

# Alabama Woodturners Association



# 2017 Newsletter

January 2017

A member of the American Association of Woodturners  
Meeting location: Homewood Senior Center, 816 Oak Grove Rd., Homewood, AL 35209  
Meeting time: The second Saturday of each month at 9 am  
[www.alabamawoodturners.com](http://www.alabamawoodturners.com)

## A message from the President:

First of all, I would like to thank all the Officers, Board Members, Secretaries and Treasurer for their hard work last year. I have never held a board position, never mind president, so I ask all of you to be patient with me.

The following are some goals we as a team would like to accomplish in the coming year:

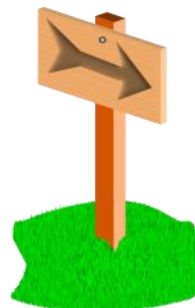
- Increase member participation with the Turn and Tell. It seems like every month the same people show their work. The majority of attendees do not. The Turn and Tell is not intended to rate people's work and members should not feel their turnings are not good enough.
- We need to have more members participate as demonstrators in the Round Robin. Again, it appears that the same members demo all the time. Again, members should not feel their skills are not high enough to be a demonstrator. Everyone has different ideas and techniques that may be interesting to all members.
- I believe the website could use some updating, especially the membership list. It would be nice to post pictures of the members that do not have a photo. There are quite a few members with pictures, but many are missing.
- I would like the Treasurer to give a brief rundown of our financials. This does not have to be detailed, just what our balance is, what we took in and what was spent. Maybe every two months and a more detailed report quarterly.
- Complete a survey of what the members would like to see for the demos and Round Robins.

This is not a complete list by any means, just a starting point. I am looking forward to the coming year with some interesting demos and a lot of interaction between members.

Pete Marken

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## ANNUAL CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

Our annual Christmas luncheon was held as part of our regular meeting December 10.

Preceding the meal was a rousing game of Dirty Santa in which several individuals (who might have received coal in their stockings on Christmas morning) actually stole presents from Santa, in addition to other poor souls who had the misfortune of having picked just the right gift but then lost it to someone who should also have received coal from Santa for Christmas.

To all who came, brought their significant others and contributed food, we thank you and enjoyed your company. To those who were unable to attend, rest assured we missed you, but we didn't save any of the good food for you.



**Hey! Wanna learn more about turning? Or help someone else learn more about turning?**

Mentoring is available Saturday afternoons in the Craft Room at the Homewood Senior Center. Sessions start one hour after the demonstration ends or 1 pm.

AWA owns lathes, chucks and tools to use in class, but you may also bring your own.

**If you are interested in participating either as a student or a mentor, Phil would love to talk to you and sign you up!**

**Phil Fortmeyer  
(205) 612-7496**

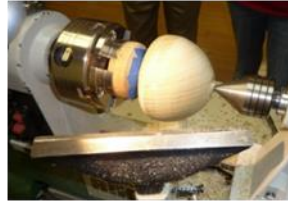
See page 4 for upcoming classes.

# November Demo - Round Robin!!

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**Bruce Gibson**



**Howard King**



**Carl Cummins**



**Phil Duffy (and Myra Harper practicing)**



## Upcoming Events



January 14

Morning Demo

Jean Cline - Bracelets  
Maurice Clabaugh - Angels

Afternoon Mentoring  
Bring your not-so-sharp tools.  
Learn how to sharpen!  
\$2.00 per tool

February 11

Morning Demo  
To Be Announced

Afternoon Mentoring  
TBD

March 11

Morning Demo  
To Be Announced

Afternoon Mentoring  
TBD

# November Demo - Round Robin!!

Cont. from page 3



**Dwight Hostetter**



**Johnnie Carpenter**



# November Turn and Tell Highlights



# Interview with an “Original”

As we approach the 20th anniversary of this AWA chapter, we thought it would be nice to look back to the charter members, the “Originals” to see what got them started and keeps them coming back. Below, you will find an interview with one of the Original Turners, Maurice Clabaugh. We hope you enjoy.

How long have you been turning or been a member of the Alabama Wood turners Association? Why did you join/form the club?

I have been a member since the invitational meeting in the unheated and un-air-conditioned warehouse of Thurson’s Saw Shop in the early 90s. We found a profound need in Alabama to learn/share information about woodturning. Twenty-five people attended that meeting and, with a consensus, AWA was born. I have been a contributing AWA member since that time as well as an AAW member and co-founder of the Black Warrior Turners (2004, Tuscaloosa). I was invited to be President of AWA in 2004 as well as President of Black Warrior Turners in 2005-7. Promoting woodturning as an art form has always been very important to me.

What would you like to see AWA accomplish?

I am a strong proponent for the “show and tell” portion of every meeting. My goal as an AWA member is to promote more participation among our members in “showing” their turning skills. To me woodturning is a journey. Different people are at different places on this journey. Only through sharing our turnings, do we know where we are on that journey. By seeing the works of others we become inspired to “dig deeper” to improve our skills. Exploring other styles may ultimately improve our skill levels. Everyone is on a different part of the journey but, hopefully, we are all moving toward turning skills improvement and personal satisfaction and fulfillment. Everyone has something to contribute to the group. Only once in my 25 years has a woodturner participating in a “show and tell” session, received a harsh criticism by another turner. It was an unfounded criticism, by my judgment.

How did you get started turning?

I was a College of Business Marketing Professor (University of Montevallo 1983-2000). In 1990 I attended two art shows in this region (Kentuck, Northport, AL and Powers Crossroads, Newnan, GA). I was captivated

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## *Raffle Ticket Prize News*

**We’re changing the raffle once again!**

Bring an item to donate and buy raffle tickets. We’ll raffle the items donated and all of the tickets will go into the pot for a new lathe!

Soooo...what do you donate? How about a tool, jig, turned item, wood blank, etc. If you’ve been to the last several meetings, you probably saw some of the items that were donated for the lathe raffle. That should give you a pretty good idea. Use your imagination ...within reason, of course! As a bonus, if you bring donations, you’ll get one additional raffle ticket for each item!

The success of this raffle and when the drawing takes place will depend on your willingness to donate nice items and also to buy raffle tickets.

**\$1 each~~~~~\$5 for 6 tickets~~~~~\$10 for 13 tickets**

**More money = more tickets!!! See Amy for details!**

If you don’t think you are an expert turner, look at any of the newsletters from other clubs. You will see that your turnings are equal to anything out there. Your turned items *ARE* ‘good enough’.

## AWA January Birthdays

Richard Serviss - 1/2

Eddy Jowers - 1/13

Harold Hall - 1/26

Terry White - 1/6

Dwight Hostetter - 1/14

Willy Dielen - 1/27

Bill Hubbard - 1/8

Alan Stanton - 1/15

Randy Myrick - 1/27

Bill Bradshaw - 1/11

Jerry Conway - 1/22

Steve Warren - 1/28

Pat Johnson - 1/12

John Sowell - 1/22

Larry Dye - 1/30

Carol McFee - 1/25

### *Birthday Door Prize News*

AWA gives a birthday gift door prize to a turner who has a birthday during the month of that meeting. Here are the 'rules' for 2016 as they stand now:

- 1) This is a door prize so, yes, you need to be at the meeting and stay for the drawing to win.
- 2) You need to make sure Jean and/or Amy have your correct birth date. No fair changing your birth date in the middle of the year! You're stuck with the one they originally gave you!

Cont. from page 6

by the woodturner's presentations and the quality of their artwork. My curiosity and questions answered by the demonstrators at these shows, gave me confidence that I might be able to learn to turn also. I had always loved wood (maybe I was a termite in a "former life"). At the time I was writing a college text-book, I had "writer's block" and needed motivation to finish the rough draft before the deadline. I purchased a Grizzly 12 x 42 wood lathe as a motivator. It sat in a box on the garage floor unassembled, until I finally finished the draft. I had never touched a lathe prior to 1991. I assembled my lathe and completed "my first piece" that year. To this date, I have not had any formal training (lessons or instructions) on how to become a turner other than my observations at workshops and symposia. Being self-taught is NOT the best way to learn because it increases one's learning curve! My mistakes in the early years brought my failure rate to nearly 70 percent!

What do you like to turn most?

Unlike many turners, I like "completely natural" raw materials including all its flaws. I don't "slice & dice", add color, pierce or wood burn my pieces. Rarely do I use "in-lace" to color or accent flaws in the wood. I like to say, "I have turned every part of a tree except the leaves". Preferring to use woods that other turners would discard due to flaws (bark inclusions, cracks, wormholes, limb obstructions, etc.), I seek to highlight these flaws by making them into the outstanding "features" of the vessels. I try to masterfully accent what Mother Nature has presented to me. My turning philosophy stated-- "Inside every wood blank there is a 'perfect vessel'. I seek to find it in every turning I do by using my skills and insight to discover it. It is my challenge and adventure to discover that 'perfect piece'. I just keep looking.

What do you wish someone had told you when you were first starting out?

To take my time, be patient and know that skills grow over time. Tools have limits; don't "over reach their limits". You don't have to learn things without instructions. Swallow your pride, and seek to learn from others. Everyone has to start at the beginning.

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## Fixing Up a Wormy Bowl by Bob Heltman

Good neighbor Keith Thomas, a most knowledgeable woodsman, brought me a trunk section from a longstanding and very dead maple tree. It was ambrosia maple; meaning rot had set in leaving interesting patterns in the wood. So many powder post beetles and larvae had dined on this tree that one could suspect they had eaten a significant percentage of the wood! (Fig. 1) The 18" log section, about 10" in diameter, was quite light, also proving this would be quite a turning challenge.

Eventually I got around to splitting the trunk, and roughed out an 8" diameter by 4" deep bowl (Fig. 2). The wood was so dry that I wore an airflow dust mask as well as using the big dust collector. Because of the wood's dryness I was able to almost finish turn to a wall thickness of 3/16". At that point I sanded to 220-grit, vacuumed the piece, and set it aside for study. End grain tear-out had been considerable, and I could hardly believe the density of the holes and channels made by the beetles.

This pause allowed me to phone chat with Michael McDunn ([www.mcdunnstudio.com](http://www.mcdunnstudio.com)) who is a longtime teaching woodworker and fellow woodturner not far away in Greenville, SC. We are both members of the Carolina Mountain Woodturners ([www.carolinamountainwoodturners.org](http://www.carolinamountainwoodturners.org)). Michael and I debated approaches to "fixing up" this piece 3/4 salvaging might be a better word. Mike mentioned he had used superglue to coat and embed beetle "leavings" when they had rather tightly filled the pathways.

But, I had many holes that had no beetle residue, and the wood itself was in a condition halfway between sound and pithy. I debated mixing fine maple sawdust and cramming it in each small hole, then dropping thin superglue on top. That would have taken hours, considering the many many beetle channels and holes. The fumes would be horrific too.

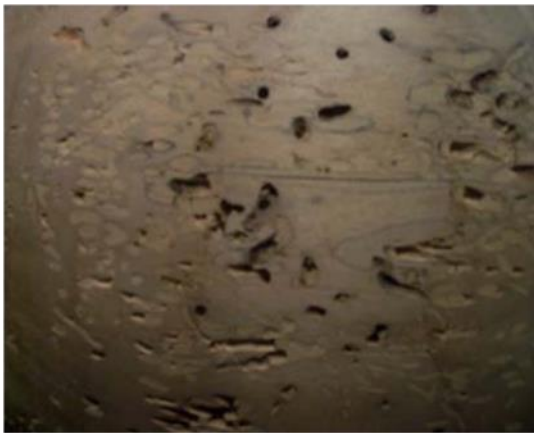


Figure 1. Surface of wormy wood.



Figure 2. Roughed out bowl.

Cont. on page 10

### Blacksmithing Class for Turners

Vulcan Forge at Tannehill Ironworks near Bessemer is willing to conduct a blacksmithing class for woodturners. It is a one-day course on the first Saturday in March (03/04/17) with all of the tools and supplies provided. It will be conducted under the direction of award-winning and nationally recognized master blacksmith, James Whatley, and approximately five other smiths. The class will cover how to use tools that most of us have, construction of a simple forge from a propane torch, converting old tools and scrap steel with forging and heat-treating into woodworking tools.

The cost will be \$25, which includes a one-year membership in Vulcan Forge plus \$5 per person (total of \$30) for lunch on class day. A family membership is available for slightly more. There is an admission charge to enter Tannehill. Participation is limited to 15 people but spectators are permitted. There may be an opportunity to purchase items from the smiths just as at their meetings. Those who wish may attend additional blacksmithing classes for one year at Vulcan Forge at no additional charge.

This is a hands-on class where students will forge wood turning tools. Participants need to wear all natural (wool, cotton, linen, leather) clothing and bring safety glasses. Students will be able to take home the tools they make.

**To register or if you have questions, contact James Vaughn at (205) 608-0022 or [cahabatraders@hotmail.com](mailto:cahabatraders@hotmail.com).**



Do you have a mentor and/or a favorite turner?

Since I have not had formal training, I have not studied under any woodturners. I was an assistant (“go-fer”) to many of the turners AWA had during 2004-06, so I observed world-class turners up close. My “mentors” were Rudy Osolnik (KY), Knute Oland (NC), Todd Hoyer (AZ) and Dale Lewis (AL). They provided inspiration through exhibiting their work and gave me words of encouragement.

Do you have a picture of something you have created? Something you are proud of?

It is hard to pick out just one creation out of the hundreds I have made. I am proud of most of my creations, but “Swirl” is an outstanding piece in my mind. It is a Chittham root that was turned and carved, accenting the roots and the figure in the wood, to give the illusion of motion. Although the inside of the turning looks large, the interior is turned through an opening only 1.5 inches diameter. This was necessary because of the root configuration on the blank (not illustrated in the photo). A most difficult challenge for me. Imagine turning on the lathe, with the roots appearing as a blur with only 1½ inch diameter hole to hollow the interior through. It is part of my private collection.



“Swirl” - Chitthum root 21.5” w x 16” h x 14” d

What do you do when you’re not turning something?

If you are talking about non-wood turning personal time, I try walking 1-1/2 hours a day 4 to 5 times a week; reading; travel and teach woodturning as well as advise others with woodturning problems.

We’re all turners here, what makes you special and different from everyone else?

I don’t consider myself special but I do see myself as different from most turners. Most turners come from the hands-on “bodger/carpenter” or a shop class regimen that inspired them to make something, generally to sell for profit. Some come from a fine arts school regimen that emphasizes to chose to use wood as their medium of expression in making wood art. I did not come from either end of the spectrum. Although I was in education, I was not an artist and I never came from these almost “set in stone” philosophies.

Likewise turners either express themselves and their feelings by using wood as the medium (I expect more than 99.5% of wood turners do so) or choose to express the wood’s characteristics using their woodturning skills (less than 0.5%). John Jordan (one of the 99.5%) says, “ Life is too short to turn ‘crappy’ wood”. The latter group of turners (0.5 %) is at the mercy of the wood and their turning skills rather than the majority of turners who turn only good (unflawed) wood, like John Jordan. I prefer working within the constraints of “crappy wood” or “street trash” flawed wood. Its unpredictability keeps me attentive while I turn.

I subscribe to this different approach. I believe wood is a living element and possesses a spirit. I bring into harmony the personality and spirit of the wood and use my skills to expose this accord, so it may be seen and appreciated. Begin a metamorphosis during this process, which takes the commonly labeled “defects” in a piece, and transform them, so that they become the very feature that gives the piece its distinctive beauty. Highlighting blemishes rather than turning them away, preserves and enhances the integrity of the pieces for the future”. Cla-baugh, 1994.

What is the direction of your turning focusing on in the coming years?

Since my turning depends on the available materials, I gather wood that is cut by others for their purposes rather than personally cutting and choosing wood for my project. I see making larger pieces in my future. I have a

large selection of 20-25 inch diameter wood blanks and several trunks up to 29 inches in diameter that I need to turn ASAP for space reasons. I would like to refine my “blossom” style and do more carving. Roots remain an enticing challenge for me. Although selling and sharing my art is affirming, my main goal is to get in “harmony with the wood”.

What have you done in a previous phase of your life?

I have had a variety of jobs in my life: warehouse worker, truck driver, wholesale salesman, night watchman, furniture salesman/sales manager, lighting store manager, college professor and author. Now that’s variety! The most satisfying phase was university teaching and now woodturning, and since 2004 teaching woodturning and being a wood artist.

What else would you like us to know about you?

I have devoted the better part of my life to the concept of life-long learning. I continue to search for better ways of performing tasks and sharing my findings with others especially now through woodturning and teaching wood turning techniques.

We all have a unique “light of insight, knowledge base and living style”. However, we can see life better if we expose that light to each other rather than hiding it “under a basket” for no one to see and appreciate. The journey of our life and our journey of woodturning are easier and more enjoyable, if we share our personal uniqueness and our talents with each other.

We both have used and experimented with a product called RayCrete. This same material is more recently named EZ -Poly Wood Rebuilder, which more accurately identifies its purpose and role.

(Editor's note: RayCrete/EZ Poly Wood Rebuilder is no longer available. Any multipurpose polyurethane filler adhesive sealant can be used instead.)

It is a two-part polymer material that can be described as a bonding structural filler. That is, it is a glue, strong filler, and sealant. Also, it has no VOCs or discernable odor. I had some on hand, which I always do for many purposes, so mixed up about 2 tablespoons full, and massaged it into the inner surface of the bowl with my fingertip inside a plastic Ziploc baggie to save later hand washing. This only took a few minutes, during which the polymer started to set up. I noticed a deep hole about 1/4" diameter was absorbing the polymer, so took the mixing spatula, lifted up a final polymer nugget which was now about the consistency of soft clay, and puttied this hole and several others I discovered while closely examining the work. Figure 3 shows the bowl, EZ Poly Wood Rebuilder, RayCrete, cardboard for mixing, and my wife’s kitchen spatula used for brownies.

Since the EZ Poly/RayCrete washes off with soap and water, and is non-toxic when cured anyway, this poses no health or marital problems, nor does it interfere with future brownie consumption, a matter of no small importance.

A little earlier experimenting with a dental tool, trying to dig out the beetle “leavings,” showed that process would take three days beyond forever. If that had not been the case, another approach would have been to color the polymer with Tempura paint powder in black, red, or some other chosen color. All the holes and pathways would really stand out, perhaps to the point of startling overkill. But, that technique works well in moderation as a highlight on other woodturnings.



Figure 3. All the kit to fix the bowl.

Figure 4 shows the completed inner bowl, after it was mounted on the lathe and sanded “through the grits” to 220 fineness, before finer sanding and applying the final finish, which could be a wax, friction polish, or whatever. The lighter fillings are the polymer, the darker ones where the beetle “leavings” were glued into place by the polymer. Since the EZ Poly / RayCrete seeps into the wood surface too, I imagine it could be a final finish if one did not sand all the way through to bare wood. I remember turning a tall vase from a piece of 106-year-old holly a year ago, and that surface with very pithy. RayCrete rebuilt the surface so that after light sanding only a final coat of wax was needed as a base for polishing. I could have sanded the inside after a couple hours, but got delayed until the next morning. After then sanding the inside, the same process was used and about 3 tablespoons of mixed RC/EZP were finger scrubbed into and onto the outside of the bowl.

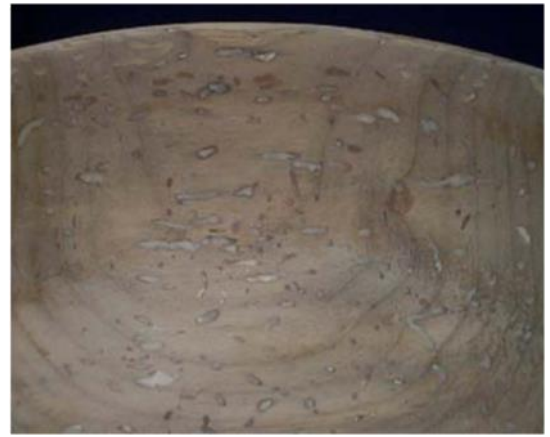


Figure 4. The completed inner bowl.

Care was taken to coat all the wood so the polymer would wet and soak into all wood surfaces to put strength into, and sealing over, the entire vessel (except the very bottom, yet to be turned and finished).

Later in the day sanding was completed, starting with 100 grit, then 150, and 220. At this point the bowl was scrutinized under a good light, looking for any missed holes or other imperfections. Since the RayCrete/EZ Poly Wood Rebuilder polymer will bond to itself at the molecular level in a seamless manner, such touch-up patches become integral to the original work and won't pop out or leave a cold joint demarcation. Hand sanding the touch up areas, and final sanding down to 320, 400, and 600 grits, left a glassy smooth surface.



Figure 5. Finished foot.

The bowl was then reverse mounted on a vacuum chuck. A vacuum chuck works well in this case since the wood is thoroughly sealed on the inside (and most of the outside except the yet to be finished foot area) by the polymer, and the vacuum holds perfectly well on this once hole-riddled and somewhat porous work piece.

Upon finishing the foot, a small amount of RC/EZP could have been mixed and worked into the remaining beetle holes and wood surface and quickly hand sanded. But, I decided to leave some evidence of the original problems via several beetle holes. Thus, title, wood name, date, along with my name, were woodburned into place. Myland's Friction Polish was applied generously to soak into the wood, and then buffed. A final wax coating and buffing produced this very unusual and eye-catching commemorative piece.

While a production turner would avoid this kind of wood in most cases, there are times a special piece of wood holds historic value, personal memories, or perhaps a special artistic meaning, and can be well preserved and handled in the manner herein described.



Figure 6. Side view of finished bowl.



Figure 7. Top view of finished bowl.

This information is provided by *More Woodturning Magazine*. Please visit their web site: [www.morewoodturningmagazine.com](http://www.morewoodturningmagazine.com).