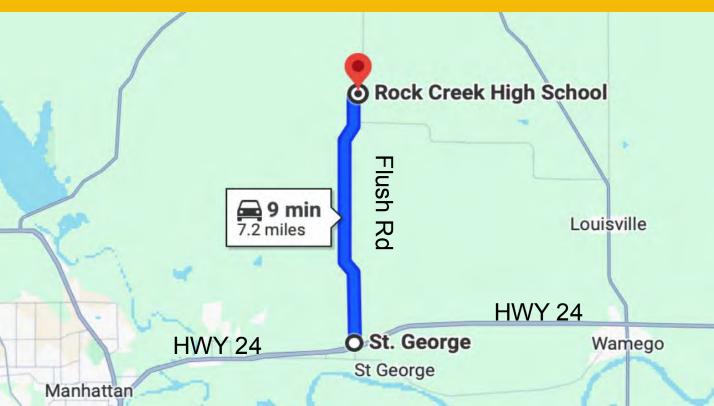
From Wamego:

Take HWY 24 West toward Manhattan to Flush Road. Flush Road is 7.3 miles from the KS-99/HWY 24 intersection and is flagged with a speed limit of 60 mph. Go right (North) on Flush Rd for 7.2 miles.

Please park and enter the building through the door by the greenhouse.





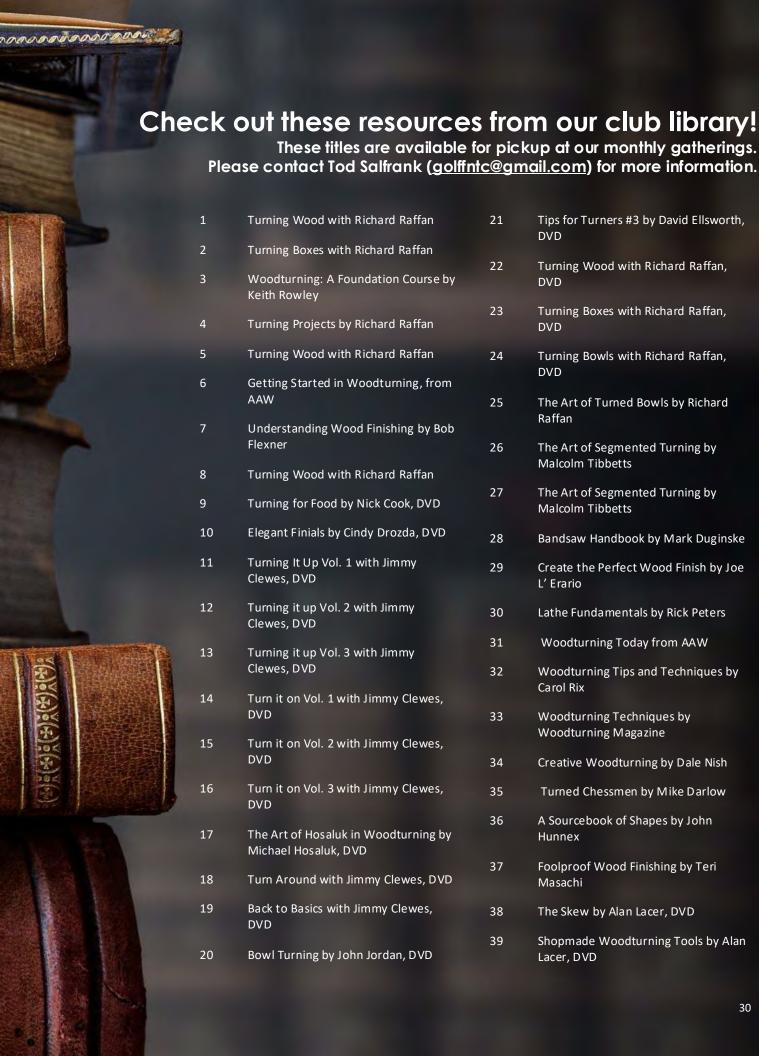


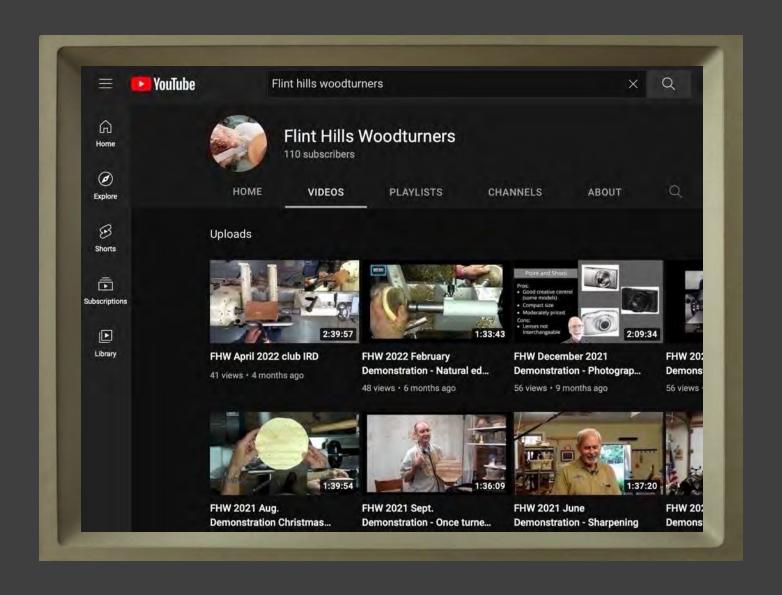


Mentoring Opportunities

Several of our members have volunteered to be available to those looking to practice, learn new techniques, and improve their woodturning skills. These mentors will lend their time and skill help. Just give one of the mentors listed below a call or e-mail so we can determine how best to help and to set up a time to meet. The club is very interested in this new skill building effort and we are looking forward to hearing from you.

- Steve Bietau, West Manhattan, (785) 317-3179, sabietau@gmail.com
- Tom Shields, Central Manhattan, (785) 341-9969, 5tommyshields@gmail.com
- Dennis Biggs, Abilene, (785) 479-6601, dbiggsgolf@yahoo.com
- Randy Zelenka, West Manhattan, (785) 477-4587, vzalenka@cox.net
- Tom Boley, near Wamego, (785) 456-7890, tboley10@gmail.com
- Ross Hirst (penturning), Topeka, (785) 249-7936, ross.i.hirst@cox.net
- Robert Kloppenborg, Marysville, (785) 713-0658, <u>bjklop@sbcglobal.net</u>





We're on



Click here to view demonstrations hosted by the Flint Hills Woodturners



2024 Board Members



PresidentTom Shields



Vice President Tod Salfrank



Secretary Barbara Drolet



Treasurer Ross Hirst



OperationsRobert Kloppenborg



Program Director Tom Boley



AAW & WIT Liaison, Newsletter Editor Heather Marusiak

Flint Hills Woodturners is a 501(c)(3) non-profit composed of individuals who are interested in learning and promoting the art of turning wood. Formed in March 2015 for hobbyists in the Flint Hills region of Northeast Kansas, the club welcomes all interested people to visit our meetings to get a sample of this inspiring hobby. You will find warm people from novice to expert willing to share with you. Flint Hills Woodturners is a chapter of the American Association of Woodturners.

If you would like more information about our club, please visit our website: https://flinthillswoodturners.org



The American Association of Woodturners (AAW) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, dedicated to advancing the art and craft of woodturning worldwide by providing opportunities for education, information, and organization to those interested in turning wood. Established in 1986, AAW currently has more than 15,000 members and a network of more than 350 local chapters globally representing professionals, amateurs, gallery owners, collectors and wood/tool suppliers.