

**TRI-STATE
WOODTURNERS**



Meeting Location:
8361A Dayton Pike
Soddy Daisy TN
(Horsin' Around fac.)

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Cuts and Scrapes

WWW.TRISTATEWOODTURNERS.COM

JUNE 2019 NEWSLETTER

June Demonstrator



Tri-State Woodturners an
official chapter of AAW

Nick Cook

Nationally known woodturner, Nick Cook lives in Marietta, Georgia, where he owns and operates his studio. He grew up around his father's woodworking equipment and became interested in the art of woodturning in the mid-70s after several years in furniture design and manufacture.

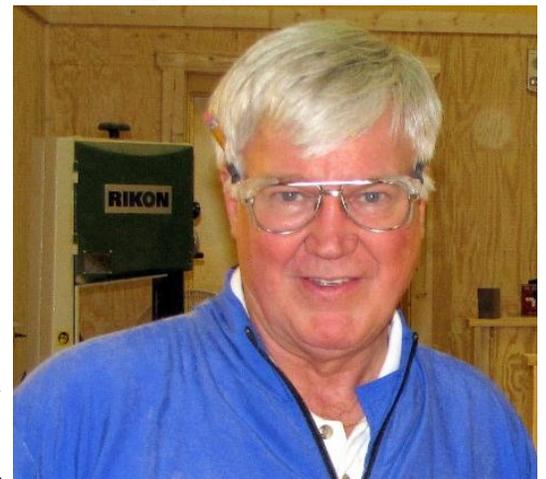
A founding member of the American Association of Woodturners, Nick served six years on the board of directors, including one as vice president.

In addition to creating one-of-a-kind pieces and his staple gift items, Nick teaches and lectures on various woodturning topics, has written articles for several woodworking magazines, and produced two woodturning

videos.

The primary materials that he now uses are maple, cocobolo, and tagua nuts. He employs a variety of woods, both domestic and exotic for his one-of-a-kind pieces. Nick's work is marketed in gift shops and galleries from coast to coast and is included in numerous corporate and private collections. You can also find Nick selling his pieces at craft fairs in the Southeast.

Take a look at Nick's Formal Bio for details about galleries and exhibitions with his work, seminars and workshops he has presented, articles he has pub-



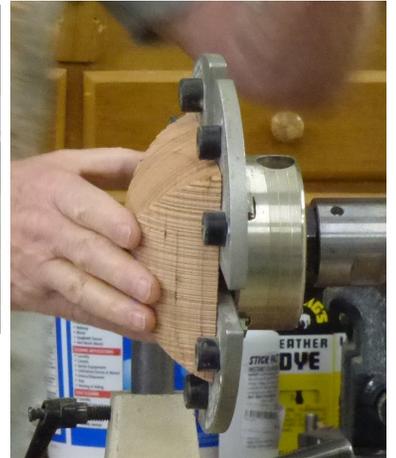
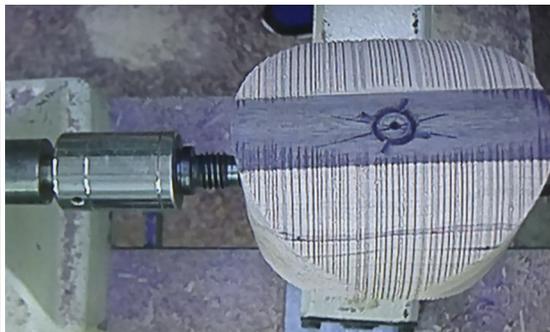
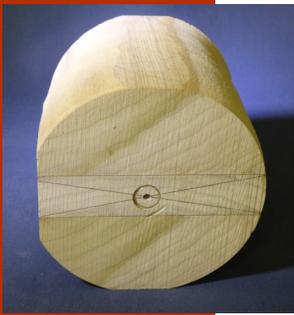
lished, and more.

Turning is the most spontaneous method of making something of wood," says Nick Cook. "The lathe allows much more freedom in shaping wood than any other hand tool."

Sat. he will demonstrate the effective use of the skew and turn some small functional projects. He will have available some DVDs at \$25 each for sale.



Making a square bowl with Drue was a very interesting demonstration. He glued two pieces together with a blank in between them. They were centered on the end and side then turned to a cylinder. Random grooves were made with a point tool. The cylinder was turned on it's side and turned again with grooves on that side. The two pieces were separated and mounted in Cole Jaws. A hole was drilled in the bottom center for a screw chuck which enabled turning a bowl in the top. The project was finished with milk paint and a plug in the screw chuck hole.





President's Corner

At a recent TSW Officer's meeting, we discussed the fact that the craft of wood turning does not have the exposure needed to draw new participation to the craft and decided that we as a club need to provide that exposure. As a result, John Dekle touched base with Woodcraft and two art and craft retail businesses. All expressed an interest in our club demonstrating at their facilities with a special focus on our service projects in an attempt to draw interest to our craft. We will continue pursuing these opportunities for presenting wood turning demonstrations at these facilities. Anyone interested in helping us support these demonstrations or if you have suggestions on other potential venues,

please let me or one of the other officers know.

For those of you that support our service projects – Thank You! The pens continue for the troops with several being turned in each month. I also have 18 Beads of Courage boxes that will be delivered to Erlanger Children's Hospital in the next week or so. Additionally, I have noticed several Christmas ornaments being displayed at our meetings over the last couple of months. Thanks!

Safety tip for the month: 'Always turn off your lathe prior to adjusting the tool rest'.



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The above officers are also official Tri-state Woodturner Mentors



Ed Lewis has been turning for 43 years and has graciously offered to open his shop on Saturday mornings to help newbies. This is as good as it comes. Ed is not only skilled as a turner but an excellent teacher. Many TSW have gained valuable lessons from him over the years to where they are now very proficient. Call Ed at (423) 344-7295 or talk with him at the TSW meeting Sat. This is an official function of TSW.

NEW MEMBER MENTOR: Are you new to wood turning or at least have an interest in it? TSW club is providing opportunity for you to learn from an expert turner who has provided instruction and guidance to many in the club and others. Ed Lewis opens his workshop on Saturdays and would love to help you. Contact him at (423) 344-7295. There is no fee for this instruction from an excellent turner & teacher.

The following sponsors give generously to Tri-State Woodturners and we want to encourage members to support them generously



5824 Brainerd Rd., Chatt. TN 373411 + (423) 710-8001

CUTS AND SCRAPES



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 THE WOODTURNERS CATALOG

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Treasurer's Report



The Web

Starting Balance	4,763.00
Income:	70.00
Wood Raffle	70.00
Expenses:	125.00
Demonstrator	125.00
Ending Balance	4,708.00

The subject this month relates to wood burning. First is an interesting twist to something many of us do.

<http://www.aswoodturns.com/2019/05/wire-wood-burner/>

The second web site is a short dramatic story regarding wood burning you may find very helpful in understanding the dangers some wood burning can cause.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ps1laGBIW0o#action=share>

Thanks you Charles for your work on keeping the finances in order for the club!



There is a place for you in Raleigh, NC, July 11-14, 2019. Learn more.

<https://www.woodturner.org/general/custom.asp?page=2019RaleighMain>

2019 TSW Club Challenges

January	Weed Pot—7 submitted	July	Made 100% with a Skew
February	Ring Box/Holder—9 submitted	August	Threaded Item
March	Segmented Pencil Cup—10 submitted (at least 24 pieces)	September	Toy (not top)
April	Desk Set—6 submitted	October	Mortar and Pestle
May	Compote—5 submitted	November	Triplet (3 identical items)
June	Door Stop	December	Silent Auction Item

Fractal Burning Has Killed and Could Kill You.

As of January 2019, we know of ten deaths caused using fractal, or Lichtenberg, burning. We only know of those deaths that are reported by the media and show up in internet searches; it is highly likely there are more.

The American Association of Woodturners has banned the use of this process at all of its events and has banned articles about use of a fractal burner in all of its publications.

The reported cases of fractal burning deaths range from hobbyist woodworkers through experienced woodworkers to an electrician with many years experience working with electricity. It only takes one small mistake and you are dead; not injured, dead. Some of those who died were experienced at using the process and some were not. What is common to all of them: fractal burning killed them.

High voltage electricity is an invisible killer; the user cannot see the danger. It is easy to see the danger of a spinning saw blade. It is very obvious that coming into contact with a moving blade will cause an injury, but in almost all cases a spinning blade will not kill you. With fractal burning, one small mistake and you are dead.

This is true whether you are using a homemade device or a manufactured one.

There are many ways to express your creativity. Do not use fractal burning. If you have a fractal burner, throw it away. If you are looking into fractal burning, stop right now and move on to something else. This could save your life.

—Rick Baker, Chair, AAW Safety Committee

—Harvey Rogers, AAW Safety Committee

AAW's response

As a response to these fatalities and incidents, and based on the recommendation of the chair of the AAW Safety Committee, the AAW Board of Directors adopted the following policy on May 17, 2017: ***It is the policy of the American Association of Woodturners (AAW) that the process known as Fractal Burning is prohibited from being used in any AAW-sponsored events, including regional and national symposia, and that AAW-chartered chapters are strongly urged to refrain from demonstrating or featuring the process in chapter events. Further, the process of Fractal Burning shall not be featured in any written or online AAW publication, except for within articles that warn against its use. AAW publications will not accept advertisements for any products or supplies directly related to the process.***

These are excerpts from an AAW article of which you can read the full article and additional information at:

<https://www.woodturner.org/general/custom.asp?page=FractalBurning>



Club Challenge for May - Compote



↑

Chris
Douglas

Don →
Douglas



Charles ↑ Jennings



← Les Isbell

John Dekle →



Donation Projects in May



Ornaments
To be sold—
proceeds for
Food Bank

Pens for
Troops &
Beads of
Courage
Boxes



↑ Charles
← Jennings



← Les Isbell →



Chris →
Douglas



Donation Projects in May



6 Beads of Courage Boxes and 10 pens created by Don Moore as donations

These Beads of Courage boxes are a tremendous blessing to the children going through very difficult, traumatic procedures. It encourages them and they are extremely appreciative to receive such a beautiful gift. You can really help a child with a donation of a handcrafted box. There is a lot of latitude on making them. Beads with the name are provided by the club alone with a card for the child. Guidelines are available at the meeting if you need them—see John Dekle.



Kits to make the pens for the troops are available at the TSW meetings as well as some simple instructions. You sign out the kits you want, make the pens and return them at a future meeting. These are given to Woodcraft and they send them to the troops. A great way to express our gratitude for their service.

Ornaments will be displayed in Nov. at a bank for customers to purchase with the proceeds going to the Chattanooga Food Bank. This is a way we can give back to our community in a very helpful way.

Show, Tell & Learn - Instant Gallery



Don Douglas ↑



← Chris Douglas



Charles → Jennings



← Don Moore ↓ ↓



As you bring items in for the Instant Gallery it gives others ideas on what they might try and encourages members in their turning. Plus you're entered for a drawing.

Skew Chisel PRIMER

LEARN THE BASIC CUTS

Keith Tompkins



The planing cut, made with the skew chisel's bevel rubbing, leaves a surface requiring minimal sanding.

The skew chisel, one of the most versatile spindle-turning tools, has a bad reputation. It is sometimes the butt of woodturning jokes: “I brought along my skew chisel,” says a demonstrator, “for opening this can of paste wax.” Many otherwise expert turners refuse to use the skew. Yet others, having mastered its use, swear by it.

The skew is ideally suited for efficient, high-production spindle turning and continues to be a favorite among production turners. With this one tool, a variety of spindle-turning functions are possible: peeling, planing, V-grooves, beads, fillets, facing off endgrain, and even coves. But the skew's versatility comes at a price: In order for the tool to cut both to the right and to the left, a bevel must be ground on both sides of the cutting edge. This design is the primary reason the skew has a tendency to catch.

The difficulties of mastering the skew have not gone unnoticed among manufacturers. Several companies market alternatives to the traditional design, with the main selling point being that their tool can help you overcome the skew chisel's propensity to catch. But if you take the time to master this tool, you will be able to make cuts other tools cannot—and leave a finer surface on the wood.

Learning to use a skew chisel is well worth your time and energy. Here is how to make the most common skew cuts.

Peeling cut

Let's start with the peeling cut, which does not usually leave a clean surface but is perhaps the best way to remove a great deal of wood quickly. Use it to rough a cylinder to size and for forming tenons.

To start the cut, place the tool high up on the turning with its cutting edge parallel to the axis of the turning (*Photo 1*). Since this cut is rather aggressive, you can lessen how heavy a cut you take by using only a small part of the cutting edge at one time. As the wood rotates, allow the bevel of the skew to rub without the cutting edge engaged. Pull the tool back toward you until the edge begins to cut, then raise the handle and feed the edge in and upward to complete the cut. As you raise the handle, imagine moving the cutting edge in a slight arcing motion as it cuts the wood—up slightly and then toward the axis of the workpiece.

Slide the tool over to begin another cut.

Planing cut

The planing cut is one of the most frequently used skew cuts because it can leave a highly polished surface off the

tool. This cut involves riding the bevel of the tool. To begin the cut, lay the tool flat on the wood and gradually rotate it until the bevel is contacting the wood and the edge begins to cut. If you are cutting from right to left, rotate the tool counterclockwise; from left to right, clockwise. When you have engaged the cutting edge, simply slide the skew along the toolrest, taking a light cut.

Turners have their own preferences as to exactly how to hold the skew chisel during the planing cut. Note in the *lead photo* that my left index finger is riding against the straightedge of the toolrest, while light pressure from my thumb maintains bevel contact with the wood. I find this grip gives me better control of the depth of cut and allows me to feed the tool smoothly along the toolrest. There is no need to muscle the cut with brute force; a light touch is all that is required. Also notice that the cutting edge is skewed, or positioned at an angle in relation to the rotation of the wood. This allows the tool to cleanly peel away, or pare the wood, rather than scrape directly into the surface.

V-groove

The V-groove may be the simplest cut to make with a skew chisel, but no other

tool can do the job as well, leaving clean, sharp sides of the V-grooves all the way to the bottom. The traditional method involves positioning the toolrest fairly high in relation to the turning. The long point of the skew is used to define the centerline of the V-groove, arched downward until it contacts the workpiece, and then the handle is raised to deepen the groove. To widen the groove, the same cutting action is made alternately from the right and left until the V-groove is to the desired width and depth. The bevel is rolled slightly away from the cut for minimal bevel contact. This is called “floating the bevel” and helps with tool control when cutting into the narrow bottom of a V shape.

An alternate cut I use successfully involves lowering the toolrest until the point of the skew is aimed directly at the centerline of the turning. Rubbing only the portion of the bevel near the long point, I complete the cut by pushing the tool straight in. Admittedly, this method will cause consternation with some proponents of the skew, but it works. Since the tool is situated lower in the cut, there is no need to arc the tool down into the wood. As the tool is fed straight in, the revolving wood meets the edge and is peeled away. With this cut, I control the amount of wood being removed by regulating the amount of side pressure I apply to the bevel as it cuts. The result is a clean cut, and catches are rare (*Photo 2*).

Beads

A major advantage of using a skew chisel to turn beads is that it can reach into the narrow area between the beads, leaving a clean, crisp line at the bottom—no sanding needed. Here are three ways the skew can be used for rolling beads.

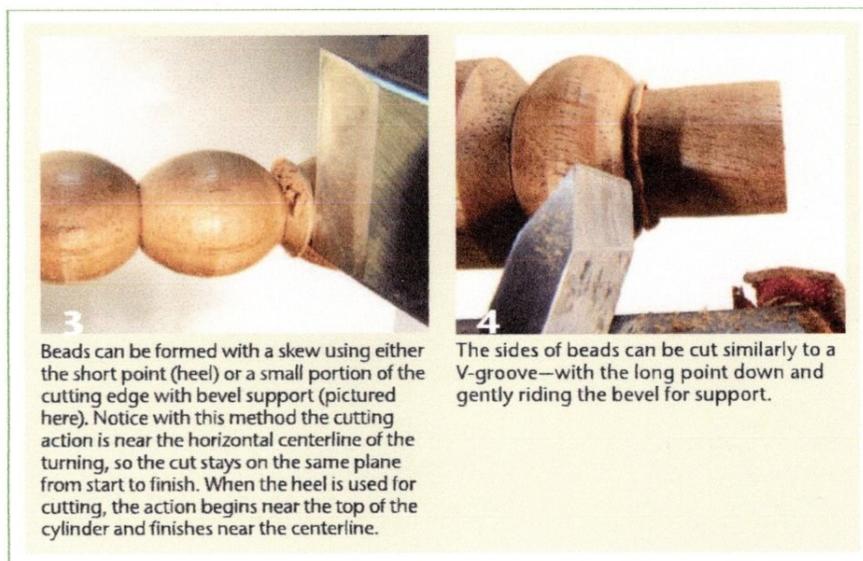
Cutting with the short point

The traditional method of turning beads involves holding the skew high up on the turning, presented on its side as you would for a planing cut, then using just the short point (heel) to roll the bead.



1 For a peeling cut, present the skew chisel with the cutting edge parallel to the axis of the turning. This cut will remove a lot of wood quickly.

2 Here, the skew is being used to turn the left side of a V-groove shape. The tool is presented with the long point down and rotated very slightly clockwise so the bevel can “float” behind the cut.



3 Beads can be formed with a skew using either the short point (heel) or a small portion of the cutting edge with bevel support (pictured here). Notice with this method the cutting action is near the horizontal centerline of the turning, so the cut stays on the same plane from start to finish. When the heel is used for cutting, the action begins near the top of the cylinder and finishes near the centerline.

4 The sides of beads can be cut similarly to a V-groove—with the long point down and gently riding the bevel for support.

This cut requires a few different but simultaneous movements of the tool: its shaft must be rotated to keep the cutting edge in contact with the wood; the handle must be swung (right to left for cutting the left side of a bead); and the handle must be raised as you cut the side of the bead deeper. During this cut, if any part of the cutting edge other than the short point comes into contact with the wood, a spiral catch can occur.

Ride the bevel

Another technique is to cut with a portion of the actual cutting edge, as opposed to using just the point at the heel. The bevel “rides” the wood as you cut the bead (*Photo 3*). The key is

to gently ride the bevel all the way to the base of the bead. The tool’s bevel supports a portion of the cutting edge, which helps to avoid a catch.

Long point down

Yet another method is to cut the bead using the toe (long point) of the skew, similar to making a V-groove. Rather than using just the point, however, ride the bevel at an area just above the long point when cutting with the long point down (*Photo 4*). It helps to use your body movement to swing the tool smoothly to form the curve of the bead. Control the depth of the cut by modulating the pressure applied. This cut works equally well cutting either to the right or left, ▶



5 Position the bevel of the skew chisel parallel to the wood to begin cutting a fillet.

6 Finish cutting the fillet by advancing the tool as you would for a planing cut.

7 To achieve a clean cut on endgrain, use just the toe of the skew chisel. To avoid a catch, lean the left-side bevel slightly away from the endgrain (exaggerated here to illustrate the concept).

and gives an unobstructed view of the cutting action. The result is a clean cut with little tendency for a catch.

Fillet

A fillet is a flat, horizontal area of a turning useful for visually separating various spindle elements. For example, a fillet can be used as a transition between a cove and a bead. Fillets must be cut clean and crisp, without the need for sanding, and the skew chisel accomplishes this task better than any other tool. Many turners cut fillets with a parting tool because of its ease of operation, but the parting tool leaves a surface of torn fibers, which requires sanding. Sanding is useful in some cases but can dull, or round over the clean, crisp details of a well-turned spindle. A parting tool can be used to rough-size a fillet, but it should be followed up with the fine finishing cut of a skew.

Cutting a fillet involves making the initial cut without the benefit of bevel support. To begin, position the skew chisel with one of the bevels (depending on the direction of the cut) parallel to the turning, as you would perform a planing cut. Raise the handle gently until the short point contacts the wood. Just the slightest pressure will cause the tip to form a slight groove in the turning (*Photo 5*). Once the groove is formed, rotate the toe of the skew away from the wood slightly to create clearance and avoid having the entire

bevel making contact with the surface of the wood. Then, advance the tool as in a normal planing cut (*Photo 6*). With experience, you can eliminate the step of shifting the toe away from the cut. This cut is also useful for sizing tenons.

Cutting endgrain

The skew chisel works well for cutting across endgrain, whether on steps, shoulders, or the absolute end of a spindle-oriented blank. This can be useful for truing the face of an endgrain blank prior to hollowing for a box or goblet.

The endgrain cut is performed with the toe, or long point. Present the tool with the long point down so the toe is just touching the surface to be cut (*Photo 7*). The key to avoiding a catch is to keep the bevel nearest the wood tipped slightly away from the endgrain. If the long cutting edge touches the endgrain, a dig-in will happen. To finish the cut, simply raise the handle and advance the tool across the endgrain. This cut leaves an exceptionally smooth finish on endgrain surfaces.

After years of using the skew chisel, I have learned the secret to its misbehavior. Simply put, the cutting edge of a skew chisel will catch when the correct portion of the bevel is not supporting the cut. Even a slight twist of the tool handle can allow the wrong portion of the bevel (or the wrong

bevel) to contact the wood; a spiral catch is the result. Keep the cutting edge supported by the bevel when beginning a cut whenever possible.

Although there are new tools constantly being brought to market, the skew's versatility and quality of cut will ensure its continued presence in nearly every turner's tool assortment. You, too, can learn to use the skew chisel with patience and practice. ■

Keith Tompkins is an accomplished life-long woodworker and turner. For contact information and examples of his work, visit keithtompkins.com.

**You read the article—
now see the video!**

This article has an accompanying online video in which John Lucas demonstrates how to make the skew cuts described here. To view the video, visit tiny.cc/skewcuts (case sensitive) or scan the QR code with your mobile device.

