

Santa Cruz Woodturners

Turning in the Age of Corona: Episode 5

We've entered our second month of shutdown, with at least 1 or 2 to go, but our members have stayed busy. Today's note features Mark Burden, Seth Harpending, and Tim Johnson...and a hint for a satisfying quick project, too.

After our November, 2019 meeting at Mission Hill School, a number of SCW members descended upon a freshly fallen, roughly 3' diameter Sycamore tree that had been threatening the foundation and pavement adjacent to the school.

Here was **John Wells** atop that leviathan, taking that critter down to workable size:



(You can't easily see John's protective eyewear, but it's right where it belongs.)

Multiple trucks headed homeward with their beds groaning with good sized blanks. A dozen SCW members rose to the President's challenge to make something with these. We also cored a number of these around the time of our February meeting.



On that same sunny day, **Earl Wynn** brought in a load of freshly cut madrone to share, much of it quarter sawn. Some of those blanks got mixed in with the Sycamore.

Mark Burden just shared this image of his finished project from Sycamore Saturday.



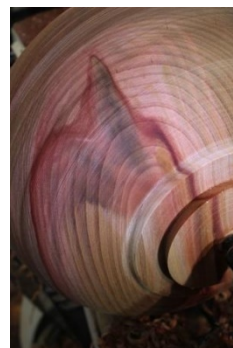
This is a spectacular effort—delicate turning, beautifully finished, artistically photographed, and destined for a long and joyful career as a prized possession.

Now there's a little question for the wood hogs. Many of us found out quickly that Sycamore's reputation for wonky warping was well deserved...you could almost watch it move and check. Mark's bowl, judging from the grain pattern, came from a quarter sawn section, and there's no evidence of the warping commonly found in tangentially cut Sycamore. Note the prominent dark red streak on the right hand side.

Sycamore is pink as raspberry frappé when freshly cut, but it usually oxidizes to a golden color within days, while madrone holds its much of its color.

Could it be that Mark's bowl is madrone?

Madrone blank, same lot from Earl's generosity, with a familiar red streak →



Seth Harpending is rarely constrained by some of the conventions. Construction crews often leave a discard pile which may include useful cut-offs of substantial timbers—4x12, 6x 12, some even larger girders and beams. Some of those cut-offs feature perfectly clear lumber with that enchanting contrasting grain pattern of Douglas Fir.

Seth snagged some, turned them, but he wasn't finished. Then came the torch and wire brush treatment, and here's the extraordinary result! Wow, Seth!



Tim Johnson has made an art form of lace bobbins...a traditional harmony between meticulous fiber art and equally meticulous small caliber lathe work. Excellent marital harmony, too.

These small objects are divider pins...essential for lace artists, but not likely welcome at a balloon party.



OK, here's another turners' quiz: *From what material do you think the object on the right may have been turned?*

It's a tagua nut, hard and creamy as ivory, but you find these painlessly on the ground ...underneath a tagua tree.

Guess what! SCW's Wood Bazaar on April 25 includes, among many exotic wooden blanks, a bag full of tagua nuts! Take some home and give them a try.

Next page a hint for an easy project:



Black acacia discs--too cool to burn, but too shallow for a bowl 5-8" diameter

Ever have a small piece of wood with grain that's just crying to be heard...but it's too shallow to make a proper bowl? Put a mortise in the underside and make a coaster. Give it 4 felt, cork, or silicon feet to keep it from skidding. Fast, pretty, great for people who don't want water rings on the table from a flower vase...or a pitcher of margaritas. Poly likely works best for finish. Naked wood is possibly better for hot things, like a pan of sizzling roasted potatoes. Coasters make a nice gift when somebody invites you over for ribs or vegetarian spaghetti...if that ever happens again.

Remember it's better to stand at the lathe than leave in a box. Remember the mask.



Wells
President, SCW 2020