

# Catoctin Area Turners



Next meeting: **MAY 13, 2010, 6:30 pm**  
Location: **Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve,**  
**Leesburg, VA**



*Volume 2 Issue 5 May 2010*

## Arbor Day Celebration

Although there were overcast skies with a slight touch of rain early on, a small but enthusiastic crowd of students, parents and grandparents along with tree lovers of all ages gathered on Saturday, 24 April in the beautiful front yard of

many nice comments about the display pieces that were available to view. We had a number of adults who kept returning to our booth asking many different questions about our craft and our organization.



George Carrigan



Jeter Benbow

It was certainly good to let the public see and understand our craft, but it was a particularly great time for each of us to fellowship and get to know each other better.

the Morven Park mansion in Leesburg. This was the 22nd annual Loudoun Arbor Day celebration.

I special thank you to George for providing his

tent, table, the use of his Jet mini lathe and most importantly his extension cord. Although our president, Tom Boley as unable to make this event his Delta lathe did. Thanks Tom!

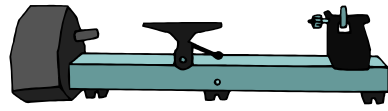


Mike Enloe

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# The Call of the Lathe



by Tom Boley

**W**ow. Has this weather been great or what! This is the kind of weather for which garage-turners live. Open the big door and enjoy the fresh air while making shavings. As the man said, "It just don't get no better 'n this!" This is mighty fine weather to be out with a chain saw collecting tree parts as well as standing at the lathe with a nice piece spinning there in front of you. I have had many hobbies in my time but I think that woodturning probably heads the list. I love it and know that you do, too. And we have so much good fortune, too, as we are all relatively close to Woodcraft, a great source of materials and tools, we belong to a great club with a host of skilled turners willing to share their time and talents to help us improve, and there are resources everywhere.

Since Spring will soon transition into Summer and this is the time we like to have our club picnic, let me ask if one of you would be interested in offering to coordinate the picnic for next month? As of this writing, we don't have a date yet as I have just now sent an e-mail to Ron Circe at Ban-shee Reeks asking for a date for us to have the picnic. We'll keep you informed through e-mail and the newsletter as the time draws closer. If you would like to take on this task for our club, please let me know soon so we can talk about it a bit.

You know, this hobby of ours is not just making round things from wood. Sure, we do that and along the way, pick up quite a bit of knowledge and considerable skill, but there is something more, sort of an intangible intrigue which comes with it. And that is the fact that we really don't know what we are going to make most of the time when we mount a piece of wood on the lathe. Oh sure, we may know that our intention is to make a bowl, but what kind of bowl. Sometimes I hear

woodturners say they have to wait for the wood to speak to them. Or, one of my own phrases, "I'll follow the wood." And that is all well and good. But ultimately, as we are proceeding, we need to make a series of decisions about what tool to use, where to cut, how deeply to cut, how to manipulate the tool so that it will do as we want, and so forth. Mechanical decisions, design decisions, time decisions, all impact on our efforts to produce a suitable outcome. And there are challenges along the way.

So many times, I will get a unique piece of wood and then let it sit around the shop for weeks or even months, just looking at it and trying to decide how best to bring out the shape, color, and texture which I want from that piece. I have one piece which was priced at \$450. I got it for less, but the price tag alone has intimidated me into doing nothing with it for six years. So, challenges, what to do and how to do it? We all see lots of other woodturnings as well as other shapes and figures all day long. Are we able to find something in that maelstrom of visual inputs which strikes our fancy which we can pursue into a finished piece? Probably. And in all of this mental and physical effort, we improve our product. Over time, with many trials and errors, we learn how to do it better. It is smoother, the design is better, the base looks good, the edge is just right, and we hear more compliments from friends. This is a type of personal development which challenges us to do even better next time. Don't fear the Call of the Lathe. Go out there with confidence, whether you have a vision or not. Many people have asked how you learn to be a woodturner and my answer is always, "By turning wood." For some, the doing is the goal. For others, the end product is the goal. Whichever way you approach it, turning wood will make you a better woodturner.

*Tom Boley*

# Upcoming Demonstrations

**May:** Dale Bright will be conducting this month's demonstration. He will be demonstrating The Monster Articulated Hollowing Rig and some other handheld hollowing tools. Most of the demo will be a discussion about hollowing and the different tools available. If his Monster Rig will fit on our 1442 club lathe, he will do a few cuts on an open form (so everyone can see what is happening). He will attempt to show the recommended cuts for an end grain turning versus a side grain turning. He will also talk about the John Jordan hollowing tools, the Kel McNaughton tools, and a small outrigger tool made by Jim Vogel of the Tidewater Turners.

The following links have been included to some of the tools he will be discussing but there are many others available.

[http://monster-lathe-tools.com/cart.php?target=product&product\\_id=262&category\\_id=63](http://monster-lathe-tools.com/cart.php?target=product&product_id=262&category_id=63)

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

[http://www.kelton.co.nz/hollower\\_sets-mini.html](http://www.kelton.co.nz/hollower_sets-mini.html)

**June:** Our CAT summer picnic. Location: TBD

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Debbie Woods - Silent Auction  
Mark Duffell - Raffle Tickets  
Chet Olson - Web site/Gallery Photos  
Brian Sullivan - Bulk Purchases  
Jeremy Baker - Arborist Extraordinaire  
Tom Boley - Newsletter Proofreader

# The Editor's Bench

by Ron Cote

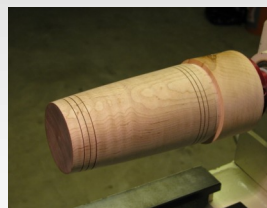
I would certainly have to agree with Tom Boley about our great springtime weather. I have spent a number of late afternoons and evenings during the past month with the garage and back door open. Let's hope that this springtime weather gets extended throughout May and into June.



My own personal turning efforts this month were focused on finishing a gardening tool set as a birthday gift for a friend of my wife. I believe that many may have experience these types of requests, also. The gift was well received, so much so, that she has yet to use them. She thought that they were much too beautiful to actually use. She is now waiting to show the pair to her grown daughter prior to using them. Meanwhile, she is considering using them as salad tossers. I'll see if I can borrow them back for this month's "Show and Tell". This was an easy project to do, as it was nothing more than spindle turning handles. I picked up the gardening tools from our local Woodcraft store.



My other project was to turn the mug holders challenge that Walt Bennett presented to us at the last meeting. Walt should cer-



tainly be commended in inspiring and challenging us with this project. Let's hope that everyone who picked up the mug inserts at the club meeting has had time to complete their project. I believe that I will complete mine on time.

I would also like to remind everyone that if you are possibly planning on going to the AAW symposium in Hartford, Connecticut, early and discounted registrations deadline is 15 May. The dates for this symposium are 17 thru 19 June. You might consider Hartford, as next year's national symposium will be held in St. Paul, Minnesota.

One final word for this month. I would certainly like to encourage others to participate and volunteer in some of our club efforts. Whether that would be participating in a public demonstration event, volunteering to spearhead a specific club event, such as our upcoming picnic, providing pictures for our monthly "Show and Tell", or possibly provide an article for our newsletter. I have been involved in a number of organizations through the years and probably most of you have also. Although the elected officers do take on additional tasks with their duties it should never be left to them to do everything. Successful clubs are often well supported by the internal participation of their members. CAT has had a very successful year and in order to continue this success we will all have to contribute in some small ways. So please, when your time permits, consider occasionally helping out.

*Ron*

# What I've Learned — Month Nine

Jeff Greene

**W**ow! What happen to April? I can't believe another month has pasted: it's scary how fast time is passing these days. I remember when a day felt like a life time and a week was an eternity, but that was the same time I was walking to school bare footed in the snow miles uphill both ways at least as far as my kids know. So, getting back to business the highlight of the month was the wood working show at the Dulles Expo center, (can you say kid in a candy store). I could have stayed there all weekend and likely would have if my 12 year old son would have stop nagging me. "Quite boy, those ten pieces of wood you're carrying can't be that heavy! "We did carry out our weight in wood and several other cool things. The most amazing thing was the band saw demo, did anyone see it? This guy was giving his pitch while running a piece of wood through the saw at blazing speed while not even looking. The next thing you know out pops a 3D reindeer! Are you kidding me! I'm waiting for the finger to fly into the crowd and he comes up with this perfect reindeer! I am not worthy, is all I could think of.

As news is starting to filter through my network that I'm in to turning, the wood is starting to pileup. I have Box Elder, Spalted Maple and White Oak, Bradford

Pear, Black Walnut and Cedar. I'm happy to share as long as you bring the finished piece to show and tell. Also some of the pieces are too big for my chainsaw. I'm MORE than happy to share with anyone that can help me cut up the bigger pieces.

As seems to be the trend for me in these articles I have yet again found a new favorite wood. Big Leaf Maple Burl is gorgeous! I picked up a piece at Woodcraft that had a huge bark fragment and crack running down the middle. At the register Lee gave me a funny look and I could tell he was seeing in his mind fragments of wood flying in every direction around my shop. To mine and I'm sure Lee's surprise, my vision of the bowl inside the wood was accurate. It just goes to show everything is a numbers game for every X number of failures you will achieve Y number of successes. Most people think excellence is the reduction of the ratio of X of Y and yes I would agree the ratio needs to be reasonable however, true Excellence is achieved not by reducing the ration of X of Y buy rather through continuing to push the limits of design.

See ya at the meeting.

*Jeff G....*

**Next meeting: May 13, 2010, 6:30 pm**  
**Location: Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve,**  
**Leesburg, VA**

# Food-Safer Finishes

PREP & FINISH

## FOOD-SAFER FINISHES

*Picking the right finish is more about watching the clock.*

By Joe Hurst-Wajszczuk



Thanks to writers and editors (like me), woodworkers worry about “food-safe” finishes more than poolside moms fret about kids snarfing down chicken salad sandwiches then diving into the deep end. To address this matter, let me start off by making one point loud and clear: **All drying oils and varnishes sold for finishing wood are non-toxic and food safe when fully cured.**

At this point, we could leave the next page blank for you to sketch your next project. However, there’s a second, often overlooked, point that you can’t ignore, when you give a well-crafted wood gift and watch the recipient’s nose crinkle the second they unwrap the box: **Some finishes take a lot longer than others to become fully cured and food safe.**

While trace amounts of finish or solvent don’t pose a serious health risk, the smell can ruin the taste of certain foods. This “smell-factor” is almost as important for non-food related projects such as pens, jewelry boxes, and blanket chests, where you don’t want any lingering solvent odor.

### **“When you can’t smell the finish, the finish is safe.”**

It’s a good rule of thumb, but not entirely accurate. What smells “safe” for one person may still stink to another. Also, heat can release solvent many weeks after the piece passed the initial sniff test. To be safe, allow extra curing time whenever possible, or select a faster-drying finish.

Finding a food-safe finish is easy; finding one that looks good and smells OK within a tight time frame (or won’t knock you out when working in a small basement shop) is trickier. The following information about oil and film finishes, and the accompanying chart, will help you find the right balance between ease of application, protection, good looks, and curing time. Use it all to pick the best finish for your next project.

### **Fine print and the FDA**

Want to know the facts? Oils, varnishes, and oil paints all contain metal driers in order to cure. These driers appear on an approved product list drafted by the FDA. **So-called “food-safe” finishes use the same driers as those that don’t put “food-safe” on the can.**

While most finishes have not been tested for food contact (that stamp requires pricey per-batch purity testing) because they all use materials from the same list, they’re just as safe for food contact as those that claim “food-safe” on the label. (Some of the “safest”

finishes aren’t even on the list. Mineral oil is sold in drug stores as a laxative. Wax and shellac are used to coat certain foods and medicines.)

### **Oils are thin, but defend from within**

The advantage to oil finishes is that they sink in. In addition to enhancing the look of the wood, oils provide decent water and stain protection as long as the surface receives regular care and feeding. Luckily, this is an easy wipe on/ wipe off affair.

Mineral oil doesn’t dry, but because it’s easy to apply and odorless, it’s a favorite for butcher-block countertops, cutting boards, and other projects finished the night before. Many woodworkers like mixing it with beeswax for additional stain-fighting resistance and to give surfaces an extra glow. Natural polymerizing, or drying oils, such as tung and walnut, perform better, but these natural products require about two weeks to cure. Until they do, you’ll need to put up with a distinctively nutty aroma.

Salad bowl finishes are the food-minded entry in the oil/varnish category. Like the rest, they provide some of the color enhancement afforded by oils, coupled with a protective varnish film.

PHOTOS: OMD MCCLUNG

While these thin film finishes cure quickly, you'll still need to provide some curing time. If you can't give it at least a week, you might want to consider mineral oil if the piece will see regular food contact, or shellac if you're looking for a nice shine.

## Films protect the perimeter

Film finishes provide better surface protection, but are more likely to chip, peel, or crack, allowing water and other potential stains to find a direct path to unprotected wood. For that reason, films might be fine for knife or

**TIP ALERT**

For blocking bacteria, your choice of wood is almost as important as your finish. To prevent microbes from getting a toehold, stick with tight-grained, ring-diffuse woods, such as maple, beech, or cherry.

breadboxes, but less suitable for cutting boards that might see knife action and then be rinsed in the sink.


Shellac may not seem as tough as some other finishes, but in our tests, fresh-mixed shellac provided slightly better moisture and stain resistance than mineral and tung oil. The only downside is its alcohol solubility. While perfect for drawers and furniture, shellac isn't recommended for use on

tabletops, for instance, where folks might forgo the coaster.

Lacquer outperforms shellac, but you'll need to fight the fumes during the finishing process. It's also prone to scratches, making it less suitable for pieces that might see heavier use.

In the film-finish arena, polyurethane is king. However, while fast-drying polys might feel dry in a few hours, curing takes longer. It can take weeks for the solvent to work through a multi-coat finish. So if you're planning to apply more than a light spray coat, apply this finish before starting on other last-minute gifts. 🍷

## FOOD-SAFE FINISH CHART



Finish	Mineral Oil and Wax	100% Tung Oil	Salad Bowl & Oil/Varnish Blends	Shellac	Lacquer	Polyurethane
Type	OIL	OIL	OIL/FILM	FILM	FILM	FILM
Application	Wipe on, buff off.	Wipe on, wipe off.	Wipe on, wipe off excess. Repeat.	Brush or spray.	Brush or spray.	Brush or spray.
Appearance	Low luster.	Low luster. Can appear blotchy on woods like maple and cherry.	Low luster. Can appear blotchy on some woods.	Hardly visible to super shiny.	Clear and shiny.	Amber and shiny.
Odor	Mineral oil is odorless. Beeswax smells nice.	Mildly nutty	Solventy (mineral spirits)	Quasi-sweet (alcohol)	Super-solventy (lacquer thinner)	Solventy (mineral spirits)
Curing Time	Never	30 days	2 weeks	3 days	3-5 days	30 days
Smell the Finish?	Trace wax scent remains.	1-2 weeks*	1-2 weeks*	Less than 1 week	Less than 1 week	2 weeks*
Water Resistance	Good (when freshly applied)	Good	Very good (depends on film thickness)	Fair (Dewaxed and fresh flakes work best.)	Very good	Excellent
Alcohol Resistance (Red wine, 2 hours of contact)	Good (some staining)	Good (some staining)	Very good (no staining)	Luster lost, but no staining (Don't expect the same success with vodka.)	Very good	Excellent
Notes	Quick and easy, but needs regular renewal.	Polymerizing (curing) oil. Some film build-up. Needs regular renewal.	Oil adds color while film provides protection. Film may be built up for added sheen.	Good, but not tough enough for regular food contact.	Tougher than shellac, but can chip and is easy to scratch.	Top-ranking protection but also longest curing time.

\*Finished items such as plates, trays, and spatulas may release solvent from beneath the finish when exposed to high heat.

We appreciate and thank "Woodcraft Magazine's" Editor-in-Chief, Jim Harrold's permission for publishing the above article on "Food-Safe Finishes".

# Advice to The Wise

Safety Tip from Vol 16, Issue 2 of the American Woodturner

Ask yourself the following question

**Are you wearing the appropriate clothing when turning?**



A 2001 incident that happened at the JC Campbell Folk School. On the next to last day of class a person was turning a piece of wood. The wood broke and he reached to grab it with his left hand. His long sleeve shirt got caught in the spur center of the lathe. The lathe and his movement to free himself ripped his shirt as shown in the photograph. Since he was wearing an old shirt, he only received a small superficial cut. He was very lucky that he was not injured more. I believe that this picture clearly illustrates the importance of wearing the appropriate clothing while turning.

# Advice from The Arborist

Jeremy Baker

## Don't Do This At Home

Like all of you, I love wood-turning! I particularly enjoy quick little projects that I can knock out in an hour or two as the feeling of satisfaction is immense for me. Lately, I've been into creating small natural-edged bowls from branches of trees that my company has removed. Take for example this photo of a small black locust bowl that I created a few weeks ago. While working on this bowl, I remembered all of the things that the wood, creating a tenon, then roughing and finishing the reverse and finish the exterior



I love about turning bowls – prepping roughing the exterior, chucking up and interior, creating a jam chuck so I can of the bowl...I could go on, but I won't.

At this point in the process. I've got the tail with the jam chuck on the opposite that is left where the tail stock

as possible so that I have less hand trimming and sanding to perform. I hate that part! I know what you're all thinking – that knuckle-head's gonna take too much material and blow out the bottom when there's no more wood for the tailstock to be properly supported. Well, you're wrong! This time, anyway, maybe there will be another story... I took it down perfectly and left only a small piece to trim away maybe 1/2" in diameter and 1/2" in length.

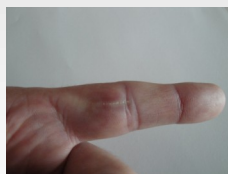
ject, I recalled my least favorite part of stock slid up to keep the bowl in place site side. I carefully work on the nubbin rests. I want to get as much of it gone

I go to the work bench and get to work with my freshly sharpened 1/2" chisel, working slowly so as to not tear away any of the fibers and ruin all of my work. About two minutes into the process, I can tell that I'm close to parting the bulk of the material off so I grip the bowl a little tighter in my left hand to hold it still – after all, I don't want to gouge the bottom of this beautiful bowl with a flat chisel. In the process of readjusting my grip on the bowl, I inadvertently slipped my pointer finger on my left hand up over the bevel of the inverted bowl. Before I knew it, the material parted off and the chisel promptly entered my now out of place finger. Did I mention that I wasn't wearing gloves? So now I run inside with blood gushing out of the 1" long hole in my finger that extends through all of the muscle and clear down to the bone. My wife gives me one of those "OK stupid, what did you do?" looks for half a second before becoming the dotting nurse. Since I hate doctors, we used superglue and butterfly bandages to close it up. Two weeks later, the wound is completely closed, but I still don't have full mobility back.



What should I have done differently? Gloves would have been a good idea! Keeping all of my body parts out of the potential path of travel for the chisel also would have been a good idea. Clamping the bowl to keep my left hand completely out the picture also seems smart. What else do you all think could have been done differently? Bring your ideas to the next meeting and we'll have a quick discussion.

Here is an update on my finger.



# March Meeting Minutes

by Bob Parson

At the April 8, 2010 CAT business meeting the club discussed sharing basic information about our club members with one another via a shared membership roster. We decided to pursue providing this information with the understanding that club members will respect the privacy of one another. Anyone wishing to be excluded from the member access roster can contact a club office and we will exclude his or her contact information from the roster.



Our demonstration for the meeting was a step-by-step demonstration of platter-making, presented by Tom Boley. Thank you, Tom, for your patient and clear instruction.

*Bob Parson*

# Mentoring Program

by Terry Lund

We have established a mentoring program for CAT members, so Terry Lund is looking for volunteers to be mentors as well as requests from any of our members who would like to be paired up with a mentor in one of the following areas of interest for turning skills, or for general mentoring activity. Terry will have sign-up forms for those who want to be a mentor as well as for those who would like to be matched up with an assigned mentor at the next meeting on May 13. If you are interested in either opportunity but will not be at the meeting, please contact him via email at [terry.lund@gmail.com](mailto:terry.lund@gmail.com) or call him on his cell phone 585-455-2517. Please include your name, address, phone number, email address, and indicate your level of experience as Beginner, Intermediate, or Experienced when requesting a mentor.

We will try to match interested individuals with a mentor who lives “reasonably close” whenever possible, and if we get enough mentors to sign up, we will also try to match based on one of the following areas of interest, or feel free to mention another area of interest.

## Member Discounts

# Woodcraft of Leesburg



Leesburg Plaza

512 E. Market

Leesburg, VA 20176

Phone: 703-737-7880

Fax: 703-737-6166

[Leesburg@woodcraft.com](mailto:Leesburg@woodcraft.com)

**Store Hours:** Sun: 9 AM— 5 PM Thr: 9 AM— 9 PM  
Mon: 9 AM—9 PM Fri: 9 AM— 9 PM  
Tue: 9 AM— 9 PM Sat: 9 AM- - 6 PM  
Wed: 9 AM— 9 PM

Show your CAT membership card and get a 10% DISCOUNT! Valid Thursday thru Sunday of each monthly meeting week.

## Dunlap Woodcrafts

Is located very near the Dulles Expo Center at  
14600F Flint Lee Rd  
Chantilly, VA 20151  
Tel (703) 631-5147 Fax. (703) 631-7103

I talked to Mr. Dunlap on 28 April and he said that a discount is available to our members. The offer went something like this.

Purchase \$100 and receive a 10% discount.

Purchase \$250 and receive an additional discount.

I've been trying to get more specific information but believe that he has been attending a gun stock show. I suggest you call for more information prior to going down. I will update everyone as soon as I know. For those of you who may not know, Dunlap Woodcrafts sells wood only. <http://www.dunlapwoodcrafts.com/>

# AAW Tidbits

There are some very interesting things that are occurring if you are a member of the American Association of Woodturners (AAW). I think that most of you are aware that we, Catocin Area Turners (CAT), are a member chapter of the AAW, and we would certainly encourage everyone who belongs to CAT to join the AAW. Here are some upgraded benefits that are now available to the membership. Check out the AAW site for yourselves at <http://www.woodturner.org/>

- Past *American Woodturners* issues now available on the web
- Monthly membership drawings
- Year End Lathe Drawing
- Best Practice on Website
- Electronic Membership
- Vendor and Supporters of AAW Discounts

## Symposiums

[2010 American Association of Woodturners \(AAW\)](#): June 18 - 20

Hartford, CT

<http://www.woodturner.org/sym/sym2010/>

The first Deadline for **early registration is 15 May**; Cost is \$250.

After 15 May, \$290

After 14 June, \$330

### [2010 Virginia Symposium](#)

The nine woodturning clubs in Virginia are collaborating once again to produce the fourth biannual Virginia Woodturning Symposium the weekend of 23 and 24 October 2010 in Fishersville, VA, the same location as in 2008. The Virginia Woodturning, Inc, web site at <http://www.virginiawoodturners.com/> has much more information and also has a list of the motels which will offer discounts for the symposium. Making an early reservation will help VWI convince more vendors that attending and setting up at our symposium would be worthwhile. The more attendees we have, the more vendors will be willing to come. This will very much be a hands-on symposium. Save some money by sharing a motel room with a fellow woodturner.

# Odds and Ends

## Photographer Still Needed

We are still in need for someone to be able to take photos at our club meetings, especially for our "Show and Tell". Jeff Greene, our club's Operations Officer, has graciously volunteered for the additional duty until someone else volunteers. So please, get involved and you too could be the next newsletter editor, I mean photographer. Isn't that right Tom??



## Newsletter Submissions

I would like to encourage everyone to submit an article to the newsletter. Some subjects that could be submitted that I would think would have in interest to all, would be such things as reviewing a good turning book or DVD. Maybe describing your own experience in turning a specific project. How about identifying a specific type of tree and the usefulness of that wood. Another article could be on your experience with attending a woodturning class such as Campbell. I may not immediately add it into the newsletter of the same month that you submit it, but it will surely find its way in shortly. Even if your submission is only a one time affair, that is ok. Help us all out.

## CAT Web Site

[www.catoinareturners.org](http://www.catoinareturners.org)

Remember to check our CAT web site from time to time for new information and the schedule of demonstrations for our meetings. Chet Olson has moved to Florida but is still our web master, for which we are very grateful. He has done a great job of getting it up and running and it is now a source of a lot of information about our activities.

## Newsletter Contributions

A special thanks has to go out again this month to Jeremy Baker for his article on "Don't Do This At Home".

I would also be remiss in not thanking our elected officer for their monthly submissions. Thanks guys!

# Have Fun Turning