

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

[BOD@OPCAAW.com](mailto:BOD@OPCAAW.com)

**Tim Larson**, President  
C: 360-930-1064  
[President@OPCAAW.com](mailto:President@OPCAAW.com)

**Brad Stave**, Past President  
C: 206-910-5459  
[PastPresident@OPCAAW.com](mailto:PastPresident@OPCAAW.com)

**Dan Holderman**, VP Public Relations  
C: 360-968-3648  
[PublicRelations@OPCAAW.com](mailto:PublicRelations@OPCAAW.com)

**Brad Powers**, VP Membership  
C: 360-271-7965  
[Membership@OPCAAW.com](mailto:Membership@OPCAAW.com)

**Roger Dunn**, VP Training  
C: 206-948-3551  
[Training@OPCAAW.com](mailto:Training@OPCAAW.com)

**Denise Larsen**, Secretary  
[Minuteman@OPCAAW.com](mailto:Minuteman@OPCAAW.com)

**Larry Lemon**, Treasurer, FaceBook Admin  
C: 253-278-9058  
[Treasurer@OPCAAW.com](mailto:Treasurer@OPCAAW.com)

**Dale McDaniels**, Sergeant-at-Arms  
[SergeantatArms@OPCAAW.com](mailto:SergeantatArms@OPCAAW.com)

**George Kromka**, Board Member at Large,  
Training-Classes  
C: 360-373-1028  
[Classes@opcaaw.com](mailto:Classes@opcaaw.com)

**Sandi Swayze**, Board Member at Large  
C: 360-434-0816  
[AtLarge1@OPCAAW.com](mailto:AtLarge1@OPCAAW.com)

## STAFF POSITIONS

**Jeff Brody**, Webmaster  
C: 360-710-2800  
[Webmaster@OPCAAW.com](mailto:Webmaster@OPCAAW.com)

**Vern West**, Librarian  
H: 360-479-8634

**Bill Gray**, Glue & Sandpaper Sales  
C: 360-516-3188

**Valerie Henschel**, Wood Auction,  
Facebook Moderator  
C: 360-808-7743

**Ron Lucas**, Video Director

**Open**, Cameraman

## Inside This Issue

<a href="#">Monthly Demonstration</a>	2
<a href="#">President's Corner</a>	3
<a href="#">President's Challenge</a>	4
<a href="#">Public Relations Update</a>	5
<a href="#">Member's Challenge</a>	6
<a href="#">YouTuber Challenge</a>	7
<a href="#">Member's Column</a>	8
<a href="#">Member's Submission</a>	9
<a href="#">Club Classes</a>	10
<a href="#">YouTuber's Corner</a>	11
<a href="#">AAW Article of the Month</a>	13
<a href="#">Save the Dates</a>	18
<a href="#">Mentoring Program Information</a>	19
<a href="#">Club Sponsors</a>	20

To renew your membership go to the Club website,  
[OPCAAW.COM](http://OPCAAW.COM) please log in and then click on  
**"Renew Membership."**

Show & Tell photos from previous month's meetings are posted  
on our [website](#) at:

<http://opcaaw.com/gallery/>

## FEB 2023

This month's  
meeting is  
Feb 22nd at  
Kitsap  
Adventist  
School, 5088  
NW Taylor  
Road,  
Bremerton.

**In-person  
meeting.**

**Masks  
optional.**

**Activities  
Include:**

Member on a  
lathe

Featured  
demonstration

Show and tell

Wood auction

See our website  
at

[OPCAAW.com](http://OPCAAW.com)

On Facebook

[https://  
www.facebook.  
com/groups/  
opcaaw](https://www.facebook.com/groups/opcaaw)

# Monthly Demonstration



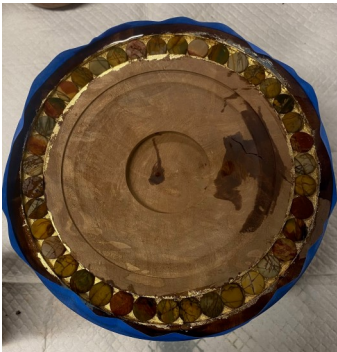
This month's demonstrator is Scott Overby.

I was born in Duluth, Minnesota in 1963. I showed an early aptitude for engineering and, after finishing high school, joined the US Navy as a Nuclear Electronics Technician. Retiring from the Navy after 20 years in 2002, I embarked on a new career as a Certified Energy Manager which led to my current position in Advanced Metering for Navy Region Northwest. And no, I do not glow in the dark.



Wood working has been a part time hobby for many years. My interests turned to woodturning in 2005. Soon thereafter, I joined OPCAOW. I mainly make bowls, boxes, pens, pepper grinders and earring stands.

My bowls are made mostly with native northwest woods: Pacific Yew, Madrone Burl, and Maple Burl. Where as in many smaller turnings I work with exotic woods: Ebony, Amboyna Burl, Tulip Wood, Chechen Burl, etc. I will be discussing inlaying woodturnings with various materials and methods. We will touch on the following topics: wood selection, stone selection, beads, purfling, butterfly joint, metals, other things to consider when designing and executing your inlay. I will touch on the topic of cyanoacrylate, epoxy and Alumilite resin. I like to push the envelope and think outside the box, so I will talk about a couple of designs I'm playing with – intarsia.



Brad Stave demonstrating color and texture in the January 2023 meeting



## *President's Corner*

### ***The Bad News...***

Let me start by apologizing for not having the general meeting on Zoom. I was unable to find enough volunteers to make that happen. I do not wish to disappoint any of our members by being unable to keep a commitment. We will suspend Zoom until we can get enough people to help and they feel comfortable putting this on.

### ***The Good News...***

We have a new person in charge of coordinating the video we display in the room. Please take the time to thank Ron Lucas at the meeting.

### ***February's meeting will have something new...***

One of our mentors, George Kromka will be running one of the small lathes shortly after 5:30 pm until 6:20 pm... I can't wait to see what he's going to be showing us.

We are in the process of setting up short introduction classes and/or demos with other groups. We are looking to get word out how much fun wood turning is. If you have ideas on where we could go, please

let me know or another board member.

Great Job wood wranglers! I do look forward to the Honey Locust and Monkey Puzzle. There should be Monkey Puzzle available at February's meeting.

The member appreciation meeting will be at next January's regular meeting. I'm going to need a couple of people to put on the committee to spend some of the clubs money on gifts (*sorry, no open credit card*).

If you haven't already, please renew your membership. 2022 dues run out at the end of February.

Board meetings are open to all, and are usually on Zoom. March's board meeting will be in person at a local restaurant. Details will be provide on request. Contact me, or another board member.

**Tim Larson,**

**OPCAAW President**

### **\*\*\*Tops for the Kitsap County Fair\*\*\***

For anyone who might not know, we take spinning tops to the fair as give away items to attract people to watch our demos and talk to us about the club. It would be great if you would turn tops and drop them off at the meetings. We will store them at the school

until time to go to the fair. It is not too early to start building our inventory.

If you have not turned a top let me know and I will get one of the fine top turners in our club to help you.

**The February 22nd general meeting will in-person at the school and there will be a wood auction, show and tell, and demonstration.**

**Mask are optional for all attendees**

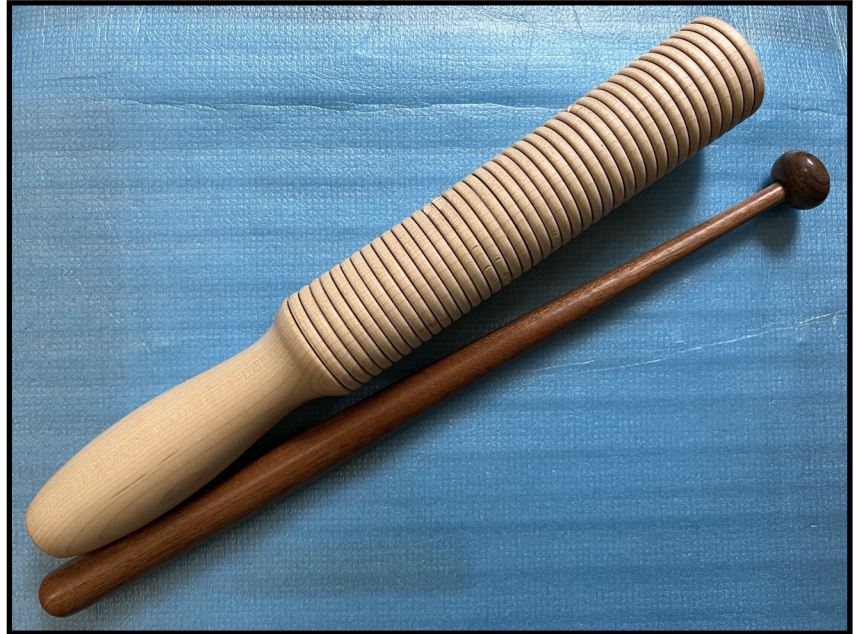


## *President's Challenge*

Thank you to everyone that submitted an egg cup in January. Going forward I plan to take pictures and include some of them on this page...

*February's challenge is to use at least two species of wood in a project of your choice.*

The inspiration for this came from my wife. She works with kids that love to make noise. This is a prototype made from Eastern Hard Maple and the striker is made from Mahogany and Black Walnut on the tip.



*March's challenge will be to turn some napkin rings*

Since it will be your design, you can decide if they match, have color on them, textured, carved or pyrography. I picked up a piercing kit at our last club tool sale... it might be time to break that out.

If you aren't sure how to do this, check with one of our mentors or see me. Also I have included a link to a You Tube video. It's not the only way of doing it, but one that works with minimal tools.

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=zPHa9XjNL8w&si=EnSIkaIECMiOmarE>

## *Public Relations*

There are been some changes to the look of Chatter-Marks and I hope you like them. There is more content and I think it should be of interest to woodturners. Look for the *Member's Column* which is a new thing I am trying. I hope to get different members to tell a bit about themselves. We don't all know each other. New this month is the *Member's Challenge* that will run until after it is concluded. There is a *YouTuber's Challenge* that will run a couple of issues. There is a one off this issue, a *Member's Submission*. It would be great if others wanted to do something similar.

I have made a Table of Contents and now you can click on the article you wish to read and go directly there, also a link at the bottom of each page to take you back to the first page.

As I said in January's meeting, this is your newsletter, let me know things you would like to see added or changed.

Here is something **FREE**, so please read the following.

Have you thought about what the OPCA AW stands for? Olympic Peninsula (OP) Woodturners, a Chapter (C) of the American Association of Woodturners (AAW). AAW offers its members several benefits that are listed [here](#) on their website. And you can sign up as an Affiliate for 3 months **free**. Click [here](#) and give it a test run.

AAW has given me permission to reprint one of their articles in our newsletter each month. I will be choosing something that catches my eye. If you are an AAW member and you see something you think would be good to share with our club let me know.

This month is an article by Dave Bleil "Off-axis Top Hat Bottle Stopper." You will find this after the monthly update on the club classes or click [here](#).

### **Club Sponsors**

The Sponsors listed on pages 18 and 19 have been verified as willing to continue their sponsorship this upcoming year. They will donate product to our annual Members Appreciation event, scheduled for the monthly meeting January 2024. We also have a new sponsor, Bell Forest, click [here](#) to visit their site.

### **Growing Awareness**

Your Board of Directors is working towards spreading the word that our club is in Bremerton, that we hold classes and monthly meetings and offer mentorship. We are trying several things to get the word out; one way is to offer demonstrations. If you know of an organization that would be open to us bringing a lathe to them and showing off by making a little sawdust please get with one of the board members.

## Member's Challenge

Win a \$50 gift certificate to D-Way Tools.

I would like everyone to try a multiple axis turning to be judged by a non-partisan party. I'm thinking by the September meeting. The sky is the limit. I want to hear the trials and tribulations of your turning and what you learned. I have a spare Joyner setup that can

be borrowed if anyone would like to try using it. :)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BcOo2pIH\\_tg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BcOo2pIH_tg)

Scott Overby, OPCAOW Mentor

Enter as many times as you want.



# D-WAY TOOLS

they're quite simply the finest turning and sharpening tools available...

[boxmastertools@gmail.com](mailto:boxmastertools@gmail.com)

360-689-4541

<https://d-waytools.com/>

## BOXMASTER TOOLS



## *YouTuber's Challenge*

This month's YouTuber Corner features Lisa Ramblow, I hope you find her as interesting as I do. She is involved in a challenge to help sick kids, her words are just below. But to me this seems like a nice thing to do and we have a lot of nice people in our club. So I am throwing down the gauntlet. I am challenging Tim Larson, Larry Lemon, Roger Dunn to make wands and bring them to the February meeting. Will you join them? Other than just being a good cause, Camp Korey is in Mt Vernon, WA. It is practically in our backyard being as it is in the PNW. Surely we can get some wands for these kids?? This next paragraph is from Lisa Ramblow who is the guest this month. The links to the camp are below that.

Thanks, Dan Holderman

I am still just blown away by the response to my YouTube channel, and I have "met" so many great people through it, other turners, artists, and just admirers alike. One of these amazing folks is a turner from Texarkana, TX who goes by Hula's Woodworks. Hula recently hatched a scathingly brilliant plan to help a non-profit organization in Mt Vernon, WA dedicated to giving kids with serious medical conditions an opportunity to go to camp. Camp Korey

is currently working on an incredible installation of Wizard's Alley from Harry Potter, though I've been calling it Diagon Alley and I think either one works. In any case, this is a full-blown replica of the Alley and included among the shops is Olivander's Wand Shop. Hula's 1k Wand Challenge is going to put an actual wand in every box inside Olivander's, so that the kids will be able to fully immerse themselves in the experience. Turners from all over the wand are answering the call and I think we might just pull this crazy thing off! So if you want to help, make a wand...or two...or a box full and send them off to Camp Korey. Do keep in mind that these wands should be kid-friendly, maybe a little sturdier than normal and definitely no sharp points. I'm sure the kids will be Making Mischief (and possibly sword fighting) so create them accordingly. Links to Camp Korey are included below and I hope we can help make this happen! I'll be publishing my Hula's Wand Challenge video on Thursday, February 9th if you want to check it out!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mJbYHUnlAhY>

<https://www.campkorey.org/>

<https://www.campkorey.org/tiger-pearson-makes-magic-happen/>

## *Member's Column*

Hello

I am your new treasurer Larry Lemon.

A lot of you know me from my various roles in the club in the past. Audio Visual, Sergeant at arms, VP of Training, President, Past President, Teacher, and now Treasurer. You may not be familiar of my background. I became interested in wood turning when I was in elementary school. My grandfather was a cabinet maker and he had a lathe. He had a contract to make 2-inch wooden rings for café rods. He designed and built a jig using two knives to cut the rings, which I still have. He also manufactured the brackets to mount the rods on the wall. As a result of this my dad bought a little 6-inch metal lathe with no feeds for me. I turned wood with that on off through college.

In college I earned an Associate of Arts degree as an electronic technician and then went on to Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo CA. I studied lower division electronic engineering and after two years got married and moved to Los Angeles area. I then earned a Bachelor's Degree in Technical Arts and started teaching for LA City schools in the junior high electronics shop. From there I moved to Medford Oregon to teach Electronics, Small Engines, Wood, Drafting and Automotives and Math in High School. Retiring from there after a total of 32 years of teaching.

I occasionally used the lathes in the shops during that period. After moving to Gig Harbor 19 years ago I traded an old extra table saw (Craftsman 10")

for a Rigid brand pipe bed lathe and the real journey began. About a year later, I found OPCAAW at the Kitsap fair and Jon Geisbush convinced me to come to a meeting. Tones Briggs was demonstrating his hollow form Christmas ornament and I was hooked and joined. Since then, I have upgraded my lathe several times by buying a better used lathe and reconditioning it. I have converted several lathes to electronic variable speed using salvaged Tread Mill motors and electronics. Currently I have a Powermatic 3520B. I have improved my skills along the way from the many excellent demonstrations the club has put on, attending a week-long class at Craft Supply in Utah (made a Nut Cracker), the Oregon Symposiums and the AAW symposium held in Portland Oregon. I have found the best way to learn, for me, is to observe and then go practice what was taught. Thankfully I am not afraid to try new things and experiment with different techniques. I enjoy both bowl and spindle turning and appreciate combining the two into a project when I can.

I welcome the opportunity to share what I have learned with others and invite you to ask questions. I am willing to mentor and will welcome you into my shop.

Keep turning, have fun and be safe.

Larry Lemon



## *Member's Submission*

### **Monkey Puzzle**

*(Araucaria Araucana)*

The club recently took down a Monkey Puzzle tree in Poulsbo. Unfortunately for appearance, it was healthy and not standing dead, so no spalting is present.

#### **Characteristics**

MP is a native of Chile and has been planted as an ornamental tree in the US since the late 1800's. MP is a cousin of Norfolk Island Pine (*Araucaria Heterophylla*) and has the same characteristics as far as turners are concerned. NIP is a native of an island off the coast of Australia. The Janka hardness scale for NIP is 650 putting it in the vicinity of Sycamore, 770, and Alder at 590. MP limbs are generally evenly spaced in the trunk and grow 5, 6 or 7 in a ring. The trunk and limbs are covered with sharp "scales". When you are ready to turn a blank, take the bark off with your chainsaw or a spud and thick gloves. Spalting can be generated in MP as we do for any other woods. When turned very thin, the forms become translucent when soaked in oil. Examples of spalted NIP forms can be found on Hawaiian turner Kelly Dunn's website, [www.kellydunnwoodturner.com](http://www.kellydunnwoodturner.com).

His forms are also on Pinterest, Etsy, YouTube and Facebook. Kelly was influenced by Ron Kent who also lived in Hawaii. Kent's website is [www.ronkent.com](http://www.ronkent.com).

#### **Turning MP**

To maximize its beauty it should be turned end grain with the pith at the center of the form. Use very sharp tools with a shear cut to shape the forms. Use a steep grind traditional bowl gouge or hook tool for the interior final passes. Be careful if using the knot as a pattern in the bottom or around the sides like portholes. When they dry it is at a different ratio than the surrounding wood and they may pop out. Use thin CVA glue around them to stabilize. The knots will turn red.

#### **Translucent finish**

If you turned it "very thin," which means well under 1/8<sup>th</sup> of an inch, get the sanding done and check the thickness with a light source. The optimum thickness is 1/16 of an inch. The formula for the oil base finish varies by whoever is writing about it. In my experience, mix 2 parts pf odorless mineral spirits to one-part boiled linseed oil and throw in a pint of Gloss spar varnish. Kelly Dunn has vats big enough to soak for a few days, then he takes out and wipes the finish off and let air dry for a few days before repeating the process. Most of your sanding needs to be done before you get to 1/16 of an inch. Some resources I found use sprayed lacquer to get the translucence. I have used a "mop" technique to infuse the mixed brew and it seems to work too. After 10 soakings, buff to final finish.

Roger Dunn

# Club Classes

George Kromka

The first few classes have been scheduled, so you can think about what might pique your interest. We are doing something new this year, sign-ups will be on the club's web page. You will get an email telling you what the class is, when it is, how much it costs, etc. That will mean that it is time to sign up for that one class.



\*\*\*Volunteers to assist the instructors are needed. You don't have to be an instructor level turner to help. The assistants will help setup the equipment, assist students who have basic questions. i.e. If a student has never used a chuck they may not know how to swap the jaws. That kind of thing. The more experienced the assistant the more they can offer but any help is appreciated.

On the schedule now is:

- 2/26/2023 "Basic Spindle Turning" with Jim Leary, this course has been designed for beginning turners and those who have not previously turned spindles. It will introduce proper use of the spindle roughing gouge, the spindle gouge, the parting tool and basic skew cuts. The morning will focus on rounding from a square, beads, coves, vee cuts and parting cuts. The afternoon will be project oriented with a project that includes the basic cuts learned in the morning session. This is a skill building class.
- 3/26/2023 "Tops for the Kitsap County Fair", this will be a Sawdust Session time will be announced and it is free with no sign up necessary. We will have several instructors there to show anyone who hasn't turned a top different methods to get the same end result. A top for a kid to play with. If you do know how to make tops you are welcomed to join us and help build up inventory for the fair.
- 4/30/2023 "Bowl Turning" with Tim Larson, Tim will go into basic bowl turning. Good for new turners and anyone looking to improve their bowl turning skills.

More to follow. Keep up to date at checking our club website calendar regularly:

<http://opcaaw.com/my-calendar/>

# You Tuber's Corner



This month's contributor is Lisa Ramlow, here is the link to her YouTube channel

[www.youtube.com/@LisaRamlow](http://www.youtube.com/@LisaRamlow)

I've always been interested in woodworking and spent many Saturday afternoons on the couch with my dad watching Norm Abrams on The New Yankee Workshop. My dad retired from GM holding journeyman's cards as a Machine Builder, Machine Repairman and Tool & Die Maker and he did all kinds of projects around the house, both practical and just for fun. We always had some kind of motorized toys and he would design and build amazing things to pull me and my sister on behind them-I remember a two-seater chariot kind of thing with big balloon tires that he hooked to one of our three-wheelers and drove us (and all the other kids too) around the neighborhood. He built a crazy contraption consisting of cross-country skis mounted to a platform box with a tall handle and welded a steel tongue to the front so it could be pulled behind the snowmobiles. He built an incredible go-cart from scratch, complete with roll-bars and seat belts, using a mini-bike motor. He also had a small workshop in the basement where he tinkered with building some furniture and other small woodworking projects. I've always been a daddy's girl and was right there with him, playing gopher while I was still too small to actually help and working alongside him once I was old enough to hold a hammer and run the wheelbarrow. We did mostly home improvement projects, building decks and creating a screen-room, that kind of thing. Fast-forward to 2000, when my partner Marie and I moved into her family's house in Ann Arbor, a gorgeous bungalow built in 1927 that needed a lot of updating. My dad bought me a few tools and I picked up a vintage Craftsman table saw from a friend - so began my journey into woodworking. I was really self-taught as the woodworking with my dad was mostly 2x4 construction projects (I don't think he even had a table saw until I was already out of the house) and I just jumped right in. I learned how to operate the tools safely and wasn't afraid to use them. My first actual DIY project was building new mission-style tongue and groove cabinet doors for the kitchen, using cabinet grade poplar and birch plywood - my tendency to take on rather complicated projects right from the start has not changed along the way. My partner is a colored-pencil and ink artist and I

started building frames for her drawings and prints, as well as trying some small projects from WOOD Magazine. I seemed to have a knack for woodworking and I began filling my basement shop with more and better tools. I always wanted to turn, but for some reason I was afraid of it - looking back I think I was most intimidated by mounting the workpiece and sharpening tools. My dad had given me a very vintage Craftsman lathe and some spindle tools but I never got further than putting a piece of 2x2" oak between centers and then standing there, staring at it. I never did touch a tool to it.

In January of 2019, I slipped on the ice heading to my shop (we now live in the middle of the Manistee National Forest in west-central Michigan and I have a 24x32 garage shop) and broke my ankle. This required surgery and a plate plus nine screws. I was unable to bear weight on that leg for almost 12 weeks so I had a lot of time to sit on my butt. I discovered YouTube was more than just a bunch of dumb people recording themselves doing dumb things and was blown away by the content I found. I started binge-watching a bunch of turning channels and teaching myself all I could about turning without being able to be in front of a lathe. Reed Gray aka RoboHippy, Sam Angelo the Wyoming Woodturner, Brian Havens, Lyle Jamieson, Mike Waldt, and Shawn from Wortheffort Woodworking are some of the ones I found most informative and I decided that maybe turning didn't have to be terrifying. I bought a Delta midi-lathe, ordered some carbide tools to eliminate the sharpening issue, and went to town as soon as I could stand in my Storm Trooper walking boot. It took about 5 minutes for me to be hooked and I made my first bowl from a piece of kiln dried, stringy willow - you can imagine the tear out using a standard carbide scraper! I decided I wanted to learn to use traditional tools so again I turned to YouTube for help and now, especially after using the Wolverine sharpening jig with CBN wheels, I wonder what I was so afraid of!

(Continued on the next page)



# You Tuber's Corner

(Continued)

A fluid artist friend of mine has a YouTube channel and she encouraged me to start one of my own. I'm the girl who dreaded having to give a presentation in front of the class, hated performance speech, and basically just wanted to fade into the woodwork (lol) - the fact that I am publishing videos for the whole damn world to watch is really kind of crazy talk, but I am having so much fun. When I first started my channel I meant it only to be a bit of a chronicle of my journey from newbie to not-such-a-newbie and I was just turning with music in the background, but somehow along the way other woodturners started watching my videos and asking questions so I changed formats and am now doing a combination of talking while turning and voice overs. I am certainly not intending to have a teaching channel, but I have found that people are learning from me, from both my mistakes and successes, and are appreciating the creative work that I'm doing and the techniques I'm using.

So here I am, several years into turning, and it's still hard to drag me away from the shop. My partner and I added a third artist to our business and became Bear Track Studios, LLC, where Marie Rust runs under the main Bear Track Studios creating colored-pencil and ink wildlife drawings; Lori Taylor runs under Bear Track Press where we publish her children's books, although Lori is also an accomplished mixed-media artist, wood carver, muralist-she can pretty much do anything and everything; and I run under Bear Track Wood Works. We live and work on a property we refer to as "The Compound" or "The Bear Den" where we each have our own studio space, as well as a bog and a tiny little private lake nestled in the middle of the National Forest. It's pretty much paradise, especially for outdoorsy, science-y, nature-y Bear Girls like us.

Here's me in April of 2019 with my first bowl



Here are some links Lisa would like to share"

[www.LisaRamlow.com](http://www.LisaRamlow.com)

[www.MarieRust.com](http://www.MarieRust.com)

[www.LoriTaylorArt.com](http://www.LoriTaylorArt.com)

[www.BearTrackPress.com](http://www.BearTrackPress.com)

[www.youtube.com/@lisaramlow](https://www.youtube.com/@lisaramlow)

<https://www.campkorey.org/>

<https://www.campkorey.org/tiger-pearson-makes-magic-happen/>



# OFF-AXIS TOP HAT BOTTLE STOPPER



BY DAVE BLEIL

I am always looking at objects with an eye for turning them. The stoppers I once made for friends and family seemed to be too much like the ones everyone else had been making; I wanted something different. Reading a Dr. Suess book to one of my grandsons is a likely candidate for the origin of this idea—think *The Cat in the Hat*. Because the project requires little wood, it didn't take me long to try to make one. My wife's "Oh, that's different" reaction added encouragement—confirmed by the people that received them as gifts.

Figure in the wood adds to the attractiveness, so I immediately looked for pieces that had unusual grain or a distinctive feature such as spalted patterns in maple or a cherry burl. I am sure you have pieces of wood that look very distinctive in your stash that are cut-offs left over from another project that can be put to good use. Grab one of those pieces and have some fun making an off-axis-turned top hat stopper!

The finished hat has a brim of about 1-3/4" – 1-7/8" (44mm – 48mm); the smallest part of the hat band is slightly less than 1" (25mm) in diameter. The height varies from 1-3/4" – 2" (5cm) depending on the brim diameter. I personally like the taller ones.

Even though this is a small item, there are opportunities for embellishment. In my area there are three school districts that have red and black as school colors, so I have made some stoppers incorporating these colors. The middle two stoppers in the opening image are dyed laminated birch; the two on the ends are spalted maple and English walnut. I question whether this stand-out design needs to be colored, but the connection with the school colors makes these items popular.

Here is how I approach turning my off-axis stoppers. I recommend reading this description in its entirety before starting.

## PROJECT: Off-axis top hat bottle stopper



### Stock up

Metal stoppers are available from many suppliers of woodturning accessories and kits. I use the flat-bottom stoppers from Niles Bottle Stoppers so that they can be displayed on a shelf when they aren't doing their job in a bottle. I want a high-quality stopper that will add to the decorative aspect and last forever.

Using a bandsaw or table saw, cut your stock to about 2"-square and 3" (8cm) long; the length can be as little as 2-3/4" (7cm), but 3" gives you room to maneuver your tools. A 6"- (15cm-) long piece will easily give you two top hats. I usually find several pieces of different species or interesting grain patterns and prepare them for the lathe. I am not a production turner but have given at least fifty of these stoppers as gifts.

### Rough turn

With a small blank that will be secured with the tailstock, I do not bother to round the end that I place in my chuck jaws (**Photo 1**). If you would like the added security of a tenon, round the entire blank between centers using a spindle roughing gouge and then use a parting tool to cut a tenon on the end of the blank to fit your chuck jaws. Whichever end you choose to place in the chuck will be oriented at the top of the hat, so consider how you want grain or color to figure into your design. At the least, round the section of the wood you will turn into a stopper to about 2"-diameter.

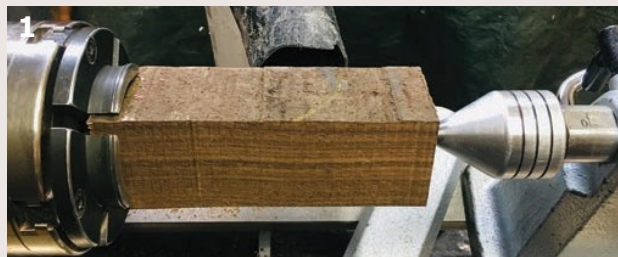
Make a shearing cut across the end grain with a freshly sharpened tool. A properly presented skew chisel will leave the best surface—with the long point down, cut through an arc to the center, riding the bevel through the cut. A spindle gouge presented on its side (flute away from the stock) and cutting through an arc will also leave a satisfactory surface. Whatever your tool choice, you will want to slightly undercut the area where the base of the stopper will contact the wood. The resulting concave surface reduces the chance of a gap showing between the wood and the metal stopper.

### Fit the stopper

Drill a 23/64" (9mm) hole to a depth slightly greater than the threaded tenon on the wine stopper (**Photo 2**). Although a 3/8" (9.5mm) bit is only fractionally larger, avoid the temptation. I learned by experience that a 3/8" bit is too large.

Thread the stopper into the hole by hand (**Photo 3**). You are forcing the stopper to cut its own female threads, and you will need to repeatedly turn the stopper in until you meet resistance, then back it out, and blow out the hole until you get a secure, seated fit (**Photo 4**).

### Blank preparation



Mount your blank in the chuck jaws and bring up the tailstock for support.

### Affix the stopper



Drill the bottom of the hat blank to receive the threaded stud on top of the stopper.



Turn the stopper in by hand, forcing the stud to cut its own threads as you proceed. The stopper should seat against the bottom of the blank without a visible gap.



## PROJECT: Off-axis top hat bottle stopper



### Shape and decorate



Using the tailstock for support, shape the hat, focusing on creating a brim and a form that tapers down to location for the hat band.



Add a hat band using a permanent marker. Don't use a worn pen, which may leave a ragged line.



Part-off the hat at about 2"—longer if you're aiming for a stovepipe look.

### Shape the hat

Remove the metal stopper and bring up your live center on the tailstock to support the piece. Shape the bottom part of the hat that includes the brim (**Photo 5**). I use a small round-nose scraper to establish a crude shape before switching to a spindle gouge to refine the form. I like to turn a slight taper from the top of the hat to the brim.

### Sand

Small objects like these stoppers invite close inspection, so a good finish is essential. Sand the bottom, brim, and side through your grits, finishing with 400- or 600-grit abrasive.

### Add a band

The hat band is about 3/8" wide. I use a black ultra-fine permanent marker to define the top and bottom of the band, then a chisel-point permanent marker to color the interior (**Photo 6**). Using a relatively new marker makes the process neater and easier. I have tried many colors for the hat band but have always been dissatisfied with any choice other than black.

### Part-off

Using a parting tool, part-off your hat at a length of about 2" (**Photo 7**). You can go for a little more length if you're aiming for more of a stovepipe hat look.

### Make a friction drive



Use a dowel to make a shopmade friction drive for your hat. Taper the end to fit securely in the hole in the base of the hat blank.

### Drive your hat

Make a friction drive by mounting a small piece of hardwood or a dowel in your chuck—a piece slightly larger than 3/8" in diameter will work (**Photo 8**). Note that a piece of stock this small won't fit in the jaws but can be securely held by the center of the jaws and extend back towards the headstock spindle. Turn the end to a taper of about 23/64" (9mm) at the tip.

Mount the hat back on the lathe by inserting the friction drive into the hole for the metal stopper.

## PROJECT: Off-axis top hat bottle stopper



### Off-axis turning

Examine the top portion of the hat. Consider whether there is a feature or some grain figure in the wood you want to retain and emphasize. You will have to position the blank on the friction drive to retain that feature and remove waste wood from the opposite side (**Photo 9**). Just keep in mind that moving a section of the wood away from the axis of rotation will place it in the path of the gouge to be cut; placing a section of the wood closer to the axis of rotation means it is more likely to remain in the finished piece. Alternatively, your intuition may tell you that removing wood on one side may reveal better grain figure, so you may want to sheer off that side.

Having identified the off-axis location for your new center, bring up the tailstock and position the live center against the new axis of rotation—this will involve angling the hat on the tip of the friction drive (**Photo 10**). Tighten the tailstock. Rotate the blank by hand to make sure it clears the toolrest. Lower your faceshield into position, stand out of the line of fire, and start the lathe at a slow rpm. Slowly increase the lathe speed. Stop the lathe and try to move the piece with your hand; other than rotating with the drive spindle, it should not budge.

Once you are satisfied that everything is secure, use a freshly sharpened 1/2" (13mm) bowl gouge or a spindle gouge to shape the top (**Photo 11**). Stop the lathe frequently to confirm that you are not cutting into the hat band. Take light cuts starting from the top of the hat and cutting towards the brim. You can see the piece taking shape by watching the ghost image as the nonuniform piece rotates through space.

The blank may loosen as it pushes against the compression chuck, so occasionally tighten it by applying more pressure from the tailstock's live center. Stop the lathe often and adjust your toolrest to get your tool supported and as close to the turning as possible. This will give you more tool control.

You should also frequently check to make sure you're not cutting into the hat band. If you do hit the band, after hand sanding the new surface, use some clear tape to line up the two remaining ends and fill in the band with your marker.

### More sanding

You will want a smooth finish to show off the features in the wood. With the lathe off, hand sand the newly cut wood, sanding with the grain direction. As with the previous sanding effort, work through 400- or 600-grit abrasive. Lightly sand the ridge connecting the two adjacent faces.

### Mount on the off-axis



Mark the location for remounting your blank off-axis. Moving a section of the blank away from the axis of rotation means it is more likely to be removed during turning.



Angle the blank on the friction drive and secure it in place using the tailstock in the off-axis location. Snug the tailstock, but don't overtighten it and split the blank or break the friction drive.

### Turn the off-axis



Shape the sweep of the hat, taking light cuts from the perimeter of the "ghost" edge as the off-axis blank rotates through space.



## PROJECT: Off-axis top hat bottle stopper



### Shape the hat top

With the tailstock still in place, make a series of light sheering cuts across the top of the hat (**Photo 12**). While there is still a nub connecting the tailstock to the hat, sand the top of the hat.

Remove the hat from the chuck and use a knife or chisel to remove the nub. Finish the surface with abrasive, blending the spot where the nub was removed with the surrounding surface (**Photo 13**). If the top of the hat is flat, I have found that placing a sheet of abrasive on a flat surface and rubbing the top of the hat across it is an efficient way to finish this surface.

### Apply finish

If you're worried the brim might break if the stopper is dropped (I have never had this happen), you could put a little thin CA glue across the bottom side of the brim. I use multiple layers of wipe-on poly, but there are many options—feel free to use your finish of choice. On the down side, wipe-on poly will yellow if left in sunlight such as on a windowsill.

Give your friends and family something they couldn't possibly have—these stoppers make memorable gifts (**Photos 14 - 16**). I include a gift or business card on which I write "STOP your WINEing," along with the type of wood. ■

*Dave Bleil became interested in turning while in high school and subsequently used his uncle's Shopsmith while in college. Dave joined the Pennsylvania Guild of Craftsmen where local turners, including Ted Rasmussen, encouraged his turning. These days, most of his turnings go to family and friends as gifts.*

### Refine the shape

12



Refine the top of the hat with a series of sheering cuts, made either with the long tip of a skew chisel or a spindle gouge presented on its side.

13



Remove the nub from the top of the hat with a chisel or carving knife, sanding the area to blend the surfaces.

### Combine function and whimsy

14



15



16



Finished stoppers, including a rakish pair that look like they are weathering high wind. The Santa-themed stopper is by Mike Peace.



## Save the Dates!

### [AAW Virtual Events \(click here\)](#)



Follow this link to the AAW (American Association of Woodturners) webpage for Virtual Events. They have an upcoming events schedule tab and a tab for past virtual events. You must be an AAW member to view the past events.

### Washington

March 11, 2023, Northwest Washington Woodturners' 11th annual all-day demo, A Day with Nick Agar, Anacortes First Baptist Church, Anacortes. Nick will spend the day demonstrating the many techniques of turning, texturing, and coloring that he is internationally known for, including his Viking Sunset Bowl. For more, visit [nwwwt.org](http://nwwwt.org). Questions, email [info@nwwwt.org](mailto:info@nwwwt.org) or call Phil Kezele at 206-372-5123.



### OREGON WOODTURNING SYMPOSIUM



### [THE OREGON WOODTURNING SYMPOSIUM \(click here\)](#)

March 17-19, 2023 at the  
Linn County Expo Center  
3700 Knox Butte Rd  
Albany, OR 97322

Registration is now open.



### [2023 AAW Symposium in Louisville, KY \(click here\)](#)

Kentucky Exposition Center

June 1 - 4

2023 Featured Demonstrators: Pat Carroll, Ireland; Lynne Hull, US; Ulf Jansson, Sweden; Mauricio Kolenc, Uruguay; Joss Naigeon, France; Seri Robinson, US; Curt Theobald, US; Jacques Vesery, US; and Derek Weidman, US

**Registration is open!**

# The Mentoring Program

**CONSIDER A MENTOR**—The OPCA AW **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.

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

The current Mentors are:

<b>George Kromka</b> (Bremerton)	360-373-1028
<b>Jim Leary</b> (Kingston)	360-913-8073
<b>Brad Stave</b> (Gig Harbor)	206-910-5459
<b>Scott Overby</b> (Port Orchard)	360-535-3203

Go to this [link](#) on our [website](#) for an updated article on the Mentor Program — what it takes to be a good mentor!

---

**CHATTERMARKS** is produced by and for **The Olympic Peninsula Chapter of The American Association of Woodturners - OPCA AW** and is published monthly electronically. All articles are copyrighted by **OPCA AW** unless otherwise noted. *Letters to the Editor* and article submissions are welcome.

Tim Larsen  
President

## CLUB SPONSORS



**D-WAY TOOLS**

they're quite simply the finest turning and sharpening tools available...

[boxmastertools@gmail.com](mailto:boxmastertools@gmail.com) 360-689-4541 <https://d-waytools.com/>

**BOXMASTER TOOLS**



### Sumner Woodworker Store

908 Cherry Ave.  
Sumner, WA 98390  
253-891-9413



<https://nilesbottlestoppers.com/>



**WANE + FLITCH**

LIVE EDGE WOOD FURNITURE

<https://www.waneandflitch.com/> (253) 200-5939





## CLUB SPONSORS



OVER 100 SPECIES OF EXOTIC WOOD!

Custom Orders Welcome: (877) 770-9663

<https://www.bellforestproducts.com/>

TURN TO  
PACKARD  
FOR QUALITY  
TURNING TOOLS  
AND SUPPLIES



The Woodturner's Source

[www.packardwoodworks.com](http://www.packardwoodworks.com)

1-800-683-8876

[www.edensaw.com](http://www.edensaw.com)

Port Townsend: 211 Seton Road

Port Townsend, WA 98368

(360)-385-7878

Fax: (360) 385-5215

Toll-Free: (800) 745-3336



Now with a full line of  
Rockler Supplies

# The Board Hoarder



**Wood for the woodworker**

Steve Bartocci, 206-459-4300 • [wopwoody@comcast.net](mailto:wopwoody@comcast.net)