

# WOOD CHIPS

March 2001

Next meeting Mar. 12 at 7:00 PM at Consolidated Lumber located off  
I-35 West on 67<sup>th</sup> Street in Merriam Kansas



Kansas City  
Woodturners  
Club  
Local Chapter of The  
American Association  
of Woodturners

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Camera:  
Don Grimes  
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## LAST MONTHS PROGRAM

We had a huge crowd at the Feb. meeting to participate in the wood turning basics (techniques) workshop. All three lathes were in action with instructors Alex Garcia, John Shackelford, Don Gruis, and Danny Moreno (At the grinder) offering help with correct tool use and sharpening. The meeting format was well received by the club members. Our thanks to the instructors, President Woodhouse and everyone else who contributed time in making the Feb. program successful. If you still have questions, the Saturday morning work shop should be helpful.

## MARCH PROGRAM

Jigs and fixtures are the theme for the March 12<sup>th</sup> meeting. With the promise of making our woodworking easier and improving accuracy, this is a topic of interest to all turners. This is your opportunity to bring your favorite jig or fixture and share how you use it with other club members. Plan to attend, this could easily be one of our best meetings of the new millennium.

## SET -UP AND CLEAN-UP

Anthony Harris  
Virgil Boyd

## REFRESHMENTS

Merle Schneck

Note: If any of the volunteers are unable to provide for what he/she signed up for, it is his./her responsibility to find another member to take his/her place.

Thank you for adhering to this rule.

## SHOW AND TELL

We had great participation at the Feb. Show and Tell and encourage everyone to bring examples of their work, even if it's not perfect.

Boyko Varney brought a good example of ornamental turning from "Australian Waddle" and ebony. Great job.

John Shackelford continued to work his magic with hollow forms and brought two constructed from Pin oak. He makes it look easy.

Chip Siskey brought enough plates and bowls to set a dinner table (However no dinner was served). Chip's plates were from cherry and walnut. He also had a nice natural edge bowl.

Pat Roman showed a very nice segmented stamp box from teak with an inlaid clock. He brought a partially completed stamp box from cocobolo to



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show how they are turned.

Russ Blaser brought in 2 good hollow forms from spalted sycamore finished with lacquer. Shackleford's got competition now.

Don Grimes started turning a hickory bowl at the Saturday workshop in January, took it back home, completed it, and brought it back for us all to enjoy. Good job Don.

Sandy Moreno showed a red heart base, which will hold a ball (sphere) once completed. Sandy is learning to turn the spheres without the aid of jigs and fixtures.

Danny Moreno is apparently planning to play slow pitch softball this summer. He is turning bats, from pretty expensive wood, (Cocobolo). No problem here, usually the only chance to break a bat is to actually connect with the ball.

Bob Davis's daughter sent him a nice piece of hand made pottery, which Bob promptly reproduced in wood with the help of Mary. Both bowls were on hand at our meeting, and looked virtually identical.

Virgil Boyd brought in a nice cedar hollow form. More competition John.

Clarence Huycke turned a good natural edge bowl from ginko biloba.

Merle Schneck brought a mallet with a wax finish to show. Merle would appreciate any information you might have that makes wax finishes durable. Merle also showed a nice freestanding shop light.

### GUEST

Ed Mills  
Ed Crowdis  
Steven Bennett

### NEW MEMBERS

Mike McGloughlin  
Dan Rynard  
Gary Walden  
Samantha Anderson

### DONATION-

Merle Schneck has donated a 3/8" Electrical drill to the club. Thanks Merle.

### SATURDAY WORKSHOPS

On the fourth Saturday of each month from 8:30 am to noon at consolidated lumber you can use the club's lathes to improve your turning skills. Knowledgeable club members will be available to answer your questions and assist you in learning new work methods.



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## The Wheatbix Finish

By Jim Manley

[Illustrations](#)

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A couple of years ago student of mine coined the phrase "Wheatbix Finish" to explain his ability with the gouge. I find this an excellent way to describe the unfortunate result of torn endgrain on a gouge-finished bowl. I find that the predominant subject for discussion in turning circles is torn endgrain. The hardest lesson to teach is how to get a good finish on your work. The average novice turner believes that the secret to good finish is sandpaper and magic potions. This I am afraid this is a fallacy. Let's have a look at what it takes to beat the Wheatbix finish. When it comes to getting a good finish the best thing you can do to start off with is to leave the sand paper in the cupboard for a while and try to understand why your piece looks like it does. It is my belief that the biggest causes of bad finish are rules, tools, skills and technique, bowl shapes and angle of grain, moisture content and wood types, so lets have a look at these individually.

Rules - Although the purest will tell you that there are no rules to turning there are a couple of rules we should follow very religiously. These are:

- Rule 1 - Rub the Bevel,
- Rule 2 - Sharp tools are Paramount.
- Rule 3 - Speed Kills,
- Rule 4 - Cut in the Right Direction.

Rule 1 - Rub the Bevel. If the bevel of the gouge does not stay in contact with the wood being cut the tool is being used as a scraper and it leaves a very bad finish.

Rule 2 - Sharp tools are Paramount. This one is very straightforward. When it comes to your final pass with the gouge, insure your cutting tip is sharp. Many professionals have a gouge they use solely for doing their finishing cuts with. If you don't have a chosen finishing gouge, give the tool a quick lick on the grinder before you do the last cut.

Rule 3 - Speed Kills - Here I am referring to the speed of travel of the tool as it shapes the bowl. Let's call it assent rate. If the tool travels to fast up the wood, you don't give the bevel time to do its work





tear out the wood instead of cutting it. Please don't confuse this with bowl rpm; the speed of the bowl revolving is not what we are after. It is the time it takes for you to cut from the foot of the bowl to the rim. The advice is, on your last pass; slow your assent rate right down, for the best finish.

**Rule 4 - Cut in the Right Direction.** Believe it or not there is a right and a wrong direction to cut wood. **Face work** - You should always cut from the smallest diameter to the largest on the outside of a bowl, call it uphill if you like. On the inside you should cut down hill from the largest diameter to the smallest. This might help explain why when we make a bowl we start with the outside first, because it helps us attain a better finish off the gouge.

**Spindle Work**- Cutting rules for spindle work are exactly opposite to face work Here you should cut from the largest diameter to the smallest or down hill.

**Tools** - When it comes to tools rule 2 is a biggie. Sharp tools cut wood blunt tools butcher wood. For the beginner tool sharpening is more important than anything else. There is no short cut to sharpening. The novice is best advised to invest in a sharpening jig. The Teknatool sharpening centre is as good as any and there are plenty of people around who can show you how to drive one. The other thing with tools is quality. High-speed steel will keep its edge much longer than carbon steel. If you are not keen on sharpening get yourself into better quality steel. But remember even high-speed steel still needs sharpening, just less often.

**Skills and Technique** - Skills are something that is gained with practice. There is only one way to gain tools skills and that is to cut wood. All my beginners want to make something with the first piece of wood they put on the lathe. My advice is to make shavings and use the whole bowl to practice with. If you are having problems with your finishing cut, you have the whole bowl to practice with. While you are shaping the outside get the feel of how this particular piece of wood performs in the finishing cut while you are still shaping it. If you are experiencing problems in attaining a decent finish off the tool, I can thoroughly recommend putting pieces of wood on the lathe and wasting them away to nothing all in the name of skills. Until you can master the gouge its probably best not to make your projects to complicated. Technique is another matter. In time you will probably come up with a technique that works okay. My advice is to get someone to show you how to do it. If there is someone in the area offering classes, go to the professionals. It will take a lot less time for you to learn the techniques and possible years off the time in becoming proficient.

**Bowl Shapes and Angle of Grain** - Often the shape of the bowl can be the problem with the finish. Have you noticed that it is very hard to sand the end of a piece of 4x2 to make it look good? This is because the straws that carried the trees nutrients are exposed like the end of a pipe and fall inwards on them selves when cut at right angles. Now take your average bowl, if it has perpendicular sides the whole of the side of the bowl has right angle cut endgrain on it on either side of the bowl. Not great for finishing. If we have sloping sides, say at 45° we can alleviate the right angle endgrain problem and make finishing much easier. So the advice here is stay away from flat-sided bowls when we are learning the business.

**Moisture Content** - Here is a problem that is cropping up more and more as we strive to recycle the timbers that are pulled out of old houses and the like. For wood to cut easy it needs a certain amount of moisture in it. To confirm this try a piece of green wood, it cuts like cheese. Now imagine a piece of wood that has sat in the ceiling of an old house for a hundred years, it has very little moisture in it at all. Instead of pieces being cut from wood like this it tends to break off, this is due it being brittle because it is dry and hard. There is no real answer to old dry wood other than patience. You might like to try turning at one speed slower and keeping the assent rate slow. Rule 2, as in sharp tools is really important as well.

**Wood Types** - This one could take a week of Sundays to write. Please realise that not all woods are equal in finishing ability. Most Kiwis want to make a Rimu bowl, fairly early in their turning careers. This wood, especially recycled Rimu is one of the worst to get a good finish on. The following list would be my choice for the easiest woods to turn and achieve a good finish off the tool with.

Sycamore, Walnut, Ash, Silky oak, Elm, Chestnut and Hawthorn, to name a few. You will notice they are mostly English timbers and they are removed from many backyards throughout the country every weekend.

Well I think I have covered quite a few points that need to be considered when you are not achieving the "off the tool" finish you want. Consider all of them, they will help.

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