



# CHATTERMARKS

The eNewsletter for Woodturners of Western Puget Sound - October 2015

*Editor's Note: The Olympic Peninsula Woodturners became a chapter of the American Association of Woodturners in October 22nd of 1990, 25 years ago. Today, our club is one of the oldest and largest in America.*

*We will be celebrating our "birthday" at this month's general meeting, and our featured event will be an interview with 94-year-old Wally Dickerman, who has been turning for almost eighty years. Wally, who was raised in Seattle and now lives in Oregon, will provide insights into how the craft has evolved during his lifetime.*

## WALLY DICKERMAN

# Eight Decades at the Lathe.

By Russell Neyman

When Wally Dickerman first picked up a woodturning tool, Amelia Earhart wasn't lost, baseball was strictly a daylight game, and The New Deal was new. That was 1936, when he was a high school student in the farming country East of Seattle. In his high school wood shop class, there was a large Oliver lathe, even though the instructor really didn't know how to use it.

The 15-year old, Wally, wasn't deterred. He switched the machine on and crudely jabbed and scratched at a piece of walnut until he had fashioned a good-looking seven-inch bowl. That seat-of-the-pants, self-taught style has lasted him for nearly eight decades.

He was hooked. "The process must have fascinated me, because after a summer job I spent my hard earned money on a small Sears lathe and some tools. I lived on a farm and my father let me take over a corner of the barn for a shop. We had a lot of firewood for turning stock because we heated with a wood stove. I turned candlesticks, small bowls and more."

He married and began a family. Before he could explore his passion for turning much further is life took a sudden detour:

World War II. He entered the United States Navy, and served aboard a destroyer, *USS CASSIN YOUNG*. Wally found himself "in harm's way" at the battles of Saipan, Leyte Gulf, Iwo Jima and Okinawa.

During the closing months of the war the *YOUNG* was struck twice by Kamikaze planes, seriously wounding the young sailor. The ship is now a featured exhibit in the Charleston Naval Exhibit in Boston.

After recovering from injuries suffered in those attacks (he received two purple hearts) he returned to Seattle with his wife and a newborn daughter. Being a lover of hunting and fishing, Wally decided to get involved in the sporting goods business taking a position at a store in Seattle where he was soon put in charge of their gun department. A few years later he got into the wholesale side of things where he remained until he retired in 1986.

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**WOODTURNING WAS ALWAYS** there, even though his career was a demanding one. He upgraded his Sears lathe for a bigger one, and continued to hone his skills.

"Bowl making was in its infancy. The



Regular  
meeting is  
Wednesday,  
October 28

Meet & Greet at  
6 PM followed by  
introductions  
at 6:30.

Kitsap  
Adventist  
School  
Gymnasium  
5880 NW  
Taylor Road  
Bremerton.

Other  
activities  
include

Refreshments,  
Show and Tell,  
Wood Auction,  
Tool Raffle  
Sandpaper &  
Glue sales.

See our  
website at

**OPCAAW.COM**

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# Officer News & Notes.

**THIS MONTH'S MEETING** will be exceptional in a number of aspects. Not only will we be hearing wonderful insights and anecdotes about the history of woodturning from our featured speaker, **Wally Dickeman**, but we will also recount our own club's history through interviews with some of the original members.

There will be some celebratory refreshments, too. Yes we will have a Show & Tell Table, but we're asking members to bring in their all-time favorite turnings. We will probably dispense with the usual blow-by-blow narrative about each and every one, but we will review some of the highlights.

So, take your best work out of the display cabinet, buff it up, and haul it to the meeting.

We will also have our regular wood auction. There are rumors that the selection will be extraordinary.

**ONE OF THE SUGGESTIONS** offered during last month's Feedback Session was for a credit card service to facilitate wood auction purchases as well as easier payment of member dues.

What a great idea! Why didn't we do that sooner? Treasurer Jon Geisbush is working out the details as we speak, and we might very well have the machine operational at this meeting.

Another suggestion was that we distribute the club's information cards to everyone to make it easier to communicate with potential members and visitors. Let's face it: Our club name is complicated and hard to remember, and having a few wallet-sized information cards containing all the vital information (club name, website,

meeting schedule, phone number, etc.) makes passing the word much easier.

They'll be available at the Sign In Desk this month.

**25!**  
**IT'S OUR BIRTHDAY!**

**LOOKING FOR A WAY** to contribute to the club but you aren't the type to attend committee meetings? Consider volunteering to help run our snack stand. Now, this doesn't have to be an every meeting type of thing; you could share duties with one or two others so that you aren't obligated to be on site every time.

Contact Vern West if you're interested.

**A HANDFUL OF CHANGES** to our Bylaws will be submitted to the General Membership for approval at our November Meeting. The most important change is the addition of a Vice President of Electronic Media to our Board of Directors, but there are a handful of other minor changes under consideration, too.

If you'd like to review these changes and give us feedback, visit our website.

**YOU'VE PROBABLY** noticed the dramatically higher resolution of our new video system, and we're in the process of setting aside the budget for the final pieces of the upgrade. Thanks to Jeff Childs and his crew, as well as all the people who have generously donated to the fund.

There always seems to be one more piece of equipment that's needed, though, so if you have a tool or machine that you don't need that we might be able to sell or auction, please drop a note to [President@OPCAAW.com](mailto:President@OPCAAW.com)

**To commemorate our 25th Anniversary, we will be staging a 'Super Show & Tell.' Bring in your all time best work of all time.**

# Wally Dickerman...

(—Continued from Page 1)

craft was mostly all about spindlework, so I just had to figure things out on my own," he reflects.

Lathes were crude affairs, and the selection of tools available were limited to a basic spindle gouge and a skew. There was only one option for mounting a bowl blank: a faceplate. Chucks didn't appear on the woodturning scene until the late 1970's.

"Recent innovations such as increasing the swing of lathes, sliding and swiveling headstocks, short bed bowl lathes, and electronic speed controls are allowing turners an opportunity to be more creative in what they do. When high speed steel turning tools became available around 1980 it became easier to turn with sharp tools."

"I think that the one single thing that has a lot to do with the huge increase in turning is the advent of the bowl gouge. It then became much easier and simpler to turn bowls and vessels. Today's turners are fortunate to have access to instructional DVD's, turning classes, and websites."

"The progress in what's being done in woodturning today is astounding. At the first AAW symposium in 1987 the gallery was mostly spindle turning and glorified salad bowls, along with a few simple hollow forms. What you see at today's symposiums is almost mind boggling with the creativity and techniques being shown. We've come a long way in a short time, and we're just getting started."

**"BACK IN THE DARK AGES** of my woodturning —the 50's, 60's and 70's — I had almost no contact with other turners. There were very, very few turners around. I knew of no clubs, classes or other ways of meeting other turners.

"In 1982 or '83 there was an ad in our local newspaper that an all day turning demonstration was being put on by a woodworkers' store. The turner was Dale Nish. I had Dale's first book, so of course I had to attend. There were about 25 or 30 of us there, and we all got our first look at a bowl gouge in action. What an eye popping sight. All of those curls of wood streaming through the air.

"I'm sure that not long after that, all of us were making long curls of our own with our

newly discovered bowl gouges," Wally recalls.

Wally stayed in touch with several of the other craftspeople he met at the Nish event, sharing ideas and techniques. The fledgling AAW was beginning to stage national demonstrations.

"The following year several of us went to the symposium at Provo, Utah. Later several of us got together and formed the Seattle Chapter of the AAW. My turning life had changed forever!"

Other turners influenced Wally's work, too. "Rude Osolnik became a good friend. We spent some evenings in my shop with Rude on the lathe. Quite a thrill for me. Rude was one of the first to have his turnings recognized as art rather than functional.

"Then, Fine Woodworking magazine ran an article on David Ellsworth. There were pictures of David's thin-walled hollow forms, something I'd never seen before. I determined that I would make a hollowing tool since none were available to buy. My early hollow forms didn't look much like David's, but it was a beginning."

Wally has done thousands of turnings of all types, but has become particularly well known for his hollow forms. "I'm hooked on curves. I see curves in nature and that fascinates me.

"I like the way turning lets me just get immersed in what I'm doing. All other thoughts — good or bad — just fall away when I'm turning. I like the fact that I can mount a piece of wood on the lathe and make something either useful or just pleasing to see and hold. The fact is that I've always been fascinated by beautifully figured or colored wood. The lathe allows me to explore what's inside that wood."



**"The craft has come a long way in a very short period of time, and we're just getting started."**

**—Wally Dickerman, whose hollow form appears above.**

*Thanks to Steve Schlumpf and Bob Rotche for helping research this article. — RN*



# Calendar of events, shows, classes and other things

2015

October 28—Monthly Meeting

25th anniversary celebration with 94 year old guest speaker Wally Dickerman

November 18 — Monthly meeting

Tool & Wood Swap Meet and 'the Board Hoarder. Note: this is the Wednesday before our regular meeting date.

December 9—Christmas Party

Pot luck dinner and raffle items with "Red Tickets".

\*\*\*\*Note-date change from last month's calendar.

January 27—Monthly meeting

In 2016 be looking for —What to do with a chunk of wood, how to make a flute, another finishing frenzy and much more.

## And the winner is!

The winner of last month's CBN wheel is **Jon Geisbush**! I guess he took it really seriously when we said you don't have to be present to win because he was out of the country. He and his wife were on a little tour of the Highlands of Scotland, the pubs of London and to be sure that he got a good comparison, the pubs of Dublin.



## A Twist on Show and Tell

Because of the Big Party at this month's meeting (it's our 25th anniversary in case you haven't noticed yet), we will be having a "Show" but no "Tell". Please bring your best. Bring that **one or more** that you're most proud of to show the members and visitors what one can do with a hunk of wood and a lathe. Because there will be some VERY special and perhaps expensive pieces done by the professionals in the group (don't let that scare you off from bringing YOUR best), this will be a look but don't touch. To minimize the temptation to pick it up and turn it over to see who and what, please have a placard with your name and the type of wood used that can be placed in front of the piece of art.

**The Port Townsend Woodworker Show** will be held Nov 7-8. The Olympic Peninsula Woodturners will be represented at this year's Woodworkers Show in Port Townsend. We have been on a roll and

have had much interest in our club because of our participation in things like The Olalla Bluegrass Festival and the Kitsap County Fair. Whereas those venues featured live turning, space and show focus will be limited to static displays of finished product. This is a time when we can shine next to the furniture and wall hanging artisans that come to Port Townsend to show off their wares.

In order to fill the table and shelves that will be there, **we need to borrow a sample of the work that you members bring to Show and Tell each month.** So, see me, Jim Conway, before the meeting on the 28th and let me know which pieces that we can borrow to take to the PT Show. It will help greatly if you can provide a sturdy carrier, bag or box.—JTC



**A Tool Swap** is a great way to cull out all of those little used tools, whether gouges or power tools. Now is your chance to go through all of those tools that you have accumulated over the years and decide which ones you no longer use or need. It's like what you do with your clothes closet every 5 or 10 years.

November 18th, at our usual monthly meeting, we will have a **Tool Swap**. If you have tools to sell, bring them and display them on one of the tables to be set up, or bring your own table. Any tool. It doesn't

(—Continued on Page 5)

"Sand-paper is just another cutting tool."

- Dick Raffan

## Vern's Safety Corner

A club member (*who shall remain anonymous*) left a chuck key in his lathe chuck .... And later, it had to be removed from the sheet-rocked ceiling. A poorly supervised guest in his shop inadvertently turned on the lathe.

This same member confessed that at lathe shutdown a chuck also became unseated, unscrewed from the spindle, bounced off of the ways and tore a long gash in a good shirt before ending its unplanned journey to the floor. This suggests using set screws whenever using Nylon or Teflon washers between chucks and the spindle seat.—Vern West

*(Editors note—I'd like to know where to get one of those washers. The one I have still requires a pry bar and hammer to loosen the chuck.)*

have to be a gouge.

If you don't have tools to sell, bring your wallet or your checkbook and your shopping list. I'm sure that there will be plenty of bargains to choose from.

Also at the meeting, we will have our regular wood auction, so don't forget to bring in a nice piece of wood that you want to donate to the club.

There will be a short presentation by "**The Board Hoarder**", aka Steve Bartocci from the other side of the pond in Kirkland, is a major supplier of exotic woods. If you are a maker of flutes, guitars, pool cues, boxes, bowls or furniture, Steve is the guy to know. He will also have a sampling of his wares for sale at the meeting.

**\*\*Note—** *For those selling tools, we ask for a small donation to the club from your sales of that evening. We'll leave the amount to you, but considering the venue, 10% seems to be a nice number.* —JTC



## Finishing Finishes First

Our Finishing Frenzy at last month's meeting was a total 100% success! Brad Stave, VP of Training, received so many high fives and accolades that a follow-up "II" will be scheduled for early next year. If you feel that a particular topic or finish wasn't covered, talk to Brad so that its inclusion can be considered for round two. —JTC



## Our success is based on dues.

Already we're headed into the Holidays which can mean only one thing. (Well, really, it can mean a whole lot of things) What it means for our club is that a new year is right around the corner and annual dues will be due. I guess that's why they call them dues.

What it means for our VP of Training is that he, Brad Stave, is tasked with taking the training budget and giving the club the best he can in information, demonstrations and knowledge.

We gain so much from these demonstrations, as individuals and as a club. But, it comes with a price. Usually the cost of bringing an outside guest to our meetings. There's usually mileage cost, a presentation fee and dinner at the prestigious Pomme Bistro, aka Apple Diner.

Where does the money come from? Your dues and the wood auction. So the sooner that you pay your 2016 dues, the sooner Brad will know what he has to work with.

Got any ideas for presentations or a presenter? Let Brad know. —JTC



**"The safest thing you can do with a lathe is not turn it on."**

**- Russell Neyman**



We're glad to report that Dave Masters, OP-CAAW's master segmentation, has recovered from his stroke and is once again sending ribbons of wood flying across his shop. His all time best work will be one of many featured at this month's "Super-Duper Show & Tell." The photo below is not Dave, but it could be.....



# The Wally *Wow* Factor

Here is a sampling of Wally Dickerman's work that certainly will make you sit up and take notice.



Zebrawood & Ebony



Beaded Maple



Myrtlewood & Ebony



Quilted Maple



Buckeye Burl



The Olympic Peninsula Woodturners' Tool Swap Meet is held to promote a broad range of wood-working skills on the western shore of Puget Sound.

No entry fee will be charged, but voluntary donations from successful sellers will be gladly accepted.

We will provide a limited number of tables, but sellers are encouraged to bring their own. Hand carts and dollies are suggested. You will be responsible for your own cash boxes.

All types of tools will be on display, including:

- Machinery
- Power Tools
- Hand Tools
- Antiques
- Kitchen Appliances
- Exotic wood.

Refreshments will be available through the Kitsap Adventist School.

# Tool SWAP MEET



## Presented by OPCAAW

Wednesday, November 18th

5 pm - 9 pm

Kitsap Adventist School Gym

5088 North Taylor Road, Bremerton

Free Admission -- OPCAAW.com

"A bowl is nothing more than a large bead with a cove in it."

(Anon)

## CLUB SPONSORS

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Jim Conway,  
Editor



# The Mentoring Program

The OPCAOW Mentors are a select group of artisans and professionals who we have designated to promote, encourage, and guide novice and intermediate woodturners within our organization. Mentors provide counsel on subjects like shop setup, equipment purchase, safety, wood preparation and specialized skills. These are some friendly folks willing to give you a point in the right direction.

While not actually a formal training program, meetings with mentors often become just that. In some cases, advanced formal instruction is available for an hourly rate.

OPCAOW Mentoring is available only to members. Please bring your current badge with you to the first session.

The current Mentors are:

<b>Dan Ackerman</b> (Brinnon)	360-796-4155
<b>Tones Briggs</b> (Port Orchard)	360-271-6448
<b>Bob Hickernell</b> (Bremerton)	360-479-5501
<b>George Kromka</b> (Bremerton)	360-373-1028
<b>Jim Leary</b> (Kingston)	360-297-5872
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**"If you don't  
blow up a  
bowl every  
now and  
then,  
you aren't  
trying hard  
enough."**

**-- Dick Raffin,  
Master  
Woodturner**



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