

February-March 2013



"If the world was a logical place, men would ride horses sidesaddle."

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This is a two month February-March issue since I have traveling to warmer, sunny climates, having visited Tennessee, North Carolina, Florida and Georgia in the last month and will be on the road again soon traveling to New York. So this issue is a little lengthy, but with some great content in the Q&A section.

I have come across a few people recently that have destroyed their lasers when the batteries corroded inside the laser. Please go into the shop and take the batteries out of the laser and store the batteries outside the laser light.

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TIPS & TECHNIQUES

Topic of the Month: Tips for Carbide cutter use, grain orientation.

One of the questions this month is the basis for the topic of the month. This is very important and sometimes confusing on the inside of hollow forms. Both side grain and end grain hollowing is easier and leaves a better surface left behind if you follow the grain with the direction of your cuts. This is important for both HSS and carbide cutters.

Lyle:

I would like to ask a big favor.

Pretend you are making a new wood bowl that is 8 inches in dia. and 6 inches high with a 1/2 inch wall thickness. The bowl has a 5 inch base and is full round to the top with a 5.5 inch opening.

Now using the two styles of carbide cutter, I refer to the RIGHT cut (reverse angle) and the LEFT cut (standard). Make a sketch and show the angle of the tool to the wood and the steps you would use to cut this bowl. I am struggling with this problem.

These cutters do work very well but I need help.

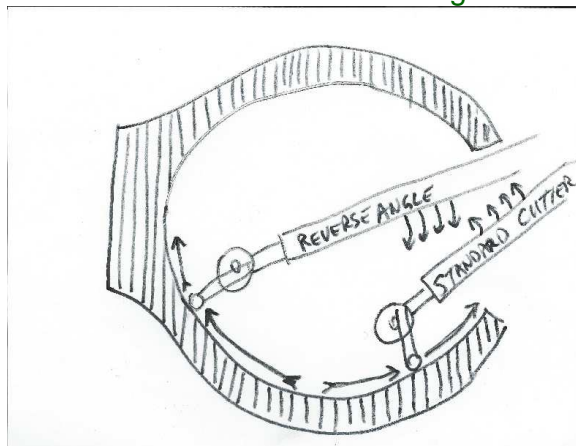
Thanks, Forrest from Virginia

Hi Forrest,

Great question! This is where the carbide cutter excels. It will reduce sanding big time and leave a much cleaner surface than any other tool will do.

I would consider taking it down a bit thinner. Half inch thick will be hard to dry and it may crack on you. I think the "feel" would be a little heavy also for that scale of vessel. I'd go down to about 1/4 inch or 3/8 inch would be the thickest I would do it. The thinner wall will give it a chance to be more elastic and move as it dries. If you want to make it look heavy and thick you can make a thicker edge only and taper the rest of the wall thickness thinner. Also, it is always a good idea to make the bottom wall thickness a little thinner than the side walls for the same reasons as above.

OK, I think the illustration is almost self-explanatory. The key is the cut must be going in a downhill direction to have supported fibers. (See the pencil trick in my DVDs.) This can be confusing because the grain in most hollow forms is in spindle mode, parallel to the bed, opposite to your example and my illustration. The standard cutter works great in spindle mode because we make the cut to the left, from the center hole to the wall. I use the standard cutter to hog off both grain orientations into the center hole and cut to the left. Once the mass of the inside is gone I switch cutters depending on the



internal grain to cut downhill wherever possible.

Inside a side grained vessel, with an undercut shoulder, the cut needs to be directed from the largest diameter inside, to the rim. This is done with the standard Carbide cutter assembly. Use the swivel to position the cutter so it is directed, pointing at the wall area you are cutting. This uses the 12 o'clock (see my carbide article, the reprint is on my web site), bevel supported, slicing cut, that will look like it's been sanded to 400 grit already. The handle needs to swing to keep the bevel directing the cut around the curved surface (see arrows on illustration). If you have a tight radius, it might have to be done in stages and one sweeping arc might not work because the handle will hit the rim.

Always use the A-B-C's from my DVDs, Anchor-Bevel-Cut. Get the bevel support first, without a cut happening, and swing the handle to get a shaving started before you proceed along the wall surface. If it is grabby or skatey you do not have bevel support.

From the largest diameter of the sidewall to the middle of the bottom everything is reversed. Use the reverse angle carbide assembly going in the opposite direction and swing the handle the opposite direction to keep bevel support. In both applications it is very easy. There is no white knuckling necessary. If you have to hang onto the boring bar with a death grip you are not on the bevel and go back to A-B-C's. The scooping action of the angled cutter moving in the correct direction is like a hook tool or a ring tool. It slices through the wood fibers, downhill, very cleanly. The same motion and feel you get, and need, when you use a bowl gouge in the bottom of an open bowl is what you will use with the boring bar and carbide assembly. You follow the bevel gently around the curved surface taking small shavings as you go. Pretend there is a little tiny bowl gouge on the end of the boring bar.

If you cannot reach the bevel or if you want to use the scraping mode to undercut the shoulder (see my carbide cutter article, the reprint is on my website), the carbide cutter would still work but the surface left behind from scraping will not be as smooth and clean.

The surface in the bottom, cut with the standard, left moving, cutter will not be as clean either because the left directed cut would be going uphill to the grain. (See illustration)

If you do not have experience with the bevel supported cut I suggest you get some practice following the bevel on an open waste block of wood before you try it inside a closed form.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

GETTING STARTED WITH HOLLOWING

Hello Lyle,

I am a member of the NWM Woodturners club and live in Mt Pleasant, MI during the summer/fall months. I have missed many meetings due to business schedules and then wintering in California. I did get to see you at San Jose this year and when you were in Mesa, AZ.

I went to your home for a one day one on one class using the boring bar you set up for me that day. Since then I have used it sparingly only because of my lack of knowledge of doing it correctly.

Pictured is what I want to hollow but really don't know how to go about it. I am sending you a couple of photos in another email showing you the unit I purchased, the lathe bed and the question, can I shorten the base plate (to give me more room on the lathe bed)?

The opening is approximately 2 inches total diameter is 8 inches and the total height is 2.5 inches. The lip at the top is .5 inch.

As you instructed another in one of your last newsletters, to reread the instructions that came with the unit that I have done. I don't have either hollowing DVD so please tell me which one to purchase. I also want the carbide cutter assembly. Please advise if I need other attachments to add to the bar such as swivel head etc.

Thank you

Frank from Michigan



Hi Frank,

Nice to hear from you! You need to start with the set up instructions to make sure the system will work correctly. My system has a bent swivel assembly that will likely reach the shape you have on the Norfolk Island Pine piece. The boring bar also has a 45 degree angle capability on the other end that could also be used to get your shape. The newest DVD would be almost a must to understand how to use the boring bar as well as the laser measuring techniques. The Carbide cutter has a bit of a learning curve to it, also shown in the DVD. Give me a call tomorrow and we can chat about your needs and how to get there. Please do any ordering from me directly, so you get all the supporting info and resources with it.

The long base is necessary for your Nova to do taller pieces. It is not in the way with the handle in the backrest. You could cut it off but that would limit the height of future pieces you might want to do.

Hi Sheldon,

In a follow-up class whether it is the second, third, or whatever, I trouble shoot your process, fine tuning your skills. Very subtle things make a huge difference in the enjoyment you can get from turning. It's all about removing obstacles, opening up possibilities both in your lathe techniques and your planning and direction you go with the lathe. I will follow what pleases you and help you take it to the next level. Once all the foundation elements are in place, at future classes, we can explore the artsy side of turning. I recently worked with a student for three days and we never even turned the lathe on. We concentrated on carving methods because of his desire to do wood sculptural pieces.

DRY A GREEN TREE?

I just got some green walnut, should I wait until it's dry or make an open vessel now? Thanks for all your help.

Kevin from Massachusetts

Hi Kevin,

I spend 20 minutes or so in my Bowl DVD talking about green wood. The YouTube clip will help some to understand the handling options. http://youtu.be/PrqvoGs2T_U

I prefer to turn green to the finished product. It's fun and easier. The down side is it will not be round after it dries. That's OK with me, in fact, I cherish the character it receives in the drying process. The other option is to double turn it. It is not an option to dry the tree. There are two things that will happen if you try to dry a tree. It will check and crack or it will rot and decay.

CBN SHARPENING WHEELS

Lyle,

CBN sharpening wheel, any opinion on this?

Is it really that good?

Thanks! David from Michigan

Hi David,

I don't know how to respond to the new grinding wheels. I do prefer the bench grinder for lathe tools but I do not have enough experience to recommend the more expensive wheels. I used one recently

and the courser grits work fine. I am waiting until there is more history and see how long they last with hard use. For the hobbyist turner, that will not use it much, I suppose it would be OK but the cost is a factor. I have difficulty using the finer grit models. They do not raise a burr I like. Cindy Drozda just blogged a detailed note that explained the correct and incorrect way to use them, depending on the tools you need to keep sharp. cindydrozda.blogspot.com

GLUE DIRECT TO FACEPLATE

I was just thinking (dangerous for a retired attorney) regarding glue blocks and dealing with getting real, REAL close to center on the reverse jam chucking. Instead of a wood glue block, could one use the same process on a faceplate (wood bowl to metal faceplate)? In other words, turn the bottom slightly concave. Measure your faceplate diameter and mark it out with pencil on the bottom of the bowl (to use to center as best you can on the faceplate). Use the CA glue on the parameter of your turned bottom of bowl, accelerator on the faceplate and bring your tailstock up for pressure the union and then accelerate the rim meeting the faceplate? Then use a center finder (easy to make, as you saw mine, but there are retail products offered) to mark the center of bottom from the faceplate center. Now hollow out inside of bowl using your new glue/faceplate. Knock off (Will it do so as easily as the wood glue block?) the bowl from the faceplate. Presto, you have as good a "center" as you ever will otherwise. Reverse jam by lightly fixing live center pin into marked center of bottom and slowly meet bowl to jam chuck. Turn the rest of the bottom. Any thoughts? Am I thinking too hard?
Alan from North Carolina

Hi Alan,

Your plan would work for small scale objects but I would be afraid of the glue sticking to steel as well as wood. The other issue is getting it off. Need to break the glue line with a chisel. Half the glue line is steel so I don't know how well it would work. I know wood against wood is a very strong glue joint. After you use this method for a while it will be easy to get it centered as well as needed. It will always be off due to the warping and shrinkage when you reverse it. It will never run true so why spend the time and energy. Remember the drill dimple is still there from the glue up. It's as close to center as you will need.

GRINDERS

Hi Lyle, I bought a Delta variable speed grinder 23-199 and left it at the lowest speed (2000 rpm). It promptly quit functioning. It would not turn on. I sent it back for warranty repair and don't know if I can trust it. Wood Craft sells a slow speed grinder but it's cheap and did not get good reviews. Do you have any suggestions for a particular brand? I am wondering if the potentiometer controlled variable speed grinders are not the way to go.

Greg from Wisconsin

Hi Greg,

Sorry to hear you have had troubles. The Delta grinder is very popular. A lot of turners use it. It is usually good enough for a hobbyist workload. It was likely a switch that was bad in the grinder. We have one owned by our club it works fine. Not a lot of power but for sharpening it's all that is needed. I would be cautious about the Woodcraft or Harbor Freight type grinders. Some I've used don't have the power. You might find a decent grinder down at the local Ace Hardware. We don't really need the variable speed. I prefer a slow speed grinder.

The important thing if you are buying a grinder from any other source than a turning catalog is to get the right grinding wheels. Look for J, or K, hardness, aluminum oxide, 80 grit or 60 if you can't find 80. Some come with a 120 grit wheel that is too fine for turning tools. The better Norton wheels are worth the money. They last longer and run cooler.

BOWL TURNING CLASS

Hi Lyle,

I've been meaning to write you this email for a while and finally have some time to compose it. I do have some advice for students taking your bowl turning class which you are free to post in the newsletter.

First, I would very much recommend that they purchase the Bowl Basics DVD and watch it at least twice, preferably three times, prior to the class. They should also replay some of the sections repeatedly to get as strong a grasp as possible on the information presented. I suggest they watch it a few days or couple of weeks before the class and then again right before the class. This should greatly help them during the class and they will get more out of it. I think it is a mistake for them to assume that the class is a self-contained, one shot, sure fire method to give the student a permanent fix all he needs. This is especially true for beginners.

Second, it is important for the students to realize that the skills and information gained from the class is perishable and needs to be reinforced fairly quickly after the class. A great help in doing this is to refer to your short YouTube clips where you demonstrate and explain the four basic cuts, push, pull, scrape and sheer scrape. That way, the student does not need to search through the DVD for that material. So that's my 2 cents and I hope it helps future students! Greg from Wisconsin

Hi Greg,

Thank you for your suggestions. It would be a great topic to cover for the next newsletter. I totally agree. There are a lot of pieces of the turning puzzle. None of them are difficult to understand or learn individually, but you put them all together in a two-day foundations class and it is more than any one person can absorb. I preface the class by suggesting that students get home and immediately get some practice time on the lathe, and go through the process as soon as possible while it is fresh. I have even had some students that have come back and done the class a second time when too much time had passed before they got back on the lathe. Remember my comment when I said my goal was "to spoil you". I gave you the easy way and the best process. Everyone graduated from skill to skill with confidence. But we didn't have time to practice much before we moved on to the next skill needed.

The learning curve for turning skills is like a journey. You start off and get some of the basics. When you get confident and succeed, you find out there is more and you build on that foundation until you learn more again. It's a journey that, when you get to where you think you are going, it opens up new possibilities and challenges. It's a journey with no end, the fun has only begun, and it never stops. Yes, I also agree that the DVDs are a great resource. The hands-on experience is where the real understanding comes from. At each stage of the bowl process we learned new skills and took all the fear away and gave you the confidence to go home and put it to work for you. Sometimes I am asked if I have written handouts for the class. It would have to be in book form to get it all in one document, a pretty thick book at that. Still photos do not give as much information as the DVD has to offer.

WHAT FACEPLATES TO USE

Hello Mr. Jamieson,

I enjoy and really benefit from your edition each month. My question is on face plates. What is best performing, those made of cast, steel, or Anodized Aluminum. Thanks in advance for your advice.
Joseph location unknown

Hi Joseph,

Since the faceplate is the "go to" way to hold wood, get a couple good ones, you will have them for the rest of your life. I dedicate one to a glue block that never comes off, and the other for hollow forms etc. Steel or cast iron are the best. I have seen some aluminum brands that do not work very well and aluminum is too soft and can get damaged over the years.

FINISH AND FINISHING

Hi,

I am still having trouble with my finish work. I turn, then sand all grits up to 600, then put on linseed oil, then fast turn and put on a mix of 1/3 shellac and 2/3 denatured alcohol. When I get ready to put my finish on I still find rough spots. Is it my turning, my sanding or my skill level?

See you in Tampa, Stan from Florida

Hi Stan,

Glad to hear you are back in the shop getting some things cranked out. You have been my student for a long time, I know you well. I'm going to be real blunt here. Bear with me and I think it will make some sense. The main thing that will help you is if you can S L O W down. Are we having fun or is this a race? Let me explain. A finish is not going to fix a bad surface. I'll include my YouTube clip on finishes. <http://youtu.be/eATTTP4PZAE> I don't particularly like the finish process you describe. It does not have to be that complex if you do the things below better. You are looking for a magic bullet that does not exist.

Let's start with your tool control. We need to do a good cut so we don't tear up the surface in the first place. How? Depends on what you are turning and the grain orientation. Remember my pencil trick concept? We need to be cutting down hill to the fibers. Grain orientation is critical. And, we need to have a bevel supported slicing action going downhill. The cutting is happening on a 45 degree angle to the rotation of the wood. Scraping mode will rip the fibers up more than a slicing cut. Slow down and visualize the cuts with the lathe off. All your ducks in a row? And we need to be using sharp tools. Remember how often I sharpen? All of this works to get the best surface on the wood as possible before we sand. Trying to sand out torn out grain from poor techniques is a nightmare. Slow down and review the rules for all four cuts on my DVDs. Slow down and review the direction of the grain and the best way to cut it cleanly.

Now let's talk about sanding. <http://youtu.be/PLkNvVOWIo4> You can sand away the damage you do if you choose to ignore the above but it's hard work and takes a lot longer to sand a bad surface into submission than it is to cut it clean with good tool control methods. SHARP SANDPAPER!! That's all you need to know, really. Start with a grit that will remove the minor tool marks. Slow down with each grit and inspect the surface. Is there a hazy, blotchy, dull patch on both sides of the surface, or any marks that are not part of the grain color of the wood? Go back and sand some more with sharp sandpaper. Slow, really slow lathe speed, no heat on the sandpaper, no high speed disk sanding with pads. Sand only with a drill and sanding pads with the course grits. Again a sharp sandpaper issue since fine grits in a drill are dull in an instant. Slow everything down and inspect your piece after sanding with every grit with a bright light. If you see some white dull patches on the wood go back one grit and start over. Depending on how much attention you took with your tool control this might take a lot of time.

If you do all of this it does not matter what finish you put on it. The wood will speak for itself. How many times did I say "Slow down"?? I know you well, this is the secret. See you at AAW.

WHEN TO USE THE BIG BEND END OF THE BORING BAR

When do you turn the boring bar around and use the angle? I never have.

Stan from Florida

Hi Stan,

The big bend or hook capability is needed with severe undercut shoulder shaped vessels. Pieces with a larger diameter than they are tall or squatty shapes, with relatively small mouth openings, will need extra reach to keep a uniform wall thickness. Most traditional bulbous shapes can be reached with the little bend swivel assembly. And you can get in and out of smaller holes easier with the little bend capability. I seldom use the big bend, only when the shape dictates.

PROTECTION FROM DUST

I turn mesquite almost exclusively. When I quit for the day my nose is full of dark crap. I am an ex-smoker and use an inhaler occasionally. My wife is an RN is making a fuss. There is a face shield/air filter combo called TREND AIRSHIELD PRO. It's way more than I want to pay, but if I plan on turning for the next 10 plus years.....!!

Do you have an opinion on it?

Also, I have always had a slight issue w/wobble of the piece being turned. I actually paid attention to the TRANSFER OF POWER chapter on your tape, the light turned on, and I am now using a face plate instead of a chuck, and guess what! You already know.

If you ever need a testimonial please let me know!

John from Texas

Hi John,

I have and use a dust helmet with the air blowing on my face and I like it....for a little while. It is a nuisance. It is heavy and gets in the way, and the noise is irritating. So, I don't use it much. Only when I'm doing my shaping with big tools and I make a cloud of dust so I can't see two feet in front of my face. Otherwise, I usually use a good medical dust mask with a regular face shield. Do a test, use a regular dust mask and see what is in the tissue at the end of the day. That should get a big part of them. Without the mask, the big particles that you can see later in the Kleenex are not the stuff that really hurts you. You don't want to breathe that stuff either but it's the finer particles you cannot see that get into your lungs that can cause most of the problems. So if I were to spend some money I'd put it in an overhead filtering system that gets the smaller stuff out of the air we are breathing every day all day.

GRINDING JIG

I really appreciated the time you took with me on the phone. I'm sure you had better things to do. As I said then, I want to have a jig dedicated to the bowl gouge when it arrives. What is your opinion of the NEW Vari-Grind 2 jig?

Thanks,

John from Texas

Hi John

I hope you don't have the Vari-Grind 2. The good thing about it is that it keeps the grinding happening in the middle of the grinding wheel. If you are physically challenged with a tremor, or stroke, etc. it is a wonderful tool. The bad news is it is next to impossible to set it for the swept back grind bowl gouges and do my grind with it.

GLUE BLOCK PREP

Hi Lyle,

I had a quick question on the glue block. Is it OK to turn it as a spindle, grain parallel to the bed with the face plate and work piece ending up screwed and glued into end grain, or should it be turned so the face plate and work piece end up attached to side grain. Or, does it make a difference? I think it looks like side grain in the video.

Greg from Wisconsin

Hi Greg,

Good question. It needs to be side grain. An end grain block would be prone to cracking from the stress of the screws and is not as strong of a glue joint as side grain. It would work either way for small things but once you start pushing the envelope of scale you will need to be side grain oriented.

BOWL GOUGE GRIND SHARPENING AND BOWL TECHNIQUES

I have your video on turning bowls and have a question concerning your bowl gouge. How difficult is it to sharpen on my Wolverine system? BTW the instruction on sharpening was worth the price of the DVD. Pepper mills are my passion but bowls scare the hell out of me. I am the king of catches making the entry cuts. Someday I hope to be able to make a set of salad bowls and your DVD might make it possible.

Thanks,
John location unknown

Hi John,

Nice to hear from you and thanks for the feedback. I always use the Wolverine jig to sharpen my bowl gouge. The hard part is getting it set up correctly for my grind. The easy part is sharpening with it. So you must have one of my gouges with my grind on it to get the jig set up correctly. Or, know what the angles look like to come close. I suggest you ask around your turning club members and borrow one that is ground correctly and duplicate it with the information in the DVD. I also have a YouTube clip on it, <http://youtu.be/0zUph9zEjck>

Your lack of success on bowls is most likely not understanding or having bevel support, and the gouge grind you have now might not be too friendly in helping you. I suggest you get some help there too. You will have some good turners in your club that would be glad to help you get some confidence with the gouge. To really kick it up a notch come up to Traverse City and take a class or catch me as I travel around the country with a one-on-one class in your own shop. It takes a long time of trial and error with a lot of frustrating errors to get it being self-taught. Watching a DVD or demonstration helps on the concepts but the hands-on is where you get the skills needed. There are other YouTube clips on my channel to help with bowls too.

TOOL REST INFO AND CLASS SCHEDULES

Please let me know where can I find additional information regarding the Jamieson tool rest? The online store said refers to the tool menu - but I think I was on the tool menu.

Just want to find the article where you describe the pros and cons of the tool rest. My 3520b take a 1" post.

Also - any plans to come close to the Washington DC or Virginia/ Maryland area? I'd love to take a class.

Thanks as always,
Jeff from Maryland

Hi Jeff,

Nice to hear from you, thanks for the inquiry. The tool rest is on my web site store menu. It's a pretty simple idea. The hardened threaded post with adjustment nut allows infinitesimal adjustments to get on the center line when cutting on the bottom inside of hollow forms. This eliminates all the frustration of the nub in the bottom when the drill hole is gone. It's just the right size and shape to work on bowls, too. I made it because of the hollowing process but people that have it love it because it stays at the height you want it for spindles or bowls. All I need is the lathe model; I make them to fit any lathe.

I get to the East Coast often. I do symposiums out there and have relatives near you. Give me a call and we can chat about how and when to make a class happen. There are many options with multiple students or one-on-one.

FEEDBACK

Dear Lyle;

Thank you for your visit to my home and sharing your skills in teaching me a new level of turning. Our three days together was filled with passion, knowledge, attention to details, direction and thought provoking. I must inform your readers that your teachings and coaching goes beyond the needs of a beginner, but transcends to all levels of turners. As you observed, I am a well advanced turner, turning well over 250 bowls, 75 hollow forms and many other varied turning projects. Irrespective, your direction took me to a new level-- that my wife thought was not possible. Turning is an evolutionary experience. In this travel, I watched just about every DVD/VHS that has ever been on the market (including your three DVD's and many demonstration DVD's at my club [Carolina Mountain Woodturners] of the Master Turners, such as yourself). Irrespective of all the DVD's I studied, the many books and articles I have read and, yes, even the many Master Turners such as yourself that have guided me along my passion, I have NEVER had the benefit of such direction, attention and thought as I experienced with you in these past three days. Although one can learn the process from your DVD's, there is simply no substitute for your hand on my gouge as I am finding that sweet spot. The slight twist of the wrist, as you illustrate in your DVD, is illuminating. Yet your personal observation and on spot corrections and directions, is priceless. So, I have captured your teachings. I continue to practice my learning's. I have already passed on to other turners the "golden nuggets" I have learned from you and my turning passions have, if possible, escalated to another level. Thank you! Thank you so very much!

Alan, from North Carolina

By the way....WARNING TO WOODTURNERS....if you hollow out at a 1/8 thickness, DO NOT reverse vacuum chuck to clear up the bottom. The vacuum will suck your piece in many, many parts!

Alan from North Carolina

Hi,

I am so pleased to find your video. I have been having a problem with some bowls, with reverse grain, thank you so much for the brilliant demo, now I can try your method.

Thanks again,

William from YouTube

Hello Lyle,

I received your shipment and really enjoyed the video. It was great information and I know it will improve my skill level again. I forgot the push cut into the tree and was beating myself up. Thanks again for taking your time and giving us the why and how... Really appreciate it.

Thank you,

Frank from Michigan

Great demos, glad I found you. I should buy your DVDs. Thanks!!! YouTube comment

Hi Lyle:

Just a note to thank you for the newsletter and the work you put into that each month. I really look forward to them and enjoy reading what others are doing and how you help them improve their turning. I have signed up for a week at Arrowmont in June also - so that month will be more about turning than working for me. I am still turning bowls and trying to learn the different basic techniques and feel I have a long way to go but still enjoying it.

Ken from Michigan

CALENDAR

Check out my website calendar for more specifics.

(<http://www.lylejamieson.com/information/calendar.asp>)

March, 2013 – New York

June, 2013 - Florida

July, 2013 – New Jersey

August, 2013 – Texas

September, 20

October, 2013 - Ohio