

Turning in the Age of Corona...Episode 19

Santa Cruz Woodturners

Thanksgiving, 2020

Featuring: Vice Presidential Turners' Hand-Off and a few other happy things

Our 2020 Vice President, **Linda Anderson**, has a lifelong affection for trees, serving as a longtime supporter of the world renowned UCSC Arboretum...as well as turning pieces of fallen trees into gorgeous handmade shapes.

It's no surprise that the destruction of Sudden Oak Death (SOD), particularly on the vulnerable tanbark oak¹, has generated both sadness and opportunity. Linda turned this lovely bowl from a tanbark tree that fell victim to the plague. How Linda negotiated all those knots is a secret. This bowl was not stained. Note the dark brown coloration of the wood...quite different from the normal golden-tan coloration of tan oak. Is this a spalting phenomenon from the SOD organism? (*Let's ask Seri Robinson soon!*)



¹ Tan oak, AKA tanbark oak (*Lithocarpus densiflorus*), is a member of the beech family, related to oaks, producing fabulous acorns and bark of legendary tannins, the latter an important part of Santa Cruz history. It produces a relatively soft, lovely tan wood with oak like features, and it turns beautifully. Unfortunately, tan oak is exceptionally vulnerable to sudden oak death (SOD). SOD is caused by *Phytophthora ramorum*, a water mold pathogen in a unique category of fungus-like oomycetes with filaments which choke out fluid transfer in plants. It is spreading widely in California and Oregon, including our woodlands.

Here are two of Linda's recent tanbark bowls with more typical coloration.



Natural edge revealing that famous tannin rich bark



Never be discouraged by "features"

And a redwood burl bowl with Thanksgiving Spirit





Linda's turned **Banksia** wood box with a manzanita finial



What makes UCSC's Arboretum world renowned, you might ask? It boasts the world's most compendious collection of Banksia's outside Australia. Banksia plants range from shrubs to towering trees...most somewhere in between.

Banksia pods—anywhere from a few inches to a foot long—hold their seeds in hardened compartments until a bush fire heats them up. The compartments snap open, sending swirls of seeds with clever propellers 10-20 yards out to start the recovery process.

Of course, turners can put them on a lathe...and the trunks, too. Linda, as you can imagine, has done both.

Linda's geology professorial duties at UCSC got knocked askew with the COVID scourge, but she soldiered on with her SCW vice presidential role. *Thanks, Linda!*

In January, 2021, she'll turn those reins over to **Morgan Taylor**, one of SCW's three member lawyers...and probably the most ardent of all our members in the creation of turned boxes. Here's one of his recent threaded boxes, made with a hardwood insert in a piece of redwood burl:





Lids off and lids on



This is how Morgan described these: The first has boxwood threads, and the second two are of Honduran Red Heart. I get to thank **John Wells** for this. He gave me quite a bit of redwood burl that to him was scrap, but to me was buried treasure! Honestly, this stuff is the *filet mignon* of redwood burl. The spacer on each box is roughly the thickness of what was cut out to separate the top and bottom, so that I got good grain match by doing it that way. These are each about 2 ½" high.

Speaking of boxes, our “dual citizenship” **Tom Eovaldi** will soon be leaving the frigid desolation of the Illinois plains and returning to the Santa Cruz coastline for the rest of winter. Tom, as most of us know after his natural edge demo a year ago, is an accomplished turner who, among other things, had the privilege of studying with Dinh Pho. Tom has a massive Oneway lathe, but he makes some delicate boxes with it.

Welcome back, Tom, even if it’s mostly a virtual reunion this time. Let’s make some shavings.



This is a season of festive colors, so latching onto the theme of mixed media featured in our November inlay demo with **Scott Grove** and our upcoming turning/blacksmithing demo with **Roy Holmberg** December 12, I did a little mixing and matching, too:



I derived a much greater joy coaching my granddaughter, Celeste, behind the lathe to turn her first bowl this week.

Inspiration: **Sue Broadston**, the Constant Teacher, putting razor sharp steel into the hands of her granddaughter, adding confidence to pride and smiles to discipline, while turning gender stereotypes into crunchy dust beneath her feet.



This is a season for kindness, sharing, songs, stars, and...the hum of smooth bearings in a well maintained lathe.

Turners do not need any flying reindeer.

We enjoy the gentle flight of shavings wafting unfettered over our left shoulder instead. Plus...we can enjoy this spectacle any day of the year we want.

Enjoy these short days.

Wells Shoemaker
President, Santa Cruz Woodturners



And...say hello to a maple tree in the woods.