

# Northwest Woodturners

A Chapter of  
The American Association of Woodturners

Volume 10 Issue 6

June 2006

**Northwest Woodturners** meets on the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of each month at 7:00 PM. See website for details and map.

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**Librarian:**  
Chris Dix

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**Newsletter & Web:**  
Owen Lowe  
503-538-5325

Next Meeting:  
**June 1st**

Turning  
Challenge:  
**Segmented  
Turnings**

## President's Corner June's Special Treat

This month's meeting demonstrator is one of our new members, Pete Unger. Pete has been turning for 25 years, and is the one responsible for the beautiful segmented bowl shown at the last club meeting. Pete has agreed to show us how he made that very special bowl (ed., shown below), and after my "preview" you won't be disappointed.

In addition, this busy month has Mike Darlow here on June 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>. That is a Saturday / Sunday so everyone can attend. The cost is a very reasonable \$50 for both days and lunch will be served. This session will be held at Chemwest and Mike will be catering the demonstration to the questions and issues of the audience. He will demonstrate and explain the "basics" of turning so you will understand the "why" and be more likely to master, and have confidence, in the "how".

Jean François Escoulen will be here from France on June 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>. This is a Friday / Saturday hands-on session for 8 turners at the Reiman Ranch. We have *one opening* for this session as we had a late drop. The cost of this session is \$150 and again, you will be able to enjoy the wonderful cooking of someone other than me!

Payment for all sessions is due at the June meeting so make sure you bring your checkbook and see Lloyd Johnson during the meeting.

**Happy Turning...**  
**Tom Reiman**



## Wood Auction is Getting Close

For our August meeting we will be holding our annual Wood Auction. Our very good friend and auctioneer, Frank Lynn, will be down from Kelso to squeeze every cent possible from the membership. Now in order for this to happen, it is important that we start collecting our good, unused wood and other woodturning or woodworking items to donate to the cause. Those of you who have been to an auction before know the good time that will be had and for our newer members, please make an effort to come down and enjoy this special evening. This is also the night that we host our yearly barbecue as well, Walt Brown will be back cooking up his famous burgers and hot dogs. The meeting will be held at Chemwest and we will start the barbecue at 6:00 PM and the auction at 7:00 PM. The auction is normally our largest fund raiser of the year, so please make the effort and bring something to donate, but most importantly, bring your cash and check books. A good time is guaranteed to all.

**Thank You,**  
**Fred C. Kline**

## Library News

This month we have a double feature: our regularly scheduled addition; and a bonus feature donated by Mike Darlow. So grab a jumbo bucket of popcorn and supersized cola then sit back in your favorite chair for a woodturning extravaganza. The bonus feature is a 7 hour two-DVD set. This set covers the basics of woodturning in great detail. Watch this video to really see how to master woodturning's basics. Filming used 860 separate camera setups (I did not count all of them), many close-ups - often taken from the turner's viewpoint. This material originally sold as a video and was converted to DVD in 2003. Disk 1 contains an introduction by a famous wood turner and the following topics: the lathe; turn-

*See Library - Continued on page 4*



# The Soap Solution

By Leif O. Thorvaldson — *Reprinted with permission*

Having a re-awakening to the pleasures of woodturning after a gap of four years, I plunged into it with enthusiasm. Joining the South Puget Sound Chapter of AAW, buying books and videos and eagerly reading all the posts on the newsgroup, [rec.crafts.woodturning](http://rec.crafts.woodturning), along with visiting every internet site, both personal and commercial. I became increasingly discomfited by what I read and learned. Experienced turners and professional turners were constantly carrying on about multitudinous ways of “drying” wood so as to avoid cracking. One way in particular had my hasty heart dismayed when it was described that one should rough turn the wood, slather it up with various lotions and potions and let it sit for six months to six years. One was to build an enormous pile of these objects by constantly adding to the drying rack and, at the end of the six months (or six years), check to see if the roughed out blank had cracked or warped so badly as to be unusable. If not, one could then turn it to completion, finish it and hope that it wouldn’t crack thereafter. Faster methods were suggested: boiling, microwaving, burying in manure piles, compost heaps, sawdust piles, storing in sealed plastic bags, unsealed plastic bags, dry paper bags, wet paper bags, immersing or spraying with WD-40, ad nauseam. None of these did what I wanted to do, i.e., pick up a piece of green wood, turn it, sand it and finish it within a day or two without unsightly cracks occurring.

One fateful day, browsing on my computer while waiting for the first six months to elapse, I encountered a very lovely web site by Ron Kent <http://www.ronkent.com/RKgallery.html>. He had some beautiful Norfolk Pine turnings — very thin — and used some unique finishing techniques. All very nice, but what

struck me was a technique he had developed for stabilizing and conditioning wood. He had tried the expensive route, but was looking for something under \$50 per gallon. To make his story short, he found that Costco’s house brand (Kirkland) liquid dish washing detergent (LDD) mixed with an equal amount of water provided hitherto unavailable qualities in both conditioning and stabilizing of wood for almost immediate turning and finishing.

I went to Costco and purchased four half-gallon containers of the magic elixir along with a sturdy plastic storage bin of sufficient size to hold the mixture and some bowl blanks. Upon arrival at home, I emptied the detergent into the container and added an equal amount of water. From then on, I would take primarily green wood and rough turn in one day, soak overnight, and finish the next day. Sometimes I didn’t finish it on the second day and left it mounted on the lathe overnight and sometimes for several days. Surprise! They didn’t crack! I have since taken green wood, rough turned it, soaked it about four hours and then finish turned it and finished it in one day. In the six to eight months I have been using this technique, I haven’t had one bowl crack. A few had a bit of movement, but it was very slight. I have used the following woods: black walnut, vine maple, maple, oak (kiln dried), yew, honey locust, fruiting cherry, birch, plum, and apple. I have not tried madrona as I refuse to cut down the only one I have growing on my property.

Needless to say, I was ecstatic and proceeded to share my “discovery” with any and all turners I knew (two) and also spread the word on [rec.crafts.woodturning](http://rec.crafts.woodturning), (a regular not-so-little Johnny Appleseed I was!). A few turners were lured into trying it.

Unfortunately, some people can’t follow directions and tried variations on the simple recipe which resulted in cracking. A few did it correctly and were rewarded with success.

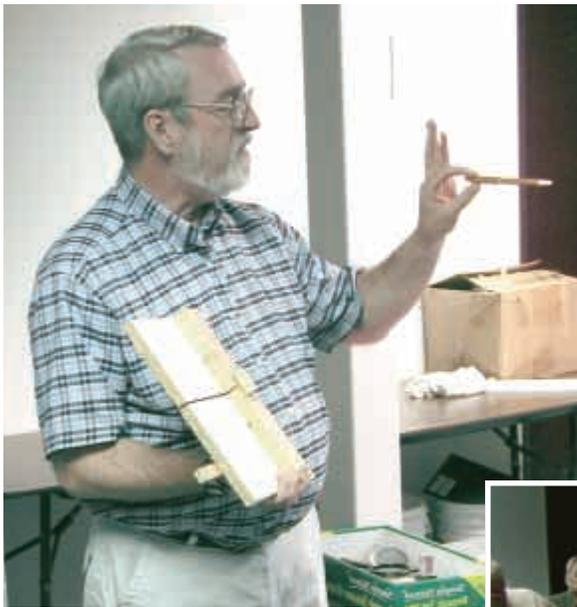
There has been some speculation as to the mechanism behind the process, but no real scientific investigation has been done. Several others and I have come up with the following theory:

“The soap solution sets up an osmotic gradient. Pure water in the wood is in more abundance than water in the soap solution, so it (the water) tries to migrate to balance the osmotic pressure. This would cause the specific gravity of the soap solution to decrease (although possibly not noticeably.) On the other hand, the concentration of soapy stuff is higher outside the wood than in, so it tries to migrate into the wood. If it is successful immigrating into the cells, the soapy solids will get trapped as the wood dries, preventing the cells from collapsing as they do when wood dries naturally (or unnaturally for that matter.) The soap solution is slicker than a Teflon banana peel. This may help the migration of soapy solids into the cells.”

The only slight drawback to the detergent solution is that the wood should be drained for a few minutes or longer and wiped with a towel while mounting it to the headstock. A plastic sheet should be placed over the ways and eye protection should be worn. Try it! Your hands will be smoother, cleaner and less subject to cracking as well as your turnings. (ed.- I’ve called Leif the Madge of LDD.)

Please follow the directions. Correct soap, correct mix ratio, always keep the turning item in the solution when not working on it, apply finish immediately upon looking upon it and declaring it is good and I am done. If a little damp feeling, don’t worry the finish will go on just fine. Please let me know of your results.

*© Leif O. Thorvaldson. All rights reserved. For more information on this subject and to pose questions and comments to Leif, email him at <Leif@mashell.com> or call 360-832-4352.*



**N**WWT Gadget Night called out to the innovators, entrepreneurs, tinkerers, and better-mousetrap builders willing to share their ideas. From tools and jigs to surfacing techniques and crushing stone, members stepped forward to demonstrate the modifications and methods they have developed in their shops so that others might benefit. Thank you to all who participated.

*Clockwise from above: Irv Johnson with his band saw jig for pen-making; Phil Lapp and his mini-hollowing and laser set-up; Lloyd Johnson demo-ing the Woodturner Pro centering jig for gluing segmented work; and Jim Hall discussing the texturing he applies with a needle scaler.*



*Library – Continued from page 1*

ing theory; tool design; sharpening; and safety. For spindle turning, Mike covers roughing, planing, V-cutting, bead rolling, fillets, coves, using calipers, leaving squares (pommels), turning a leg, and slender turning. For cup-chuck turning, Mike shows us chucking, turning a knob, turning an egg-cup, hollowing, and turning a lidded box. In Disk 2 we are treated to another introduction by that Darlow mate, followed by faceplate turning, bowl turning, design, wood preparation, chucking equipment, chucking procedures, tool theory and use. Mike, we thank you for your generous donation to our library and look forward to meeting you in person when you come to Portland. – Intermission.

The regularly scheduled addition to the library is a 57 minute VHS by David Springett titled "Elliptical Tuning." This video is for those of you who like to place square pegs in round holes or anyone who has difficulty making either perfectly square or perfectly round things (like me). In other words - anyone who is up to the challenge and has the time to build an oval chuck. Elliptical turning would seem to be a contradiction, yet it is a skill that has been practiced since the sixteenth century. If you have ever wondered how that little gem of an oval picture frame, or beautiful oval dish, was turned, wonder no more – with this video, you too will soon be using the technique to create your own stunning pieces. Master of the inexplicable, David Springett, explains and demonstrates in great detail the creation of an oval frame with a moulded edge and the techniques which, once mastered, will lead you to the creation of superb elliptical frames, dishes and boxes. David demonstrates how, without great expense or trouble, you can build the specialist homemade chuck that will give you the ability to turn these fascinating elliptical pieces on an ordinary lathe. Maybe next year we will have an oval turning challenge – check it out.

Happy turning,  
**Chris Dix**



*A few May Show'n'Tell items: Above - Pete Unger's uniquely segmented work; Right - Goblet by Joe Schafer; Below - Figured Maple bowl by Chris Dix.*

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### **Soren Berger hosted by Cascade WT**

Soren Berger, from New Zealand, will be here for two days of shop classes June 28th and 29th. Soren has been here twice before, about 4 years ago, and was well received. He puts on a good show and turns lots of items during the day. He uses some tools that are unique for hollowing and finishing. The demonstrations will be at Dale Larson's shop in Gresham. Classes will start about 9:30 and go to about 4:30. The cost is \$30 per day. For more information or to sign up call Dale at 503-661-7793.

Here is the schedule for each day:

#### **Wednesday June 28th**

1. Small handled bowls, a new fun idea
2. Thread chasing parallel threads in softer woods
3. Small hat turning with new easy light chuck
4. Soren's ladle

#### **Thursday June 29th**

1. Thread chasing tapered threads in softer woods
2. Larger hats and fun shapes, easy light chuck
3. Ladles in new interesting shapes
4. Larger handled bowls





*May Challenge: "Out of this World" - Turnings from Outer Space. From the top: Sputnik sphere with loose points, Phil Lapp; UFO lidded bowl, Don Woodward; Buck's Rocket box, Owen Lowe.*



## Challenge Schedule for 2006

**June** - Segmented turnings

**July** - Hollow forms

**August** - No challenge due to wood auction

**September** - Lidded boxes; slip fit or threaded

**October** - Jewelry & personal accessories: perfume containers, key fobs, etc.

**November** - Christmas ornaments

**December** - No challenge – Christmas party & gift exchange



## Notable Trees of Washington

### Vancouver's Old Apple Tree

This apple tree is the greatest living symbol of the Pacific Northwest's orchard industry. Its modest beginning has been traced to the whimsical flirtations of an English woman in 1825.

Historical detectives have learned from diary entries that Lt. Aemilius Simpson, an officer in the Royal Navy, was attending a formal dinner on the eve of his departure to the rugged Pacific Northwest. A young woman admirer collected some apple seeds left over from the fruit dessert that evening. She dropped the seeds in Lt. Simpson's dinner jacket pocket and said, "Plant these when you reach your Northwest wilderness." Simpson forgot about the seeds during his long sea voyage across the Atlantic Ocean, around Cape Horn and north through the Pacific to the Columbia River.

When he reached Fort Vancouver he donned the jacket for a formal dinner given in his honor by Dr. John McLoughlin. In 1826, under the direction of McLoughlin, the seeds were planted. One of the five original apple trees, the Old Apple Tree is the only one to survive. It has stoically withstood flood, wind and the steady encroachment of the railroad and Highway 14.

On October 19, 1984, the venerable Old Apple Tree was celebrated during the festive opening of Old Apple Tree Park located at 112 Columbia Way. The tree is now celebrated each year on the first Saturday in October at the Old Apple Tree Festival.

From [http://www.ci.vancouver.wa.us/parks-recreation/parks\\_trails/urban\\_forestry/docs/heritage\\_inventory.pdf](http://www.ci.vancouver.wa.us/parks-recreation/parks_trails/urban_forestry/docs/heritage_inventory.pdf)

## Classified Ads

**Guidelines for Classified Ads:** If you sell or find your item please notify the editor. Ads will only run for 3 (three) consecutive months. Please submit your ad to the editor by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month. Editor makes no apologies or guarantees for spelling or grammatical errors. All woodworking items, for sale or wanted, are welcome.

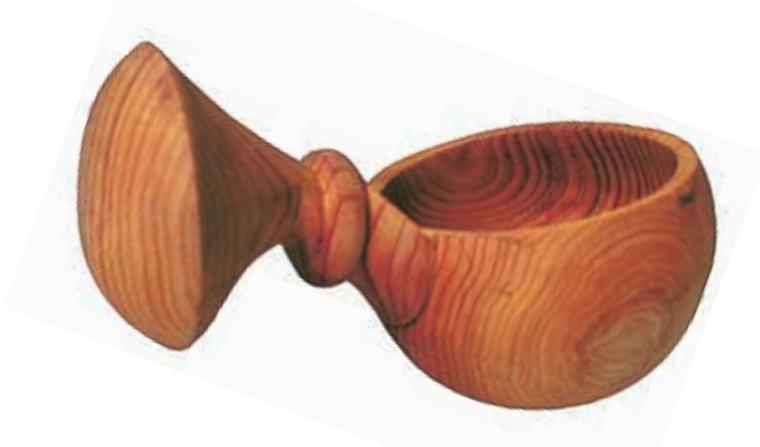
**Estate Sale,** Gordon Keyser's shop. Woodturning and wood carving tools and some large power tools. June 3, 9am-4pm. 11885 SE 36th Ave., Milwaukee, OR. **Contact Alice Keyser, 503-654-7897** (6/06)

**Tonneau Cover** from long & wide bed Ford pickup. \$200 or best offer. **Contact Mike Studebaker, 503-648-1417, <sadie551@msn.com>** (5/06)

**Estate Items:** My wood turning friend, mentor, and past president of Willamette Valley Woodturners, Keith Wood, died last fall. His widow has asked me to liquidate his shop tools. The major ones remaining are listed below. The tools are located in McMinnville, Oregon. I can email pictures on request. **Contact Doug Smith, <dsmith@onlinemac.com> 503-472-5616** (3/06)

Tools remaining for sale as of 05-01-06:

1. **Craftsman 6" Joiner**, Model 113.20680, SN 8.129.000.38, with stand - \$175.00
2. **ShopSmith Model 10ER**, SN69570 (elderly) - Best offer
3. **Craftsman 6" Grinder**, Model 115.19500, Mfg #7561 - \$30.00
4. **Bench Dog Router Cabinet and Router** - \$150.00



*More items from the May Show'n'Tell: a scoop by Steve Newberry; and Bruce Schafer's dyed tool handles with Serious Toolworks scrapers.*

## Editor's Note:

Submissions to the newsletter are due by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month. Articles, tips, web links, classified ads, or other items pertaining to woodturning are welcome.

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