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If we are not meant to have midnight snacks, why is there a light in the fridge? Anonymous

This is a June-July issue, since I missed June☺ It has and continues to be a busier than usual summer. I have been in Chicago, Iowa, Kansas, Phoenix, Santa Fe, Oklahoma, and Philadelphia already and will be heading to Wisconsin, Illinois, and Texas soon. Some of the travel has been for family, with a lot of turning visits along the way. Happily, I have two new grandkids since the last newsletter☺

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FEEDBACK

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TIPS & TECHNIQUES

Topic of the Month: Shop Space Details

I have been in a number of shops in the last few months and in almost every occasion when I started a class session we needed to make some significant changes just to get started. I will outline some of the issues one at a time here, but first I'll talk about the big picture.

We can go into the shop and put something on the lathe and see what comes out of it. We can get lucky and it might be something very good, sometimes. I have said many times: "The more planning we do the luckier we get." The turning process needs some, if not a lot of preparation. Wood selection, scale of desired turned object, what axis, color contrasts in the wood available, grain orientation, and the question, is the wood free of dangerous defects, all come to mind. The turning process is critical to preventing limitations or obstacles from getting in the way of our fun and creativity. I will have to expand on this in a future newsletter. My focus here is to get you to look at your shop space, setup, and daily turning needs.

The concept here is to eliminate the "tolerations" we live with. Those things in our shops that can slow us down, limit our capabilities, and cause stress. If we invest some time in removing these obstacles the entire rest of our lives will be more enjoyable. I was talking about this idea to a turner that has a significantly cluttered shop and his response was, "If I take the time to fix this stuff I would never have any time to turn." Well, I challenged him to just make a list of the issues that needed fixing and fix the worst on the list. I guaranteed the fix will feel so good that more on the list will be corrected soon. Let me give you some examples of shop problems that are easily fixed and will make a big difference in your turning time enjoyment. Another benefit of fixing these tolerations is a safety issue. You know if there is no place to put something down without moving something else that your work space needs some help.

The first example is an efficient work cubicle. The grinder needs to be close by. You need an open horizontal surface behind you for prep space. Where are you going to prepare a glue block or screw on a faceplate? You need a tool rack of some kind to store tools, and storage for accessories like faceplates, screws, calipers, drive centers, live centers, knockout bars, etc., etc., all close at hand. Storage of gouges etc. needs to be safe without sharp edges sticking up at you every time you reach for a tool. Don't set up storage behind the lathe where you have to reach over the turning piece just to get a tool. Here is a link to my YouTube clip on lathe setup. <http://youtu.be/AWYEPfqRet8>

Let's back up the wagons here, what about the grinder? I think I spent time in every shop I visited getting the grinder set up to work correctly. If you can't sharpen, you can't turn. The whole idea of sharpening is to make it easy, fast, and accurate. If the grinding jig is sloppy, you grind a lot more steel away than necessary. If your method to set the jig on the gouge is not perfectly repeatable, same results every time, you have to buy a new bowl gouge more often. If the grinding table is sticking out in front of the grinder it can limit the shape available for the gouge grind itself. Worse yet, is if the grinder is not even screwed to the table and you are chasing it around with every sharpening attempt. You want to spend more time turning and less time sharpening, and we need to sharpen often to turn safely and easily. My YouTube clip might help get your grinding station fine-tuned. <http://youtu.be/0zUph9zEjck>

Where is your lathe? Have you got a cramped shop? Putting the lathe up against the wall means you are turning with one hand tied behind your back. The tailstock end has to be out from the wall. The limits caused by the lathe against the wall means settling for tool control that is not efficient. We cannot even do a simple bowl correctly with the lathe against the wall. Do you want the lathe position controlling the way you turn or limit what you can turn?

Is your shop too hot or too cold? How about some fans to make the heat bearable? How about a temporary heat source to take the chill off?

Can you see? Do your bifocals work for the lathe? Is the light good? We need a broad projection light, like a couple banks of florescent lights right over the lathe. These don't throw as much of a shadow unless the light is behind you and you are in the way of the light source. Move it! We need a mobile spot light to get bright light on a specific place or angle to inspect the surface from different angles. A \$5.00 clamp light on a post made with a 2x4 and a cross at the floor works fine.

Is the floor free of tripping hazards? I have all my electric and air hoses suspended from the ceiling. A few hooks and some extension cords in the rafters is an easy fix to get stuff off the floor.

I guess what I'm trying to say here is DON'T SETTLE; the devil is in the details. Correct one toleration at a time and start having more productive fun in the shop.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

TOOL OR WOOD VIBRATION WHILE ROUGHING

Lyle,

I am using a piece of mesquite to make a goblet. Unlike your piece of cherry, mine is not perfectly straight, it has a slight bend in it. I put it between centers and balanced it as you did. However, when I try the push cut my gouge vibrates a lot and catches when I first try the push cut.

Obviously I need to do something to balance it better I assume. What say you teacher?

Roger

Hi Roger from South Dakota,

The bowl gouge vibrating is a tool control issue. For straight or bent wood the process would be the same. Catches are a result of no bevel support. Go back to the Bowl DVD and make notes on the push cut rules. I would use a piece of firewood branch and get some practice time with each of the cuts. Practice will jump start the learning curve. An hour of practice would be like doing 30-40 turned objects.

If the WOOD is vibrating then it is a chucking/holding issue. Go back to the balancing and security issues in the DVD and the faceplate process. Find out what you missed and start over between centers.

Most people have some bowl and other turning experience before they tackle hollow forms. There are a lot of pieces to the puzzle and it is next to impossible to do this on email. Call me or find a proficient turner in your club that can help get you up to speed with the foundation elements, or better yet get into one of my classes to shorten the learning curve. All the resources are there for you. You need to pay attention to the details. One part of the process gets left behind and the problems, obstacles, and limitations creep into the picture.

LASER SWITCH CASTRATION RING SETUP

Lyle,

The elastic band which turns on the laser when you roll it over the switch will not stay over the switch. I have tried to adjust it up or down so that it will land on the switch and stay there but to no avail.

Every time it hits the switch it rolls right off. I'm sorry to be such a pest.

Roger

Hi Roger from South Dakota,

Nice to hear from you again and please don't feel like you are bugging me. That's what it means to be part of my turning family. I am here to help. There is a natural flat spot where the castration ring wants to "seat". The trick is to slide or scooch the ring up or down on the laser until it seats on the on-off switch button. It will want to roll up or down as you try to slide it so it takes some patience to get it seat in the correct place. It needs to slide not roll to get it in the right position. I also slide the laser tubing up into the black plastic holder to give the ring a place to stop or seat in the off position. If this is not making any sense to you please give me a call and I will talk you through it.

PLANNING A CROTCH BOWL BLANK ORIENTATION

Lyle,

I have attached 4 different pictures of bowl blanks I just cut from my rescued willow. I'm thinking of turning them as natural-edged bowls. I'm sort of looking for your thoughts.

Thanks,

Mike



Hi Mike from Ohio,

Does it stink? Most comments on WoodCentral mention the smell of willow. What you do will depend on how good the crotch figure is. Will it have any color or chatoyancy?

I would have thought it was walnut from the color. The first photo might be a shallow bowl with the rim facing the pith and capturing the crotch figure in the rim and/or the side of the bowl. The others might do well with a natural edge bowl using the contrasting color of the fruitwood/heartwood as the main feature and capturing some of the crotch figure in the bottom of the bowl.

If you think small, cut away all but the crotch on one and do a calabash shaped natural edge with the figure in the bottom of the bowl.

BOWL GOUGE SWEEP BACK GRIND

Hi Lyle,

I think my bowl gouge grind is getting longer down the shaft of the tool, how do I correct that?

Arlin

Hi Arlin from Iowa,

Nice to hear from you and thanks for the update. I've been wondering what you have been up to. We got home safe from our travels and I'm trying to get caught up on things since we left almost three weeks ago, it is a long time to be away.

Glad to hear you have had some shop time. It takes some time at the lathe and there are no short cuts, it will get easier and easier as you get practice time. The grind should stay the same as the photo. The wing will be ground back about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch back from the tip. If the wing gets longer than that it will get funny. The way to correct that is to stop the sharpening that far back on the wing. As you roll your wrist around to sharpen the last part of the wing just stop grinding and leave the corner of the wing alone for a while. Watch the sparks and don't grind back down the flute so far on the wing. It is pretty simple, just stop and don't go there and after a while it will shorten up as you take steel off the tip and don't take steel off the corner of the wing. No need to re-shape it all in one session. It will correct itself as you sharpen the tip.

TOOL REST SPECIFICATIONS

Hi Lyle,

I really enjoy your videos! My brother-in-law just purchased a used lathe and is just getting started. I have been referring him to your videos. Your video on the bowl gouge sharpening jig really helped me understand how to adjust my own homemade jig. I also appreciate your incremental approach to hollowing bowls. I feel much safer hollowing in steps now.

Thanks for sharing so much with us! You have a lot of good information there, so I find myself going back and re-watching them as my skills increase.

I am interested in purchasing your tool rest. Does it have a 1" post? Also, is the edge of the rest hardened?

Thanks,

Tom

Hi Tom location unknown,

Thanks for the feedback. If you are referring to my YouTube clips, my Bowl Basics DVD has more information and the continuity of process from start to finish, rather than a snapshot of one subject.

Yes, the tool rest has a one inch post and different heights to fit any lathe. It is made of cold rolled steel and no hardened rod. I want the tool rest to be softer than my tools. I can sand or file the tool rest if it gets dinged up but I don't want to damage my tools with a hardened rod on the tool rest.

DANGEROUS TECHNIQUES WARNING

Lyle,

There is so much readily available & useful information about how to add certainty to being able to enjoy our wood turning craft without injury. However turners seem to either be unaware of them or in denial that injuries do occur.

Geoff (Not a question but I will respond)

Geoff from England on Wood Central forum,

I think men especially but some women too...don't need to read instructions...don't ask for directions...don't need help...we think trial and error will sooner or later get us there. Well, when the error can hurt or kill you that might not be the wise way to take up turning. A table saw can cut a finger or two off, a lathe can kill you.

I was fortunate to have some really great teachers very early in my learning curve. My dad stressed safety with all the woodworking tools I learned to use as a kid. And I have had some close calls but

still have all my body parts. The most serious stupid thing I did is get a nasty catch on the band saw. Luckily the saw and wood took the brunt of the error and I did not get hurt. Now, I never use the band saw on a turning blank.
So be careful out there!!

GLUE BLOCK MATERIAL

Lyle,

What do I use for a glue block? I have lots of 2x4 and 2x6 and 2x8 pine would this work? Thanks, Buddy and I know you are coming soon and I am really looking forward to it so much.

Arlin

Hi Arlin from Iowa,

Anything will work for a glue block but is better to use some dry hardwood of some kind. See the YouTube clip for the process. <http://youtu.be/rbZXEBIHVOU> It is in the Bowl DVD too.

PREPARING A CROTCH BOWL BLANK

Lyle,

How do I turn a half log? Does the bark side become the inside of the bowl or outside?

I have some fantastic black walnut crotch and I want to keep as much of the crotch as possible and I just cannot think in my mind which is best.

Thanks for the help,

Arlin

Hi Arlin from Iowa,

Walnut crotch is a great find. Cut the tree in half down the pith. Take a black marker and mark all three pith locations, the trunk and both branches. Now make the chain saw cut by laying the log on its side with one branch leg down and the other branch leg up. Cut down lining all three piths in the chain saw cut curf.

Now you have two halves with the color and character of the flame of the crotch wood exposed. Lay the half section with the bark side down. You can see where the piths are on the halves. Make two more chain saw cuts down the piths of the half sections and all that is left is the crotch wood.

Now make the bowl (small bowl) with the crotch wood in the bottom and the rim of the bowl toward the bark. Some like to do a natural edge bowl this way but a flat rim bowl looks just as nice, it shows off, and celebrates the pith nicely. Start between centers to get the bottom of the bowl lined up and the pith side of the bowl blank 90 degrees to the lathe bed. Use my glue block method so you save as much of the crotch in the bottom of the bowl as possible. It is hard to put this process into words; I hope this makes sense.

For a straight grained trunk of the tree the half log can be turned either way with the rim toward the pith or the rim toward the bark. The grain will be quite different from each other. Try one of each and see what happens.

METAL SHAVINGS AND OTHER DUST HAZARDS

(This is referring to a thread on Wood Central forum about a magnet in an enclosed cabinet getting metal shavings caught on it.)

Lyle,

What do you think about metal shavings coming off our turning tools? I don't know the particulars but could some of these shavings be coming off a sanding abrasive like a mesh type sanding disk? It is kind of fun to speculate where those metal particles could possibly originate from.

John

Hi John location unknown,

Thanks for including me in the discussion. Yes, the metal is a hazard to be careful about. My guess would be the magnet is stopping the fine particulate from the grinding/sharpening dust. I'm no expert but I would think the friable grinding wheel dust is just as bad as the metal dust. Good reason to have a ShopVac or dust collection port at the grinder too.

GIANT SYSTEM SAFETY ISSUE

Lyle,

Your description for the Giant Hollowing system says "heavy duty backrest". Is that different than the regular backrest?

Thanks,

Gary

Hi Gary from Colorado,

Yes, it is heavy duty. It has to be stronger. When you get 100-200 pounds of wood spinning around everything has to be bigger and stronger. Doing things that big on the regular system would risk bending something and that would be risky. I have seen people do it, just put a bigger bar in the little systems. It is not safe, I cringe at the thought.

ELECTRIC CHAIN SAWS

Hi,

Lyle, I'm contacting you again! The time has come when I need to use an electric chain saw. You have had more experience and I wonder if you have any recommendations. On the internet, prices vary from a Husquavana at \$300 to a group of others at \$100 or less. I doubt if I need a deluxe model. Thanks for any suggestions.

Larry

Hi Larry,

I use an electric chain saw a LOT. I use the "workmate" table in my shop to cut on, works great. I have had many saw brands over the years such as Craftsman, Remington, big box names I don't remember. I usually spend about \$70.00. My attitude is that it is a disposable tool for me. I know I'm going to wear out a drive gear, or bearings, or brushes, or something. They usually last me a few years. I would imagine if I get the more expensive models that it would last the rest of my life, but I never spent the big bucks for them.

On the cheap models the oiler usually leaks. I store it on its side so the leaking stops.

FEEDBACK

Hello Lyle,

I fully enjoyed our time together in my shop before Totally Turning (except for the part about the kidney stone). I'm sure the pay-off will continue as I practice the details I picked up on. I did finish that bowl that you saw roughed out on my lathe. Nick and Jill had our 6th grandchild (Max) and there is a picture floating around of him inside the bowl. I'll pass it along when I get it electronically. I am LOVING the new gouge as it has become the first tool of choice. It really holds an edge well.

Joe from Ohio.

The other thing that really, really caught my eye was the article on using the 1/2" boring bar for turning Christmas ornaments. For a few years I have wanted to make one so badly, but my shaking (used to be a lot but now it is just a tic) and I knew I would get a catch or just mangle the thing. You have given me new hope again on turning not just this object but any hollowing I want to do.

To me personally after getting to know you better I realize you are not in the business to JUST sell tools but to make people's lives better. :)

Thank you so much buddy for a bright future.

Arlin from Iowa

PS: You can use this in your next newsletter also if you want but I really mean this.

CALENDAR

Check out my website calendar for more specifics.

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

May, 2014 – Michigan

June, 2014 – Arizona

July, 2014 - Wisconsin

August, 2014 – Illinois, Texas

September, 2014 – Virginia, Georgia