

# WOOD CHIPS

June 2001

Next meeting June 11th 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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Librarians:  
Dick Smith  
(913) 341-4613  
Pete Stiglich  
(913) 342-9133

Camera:  
Don Grimes  
(913) 962-2060

## LAST MONTHS PROGRAM

With 52 members and guest present Bill Anderson and Danny Moreno teamed up to present the program in May. Bill reminded us all in the importance of keeping safety in mind when planning and working on a project. Using myrtle wood, Danny turned a nice square edged bowl. Danny explained he likes to use small gouges for this work, taking light cuts of about 1/32". Scrapers don't work well because of torn edges. Sanding is mainly by hand with the lathe off unless you have a finger you don't mind losing. Both presentations were excellent.

## JUNE PROGRAM

Anthony Harris will give a demonstration on thread chasing. This is an extremely difficult project and should be a lot of fun.

## REFRESHMENTS

Merle Schneck

## SET -UP AND CLEAN-UP

Don Grimes  
Pat Roman

Note: If you can't do this, you need to find someone to take your place. Thanks.

## NEW MEMBERS

Frank Novich  
Bruce Page

## VISITORS

We had 5 visitors with one, Henry Blecha, traveling over 200 miles to attend. Apparently our dancing girls marketing scheme is working.

## Beech Wood Project

All three project teams brought in their completed beech wood projects.

1. Team one- John Shackelford, Pete Stiglich, Virgil Boyd and Merle Schneck turned a large vase.

2. Team two- Russ Blaser, Pat Roman, and Don Grimes showed their large bowl.

3. Team three- Danny Moreno, Bob Davis, and Dick Woodhouse turned a large vase.

All these projects were well done and a real credit to each of them.

## MEMBER NEWS

Danny Moreno continues to establish himself as one of the nations finest turners. In addition to turning and teaching turning to others, Danny does a lot to help our youth learn woodturning. Danny sets aside a portion of the fees he earns with his teaching to create his "Outstanding Turner Recognition Grant." Recently Danny presented his first grant to Jason Carpenter, a student at Truman High School. Jason received a 12" Delta lathe, a set of tools, and a membership in the AAW. Outstanding job Danny.



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**SHOW AND TELL**

Anthony Harris turned and brought in a huge walnut bowl (21 inch diameter) and also 3 small boxes with threaded lids. Anthony will show us how he did it at the next meeting.

Danny Moreno showed a large walnut platter, a maple burl turning, and a square edged hollow vessel from Australian sheoak with a Mexican ebony pedestal. All well done.

Sandy Moreno presented a spalted sycamore natural edge vessel and her famous feather "fu-fu" turning.

Mary and Bob Davis working as a team turned 2 platters, a candleholder, and a small bowl. All inlaid with glass. They looked great.

Larry Transmeier has designed his own display tray to show his pens.

John Shackleford showed his most recent Christmas ornament made from segmented diamond wood. It was outstanding as usual.

Alex Garcia brought in three items, a platter from walnut crotch, a small mesquite bowl, and a hollow form from Bradford pear. Looked good.

Kenny Gorseline turned a nice looking goblet with a captive ring. Good work.

Don Gruis fished Russ Blaser's hollow form out of the trash following Russ's demo work back in April, took it home and added a top and bottom. Don and Russ make a good team.

Boyko Varney showed his latest ornamental work, a Kansas University clock from mahogany. The turning looked great. Boyko offered no explanation why the clock ran backwards- Probably a KU thing?

Nathan Myers showed a display of wood types he uses to make his pens. Looked good.

**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.

**NORTHLAND SIMINAR**

On Saturday, July 21<sup>st</sup>, the Northland club is having a mini symposium "Turn North- As We Turn One." It looks good. We will have flyers at our next meeting for anyone wanting more information.



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## Identifying Your Work

By Paul Burri

When it comes to identifying one's work (in this I will sometimes refer to it as "signing" one's work), I guess the first question that needs to be answered is, "Why do I need to?" There are at least three reasons:

1. If you take pride in your work you should be willing to put your name on it. Just from that point of view alone, should be sufficient reason to identify whatever you produce. Your skill, your devotion to detail, your hours of loving patience, your hours of design time and thought that went into the piece all cry out for putting your identity on the work. You sign it because you are proud of it.

2. Identifying a piece immediately increases its value. (I prefer the word "piece" to project. The word "project" makes me think of road or dam building or low cost housing; things like that.) Think of it this. Would you buy a painting that was unsigned? Why then would you hesitate to sign your work?

3. I can almost guarantee that your work will outlast you. Given that, I believe that it is important to sign your work for your posterity. Someday one of your grandchildren or great grandchildren will proudly show a piece that you made and say, "My great grandfather (or grandmother) made this. See? His signature is right here."

"OK, so how do I identify my work?" Let's look at the possibilities.

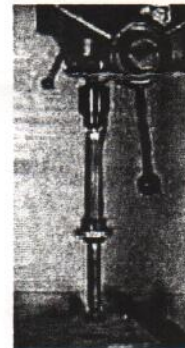
One way is to literally sign it using a ball point pen, a felt tipped pen or even by using a sharp stylus. Many people use this method and it is adequate, quick and easy. One problem with this method is that your signature probably won't last more than a few years. It surely will be illegible before your grandchildren need to find out who made it.

Another way is to use an ordinary rubber stamp such as you use to stamp your return address on your envelopes. This is probably the least expensive and surely the quickest way to identify your work but in

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my personal opinion this is the least desirable method. You have just spent many, many hours of your time - not to mention the cost of the materials - and now you cheapen the piece with a rubber stamp signature. Secondly, the ink will surely fade with time.

Another method is to use a hand grinder with a small ball-shaped burr that you will use as if it were a pen. This is certainly a permanent method that will last the life of the piece. It is the method that Sam Maloof - of rocking chair fame - uses to sign his work. As a little side note, he not only signs every one of his pieces but he also has whichever of his apprentices worked with him on the piece sign it also. A very nice practice, I think. I have tried using this method and I gave it up because I couldn't get used to using a relatively bulky grinder as a pen.

Still another way to sign your work is by using a pre-printed stick-on label as is frequently also used for your return address on envelopes. This is another quick and easy way to identify your work. The problem here is that it is probably the least permanent method. Labels soon dry up and peel off. Or they get peeled off by "persons unknown."

A more expensive way to identify your work is to have it laser engraved. This is an elegant and certainly permanent marking method. Any design, logo or signature - even pictures - can be engraved onto your work. For one of a kind work I think it will be pretty expensive. For volume work it may be the way to go because the piece price will drop somewhat. In any event you get what you pay for. You get very high quality but it's expensive.

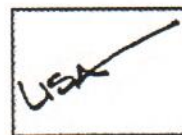
Probably equally as expensive as laser engraving is to have brass plates engraved at a local trophy shop and then attach them to your work using small brass screws. This is a truly elegant method but is also a bit pricey. In addition, there is the extra work of drilling small holes and mounting the plate.

The last method - and in my opinion the best - is by branding your name, logo, signature or other design permanently into your work.

## Branding

Already I have discussed several of the ways to identify your work; some better than others. In my humble opinion branding your work is the easiest and fastest way in addition to being permanent and inexpensive.

Branding involves using a branding iron made of any



temperature resistant metal with raised lines. The branding is heated by one of two ways. A gas heated branding iron can be heated using an old fashioned blow torch, a butane torch, an ordinary kitchen gas stove or a propane camping stove. An electrically heated branding iron is usually furnished with a heating element that you plug into any convenient power outlet. After about 10 or 15 minutes, the branding iron will be hot enough to brand even the hardest woods.

When the branding iron reaches the proper temperature (about 800° F) - usually determined by testing a piece of scrap material - you simply press it against the work for about 1 to 2 seconds and your piece is permanently marked. It's that simple.

You can make your own branding iron one of several ways. One way is to take an ordinary large nail and file an interesting pattern into it. You then mount this nail into a suitable wooden handle that you make or buy and you're ready to go. Another method is a bit more time consuming but equally effective. You can use some fine copper or soft steel wire about 1/32" to 1/16" in diameter and carefully shape it into whatever design you like. Once you are satisfied with your design, silver braze the wire onto a small brass or copper mounting plate which is, in turn, mounted on large nail. Still another way to make your own branding iron is to buy a set of steel letter stamps from any machinists supply store. By cutting and brazing these together carefully, you can now spell out whatever name or words you like.

Here are some points to consider when buying or making a branding iron. The first consideration is whether to use a gas heated or an electrically heated branding iron. If you are buying a branding iron and cost is a consideration a gas heated branding iron be less expensive because you will not have the expense of the heating element. On the other hand, a gas heated branding iron is less convenient because you will only be able to brand about 4 or 5 pieces before you need to heat it again. With an electrically heated branding iron you will be able to brand continuously once it reaches temperature. (There are some other advantages to an electrically heated branding iron that I'll discuss later.) An electrically heated branding iron is also safer because you don't have the danger of an open flame in a wood shop. Wood dust and wood chips don't mix well with an open flame.

The quality of the brand will be equal whether you choose to heat it electrically or with gas. If you choose to buy one be sure to consider the reputation of the company you are dealing with. Some branding iron companies are small and cannot handle more



than a few orders at a time. This means that it may take them several weeks to make your branding iron – not to mention two to three weeks before they get back to you with a quote. Many of them are limited to the amount of fine detail that they can reproduce or the size they can make. Many companies will respond with, "Your design is too small." or "Your design is too large." Some companies have very competitive prices (read "cheap") but will only produce a very sterile two line, block letter branding iron.

There are several other uses for your branding iron once you have purchased it. You can use it to emboss leather using it "cold" as a leather stamp. You can also use it to actually brand the leather but in this case you will need an accessory temperature controller because the normal operating temperature for wood will be too high for leather.

Another use for your branding iron is to permanently mark plastics, particularly such things as computers, keyboards, laptops, projectors, etc. For most plastics you will need a temperature controller as with leather.

For those who are making large quantities of parts or who want to generate extra income by making and selling small street fair or tourist items another simple attachment is available – a drill press attachment. The standard heating element is modified to fit into the chuck of an ordinary drill press. A few simple stops are clamped onto the drill press table and it is now possible to brand parts rapidly and uniformly using inexperienced labour at a relatively high rate up to about 300 parts per hour. Using this sort of a system, various parts can be quickly branded.

## Frequently asked questions:

What is the difference in quality produced by a gas heated branding iron and an electrically heated one?

There is no difference.

How long do I hold the hot branding iron on the work?

There are slight differences in the branding time between hard and soft woods and between face grain and end grain but the average time is about 2-

3 seconds.

Can I brand continuously with the branding iron?

With a gas heated branding iron you will be able to brand four or five parts and then you will need to reheat the branding iron. With an electrically heated branding iron you will be able to brand continuously once it reaches operating temperature (about 10-15 minutes).

Can I have my signature made into a brand?

Yes. Also any line art images, any type face, any design, any logo.

Are there any limitations to what I can have made into a brand?

Half tone images are usually not practical. It is also a good idea to avoid fine white lines against a black background because the heat from the black areas will scorch out the fine white lines.

I am a turner. Can I brand cylindrical surfaces?

Yes, you can brand a cylindrical surface as shown in Figure 1. You can also brand your turned objects by using any of the ideas shown in Figure 2.

How long does it take to get my branding iron?

BrandNew promises a 1-2 week turn-around time. This does not include the shipping transit time.

Article supplied by Paul Burri of Brand New, custom branding irons. <http://www.brandnew.net>

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