

Turning in the Age of Corona

Episode #40: Sunshine on a Cloudy Day: New Work, New Horizons

August 22, 2021

Santa Cruz Woodturners

The gloom of the first, scary wave of COVID seemed to be dissipating this Spring, as immunizations virtually eliminated the worst complication of the viral infection: Premature death. As rates of infection plummeted, we dared to think the sun was going to pop through the clouds.

Yes, it did, but it didn't last long. Symbolically, the sun penetrated the marine layer to illuminate our first in-person Show and Tell in a year at **Sue Broadston's** orchard. Your SCW board members started planning a series of in-person demonstrations and pondered public exposures to educate and intrigue our community. Not so fast.

We're back to solitude in our shops and not-so aerobic conditioning in front of illuminated screens. Well, half of that isn't so bad. Let's look at what some of our members have been doing while we grapple with the Greek alphabet, the Delta wave, smoky skies, and relentless screechy rhetoric.



Dennis Stewart took home some of **Dan Aldridge's** stash of Box Elder a year ago and made this elegant platter ...illustrating that elusive "dusty rose" pink hue typical of that tree. This one features symmetrical stripes formed by central pigmented extractives and peripheral pale sap wood.

Platters make great palettes for grain patterns. In Dennis' home, it's on the wall to view every day.

*Platter, Platter, on the wall
Who's the fairest of us all?*

Your elders, of course

Platters await...hopefully for our next in person demo, scheduled for October 23...with the obvious asterisk that we may or may not be able to gather two months from now.



Platters are one of the prized pursuits of turners.

They use relatively thin blanks
...1½ - 2 ½ " thick.

A single log 12-20" diameter can yield
multiple platters.



Platters are also a splendid outlet for glue-ups of short scraps of wood that otherwise choke the aisles of your shop.

Make symmetrical or random patterns of mixed woods...or create a large diameter blank from multiple narrow boards of the same species. Use short construction discards of clear Doug Fir or redwood.

Possibilities are endless...and the cost is generally trivial.

While plattery might get you to places where candor could be unwelcome, let's come back to our club's sweet spot: Bowls! We've been busy.



Dwain Christensen, shallow bowl from Bay Laurel stump burl

Back in the early Spring, **Dwain Christensen** heard the siren song of a chain saw while shopping in Felton. A mature Bay Laurel tree was coming down. Dwain scored a nice sized blank which he adored...and cored.

It was so pretty he went back, but all that remained was a 4' diameter stump protruding 2-3' above ground. For those who haven't discovered it, stumps can be the richest source of gaudy grain in the whole tree. Dwain and his trusty apprentice filled two pickup beds with aromatic bay burl. He shared the above photos of one of those bowls.



This is one of mine from that same harvest.

16" diameter

WS



Raf Strudley, beyond humbly saving our club's bacon with his successful pursuit of 501.c.3 nonprofit status last year, has a sweet touch for form and proportion.

In the theme of fruit woods for the August President's Challenge, Raf made this Plum wood bowl.



Speaking of the August President's Challenge, congratulations to **Dan Aldridge** for the winning entry Saturday. He turned this bowl from Bradford Pear, salvaged from a pile queued up for the chipper by municipal tree workers in Gilroy.



Back in February, our virtual demo described “How to photograph your turnings so that they look as cool as they do in your hands.” It’s on our website: Communications: Educational [photographing_your_work_demo_2-20-2021_comp.pdf \(scwoodturners.org\)](https://www.scwoodturners.org/photographing_your_work_demo_2-20-2021_comp.pdf)

Led by Dwain and the same apprentice, we emphasized composition with de-cluttering, avoidance of glare as well as sharp shadows, artful but not jarring contrasts, crisp focus, several views to show different angles...all designed to draw attention to the turning.

Dan, you get an A for the turning, an A for the photography, and at least a couple more A’s for providing our club with more blanks than we can possibly turn in a year!

Dan, of course, is also a jig maker, problem solver, and experimenter. Following yet another educational offering by our club ¹, Dan naturally took a run at using pigmented epoxies and inlays with powders.

The trouble with those powders is that they come in plastic baggies or wide mouth jars that just don't pour accurately. Aside from the nuisance, that waste can be expensive, especially crushed semi-precious stone and brass or copper filings. Some of us use popsicle sticks or itty bitty plastic spoons, but Dan used his imagination and a wee family gardening tool.



Dan explains that a **widger** is a seedling transplanting device, made of stainless steel. It can scoop up the amount of powder or pigment you want...and then can “aim” it to fill a void with minimal scatter. Easy to return excess to original container, too.

I had thought of using the lower half of a ballpoint pen barrel, funneling in the powder, and then tap-tapping it to release powder through the little hole at the end, but I wound up wasting just as much filling the pen barrel as I did with a spoon. Dan solved that.

¹ [Microsoft Word - Resinators 4-21 compress photo.docx \(scwoodturners.org\)](#)

No SCW newsletter would be complete without **Maarten Meerman's** Miniature Marvels just to tinker with our sense of scale. For example, he has turned goblets smaller than the pillars of the Lincoln Monument...on a penny.



This is Maarten's Woodturner's Alphabet—starting with Apple, going through Lemon Squeezer, Mallet, and Ukulele to Zen rake. The rack is 24" wide.



Here we have Pinocchio and Queen



OK, this is not a miniature, and it's not made of wood, but I needed to fill a gap at the bottom of the page. Sevier Lake in Western Utah at the edge of some serious weather. WS

Bill Hopkins entered the President's Challenge with the theme of "Fruit" with the only berry wood in the contest. There's practically nothing he won't mount on his lathe.



Bill's Backyard Blueberry root...and twig vase with the trophozoite fruit



Jim Baker turned this olive server bowl out of olive wood, of course.

I asked how he turned those oval green things, and he replied that wasn't so hard.

The tricky part was turning the lid on the jar.

The **President's Challenge for September**, to nobody's great surprise after Glenn Lucas delivered a remarkable remote demo on making a lidded bowl, will be...fanfare...

Make a Lidded Bowl!



Bill Hopkins, Lidded Bowl, August, 2021. Black walnut



John Wells, Lidded bowls

OK, that's it for #40. I never imagined the Age of Corona would demand 40 Turning missives, but let's hope we don't need 50!

Wells

Wells Shoemaker

President, SCW 2020-21

www.scwoodturners.com

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Dangerous particles in the air. Please wear a mask.



Roy Holmberg's display at the recent Bonny Doon art tour before the re-shutdown. Note Roy's turned redwood burl and forged sculptural gingko leaves mixed media creation (lower left). AAW national symposium juried selection, July, 2021.

Janis Joplin Mantra: *Get it while you can*
We'll be back to the public sometime.