

Turning in the Age of Corona Episode #46

Solstice Edition, Late December, 2021

Santa Cruz Woodturners

Turning a Page and Tilting back toward the Light



Turners love curves...in every medium. Eureka Dunes on the winter solstice

This “solstice edition” will be the last of this pandemic-defiant series of Santa Cruz Woodturners newsletters, virtual show and tell displays, educational offerings, interviews, panel discussions, and photographs that took us through tough months. This one will feature a retrospective on some of the high points of this difficult stretch.

I’ll take the liberty to make a few more personal notes than usual. It has been a tremendous privilege to serve as club President in 2020 and 2021...and a pure joy to pass the gavel to Morgan Taylor’s capable hands and imaginative brain.

Most important of all, all of us weathered the hazards of COVID, and we’re all present to greet 2022. Marianne has escaped from her quarantine confinement in Denmark, and she’s back at the lathe in the mountains with Blair. Personally, my spirits are bounding, although I’m more accurately limping to the end of the year. Like a marathon...form is not important... just get across that line!

We charged boldly into 2020...remember the expectations for the “*Year of Perfect Vision?*” So soon afterwards, we struggled with something none of us saw coming. Our club strode through nicely...expanding our membership by about ten new turners, solidifying our treasury with our new non-profit status, and learning how to teach and share on Zoom. I’m not convinced about the virtues of virtual donuts, however.

We relished the remote teaching of some our local masters and elite instructors from Ireland, Upper New York State, Provo, Vancouver, East Bay, and the Sierra Foothills. Our scrapers started gouging, and our bowlers started spindling. We refined our chain sawing, and many of us started carving. Our friendships expanded and gelled.

Our new website (www.scwoodturners.org) featured an abundance of educational material, as well as a new Member Gallery open to all of us. More on that p 15!

Our **monthly President's Challenge**, mostly "virtual," featured two rising star member-contestants who, between them, captured 7 of the awards!



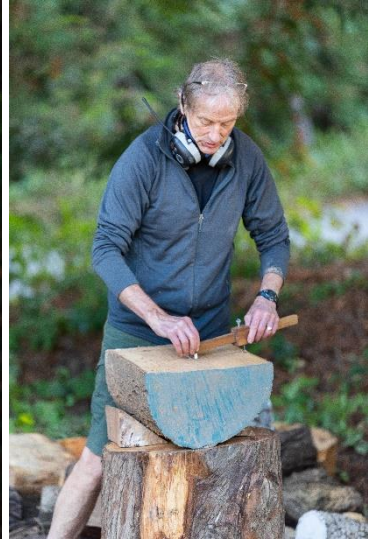
Tim Johnson's segmented bowl and "Mutt and Jeff" lace bobbins



Bill Hopkins' blueberry root weed pot and apple burl lidded bowl & finial

I thought I'd share some of my favorite memories of the year

Best! Chainsaw Derby at Sue Broadston's Orchard, September, 2020. We found a crease in the COVID clampdown in September, 2020, donned masks, and gathered outside to watch our club experts demonstrate safety, techniques, shortcuts, and workarounds to prepare lathe-ready blanks from downed wood...and "read the logs."



Clockwise from upper left: Sue Broadston, Raf Strudley, John Wells, Dan Aldridge, and Roy Holmberg



Roy, Spirit of Santa Cruz



Dan will kneel to no tyrant, but he'll follow that Stihl to the ground.

Links: illustrated content, **Dwain Christensen's** photoblog, and some follow up content on our website:

www.scwoodturners.org/uploads/4/8/2/3/4823810/outline_for_chainsaw_demo_sept_19_final_9-18-2020_update_for_website_6-21.pdf

[Microsoft Word - Chain Saw Saturday photoblog 9-19-2020 comp.docx \(scwoodturners.org\)](#)

[Microsoft Word - Chain Saw Afterthoughts for the Equinox 9-21-2020.docx \(scwoodturners.org\)](#)

Segue from the Chainsaw → Blanks R Us! (That's what we do)

A 4x8x8" ash turning blank with conventional figure from a prominent online vendor lists for \$27. It's wrapped in plastic and delivered for another \$10. For many of our members, that's a pretty small bowl from not-necessarily the most exotic hardwood.

A one year membership in Santa Cruz Woodturners costs \$50. There's an unwritten benefit of that affiliation! A member can score blanks of local wood that would cost hundreds of dollars...costing time and some fuel, but that's all. You do the arithmetic.



Dan's recent avocado stash...and Wells' three-truckload Black Acacia effort...all shared with the club



Monterey Cypress



Tan Oak



Madrone



Cores of local Albizzia (mimosa), sycamore, and madrone...bucked, slabbed, roughed, and cored. Cost? Sweat equity, chainsaw fuel, files, serious gloves, and some time.

Blanks are the currency of turners. Some of us have sore backs, more than a few have opted for knee and hip replacements, and then there are the pesky heart travails, a cancer here and there, and failing vision. We can still turn despite those impediments...but we need the wood no matter what! Our club delivers.

Bill Arnold made friends with the owner of a local tree service...and more important... with the guys who work the yard. Bill rescued loads of all sorts of wood that otherwise would have headed to the chipper or the firewood vendor. Oak, eucalyptus, pepper wood, magnolia, alder, willow, bay, cypress, ornamentals with unpronounceable names...probably not the whole list. Bill has a big honkin' Oneway lathe, but most of that bounty found its way to the shops of our members.

Earl Wynn builds structures for a living. That work occasionally involves dropping a mature tree which was growing in the wrong place. Back when we could park inside the gates at Mission Hill, Earl loaded his truck with rounds of madrone, black locust, and oak...and our members took it all home. The results are pictured throughout this paper!

Roy Holmberg's home in Bonny Doon survived the fires, but close scrutiny revealed bad news for a huge tan oak, some redwoods, and other trees. Chainsaws and front end loaders did their thing, and a lot of that wood found its way to the rest of us.

Bill Hopkins lives close to a burn area, but Bill also has a keen eye for any downed wood just happening to be close to a road. Those roadside attractions wind up in his truck! Bill also befriended a tree service and a mill! Some goes to his shop...but plenty ends up in the shops of others, too.

Larry Dubia shared loads of big leaf maple, oak, holly, cedar, and redwood...and kept a weather eye to any pending tree work.

Linda Anderson works as a volunteer at the Arboretum, and let's just say that *Linda knows her trees*. Some of those trees "aren't from around here"...Banksia pods, for example. Some of us learned to turn Banksia pods!

Sue Broadston, one of our founding turners, shared bay, redwood, and buckeye... along with sharing her orchard, shop, and sunshine...and sharing her love for the lathe with her physics students at Cabrillo. Thanks, Sue!

Dan Aldridge soared from casual interest to our most prolific logger as soon as he discovered the joys of blank making. Truckloads of walnut, ash, birch, oak, cypress, and box elder made it from Aromas to the shops of dozens of our members.

John Wells, needless to say, shares everything. In the aftermath of the CZU fires, lots of trees came down in Boulder Creek...and we wound up with truckloads of oak, madrone, tan oak, Doug fir, and redwood. The downed sycamore at Mission Hill? John arranged for us to cut it into blanks for a dozen members in an after-meeting frenzy.

Join us, learn to sharpen your chains, and never buy another piece of wood. It's good exercise, too, and the very best of company!

Just one thing...when it's down, you need to pounce. It won't stay there long!



This is where we cut...over and over...deleted center pith goes for BTU's



Used to be my driveway



Dan's bench—sealed oak platter blanks

Highlights! Member Generated Virtual Demos: A year ago, **Roy Holmberg** delivered a narrated “graphic novel” style virtual demo of the step by step creation of his signature mixed media steel belted bowl: *Hard Rock Maple and Red Hot Steel*. *Link:*

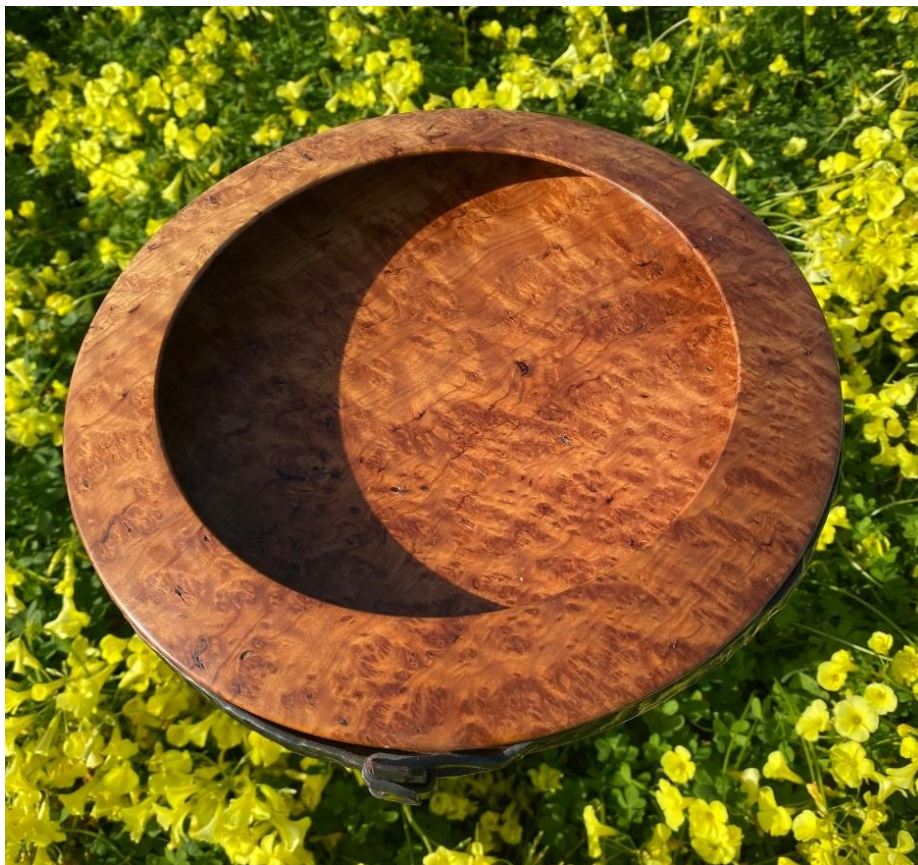
www.scwoodturners.org/uploads/4/8/2/3/4823810/roy_demo_12-20_multimedia_bowl_compress.pdf



Roy has done this before...but then in 2021, he took it another step. His copper belted sculpture from fire damaged redwood burl was honored as one of the AAW's 18 jury selections for the national symposium...out of thousands of exhibition submissions ...see the next page...and page 24!



Congratulations, Roy! Nice work...and good show to become our 2022 Vice President!



Roy's form looks good in the sun, too.

Merging woodturning and metal craft turns out to be something a number of our members have mastered.



Tom Eovaldi's hammered copper platter

Joe Cox, who once ran a commercial furniture shop and recently retired as director of UCSC's metal shop, turns, carves, shaves, hammers, molds, inlays, polishes, and buffs in multiple media like few craftsmen have ever achieved.

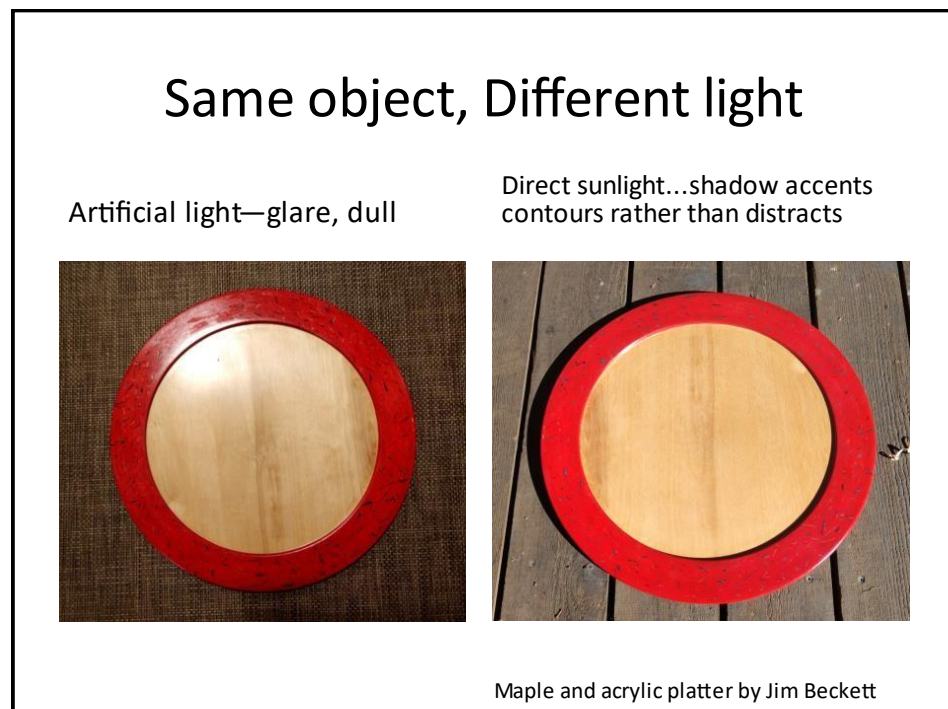
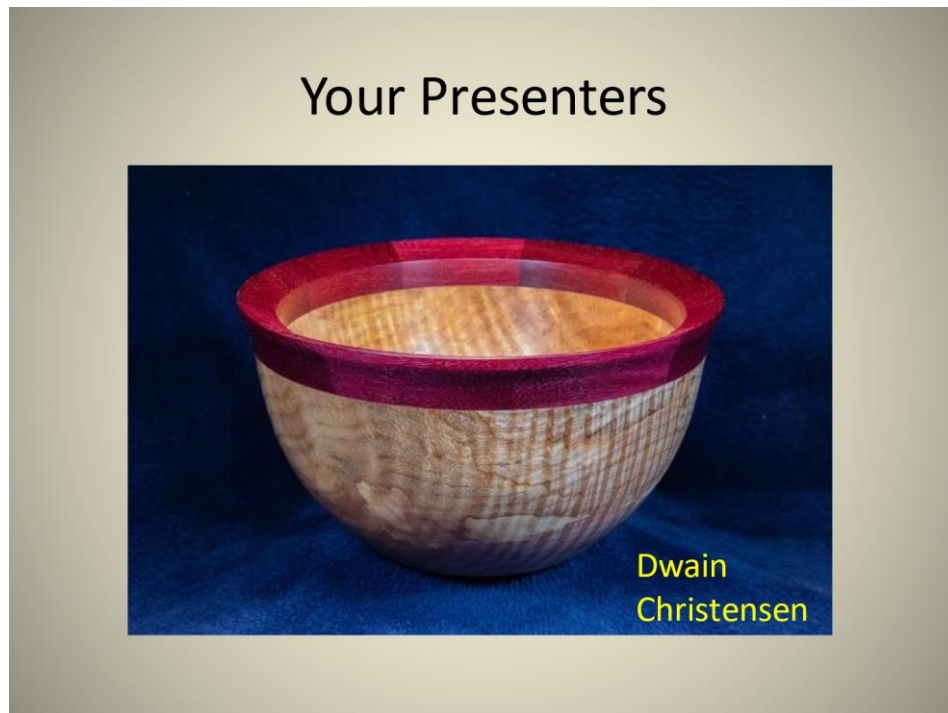
Joe's shop is not one for the faint hearted...because mine paused for a long time when I saw the palace he created with his own hands. It's conspicuous to me as I write this that I don't have a photo of his work to share...especially that amazing spider he brought for Show and Tell a week ago...but I'll fix that. Stay tuned.

More and more of us are including highlights of stone and other media in our work, too.



Larry Dubia's opal inlays

How to Photograph Your Work: Dwain Christensen, our freshly re-elected Secretary, led a 2021 virtual demo that played heavily in Roy's success! It also polished the submissions for our subsequent Show and Tell and Educational presentations! Excerpts below. Link to full presentation (totally worth it!): www.scwoodturners.org/uploads/4/8/2/3/4823810/photographing_your_work_demo_2-20-2021_comp.pdf



John Wells was a pro teacher before he became a pro turner, and he stayed busy in both realms during the pandemic! In 2021, he crafted a demonstration making three different types of **Tool Handles**... presented as a narrated, step by step, photographically illustrated sequence. Link:

www.scwoodturners.org/uploads/4/8/2/3/4823810/making_tool_handles_demo_6-19-2021_final_comp.pdf



John also presented a virtual demo entitled “**Finishing School**”...not for priming debutantes but for serious turners interested in solids, solvents, sheen...and safety.

John Wells, Sawyer



Finishing School Santa Cruz Woodturners
July, 2020

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John Wells, Finisher

Thoughts about Finishing what you Started



Finishing School Santa Cruz Woodturners
July, 2020

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There’s a lot of true believer hype, squirrely “conventional wisdom,” and commercial promotion regarding finishes. John, with signature pithiness, took the subject down its foundations and made sense.

Then, to cap off the demonstration, **six of our members took similar maple blanks**, turned and sanded them to satisfaction, then finished them with different products. Our turners showed their results with John’s commentary for enrichment.

Defy the Fires: In the darkest Age of Coronavirus, we also endured a primeval darkness of another nature in our county.



The **August, 2020, CZU fires** ravaged the mountains, uprooted tens of thousands of people, destroyed a thousand homes, and wreaked merciless havoc upon forests which had survived thousands of years. Our club members in SLV and Bonny Doon made it through, in John's case by a matter of yards. John took some time in the aftermath to share downed wood...but also to teach many of us basic **carving techniques**.

Spoons became suddenly popular as an adjuvant to our turning endeavors!



Jim Baker



Bill Hopkins

Ah, carving has many faces!



Dennis Stewart carved this Scandinavian Bread Bowl from Black Acacia...part of a Santa Cruz Woodturners' shared chainsaw stash in 2019. Carved with an adze and other traditional tools, this bowl dazzled the Show and Tell when we pounced on a brief lull in COVID to meet in person for the first time in 2021...at Sue's Orchard, of course.



John could supply the tongs

Hacks—Fixing things is what Real Turners do!

Tom Eovaldi tells us that there are usually three solutions to every problem, and if you can't find all three, somebody else in the club can help!

John and Dan Aldridge did a “live” tandem demo of different methods to make “butterfly” insets to stabilize cracks in vessels just too cool to discard.



Dan with a jig



John with a chisel

We made a collective virtual demo of inspirational “hacks” in 2020. This was a marvelous display—dozens and dozens of clever solutions—but more important, we heard from almost all of us! For lots of these, we could take them home and “do it” same day...for very little cost. You can see the entire, innovative collection on our website! (link on next page). Here are a few of the dozens of slides.

Template for Tenons & Mortises
Larry Thibault, Emeritus Shop Teacher

Shop Innovations Santa Cruz Woodturners
June, 2020

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Chain Saw Horse: Raf
Better to spur the horse than slash the rider

Shop Innovations Santa Cruz Woodturners
June, 2020

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2400 Lumen LED
Illuminate Those Scratches: Dennis Stewart



Shop Innovations Santa Cruz Woodturners
June, 2020

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No More Funnels!
The Escape Shelf & Depth Gauge: Wells



Shop Innovations Santa Cruz Woodturners
June, 2020

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Bandsaw Sled for Narrow Blanks:
Pens and Bobbins: Tim Johnson



Shop Innovations Santa Cruz Woodturners
June, 2020

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Linda's Sandpaper Rack



Shop Innovations Santa Cruz Woodturners
June, 2020

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Roller Blade Spindle Steady
John Wells



Shop Innovations Santa Cruz Woodturners
June, 2020

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Not So Holy Rollers
Gouge Safe in the Ways: Wells



Shop Innovations Santa Cruz Woodturners
June, 2020

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Some of the entries used a multi-slide sequence for clarity. Open the link below and see Roy's shop-built "back sander" for the undersides of incurved bowls, Dan's genius laser pointer device for depth control, another option as a zero-cost mechanical depth gauge for us analog types, a handful of shop-built tools and a drying kiln by John, compressor options by Roy, storage racks by Morgan and Linda and Maarten, lots of sanding solutions, on and on! Link:

www.swoodturners.org/uploads/4/8/2/3/4823810/scw_chapter_meeting_6-20-2020_comp_6-17-20.pdf

Our website is a treasure trove...there for a click or two. *Check it out!*

Hacks was just one example of Group Teaching. We also pooled our experience to publish educational pieces on **Resins for Turners, Inlays, Dust Management, Sanding, Air Compressors and Noise Abatement, Coring, Chucking, Spalted Wood, Embedded objects, Starter Tool kits**, and more! It's all there for you.

Make a **perfect platter**? Find the illustrated, step by step illustrations in case you missed the meeting...or drifted off in a buzz from those naughty donuts in the pink box.

See what our **pros do for sanding**? We vary...check out the panel discussion. Wanna buy the best drill motor for power sanding? That's in there, too.

Find out how to release a **stuck screw chuck**...or fix a wide crack? We can help.

Avoid launching a UFO (Unintended Flying Object)? We have all done that...but we don't have to repeat the harrowing experience. Here's sensible info for you!

Circle jig for your bandsaw blanks? We have multiple takes for your consideration.

Confused by the proliferation of **resin products**? Nervous about the chemicals? We have expert opinions from our experienced members...and a precious summary table.

See what **our members read** to learn about wood science and turning? Click!

Found an **embedded rock** or a rusty nail in your blank? Now what? We can help.

Purchase good **starter tools** but not waste money on things you don't need?

Open our website (www.scwoodturners.org) and open the **Communications** tab where you'll find all of these publications listed with easy downloads.

EDUCATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS 2018-2019

EDUCATIONAL DIALOGUES 2020

EDUCATIONAL DIALOGUES 2021

INTERVIEWS

The website also has the full sequence of these 46 **"Turning in the Age of Corona"** mostly biweekly newsletters. I'm immensely proud of the way our members kept the inspiration, photos, and mischief flowing! We're good at what we do!

Speaking of "best," open **Galleries**, and you'll find our Pro's website links...like **Chuc Nowark's** fabulous creations. You'll also find one-click links to the "max pride" displays of 16 of our members, like **Dale Burdick's**. In 2022, we'll be eager to expand the number of our members' collections (40+!), expand the number of entries from 3 to 5, and arrange to update your preferred entries. It's optional...but good motivation! Send the links to your friends and grandchildren...and your junior high shop teachers.

One of my **favorite collaborative projects** was the “**Resinators,**” featuring

- New member **Mattie Guthrie**, an old hand with surfboard resins
- **Larry Dubia**, an old hand with anything new, and
- Try- Anything Novelty Enthusiast **Dwain Christensen**
- A lively panel discussion and lots of illustrations.

www.scwoodturners.org/uploads/4/8/2/3/4823810/resinators_4-21_compress_photo.pdf



Manzanita burl and resin, Dwain



Segmented large bowl with turquoise in a pool of resin, Larry

In Santa Cruz, naturally we embrace **All Turnings, Great and Small.**



Larry is “great,” in so many ways, with a huge New Zealand kauri bowl (left) that took days to sand.

Above: amber resin and burl globe

Maarten Meerman takes “small” to a degree requiring magnification for those of us with normal eyes for our age.



Maarten's finial & fingerprint



a loving spoonful



and his presidential gavel

We turners may occasionally use CA glue and resins, even crushed stone, pewter, and powdered metal, but **mostly...we love wood**. Redwood, Black Acacia, Bay Laurel, Black Walnut, and Madrone seem to have especially captivated many of our members.



Linda Anderson, Exotic redwood burl with turquoise inlay and delicate rim



Bill Hopkins, Black Acacia



Earl Wynn, Avocado



Dwain Christensen, Bay Laurel Burl

Madrone Impressions:



Jim Baker, "Out of the Ashes"



Mark Burden, Platter



Earl Wynn, Shallow Bowl



Wells S Left



J Wells Right

Takes by two Wells turners on once-turned madrone from the same tree
 ...doing "flower petal" warping



John Wells, commissioned Black Walnut bowl



Linda Anderson, Spalted Tanbark Oak



Craig Wargon, Monterey Cypress (his first one!)



Dwain Christensen, textured English Walnut

We have a **bounty of beautiful wood** in our coastal forests...sometimes falling in our back yards! For an extended, photographic description (2019), see:

www.scwoodturners.org/uploads/4/8/2/3/4823810/backyard_bowls.pdf

Special Appreciation to our Pro Remote Demonstrators who raised the bar consistently for us these two years! The chance to listen, question, and wonder with these legendary craftsmen may have been one of the few blessings of being confined to a computer by an invisible virus. We will probably need to do more of this!

Mickey Singer, elite Santa Cruz Woodworker, who made us all sticky-smart with Glue.

Glenn Lucas, Live from Ireland...twice, for a signature Lidded Bowl and a Plate. Congenial genius!

Kirk deHeer, Master Instructor from Provo, who did a Thin Wall Bowl and Spindle Essentials...both times paying intelligent attention to “why” catches happen.

Ed Pretty, from Vancouver, BC, took the supposedly basic gouge cuts to another level...and, in his second presentation, described the panorama of ways to color wood.

Scott Grove, from upper New York State, presented inlay techniques with unforgettable finesse, humor, and detail.

Mike Mahoney, now an international treasure, presented a stream of consciousness approach to shapes...and those memorable medullary ray patterns in Valley Oak.

Jim Rodgers, our congenial neighbor from the East Bay, presented segmented turning. That’s just 5 syllables, but what an amazing intrigue for a technique that should no longer intimidate us.

Speaking of Pro’s...our incoming 2020 Treasurer, **Raf Strudley**, may not have seen the pandemic coming, but in late 2019, he saw our future defined as a community, educational non-profit with some formal features and a need for stronger financial platform. His foresight and diligence captured our **501.c.3 status** on the eve of the pandemic, and that prescient move saved our club’s bacon during the plague.

We were able to accept the tax-deductible gift of a wood treasury from the Trentman family, retiring from professional turning.

Their gift not only allowed us to reap revenue from that donated material, but substantially upgrade the material for our member’s work for the next 2 years.

Thank you, Raf!



We made it through! Constant inspiration and continued learning have made us stronger. We made new friends in our community, and we attracted the new members who will carry our club onwards when our own lathes go quietly into the night.

Morgan, Roy, Dan, Dwain, and I (soon to be immediate past president) now have the really hard job...what does our Board do after the winds of fickle fate stop howling and the viral malice relents? It's going to be lively!



This is for you, Morgan! We'll leave you some time to turn boxes...promise!

*There was once a young abogado
Busted crooks from Bishop to Colorado
Now he's threading wood boxes
Feedin' guacamole to the foxes
So we made his gavel out of Avocado.*

OK... on further review, it was ash. Better wood, Your Honor! Use it wisely!



Thank you all for an inspirational two years. This was fun!

Wells Shoemaker, President, Santa Cruz Woodturners, 2020-2021



High desert Utah Juniper knuckle bowl, 200+ years old, WS, 2020-2021

Of the 350+ AAW chapters in the USA and Europe, 18 individual selections were juried for formal presentation at the 2021 Virtual National Symposium.

Our club secured 2 of those cherished selections!

What's underneath the surface is always more interesting!



Masks, social distancing, and gravity in Sue's orchard.

Rounds go downhill nicely, so the 2 former club Presidents in this photo let the new kid guide this hefty round to its destiny. Put your best face forward, I tell ya!

*Banana Slugs may slither, but we rock...and roll...
And then we turn.*



Tom Eovaldi, Professor of Law and Boxes

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