



Chips & Chatter

Newsletter for the Silicon Valley Woodturners

June 2025

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President's Turn

While thinking of what to write for this month's President's Turn, I heard about the passing of David Ellsworth. David was often referred to as the father of modern woodturning. And after my initial sadness, I began reflecting on the impact he had on me, and in some ways on everyone reading this.

I had the opportunity to meet him, as did many of you, when he came to give a demo and teach a class for our club in 2019. His demo was entertaining, and as a relatively new turner I probably learned quite a bit. It was certainly the first time I saw someone literally throw a leg over the ways and 'ride' the lathe to get a better cutting angle.

But what really sticks with me is the enthusiasm he had at his hands-on instruction in the Saturday class I attended with him. He was eager to teach and almost excited about helping me figure out ways I could work with my disability, kind of like it was new and exciting for him. At one point he didn't like the gouge I was using, so he went and got his own personal bowl gouge, put it in my hands, and said "here try this one!" And of course there's that one bit of advice I think about almost every single time I turn a bowl - David was a big advocate of leaving a sharp little undercut, or shoulder just above the tennon to help with visualizing the bottom curve of your bowl.

I realize now that the enthusiasm I perceived in David was still present after over 45 years of woodturning education and tool making. With that much passion for the subject, it's no wonder he felt the need to co-found the American Association of Woodturning (AAW) back in 1986. And while a few wood turning "clubs", (maybe even ours) might have popped up without the AAW, it is clear that the existence of an umbrella organization has helped facilitate the propagation of woodturning education, knowledge, innovation, and artistry, through local chapters like ours, available all over the US and even Internationally. Without David's vision for accessible woodturning education I probably wouldn't have found such a club as this, with mentors, mentees, and monthly demos and challenges to enhance our knowledge and skills.

Speaking of monthly demos, (and the kind of sharing Ellsworth has inspired), a quick shout out to Don Bonnett for a great lidded box presentation this month. Extra credit points for bringing appropriately sized blanks, and handing them out to some of our newest turners who haven't had a chance to make a lidded box yet. Can't wait to see what they bring to next month's president's challenge. Thanks Don!

And many thanks to David Ellsworth, who somehow brought us all together.

Proud and happy to be a member of this club with you all,
Kevin

PS: For some of you who may not have known David Ellsworth, more about him can be found here: ellsworthlegacy.org
and here: svw-ellsworth-2019-10

Announcements

Volunteer opportunities:

- If you would like to help design or build a french cleat storage system for the Maker Nexus wood turning lathes, please contact Kevin Lee.
- If you would like to help maintain the Maker Nexus lathes (currently performed by Kat Napolitano before each SVW General Meeting), please contact Kevin or Kat

The club received a \$500 donation from Debbie Nelson in celebration of Tom Nelson, who was a member of the club.

More Pens for the Troops kits are available. See Jerry to participate.

Our next General Meeting will be on **July 9**, which is the **second** Wednesday of the month.

Events Recap

Meeting Demo - Lidded Boxes

Presented by Don Bonnett



Samples that Don brought in - clockwise from top

- Three cornered box (zebra wood)
- Toothpick box (maple)
- Lidded box (elk antler)
- Finial box (african blackwood inlay)
- Threaded lid box (black wood with enamel pattern from rose engine) made by Robert Sakalway(?)
- Three-axis off-center box (sweet gum eucalyptus)



For this demo, Don showed us how to make a lidded box, specifically a design that he uses for holding salt and pepper in the kitchen. A sample is shown on the left.

A common approach to lidded boxes is to make both the body and the lid from the same piece of wood. That is the approach Don demonstrated. But there are many forms of boxes, as illustrated by the samples above.

Instructions for turning a lidded box

1. Start by rounding the blank. For the demo, Don used a leftover piece of cherry.
2. Put a tenon on each end. Don used a skew custom angled to match his chuck.
3. Use a parting tool to separate the part for the lid. For this demo, Don made the lid fit inside the box (vs the lid fitting over the box)
4. Using the tenon, mount the body of the box onto the chuck. Hollow out the body.
 - a. In the demo, Don worked in endgrain and used a spindle gouge. He moved his gouge from the bottom while pulling it out.
 - b. Don used a scraper to thin the wall of the box and even the bottom.
 - c. Then he used a special tool to finish the wall. The tool is a box scraper with the sides beveled, or almost rounded (see image below). This allows the tool to fit into the curved wall of the box. In contrast, a thick scraper in a small radius box would rub against the side of the curvature..



- d. He used dividers or calipers to check that the walls are straight and even.
 - e. Finally, he added a slight inward bevel to the top of the opening.
5. **TIP** - For convenience, make the opening of the body wide enough to reverse chuck later on without having to change chucks.
 6. Mount the lid onto the chuck and form a different tenon to fit into the opening of the box, from step 4.
 - a. On the lid, Don marked the dimensions to fit the lid into the body - leaving the size slightly larger to allow for adjustments.
 - b. He used a parting tool to form a very shallow tenon matching the marking. Note: You are not making the full lid at this point, just matching the size to fit into the body.
 - c. If you go too far (the lid is too loose), move over slightly to make another attempt. You can keep making additional attempts as long as your lid is thick enough. In this image, Don made two attempts and looks like he has room to make two more attempts.



First attempt for lid tenon



Second attempt for lid tenon

7. Leaving the lid mounted on the chuck, use a paper towel to seat the body onto the lid, like a jam chuck. Then use a shearing cut to clean the lid and body together.



8. While top and bottom are together, go ahead and do some sanding.
9. Remove the body, leaving the lid. Clean up the bottom of the lid. Don opted to round the bottom, blending away his first tenon attempt.
10. Flip the lid in the chuck, using the tenon at the bottom of the lid. Remove the original tenon on the top of the lid. If you opt to add a knob or a finial to the lid, also drill a hole in the top of the lid before removing it from the chuck.
11. Reverse mount the body - expanding the chuck from the inside of the body - to remove the tenon at the bottom of the body. Optionally, you may leave the tenon (and clean it up) to use as a foot.
12. For this demo Don made a small knob (holly) for the lid.
 - a. Shape the main body of the knob or finial.
 - b. Create a tenon matching the size of the hole in the lid.
 - c. Slightly undercut the bottom of the knob/finial base so that it will sit flush with the top of the lid even if it is rounded. The image shows Don holding his parting tool at an angle to make the undercut.
 - d. Then separate the knob below the tenon. And insert into the lid to complete the box.
13. Finish!



How to Sharpen Your Chainsaw

This approach describes how to sharpen your chainsaw manually using a file. For specialized or powered tools, please refer to their respective instructions.

What you will need

- Correct sized chainsaw file (see instructions below for sizing)
- Vice clamp or something to secure the bar and chains while sharpening
- Wire brush to clean the chains

Preparation and figuring out file size

1. Start by removing the chain from your chainsaw.
2. Clean the chain by soaking 15 minutes with a cleaning solvent, WD-40 or kerosine and using a wire brush to remove sap or buildup. If using rags or cloth to wipe the chains, please [be sure to dispose of the rags properly](#) to avoid spontaneous fires.
3. You should now be able to clearly see the markings on the chain. Find the manufacturer and the chain ID number. In this image, the manufacturer is Oregon and the number is 21. It may be on the drive link, so the chain has to be removed from the bar to see it.



4. Use the manufacturer and chain number to determine the appropriate file size. In this case, for Oregon 21, a [3/16 inch file is recommended](#). This is to avoid a file that is either too large or too small, which would change the geometry of the chains. (Or just remember to save your chain packaging) NOTE: To calculate the file size from the pitch (distance between 3 rivets divided by 2) depends on the type of chain (standard height cutters or low-profile anti-kickback chains). Or there may be other manufacturer specific variation. So the only definitive way is to look up the chain ID number from the manufacturers' charts.
5. The file should have an even diameter and not be tapered.

Sharpening

6. Return the chain back to the bar with the bar secured in a vice clamp. Avoid clamping the chain itself.
7. Align the file in two ways:
 - a. The file should be parallel to the cutting edge. In case the cutting edge is not reliable, some manufacturers engrave a line on the top plate for reference.
 - b. The top of the file should sit 1/4 of its height above the top of the edge. Raise the file in the gullet until the cutter edge just starts to touch the file. The height of the file inside the cutter hook relative to the top plate of the cutter is what determines the included angle of the cutting edge. If the file is 50% above the top plate you will file the leading edge square to the work and it will not cut. If the file is too low, the leading edge will be extremely thin and will not stay sharp.



8. Make 3 light but even passes with the file - from the low corner to the high corner of the cutting edge. Try to repeat the same number of passes for each cutter.
9. Since cutter angles alternate, repeat by doing the set of cutters in one direction first then turn the chainsaw bar around to do the set of cutters facing the alternate direction. Use a permanent marker to avoid losing track and oversharpening.
10. Reassemble the chainsaw with the sharpened chains, mindful that the cutters are oriented correctly, and you are ready to saw wood!.

To improve consistency, some club members use a guide such as the Stihl Filing Guide, which manages the height and angle alignments.

Sang's Hungry Turner Tip: Costco sells pre-cooked ribs next to the rotisserie. The black plastic containers for the ribs are a good size to hold saw chains while cleaning.

Thanks to Steve Dahout for this information. He has several years experience sharpening chainsaws for Ace Hardware.

President's Challenge

The President's Challenge was to make a piece without sanding. (It was like trying to not scratch an itch)



Kevin - Mallet
(cherry)



Jerry - Unfinished
hollow form
(black walnut)



Steve - Skew practice
with beads and circular
intersections (poplar)
and eggs



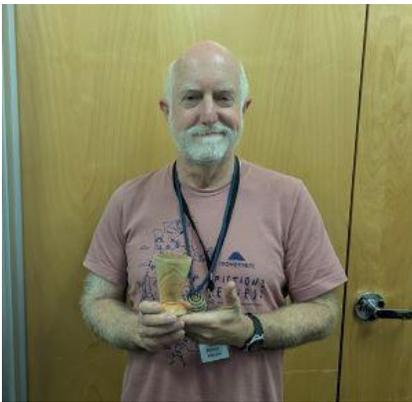
George - Two bowls sanded vs non-sanded (acacia)



Scott - D-way tool handle (hickory)



Sang - Two odd bowls with laser etched bottom (maple)



Vic - Straight edged goblet (mystery wood)



Jim - Pen (maple) and vase form (sycamore)



Angela - pine tree (pine) using skew to form texture



Kat - Practice form and finished bowl from Colin Mackenzie**



** Kat also brought several rough turned bowls found under Dennis' wood pile. These bowls were originally provided by Colin Mackenzie. Club members are invited to take a piece to finish!

Not shown: Don with Lidded Box

Show and Tell



Kevin - Two bowls (silk oak) showing different grain orientation - quartersawn (right) vs bowl orientation (left)



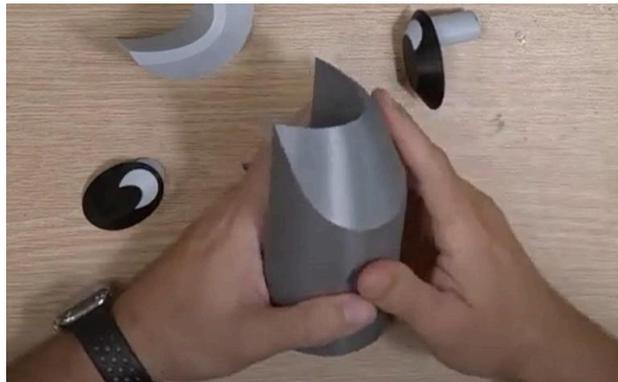
Jerry - Cored bowls (elm) for twins makeup



Vic - plater / UFO bowl (cedar)



Bob - Hollow form in two pieces (macassar ebony with opal inlay) with threaded finial



James - 3D printed instructional models of traditional grind gouge for Tina

Mark Your Calendar!

Date	Event
July 9	General Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Demo: Inlay by Bob Bley- Pres Challenge: Lidded Box- Reminder: this meeting date is on the SECOND Wednesday of July
July 19	Sawdust Session: TBD
July 30	Board Meeting
Aug 20	Picnic <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Time: 5pm- Pres Challenge: Something for the kitchen
Sep 3	General Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Demo: Laser by James Craig- Pres Challenge: Inlay
Sep 20	Pro Demo: Mark Gardner

2025 Ironman Tracker

2025 Iron Man Status

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Joel Bauman	■											
Brad Bond			■									
Don Bonnett				■		■	■					
Edy Chung	■	■		■								
James Craig	■	■	■		■							
Steve Dahout	■	■	■	■	■	■						
Jerry Galli	■	■	■		■	■						
Angela Gunn		■	■	■	■	■						
Brian Havens	■											
Mark Koenig				■								
Jim Koren	■		■	■								
Kevin Lee	■	■	■	■	■	■						
Dennis Lillis	■	■	■	■	■							
Jim Loney	■											
Scott Lucas				■	■	■						
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					

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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