



Chips & Chatter

Newsletter for the Silicon Valley Woodturners

November 2025

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President's Turn

The holiday season is here once again, and Dennis helped us kick it off with this month's demo on turning a birdhouse ornament. As always, his presentation was packed with information, including tips and tricks he's gathered over the years. I especially enjoyed seeing how he chucked a small scrap of wood for the roof, creating an easy, matching mortise that fit onto the hollowed base—almost like turning a quick lidded box. To spark our creativity, he also brought samples of several birdhouse styles he's made using many of the same techniques.

I was so inspired by the demo that I've already turned a couple of birdhouses myself. Between those ornaments and the usual Christmas gifts in progress, my shop currently looks like Santa's elves walked out after their lunch break. ;-) I hope you're all enjoying the season and finding time for a bit of turning as well.

We won't be meeting at Maker Nexus next month because of our holiday party, but it's worth noting that Maker Nexus has been hard at work organizing their first-ever silent auction. It's a fundraiser for them and also gives us some great visibility. Many of the items in the auction are pieces SVW donated for our October President's Challenge. Here's the link to the [Maker Nexus Silent Auction](https://givebutter.com/c/makernexusauction/auction), which will be open until December 13th. Please feel free to share it with friends—and maybe take a moment to bid on a fellow member's work (or even your own), along with the many other creative offerings, all in support of our gracious hosts.

I'm looking forward to seeing you at the Holiday Dinner Party,
Kevin

<https://givebutter.com/c/makernexusauction/auction>

Announcements

The **Holiday Dinner** will be at **Tomato Thyme** at 1560 Hamilton Ave, San Jose on December 3 at 6pm.

Cost is \$45 per person - and please fill out the [RSVP form](#) with your menu choice. You can view the [Dinner Menu](#) and [Event Poster](#).

There will also be a white elephant gift exchange (\$20 range) if you wish to participate.

Board Election Results (approved at the meeting)

- President - Kevin Lee
- Vice President - Kat Napolitano **
- Treasurer - Tom Stutz
- Sang - Secretary - Sang Park **
- Member at Large - Edy Chung **

** New board members

Roman is incorporating wood turning books into a comprehensive **wood working library**. The catalog is on the Santa Clara Valley Carvers website ([LINK to wood turning books](#)) but check with Roman if there is a book you want to borrow.

Update from Jerry: **Pens for the Troops** program is done for 2025 - The club completed 410 pens. Call out to Milton for completing 160 (maybe 200) pens!

Events Recap

Meeting Demo – Bird House

Presented by Dennis Lillis on November 5

In this demo session, Dennis showed how he makes birdhouse ornaments – something that he picked up from a class with [Dale Nish](#) (Utah). Since then, Dennis has been making birdhouses regularly for the holidays to add to his family’s seasonal collections.



The Roof

1. The ornaments are small, and can be made from scrap wood cut offs from the bandsaw. To mount small pieces on the lathe, Dennis uses a 1-1/16 inch forstner bit to make a mortise to fit on 1 inch chuck jaws.
2. Using a spindle gouge (image right) Dennis formed a cone shaped roof. Use your creativity to add embellishments or features. If you plan to hang your ornament, make a small hole in the center peak of the roof.
3. Dennis used a hollowing tool to undercut the lip of the roof.
4. Finishing as he went, Dennis used Shellawax, a friction polish.



The Body

5. To hold the body, Dennis used an Axminster tapered jaw.
6. After surfacing the outside of the body, he formed a 1-1/16 inch tenon to fit into the roof. (Image right, measuring with calipers)
7. After shaping the outside of the birdhouse Dennis drilled the entrance hole. By making this hole depth the same as the desired wall width, Dennis could tell when he reaches the wall width while hollowing (see step 9 below)
8. Then Dennis drilled a 1-1/4 inch deep hole down the center.



9. Using kelton hollowing tools, he hollowed the inside of the birdhouse until the entrance hole opened up.
10. Optionally, at this point, you can drill a 3/8 inch hole all the way through the bottom of the body to attach a finial.



Assembly

11. After finishing the exterior of the body, Dennis parted it off. He attached the body to the roof using Titebond Quick and Thick.
12. In the hole he previously made in the roof (step 2), Dennis inserted a DIY eyelet for threading a ribbon or string for hanging the ornament. The eyelet was made by using a cup holder hook in a hand drill to twist a loop of wire held by pliers. Trim the twisted end to fit in the hole on the roof.

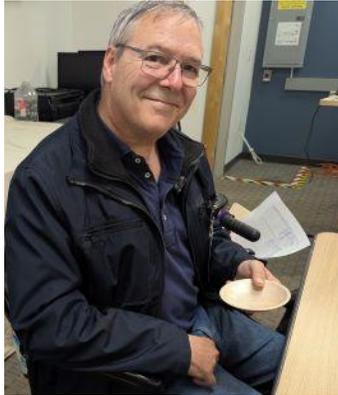


Other Ideas: add a perch, toy birds, finials or other features to personalize your birdhouse!

Note: Dale was a widely regarded woodturner and passed away in 2013. You can find several references of his works online, including his [book on Christmas ornaments and others](#).

President's Challenge

The November President's Challenge topic was embellishment.



Kevin
Jacaranda Bowl - sides were textured,
painted, and sanded



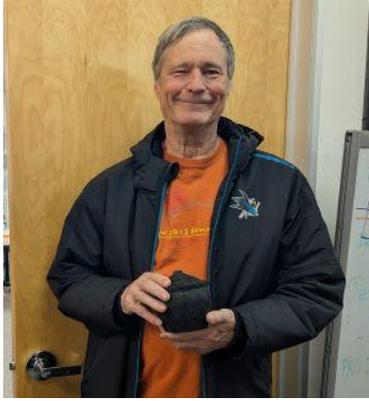
Felicia
Double lip bowl with burn embellishment;
and Opener for donation



Jerry
Walnut bowl with bead embellishment
Madrone burl with red flakes;
Kitchen items: scoopers
Live edge bowl and twig pot for donation



Dean
California modern design series



David
Celtic knots with many many wood burned
dots



Close up of David's work



Vic
Birch box with texture;
Oak plate for donation; and
Walnut cup with lapis inlay rim



Scott
Padauk ornament (using DIY chatter tool)

Show and Tell



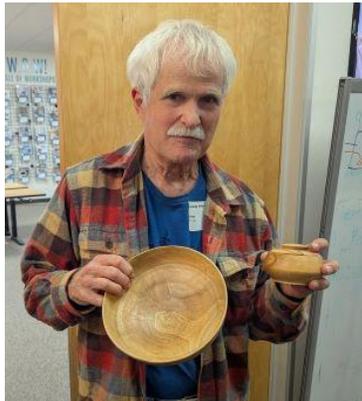
Jerry
Maple burl hollow form



Dylan
Open hollow form (bay laurel)



Dean
Spindle top



Sandy (new member)
Avocado bowl for avocados;
And box



Vic
Walnut bowl for walnuts



Angela
First hollow form!



Roman
Shares secret to carving
pumpkins



Russell
Native american flute
(cocobolo and maple)



Dan
Sycamore hollow form with
baby smooth interior

Mark Your Calendar!

| Date | Event |
|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Dec 4 | Holiday Dinner @ Tomato Thyme in San Jose <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Pres Challenge: Ornament or gift |
| Jan 7 | General Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Demo: Pen turning by Jerry Galli- Pres Challenge: Bead to trade- And final makeups for 2025 Iron Man |
| Jan 28 | Board Meeting |
| Feb 4 | General Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Presidents Challenge Awards- Demo: tbd- Pres Challenge: Pen or desk accessory |

2025 Ironman Tracker

2025 Iron Man Status

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|-----------------|------------|----------|-------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|--------------|------------|-----------------|-------|----------|-------------|------------------|
| Joel Bauman | ■ | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Bob Bley | | | | | | | | | ■ | ■ | | |
| Dan Boehmke | | | | | | | | | ■ | | | |
| Brad Bond | | | ■ | | | | | | | ■ | | |
| Don Bonnett | | | | ■ | | ■ | ■ | | | | | |
| Roman Chernikov | | | | | ■ | | | ■ | | | | |
| Edy Chung | ■ | ■ | | ■ | ■ | | | | | ■ | | |
| Calvin Breed | | | | | | | ■ | | | | | |
| Dean Caudle | | | | | | | ■ | | | | ■ | |
| James Craig | ■ | ■ | ■ | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | |
| Steve Dahout | ■ | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | | ■ | | |
| Tammy Estes | | | | | | | | | | ■ | | |
| Jerry Galli | ■ | ■ | ■ | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | |
| Angela Gunn | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | | ■ | | |
| Brian Havens | ■ | | ■ | | | | | | | | | |
| Mark Koenig | | | | ■ | | | | | | | | |
| Jim Koren | ■ | | ■ | | | | | | ■ | | | |
| Kevin Lee | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | |
| Dennis Lillis | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Gordon Levin | | | | | | | | ■ | | | | |
| Jim Loney | ■ | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Scott Lucas | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | |
| Ken Malloy | | | | | | | ■ | | | | | |
| Michael Maring | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| George Mathew | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | | ■ | | |
| Dylan McVoy | | ■ | | | | | | | | | | |
| Vic Mitnick | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | |
| Kat Napolitano | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | | |
| Jim Ostrowski | | | ■ | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | |
| Sang Park | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | | |
| Jessica Pineda | ■ | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Felicia Preston | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | |
| David Vannier | | | ■ | ■ | | | ■ | | ■ | | ■ | |
| Milton West | | | | | ■ | | | | | | | |
| John Whittier | ■ | | | | | | ■ | | | | | |
| | Name Badge | Weed Pot | Offset Bowl | Wig Stand or BoC Box | Twins, identical or fraternal | no sandpaper | Lidded Box | For the Kitchen | Inlay | Donation | Embellished | Ornament or Gift |

About Us

Silicon Valley Woodturners Inc. is a non-profit [501\(c\)\(3\)](#) organization dedicated to education and having fun. Every position in the organization is held by volunteers. The dues we collect and the donations we get go towards teaching the members the art and craft of wood turning.

We are a local chapter (in the Bay Area of California) of the [American Association of Woodturners \(AAW\)](#).

President: Kevin Lee

Vice President/Program Dir/ Pens For The Troops Coordinator: Jerry Galli

Treasurer: Tom Stutz

Secretary: Felicia Preston

Member at Large: Dennis Lillis

Newsletter:

Photos provided by Angela Gunn.

To submit announcements or articles for an upcoming newsletter, please contact [Sang Park](#). Newsletters will typically be published 2 weeks after each general meeting.

www.svwoodturners.com

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