



CHATTERMARKS

The eNewsletter for Woodturners of Western Puget Sound-



From rough

To finished

By Jim Conway

Perhaps one of the most daunting tasks that a turner approaches is that of taking a chunk of raw material—a piece of a tree trunk—and getting it “ready” to place on the lathe. Many times I have stood before said piece of tree trunk, taken a deep breath, and proceeded to chainsaw through the center. When done, and I could breathe again, what I had was two dissimilar pieces of not exactly what I had imagined when I started. Usable, but not the most ideal starting point on its way to being a bowl.

Last month **Ray Ewing** hosted an Open Shop where **Brad Stave** showed the steps one takes in using a band saw and chainsaw in preparing a log for turning. The group was small, but industrious as we attacked the pile of logs from a century old maple tree that had needed to be taken down. Everyone got their chance at hands on preparation of a bowl blank and were able to take their prize home with them.



This is not a report on that Open Shop, but an introduction to this month's demonstration at our monthly meeting. Brad Stave, our VP of training will be presenting, the tricks of the trade that he has learned over the past decades of wood working. Using a band saw and chainsaw, Brad will show us, as he did in Ray's Open Shop, how to take raw wood sections and prepare them for your lathe.

Join us for what promises to be a very useful presentation on preparing a bowl blank.



Brad Stave starting his chainsaw demo.

APRIL 2016

Regular
meeting is
the last
Wednesday,
of the month

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

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Spit and Polish

FOR AS MANY TIMES as I've been quoted as saying it, you'd think I'd be on the company payroll. Nevertheless, I'll repeat it again: *"The Beall Polishing System is the best \$49 I ever spent when it comes to woodturning tools."* OK, that was a decade ago when I made the purchase as a show special, and the current three-stage system now lists at nearly twice that, but my opinion still stands.



That Beall Polishing System is, indeed, an absolute essential part of my woodturning process and, in my humble opinion, is a must-have item for any beginning turner. It is, after all, the finish for the finish; it's the last thing that we all do before declaring a bowl, pen, or piece of art complete.

It takes an "ordinary" polyurethane, lacquer, CA, or oil finish and elevates it to something "extraordinary".

For many of us, it's the secret to our success.

But....There seems to be a great deal of vague advice and misunderstanding about this and other polishing systems on the market, so I thought I'd take a shot at exploring the subject and offering some new insights, most of which comes from my own School of Hard Knocks self-education, but I also surveyed my fellow woodturners and checked out the Internet.

My only complaint with Mr. J.R Beall's system is that the written material that comes with the kit is fairly vague. The Beall online videos are much better, but some subjects are skipped over too lightly.

BASIC SYSTEMS— Beall's system uses two polishing compounds with a matching cloth buffing wheel, plus a third wheel that works with a hard wax, Carnauba. This technology is essentially borrowed from hundreds of years of metal polishing.

The first application is a fine grit (I'm guessing a silica flour) that is mixed with an animal fat and applied to the first wheel, which is composed of multiple sheets of linen. The polish is a reddish brown and commonly called "Tripoli." The idea is to charge the wheel by holding the block of Tripoli to the wheel while it spins. Then engage the surface of the piece to be polished against the "charged" cloth wheel, and then friction will polish the surface.

The second step is exactly the same, but often goes by the name "White Diamond." The grit is much finer and the wheel is composed of both linen and flannel sheets, but the process is essentially the same. You load up the wheel

with the White Diamond block, then press the object against it. Essentially, the White Diamond is removing any excess Tripoli that adheres to the surface of the wood.

The results are remarkable. Even uncoated, untreated hardwoods can be brought to a rich

shine with no other application of finish.

Those results can be stepped up yet another notch with the application of the third step, Carnauba Wax and the accompanying all-flannel wheel. While the first two applications removed material, the wax step will add material.

PRETTY SIMPLE, RIGHT? However, there are variables and pitfalls. Lots of them.

One thing is that there seems to be some debate among experienced woodturners about the best speed to use. Beall really doesn't address this in their —Continued on Page 3

Beall "takes an ordinary finish and elevates it to "extraordinary"

—Russell Neyman

"One way to ruin a good finish coat is to over-polish and burn through it with excessive friction and the accompanying heat."

—Ibid



written brochure other than to recommend a 1/3rd horsepower motor that turns at 1725 rpm. But, in the world of woodturning, revolutions aren't as important as surface speed (the larger a round object is, the farther it is from the center axis and the faster it travels per revolution) so smaller buffing wheels should require a higher speed to achieve the same result.

One way to ruin a good finish coat is to over-polish and burn through it with excessive friction and the accompanying heat. I've done that and it's not fun. My advice is to take things slow, use a light touch, and move quickly across the surface to avoid heat build-up.

From personal experience, I can say that my 8-inch buffing wheels give me the best results at about the 1950 rpm setting on my Jet 14-42 lathe. Having said that, I'll tell you that another lathe set at that same setting might turn faster, so doing a test piece is advisable. I usually save the cutoffs from the blanking stage so that I have samples that I can test the finishes and not worry about messing up the turned piece.

The wax application is another thing altogether. The Beall videos, which show the polishing wheels mounted on a fixed-speed motor, imply that the same 1725 rpm is best. Since mine is mounted on a variable speed lathe, I turn my lever down and apply the wax at about 900 rpm or slower. The results are noticeable.

It's important to note that the Carnauba wax is extremely hard and, if allowed to build up on the all-flannel wheel, can actually scratch up the finished surface. I've encountered that recently, and it took a call to their tech line to help me resolve the problem.

THAT BRINGS ME TO a second piece of technical advice the Beall staff offered that I disagree with. They say to "clean" a wheel by holding it against a piece of coarse sandpaper. If the wax itself can scratch your beautiful wood surface, what will happen if pieces of sand stick to the wax-loaded cloth, too? Instead, I advise cleaning and preparing the wheels with a clean, coarse file, the coarser the better.

It is important that you do not mix the wheels and polishes. Tripoli and White Diamond should only be used with their matching wheels (so marked), and neither compound should ever be applied with the wax wheel. If you slip up and rub one on the wrong surface, you'll have to stop and clean it. In extreme situations, dump the cloth wheels in the clothes

washer with a good detergent that contains a degreasing agent.

Likewise, watch out for metal fittings. Making contact with a brass ferrule or copper nail can really mess up your polishing system, and that black residue will easily contaminate any wood you contact thereafter.

For some reason, Beall advises specifically against polishing boiled linseed oil and makes no mention of other types of oil finishes. I can tell you that I've "spun on" BLO and polished it with Tripoli for years with no negative results. While you can always polish untreated "raw" wood, I'm of the opinion that adding the oil really enhances the grain.

AT THE RECENT BREMERTON woodworking show I was fortunate enough to get a blue ribbon in the expert level of the hollow forms competition. For weeks, I really struggled with that piece – a small walnut vessel with a holly finial – because the lacquer finish refused to lay down smoothly. Orange-peel and other irregularities kept re-appearing to the point that I was totally discouraged. Finally, I brought out the Beal System and aggressively cleaned it up with very impressive results and a deep sigh of relief. I'm convinced that the difference between first and second place could very well have been the polish.



Russell Neyman is a writer, woodworker, and a historian who lives in Port Orchard. He is president of the Olympic Peninsula Woodturners as well as chairman of The Yukon Harbor Historical Society.



"If it it is almost sharp it will almost cut."

-unknown

Calendar of events, shows, classes and other things

2016

April 27—	Monthly meeting. How to take a chunk of wood to a bowl blank using a chainsaw and band saw.
May 25—	Brad Stave— Hollow turning—Lamp making
June 29—	Eric Loftstrom— TBA
July 27—	Molly Winton—Small Hollow Vessels
August 15	Olalla Blue Grass Festival
August 24-28	Kitsap County Fair

Spring Cleaning around the shop

'Tis that time of year and if you are so inclined to do some Spring cleaning in **your** shop, the club is needing some basic items for our lathes used for demonstrations. Check with **Larry Lemon** for a list of needs, however, spur drives and live centers are two items that are in short supply for us.



Tops for the Fair

At last year's Kitsap County Fair, the club was able to hand out a ton of tops to the kids that came through our area and watched our demonstrations. It was a instant and huge success, and got Mom and Dad to stick around and see what we do.

The fair is coming up again on August 24-28. So the Board is sending out the call to help us fill George's bucket with tops. They don't have to be elaborate, just able to spin.

It's great practice for tool control. Play around with different designs and see what you like.



Fairs and more Fairs

If you stick your nose outside of your shop, you'll see that summer's coming and with that, lots of local fairs. The club will be participating in the **Olalla Blue Grass Festival** as well as the **Port Townsend Woodworkers Show** as we did last year.

One of the things that we ALWAYS need is volunteers to man the booth. You don't have to be an expert at turning, just enthusiastic about what you do and the club you belong to. You'll be talking to

people who MAY be interested in turning and are potential new members.

Everyone that volunteers at one of the fairs has a great time, whether it's talking to strangers or having a good time with another member.

So when the sign-up sheet comes around, be sure to be included in the fun.



Jimmy Allen to show how to Sharpen things up

This coming general meeting, Jimmy Allen will be set up in a corner of the room to help you with sharpening your tools. He will be there to council you on the best grind to put on your tool and teach you the steps to accomplish that.

So bring one or more of your tools that you have questions about or have been having problems with.

This service will be on a "*twice in a while*" basis and begin around 5:30 pm before the meeting. Once the meeting starts, the sharpening will stop.



Newsletter and Website Nominated for AAW Award

The OPCA AW club's newsletter AND website have been nominated for the AAW—American Association of Woodturners annual award.

The award will be presented during the national convention in Atlanta in June, so we should be hearing something soon.

If you haven't taken the time to check out your website (OPCAAW.com), do so. It is a wealth of information for you as a turner.

All tools are hammers, except for chisels, as those are screwdrivers

-Rude Osolnik

Port Townsend Sawdust Session

For those north of the Hood Canal Bridge, Brad Stave, VP of Training, has scheduled a sawdust session for the first Saturday in October.

In a sawdust session, there will be multiple stations where different techniques are being demonstrated. Details to follow.



Rigid band saw to be auctioned

A very nice, lightly used band saw has been donated by Troy Kellington and will be auctioned at the next meeting. The auction will probably take place in the side parking area after the wood auction and before the speaker.

If you are interested, be sure to be on site at the appropriate time. There are no Mulligans.



Early Bird Turning

At 5:30 pm, before the meeting starts, Tones Briggs will be doing some Early Bird Turning. If you have a piece of wood that you are having a problem with, bring it and Tones will help you get started with it.



ShopSmith Lathe and Bandsaw

Jim Conway has a ShopSmith, Bandsaw and a compliment of tools and equipment that will get the beginning turner set up in a jiffy. Talk to him about details. **360-531-0168**. \$490.



If you have some heavy duty cutting to be done, this is the saw for you. This is a **Ship Saw**, able to handle very large and long pieces of wood. Instead of the table tilting, the head and blade of this saw will tilt to the proper angle.



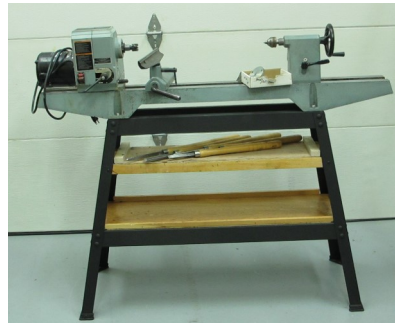
If you are interested, contact **Steve Dziedziak** at the Bates Technical School—**253-680-7437**



Be careful to not cut yourself on your tools. The blood tends to rust the unpainted parts of the lathe and stains the wood.

Small Lathe #1

Jon Geisbush is selling a Delta 46-701 lathe. Variable Speed Reeves Drive, 12" x 36" capacity, with spur drive, live center and 3" faceplate. Jon says it is in great shape and comes with a stand. \$375. 360-297-1773 or 360-362-2883



Small Lathe #2

Jon Geisbush is selling a Comet lathe, made by Nova Teknatool. Ten inch diameter capacity with 6 speeds, from 500 to 3500 in steps. Speed change can be done quickly with a belt position change. Good Unit \$220

360-297-1773 or 360-362-2883



Woodturning 101 / BY JIM CONWAY

Tools of the Trade

After agonizing over a decision to buy a lathe and which lathe, you now are faced with deciding what type of tools to buy so you can start makin' shavin's. In the beginning, I shopped eBay and found lots of gouges, new and used.



Suffering from terminal-frugalism, I jumped on some gouges that had come from estate sales only to find that I had many gouges, but not really what I wanted. Most of what I bought were the older carbon steel tools and what I was seeing demonstrated was the newer HSS or High Speed Steel gouges. I did, however, snag a skew that had been hewn from an old file. The oddity factor alone made that one worth keeping.

In the February Chattermarks Newsletter, (Link [HERE](#) to the archive in the club's web page) **Ron Brown** (a turner and presenter that has a monthly newsletter and retail site) discussed the advantages of carbide tip gouges. Essentially, he says that for the beginner, **carbide tipped tools** may give you an advantage in that they do not require the expertise of learning how to use, say, a bowl gouge. The downside of them is that they are scraping tools, not cutting tools, like a bowl or spindle gouge. Because of that, much more sanding may be required in order to get your surface to the place where you want it.



Also, the carbide tipped tools do not need to be sharpened like HSS tools. Just rotate the tip or replace it with a new one.

A sharpening system is essential to using HSS tools and can be as much as 25% of the total outlay for equipment in your shop. That sounds nuts, but I'll cover that next month.

In the beginning of my learning curve of woodturning, I watched tons of videos on YouTube. If you haven't discovered that yet, get ready to spend a **lot** of time at it.

It's just like crack. Addictive. One of my favorite YouTube instructors is **Capt Eddie Castelin**. Not only informative, but entertaining. Capt Eddie is also a terminal-frugal and has a line of carbide tipped tools for sale. They are basic and functional without the refinement that you pay for with the more jazzy gouges. As you might expect, I bought one with several styles of tips. I used them a lot in the beginning, but they have fallen into the 'occasional use' category now as my skill with other gouges improves. (click [HERE](#) for Capt Eddie's web page)

In the beginning was Carbon steel. Without going into the metallurgy of tools, in the old days of turning, there was only carbon steel tools. It was good at low speeds and easily sharpened in the field and ideally suited to the foot powered lathe. As motors were added and speeds increased, more carbon was added to the steel to get a harder, sharper tool. However, many trips to the grinder were required as the higher speed dulled the tips faster.

Today you can find a plethora (that's a whole lot of them) of carbon steel turning tools on eBay. How do I know that? Because I bought *many* sets and mismatched collections of carbon steel tools on eBay when I was first starting out. (It's amazing what one will do out of ignorance when first starting out in the biz.)

The evolution of the carbon steel tool was to HSS or High Speed Steel which gave turners the ability to keep a good edge on their tool while turning at high rpms. Now, most all of the new gouges you see in catalogs are of the HSS variety. Although there is really nothing wrong with a carbon steel tool, the snob element of turning will push you towards the HSS. Actually that's not a bad move, depending upon your budget. It always comes down to money, doesn't it?

In my travels around eBay and YouTube, I watched plenty of videos of guys cutting wood with various bowl gouges. I finally built up enough nerve and money that I purchased a nice gouge from a company that markets on eBay. That gouge has become my workhorse, doing most of the heavy lifting until I bought my last lathe which

Continued on Page 7

Not only informative, but entertaining. Capt Eddie is also a terminal-frugal and has a line of carbide tipped tools for sale.

came with a large compliment of tools. Now it shares duties with other similar gouges, sometimes saving a trip to the grinder. I now –through the club– have been introduced to a greater pool of manufacturers.

A well known bowl gouge is the Irish Grind—not a brand, but a style of grinding that has a fingernail grind swept back along the sides of the gouge to give it a long cutting surface. As my courage increases, I will eventually transform my first bowl gouge into an Irish grind. It seems to be the way to go. Or so he thinks.



Irish-grind bowl gouge

For a video presentation on how to sharpen your bowl gouge to an Irish grind, go [HERE](#). He calls it an Ellsworth grind also, supposedly because David Ellsworth came up with it. However, I learned last month that Liam O'Neill developed the grind, which is why it's call an 'Irish' grind, since Liam is from Ireland. Take your pick. Once you get into this video, you'll have 8 million more related videos to choose from. All you need is time.

Missing from my arsenal of tools, most of which are substituting as weights on my work bench, were **round nose scrapers**. I found a set of different sizes that



I bought together. Now, I am in the process of changing some of them to negative rake scrapers after my last time at our sawdust session. Jimmy Allen is a big proponent of the negative rake and will show you how to do it when he's sharpening tools at the general meetings. (see article on pre-meeting sharpening station)

Another adaptation of my scrapers is to change one side to a long gradual taper that will allow more flexibility on the inside of a bowl.

Nothing strikes fear in the heart of a turner like—a skew. Tricky little bugger it is, always doing what you least want it to do—catching on that final pass and ruining

your project. Many of us just hang the thing up and find a way around it. However, in our midst is the skew-meister **George Kromka** that will show you (at the next sawdust session) how to master the skew (and your fear of it). Trust me, he knows what he's doing and can impart confidence to even your humble correspondent.

So what does all this mean? In the world of tools, there is a wide variety of types and quality available. Sometimes, but not always, quality comes at a price. Sometimes you can find what you're looking for at an auction or estate sale. In those cases, you can pick up things at pennies on the dollar. Otherwise, you have to save your nickels and get ready to take advantage of 'deals'.

You can get by with the carbon steel tools, but in the end, you'll want to invest in **good** HSS tools and a good sharpening system (coming next month). Talk with the more experienced turners to learn of which tools will be best in your starter kit. Then you can add some more exotic gouges like a "bottom feeder" to work on the bottom of a bowl.

The gouges I've mentioned here, I would consider a core of tools that you need. They are my most used gouges, but there are many more specialized gouges that I use in those special cases.

Jim Conway is the VP of Public Relations and editor of the monthly newsletter. Originally from the deserts of West Texas, he has found his nirvana in the Northwest.

See what they're doing

Take a look at what's going on in Dublin Ireland at a sister club-

<http://www.dublinwoodturners.com/>



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"Now, I am in the process of changing them to negative rake scrapers after my last time at our sawdust session ."

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Jim Conway,
Editor

The Mentoring Program

CONSIDER A MENTOR—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 at

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:

Dan Ackerman (Brinnon)	360-796-4155
Tones Briggs (Port Orchard)	360-271-6448
Bob Hickernell (Bremerton)	360-479-5501
George Kromka (Bremerton)	360-373-1028
Jim Leary (Kingston)	360-297-5872
Jim McFarland (Shelton)	903-352-9807
Brad Stave (Gig Harbor)	206-910-5459

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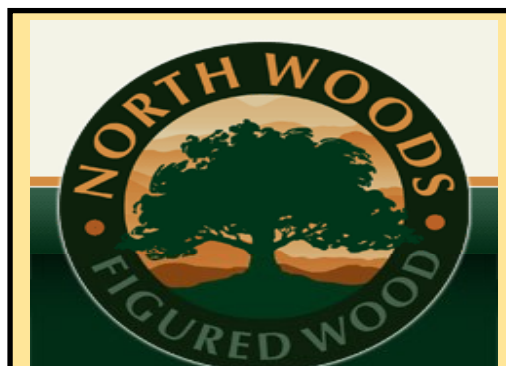
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