

Turning in the Age of Corona...Episode #30

March 25, 2021

Santa Cruz Woodturners

Turning Bowls from Tragedy, Turning Tool Handles, and
A polysyllabic review of President's Challenge for May

Spring is here, and the anguish of August, 2020, has dissipated just a little bit. Huge winds, relentless lightning, and merciless fires destroyed homes, killed so many trees, and blackened the sky. Our club members living in the mountains, San Lorenzo Valley, and Scotts Valley were uprooted and plunged into grim uncertainty.

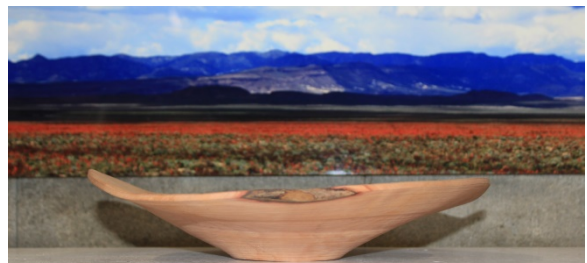
Through adversity, we had blessings to count. None of our members lost a home, a pet...or worse. It got close, though. The fire consumed the retaining walls and melted the Trex steps on **John Wells'** jewel box home in Boulder Creek...but left all those flammable dovetails, balusters, boxes, and bowls intact. The magic shop also survived.

In the aftermath, John shared cords and cords of madrone, tan oak, and fir, much of it destined to reappear as Show and Tell when we get back to in person meetings.



Madrone blanks from John's Miracle Forest

We'll have to wait and see what John's madrone has in mind for mischief warping for these madrone platter blanks...but if this is an indication...



6mm single-turned "dynamic" madrone bowl



This is another piece from that bountiful madrone pile, rough turned in January by **Dan Aldridge**. It looks quartersawn, and it was roughed out promptly with uniform wall thickness...both key strategies with dynamic shrinkers! This one has a good chance of making it to the table without splitting. That raspberry *frappé* color is real!

John turned one to <5 mm thick, and it warped as predicted into an exotic flower petal. However, because of the thin wall and resulting uniform drying, it did not split. You can see that on his kitchen table if you go back to TITAOC #28, page 4!

Link: [Microsoft Word - Turning in the Age of Corona v 28.docx \(scwoodturners.org\)](#)

Our intrepid Secretary, **Dwain Christensen**, turned one rough August memory into a very smooth bowl. A mature cedar tree blew down in his yard in the storm that sparked the CZU fires. Seven months later, a piece of that tree met Dwain's lathe, and this happened.



And then this...



Dwain says it was fun to turn, but really soft, demanding the sharpest possible edge on the gouge to avoid tearout. (Looks like you succeeded, Dwain!)

Handles' Messiah

Back in 2020, we did a remote **President's Challenge for Tool Handles**, which displayed some remarkable ingenuity from our club members. Picking up on that lead, we'll be offering our **June, 2021, demo as an illustrated, step by step narrative by John Wells for turning handles of several different kinds of tools.** Don't miss it!

As Spring, 2021, unfolds, and we all get our shots, we can start talking to our neighbors again. If you want to make friends, consider re-handling some beloved but tired, multigenerational garden tools for your neighbors. Learn how to choose the wood, turn the stock, drill the holes, and secure the ferrules! (Hey, maybe they'd like a few bales of choice, fragrant, curly mulch, too!)



Example above: My backpacking companion for 40 years, Robin Stockwell, spun a successful career as a succulent grower and proprietor of *Succulent Gardens* in Carmel and Moss Landing. He also authored the definitive text on California Succulents for *Sunset Magazine* in 2017. Now comfortably retired, Robin spends almost every day playing in the dirt...just like he did 70+ years ago. The business ends of his tools never have a chance to rust, but the splitting handles of these favorite weeding tools are about to return to nature. Just wait until you see what they look like with new, straight grain teak handles and shiny brass ferrules...stay tuned!

And this massive, antique slick deserves a helping hand-le, too.



President's Challenge, A preview for May, 2021

Our **April Challenge**, as you know, of course, is to submit up to 3 photo images for inclusion in our new Members' Gallery on www.scwoodturners.org Get clickin'!

For **May**, we'll get right back to the machine where we all started...the lathe.

Many of our most beloved trees and wood have blissfully short names—like Ash, Oak, Pine, Birch, Teak, Beech, and Yew too. That's convenient! For the May President's Challenge, however, we want to see **Turned projects made from Four-Syllable trees.**

That might include Mahogany, Cocobolo, or to be just a snarky, Podocarpus. Ah, but there are more out there. The catch—we want the common names, not the Latin scientific names, because that makes it too easy to hit the 4 syllables.



This is Manzanita burl. The wood itself is very hard, but the name easily qualifies, right?

While you're thinking about different woods, do you have a birthday coming up? If so, here's a seed to plant for your admirers' guidance as they try to find the perfect gift.

The Woodbook. Romeyn Beck Hough, the author of the first edition 130 years ago, catalogued wood samples from hundreds of North American Trees for the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, in London. This "book" was a compendium of veneers of all these woods! The contemporary version contains 3 color plates (transverse, radial, and tangential sections) from each of 354 different species of American Woods. They are organized by genus, and the variety (say pine or beech or oak) by itself is educational. Each description is presented in English, German, and French. It's a pure joy, available in usual places. Prices vary, probably most often in \$45-50 range. –WS

OK, that's it for Episode #30 for Turning in the Age of Corona. We've shared lots of creativity in a year when it would have been tempting to just get grumpy. Can't waste time when the lathe calls...or the tree falls.

Enjoy the blossoming plums, the unfurling fiddleheads, the bursting buds, the fluttering poppies, and the fresh smells wafting all around us. Full moon Sunday, too! Get your shots so we can meet in person and have some fun this summer! We're working on that!

Wells Shoemaker

President, Santa Cruz Woodturners



Chinese Elm (not enough syllables)



Yes, Yew Can Do It