

NORTHWESTERN MICHIGAN WOODTURNERS

## newsletter

### Volume 7, Number 9, September, 2023

34 members took part in person, and 6 joined by Zoom for Matt Monaco's all-day in-person demonstration. 15 club members also took the advantage of the 3 days of hands-on training with Matt in Lyle's shop.

**Next Meeting: October 14, 8:30 for coffee and donuts. Career Tech Center Shop or Online.**

**The October demonstration will be Rich Foa and Gary Perkins showing us two ways of turning a sphere.**

The November meeting will feature a **guest IRD with Carl Jacobson.**

**Upcoming events: From the AAW Events Page –**

Please go to <https://woodturner.org> for more information and to register for sponsored events.

**October 7&8 – Vendor Showcase, “Make It” – Fall Crafts. Free Register on the AAW Events Page.**

**October 8, 2-4pm Eastern – Pat Carroll – Christmas Decoration. Recording available for 30 days. Cost \$13.65 Register on the AAW Events Page.**

**October 13-15 – Ohio Valley Woodturners Turning Symposium, Conf. & Retreat Center, West Harrison, Indiana**

<https://www.ovwg.org/>

**November 2-3 – Virginia Woodturning Symposium, ExpoCenter, Fishersville, Virginia.**

<https://www.viriniawoodturners.com/>

**November 3-5 – North Carolina Woodturning Symposium, Greensboro Coliseum, Greensboro, NC**

<https://www.ncwts.com/>

If you are an AAW member of affiliate member, watch your email for the weekly “Toolbox E-Newsletter: and the bimonthly “Keep Turning E-Newsletter. Or go to the AAW website, Resources Page [www.woodturner.org](http://www.woodturner.org) If there are events, they will be listed there.

And don't miss the AAW Member-Moderated Forum on the same page. This page also guides you to the other resources, including all issues of American Woodturner magazine, Woodturning Fundamentals and others.

## We had a wonderful, in-person, all-day demonstration by Matt Monaco.

A little about him first, in case you missed it in his introduction.

Matt started life in Phoenix, and that's where he also got hooked on turning in 2003 when he enrolled in a woodworking class at a local community college. The course had him making furniture projects until he had to turn the legs for a project. HOOKED! From there he attended classes with turners at Craft Supply, including 4 classes with Richard Raffan, who helped Matt get a small business grant to kick start his professional career. In 2013, he moved to Vermont and worked with/for ShackletonThomas furniture makers, production turning bowls and accessories. In 2016, he moved to the Ozarks in SW Missouri, where he took commissions and continued filling orders from ShackleThomas.

Mat has, and continues to be, a teacher for Arrowmont, Craft Supply, SW School of Woodworking, Center for Furniture Craftsmanship, John C Campbell Folk School, and Eureka Springs School for the Arts. He also has published articles in American Woodturner and Fine Woodworking.

Matt started out the morning introducing us to the usefulness and flexibility of the SKEW.



Matt grinds all his skews with a radius rather than a straight angle. He showed that the skew is very

good at turning square stock to round with planing cuts, advising that to use the skew effectively, you need to turn the speed of the lathe up. The planing cut is used for turning square to round, but you **do not** have bevel traction (which we know as bevel support). He uses the term bevel traction throughout his demos. The tooled surface ends up much finer with this tool than with either a spindle roughing gouge or most bowl gouges.

Matt then used the same 1" skew in a peeling cut to make the tenon for chuck mounting. After the initial peeling cut with the toe, he slightly raised the back of the skew to form the dovetail to fit the chuck jaws.



Now, mounted in the concentric chuck, Matt continued with planing cuts to round out the rest, starting to form the profile of the project, a spin top. Hang in, this is a training project to show how much you can do with just a skew.

An amazing point to me was how Matt, with the radiused grind, was able to do a planing cut in both directions. I had always learned that you only cut in one direction, and that you lift the skew off the work and reposition. He said one of the beauties of the curved profile is that you can engage more of the edge without getting a catch, as long as you keep the unsupported edge of the tool (toe or heel, depending on which you are cutting with) from dropping onto the tool rest. You can cut with either, as long as you don't let the unsupported side of the tool drop flat onto the tool rest.

Matt switched to a 1/2" skew to work in a more detailed fashioned. Matt's 1/2" skew is only slightly curved and with much less angle. To



help him remember which point is the heel, he has ground a secondary, non-integrated bevel on the top side of the heel to make it obvious when setting up for a cut.

Cutting downhill with planing cuts, using the long point (toe) leading results in a conical shape, where using the short point (heel) result generally in a convex shape.

With a series of peeling and planing cuts, Matt shaped the spin top, retaining the mass near the headstock for support. As he began removing mass from the stem area, he defined the area where he planned the captive ring (only 1 on the first top).



He stressed making sure there was enough room on both sides of the ring bead so he could get the toe (long point) of the skew underneath to release the ring.



After the ring was released, Matt then proceeded to shape the rest the stem.



And even though he started out by saying this was just a piece to show the method, he put a finish on this spin top of mahogany.



So that was just to show us the methods. He next mounted a much larger rectangular block of maple to clearly demonstrate the mechanics of using the skew to make the



various cuts. Matt advised working with a much larger blank to learn not only how to make the cuts he showed, but to get comfortable with using the skew. We tend to focus on a project, and

end up frustrated with the skew because we haven't put the time in to really practice and learn how to use it. So, two things first. With the skew, you turn at higher speeds to get good cuts. You also set your tool rest much high, as you are cutting much higher on the blank than with other tools.

Working between centers, Matt roughed out the blank with the 1" skew. He stated that in roughing, you want to have a 'run out point'.

This can be at either end of the blank, just



not the middle, or you end up with torn



grain that you have to deal with.



Again, Matt showed that you don't have bevel support during the roughing, but do achieve it as you get to round. As he did this, he again showed that as long as you don't let the unsupported side of the skew touch the tool rest, you can continue to cut on the



return stroke of the cut, **but only if you have good bevel support.** Although traditionally, we are taught to lead with

the heel, and cut with the bottom 1/3 of the edge, Matt showed us that it doesn't matter leading with the heel or the toe, as long as you keep the skew well anchored to the tool rest and your body, and present the tool properly (body/tool position).

First, you need to have the proper presentation of the tool to the work. For a right handed person you want to use the heel first for cuts to the right, with the tool handle pressed into your right side. The left hand stabilizes the tool on the tool rest, and the right hand provides control just behind the ferrule. For a left handed person, you can do planing cuts with the toe or the heel leading, as your body position is correct to the lathe but in planing cuts to the right, the tool orientation has more angle to the lathe (at least I hope I stated that correctly).

So, where do catches come from with the skew? Matt showed us that very clearly. When you are doing planing cuts with the skew, whichever point you are leading with, heel or toe (long point or short point), that side of the tool is kept firmly in contact with the tool rest, and the other side is somewhat elevated off the tool rest. The "catch", according to Matt, happens any time during the cut that you let the elevated side drop onto the tool rest. Sounds like an easy no-brainer, but there it is. With the high side of the tool often 1/8" or less off the tool rest, just

a moment's inattention can let it drop – Catch.

The other major error with the skew is skating, leaving a spiral groove along the piece. Unless I really missed something, Matt mentioned this once, but didn't elaborate.

Matt used the long point (toe) to make a couple of V-cuts. This defined the ends of the beads he would make.

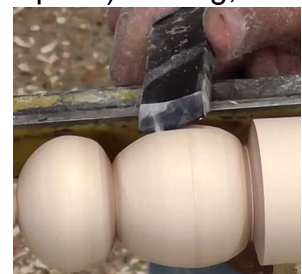
To learn to do beads properly, you need to do large beads. So many of us want to make small decorative beads on pieces, and have a hard time getting them looking right. That is because we haven't practiced enough on large beads to develop the proper muscle memory for proper tool control, and our eyes aren't trained well enough to see just how the tool (skew or spindle gouge) has to move across the surface to create the proper bead shape (rolling the tool, raising and lowering the handle).

Matt also showed us that choosing the long or short point (toe or heel) of the skew makes a big difference in the shape of the bead. From earlier, Matt pointed out that leading



with the toe (long point) produces more of a conical shape, leaving a "sharp" high point on a bead, even when trying to roll the tool into the cut. It also digs in too much. Using the heel

(short point) leading, and working with the edge behind the heel, you can roll the skew through a planing cut that better defines a nicely curved bead.



Note that the point of the skew is not, in this case involved. It is that 1/3 or so of the edge

behind the heel doing the cutting, with a continuous rolling motion of the tool while raising the handle. At the bottom of the bead, you want the point of the heel to finish the cut.

Sharpening the skew with Matt's radius edge. This is where we went to grinder with him. Matt uses a jig/grinding platform that appears to have an angle scale. Regardless, he states that his grinding angle is about 20°. Matt doesn't hone his skews, preferring to have a slight burr on one side when done grinding. For Matt, he wants the burr on the top of the edge when the toe (long point) is to the left. Because he (and we) want the toe to be a sharp point, not rolled over into a small curve, grinding starts with the tool vertical to the grinder. To get his radius, holding the tool flat on the support, he swings the handle away from the long point, ending at the short point (heel). The exact same is done on the other side.



Now, with a sharp tool, Matt used the practice piece to show us how to turn a captive ring with the skew (the 1" skew), and how to use the skew to cut coves.

With the piece mounted in the concentric chuck, he showed us how to use the toe (long point) to make sweeping cove cuts. He also used the heel to round out the tailstock end. With a couple of shallow V-cuts he marked the place for the captive ring, and



then continued using the toe to continue reducing diameter on either side of the ring with cove cuts.



As he progressed, he focused on narrowing the piece, and at the same time shaping the ring into a rounded bead. More cove cuts with the toe, and peeling cuts to remove the debris at the ring. He pointed out that the ring can be released from either side, but in this case, since he had more room on the tailstock side, he released the ring there with the long point (toe) of the skew.



From there, he continued to reduce the diameter of the shank, allowing the captive ring to float freely.

A further point to the cove cut. To refine the cove curves, Matt suggests using the heel leading, cleaning up if necessary with the toe.

Next, Matt wanted to leave our club with something a bit more special. So again using the skew, both 1" and 1/2", he turned a



small spin top with 2 captive rings, the 2<sup>nd</sup> smaller ring to keep the 1<sup>st</sup> larger ring from escaping. The wood is ebony, and very hard. The final photos here is of Matt polishing the finish, and the top spinning.



And here, as the group broke for lunch, we leave Matt's afternoon demo to the club website. If you haven't already, claim your members only log-in and password from Pete Meyer ([hammergrips@gmail.com](mailto:hammergrips@gmail.com)).

So why break here? For 1, the training with skew is something we have all needed, and the newsletter is getting pretty long. For another, Matt's afternoon demo was turning a platter with bowl gouge, spindle gouge, and scraper. Our club has a lot of expertise in this. One thing to share though is Matt's use

of a secondary bevel on his bowl gouge. It is explained quite nicely in the recording. You can also get much the same information from Cindy Drozda's website, as she too uses the micro-bevel/secondary bevel grind.

So please go to the club website, or if you can't get the members only page from Pete, try this. **However, this is for club members only, so please don't share it outside the club.**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g5NW62uo94Q>

On Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday, Matt held hands-on training at Lyle's shop. There were 5 openings for each day, at a cost to participants of \$100. The focus was on bowl turning, and 15 members took advantage.

Blanks were prepared in advance by Lyle, Mike OB, and several club members.

I received a few photos from the hands-on sessions, but unfortunately, they were all taken with cell phones, and the file sizes were so large that even with compression they would make the newsletter too large to email.

So how large do I mean? 15 photos received – total file size 37.5 megabytes. Cell phones seem to have only 1 photo resolution size – hi def, which equals huge file sizes.

If you want to send photos for the newsletter, and you have another digital camera, please use that, set to **standard resolution**. That produces smaller file sizes. What do I mean? Well, the camera I use (Nikon SLR) produces photo files of 1/2 megabyte on standard resolution. Cell phones and cameras set to hi-resolution produce file sizes of 4-5 megabytes each.

If you just have a cell phone, send them anyway, I can usually sneak a couple in with compression.

## Business Meeting:



Due to our all-day demonstration by Matt Monaco, the business meeting was very short, and held at the lunch break.

**Gary notified the club that we are once again invited to display our work at the Traverse City Library for the month of October. Kris Roberts is the coordinator this year, and you need to email him directly ([krobdi@gmail.com](mailto:krobdi@gmail.com)) if you will be displaying some of your work this year. We are asking that members limit their display to 3 pieces each (2-3 board members will have extra pieces there only if needed to fill in the display cases, which likely won't be needed). Set up is scheduled for 9AM on October 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday, and take down at 9AM on October 30, again Monday, to let the Library staff have time to set up for the children's Halloween events at the Library.**

The club Shirts that were ordered are in, and most were picked up at the meeting. If you weren't there, you can pick them up at the October meeting. New orders are being accepted by Marv Slee, who will collect and submit them in appropriate batches. Don't forget to pay for them. T's \$15, long sleeve T's \$20, and swearshirts \$40.

Treasurer Jan Bachman reported to our Board Meeting on Sept. 7. As of September 15, with all bills paid, including costs for our September in-person demonstration, our balance stands at \$3,796.73.

**Student Mentoring** – September starts a new school year, and it also starts another year of paying our meeting rent by introducing/mentoring students of the Construction Trades Program to woodturning. Last year we made it through with just a few members volunteering their time over and over throughout the school

year. Our coordinator, Ken Hunter would very much like to have some more flexibility in scheduling, so we need more of you to step up in this school year. Give Ken a call (**231-499-9474**) to get more information, and get in the rotation.

More Wig Stands are needed! – Our project coordinator, Dennis Ferguson, says that we are in need of more wig stands for the cancer centers in TC and Kalkaska. If you don't have the plans for them, reach out to Dennis Ferguson, [dennis45th@gmail.com](mailto:dennis45th@gmail.com)

Members of the club will be running another fundraiser at Left Foot Charlie's, turning bottle stoppers on October 1 from noon to 6pm. Bottle stopper kits are here. Contact Kieran or Gary for more details and volunteer to help.

## **Board of Directors – Your new Board of Directors for 2024 are:**

Gary Perkins - 231-640-0377  
Pete Meyer - 231-499-7935  
Jan Bachman - 734-730-7038  
Kris Roberts - 701-400-9160  
Dennis Ferguson - 231-492-6475  
Kieran Goodman - 812-298-5747  
Marv Slee - 231-499-1719  
Chuck McLaughlin - 231-668-1901  
Jim Scarsella - 313-220-5077

Our Board members are here to serve the club. If you have a need, concern, or suggestion, please get in touch with one of us. The Board meets the first Thursday of the month at 7:00pm virtually by Zoom. All members are welcome to attend by contacting me, your secretary, before a meeting so I can send you the Zoom invitation.



## **For Sale:**

**Supplies: CA Glue and Anchor Seal Wood Sealer.**

**We will not be ordering another 55 gallon drum of Anchor Seal. If you need some, get it at the next meeting before it's gone. Cost is \$10.00/gallon. After that, we will be on our own. The Anchor Seal website, <https://ucoatings.com/shop/product/anchorseal/> lists their product for sale either online, or the nearest retailer, which is Woodcraft of Grand Rapids. It is offered in sizes quart, gallon, or 5 gallon. Joe suggests that you could get a 5 gallon pail of it and share it out with others. That option is by far the least expensive on a per gallon basis.**

**CA Glue – Glue will now be stored at the Career Tech Center, Club storage box, and sold at meetings.**

## **Wanted:**

**If there is something you are looking for send an email or text to me and it will be posted here.**

**Sad News** – We lost another of our woodturners. Dan (Gunner) Howitson passed away on August 21. He was born in Detroit, Michigan, on May 31, 1945. Dan enjoyed working on Tall Ships with the Maritime Heritage Alliance and was just learning woodturning.

## **And finally, a report on the Gallery event we just finished at Oliver Center for the Arts.**

The Gallery Exhibition was extended a week, and ended on September 9<sup>th</sup>, our meeting day, so our pieces had not been picked up and were not at the meeting to display.

This was a juried exhibition, and the pieces were judged at the exhibition. 5 of the pieces received awards, from Honorable Mention to 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place. Our Board of Directors chose to honor the top 3 awards with a monetary prize. Here are the winners. Honorable Mention: Chuck McLaughlin and Pete Meyer.

3<sup>rd</sup> Place, and \$20 club prize – Joe Breech  
2<sup>nd</sup> Place, and \$30 club prize – Vern Steinfort  
1<sup>st</sup> Place, and \$50 club prize – Lyle Jamieson

Gary promised that photos of all the gallery pieces would be in the newsletter.

Unfortunately, for 2 reasons, that will not happen. 1<sup>st</sup> – This newsletter is already long, and photos really add to the file size of the newsletter. 2<sup>nd</sup> – It seems no one took photos of all the pieces while displayed at the gallery. And, of the photos that were sent to me, only a couple had the placards close enough or large enough to read in the photos.

Come to the Library display, many, if not all will be displayed there, with placards you can read.

**Respectfully Submitted,**  
Kris Roberts, Secretary