

Saturday Program Meeting

Bowls & Vases – Lyman Frugia



Lyman started his presentation with a discussion about wood and specifically how to preserve 'found wood' like downed trees and trimmed limbs. It's very important

to seal the end-grain of the piece so that it will dry gradually and not crack. Lyman suggests using Gulfwax melted with a small propane torch. He cautions that if you wait too long to use the wood, it may start to decay. The first stages of decay is a condition referred to as 'spalting' which is characterized by black lines in the wood. It looks really good on light colored wood. Turning and finishing the piece will usually stop the spalting process.

Lyman discussed the various types of turning tools and what each is normally used for. He noted that different people use the tools for different applications – you should use whatever you feel comfortable with. The main tools are:

1. Roughing Gouges are usually used to smooth rough stock down to a round shape
2. Spindle Gouges are used to turn beads and coves on spindles
3. Bowl Gouges usually have a deep flute in the center and are designed to cut on the side of the cutting edge of the point when turning bowls
4. Skews are used to shear cut the smooth surfaces of spindles and can be used to make beads and coves
5. Parting tools are designed to 'part' or cut the waste parts off of the turning
6. Scrapers are used to make fine, decorative cuts on spindles or bowls – they come in many different shapes and designs

When you buy turning tools, always specify 'High Speed Steel' – they last much longer, sharpen better, and hold an edge longer. It's better to have a few really good tools than a lot of inexpensive tools. Also look for long and strong handles – they make the tool easier to control and more comfortable to use.



Lyman uses a grinder to establish the basic shape of his tool and then a combination disk/belt sander to sharpen the cutting edge. He uses a 'dressing board', that has several grits of sandpaper attached, to do the final honing of the edge. He uses 120 to 180 grit for the sharpening and as high as 400 grit to hone the edge. A sharp tool is a must for good turnings and safety!

The basic woodturning tools are:

1. Inside and Outside Calipers
2. Dividers
3. Ruler
4. Pencil
5. Turning tools: Roughing, Spindle and Bowl Gouges, round nose scraper and skew
6. Safety tools

Speaking of safety, Lyman ALWAYS wears a face shield and dust mask while he is turning. You never know when a piece of wood will break and fly off of the lathe. The dust mask will keep reactions to toxic woods to a minimum. Never take chances with safety!

Lyman stressed the A B C's of turning – Use the correct cutting **Angle** for the tool, put the **Blade** on the wood and then start **Cutting** the wood.

- A. Each tool design has it's own cutting angle. Get the tool at the proper **Angle** in relation to the wood
- B. Put the bevel of the **Blade** on the wood, (it's not cutting at this point)
- C. Bring the cutting edge into the work piece to start the **Cut**

Hold the tool firmly with the handle close to the body for maximum control.



Here, Lyman is finding the center of a spindle blank by placing the blank in a 'V' block and marking the ends, from corner to corner, with his band saw. After marking the ends, he drills the center to accept the tailstock and the drive spur. Accurately finding the center will make the turning easier and safer.



In this case, he's already used the roughing gouge to smooth the blank to a cylinder. Now he's using a skew to smooth out the basic spindle before he turns the beads and cove

decorations. When the blank is the correct diameter and smooth, use your ruler to mark the location of



the coves and beads. You can use your spindle gouge, scraper or skew (with some practice) to make these cuts. Lyman says "Don't try to make

SOMETHING at first, just practice making different cuts with different tools on different woods. The worst thing you can do is try



to make 'something' and fail - then you won't like turning at all." After you finish your cuts, sand with progressively finer grit sandpaper - usually 180 through 400.

To make a bowl, first cut your blank round with a band saw, find the center and attach the blank to a faceplate. You can attach it in several ways, but Lyman prefers to glue the blank to a waste block that



is attached to the faceplate with screws. He uses a lot of faceplates because he turns most of his bowls in steps - shaping, drying, sanding and finishing. If he leaves the

blank attached to the faceplate, it will stay centered and balanced when he puts it back on the lathe. Use your tailstock to help support the bowl during the initial rounding and shaping.



Next, establish the overall outside shape of the bowl. It's better to put some type of shape on the foot - it looks more natural when it's sitting

on a table. Lyman usually uses a roughing and a bowl gouge for this step. Take light to medium cuts from the edge of the bowl to the foot. Lyman suggests that you watch your progress on the 'horizon' of the bowl instead of the area where the chisel is cutting the wood. By doing that, you can see the results of your cut - not just a lot of sawdust.



Once you get the outside of the bowl shaped the way you want it, start turning the inside. You need to decide how thick you want the walls of the bowl to be. A lot of

people like extremely thin walls, but, if the bowl gets any rough treatment, there's a high probability that it will break. Thicker walls also allow for some



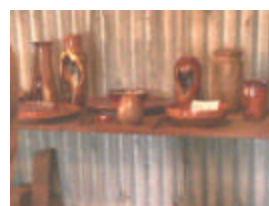
decorative treatments like inlays. Leave the tailstock in place as long as you can and continue turning the bowl until the wall thickness is the way you want it. Then remove the

tailstock, cut the center waste area away and finish turning the inside of the bowl. Now you're ready to



start sanding and finishing the bowl. You can hand sand with a folded piece of sandpaper. For safety's sake, always hand sand in the same direction as the lathe is

turning. Lyman prefers to power sand by using an electric drill with a 'PowerLock' attachment. By turning the sandpaper across the grain and with the travel of the wood, swirl marks and scratches quickly disappear and the sanding is very fast. Applying a small spot of wax and rubbing sawdust into it can repair small imperfections. If you use glue for the repair, it will be darker and more noticeable. When you finish sanding the bowl on the lathe, part it off the waste block, put it on a sanding mat and contour sand the bottom. You have to get all the scratches out if you plan to finish the bowl with clear lacquer. Small scratches will not show if you use an oil or wax finish. The type finish you use will depend on what the bowl is going to be used for. If it's just for display, you can use almost any finish, like: lacquer, tung oil, polyurethane or varnish. If you are actually going to use the bowl for liquids, stick with a 'salad bowl finish' that's FDA approved for food contact.



This is a display of some of Lyman's work, mostly mesquite bowls, vases and platters. If you have turning questions, call Lyman at **769-3604**.