

What's Wood Turning?

Ken Deaner

A recent article in the AAW Journal listed classes in woodturning in Maine, Connecticut, Tennessee, and Florida. A short time ago the only way to learn how to turn was by paying for private lessons. Another article discussed the SOFA shows in Chicago and the upcoming show in New York. There were articles about galleries accepting work all over the country and museums doing exhibits.

The Journal goes on to discuss television programs about turning and internal AAW issues of ethics related to board members being paid fees for hosting such shows. There has been a remarkable growth of interest in turning over the past ten years. The growth is so extensive that our national organization is discussing ethics. Only a few years ago it was struggling to bring together a group of people with common interests who loved to turn.

When you speak to the average person on the street they still have no idea what a lathe is. They have no idea how much time is involved in turning a fine piece of art. So much for all of the purported growth, museums interest, and TV exposure. The first question asked of a turner who is exhibiting his work is how long did that take you to do, or how did you do that? I wonder if artists who paint are asked such questions.

Joe DeMaio and I spent a day in my shop exchanging ideas and sharing techniques. We turned a small form and began to do some carving and texturing. I showed Joe some of the tools I use and some of the new tools I recently purchased as carving has become more important in my current turning. Joe does a lot of carving on his work. I have seen some of his carving tools. After several hours of work we looked at one another and smiled. All we accomplished in the day was turning a small hollow and doing a bit of layout for carving. You can not expect instant gratification if you are going to turn, hollow, carve and texture. The demonstrators who come to the club for a day can turn out a rough example of their work but they never complete anything they start. The hard work begins when the piece comes off of the lathe and the next steps begin.

Completing a turned piece requires patience. It requires as much time or more to decorate as it does to complete the rough turned form. How much time does it take? That depends upon what you are trying to accomplish. A weed pot is usually not a completed the-

matic piece that has been hollowed, textured, carved, painted etc.

The general public should be expected to recognize the skill, talent and beauty that goes into our work. Fellow turners should understand that we can share ideas and teach one another new skills but the trick to creating good work is time and patience. Our library outreach and participation in the Long Island Woodworkers Show are just some of the ways we can get the message out.

The question should not be how long does it take you to do that "piece" but rather how do you muster the patience and intestinal fortitude to do that. The answer is that if you love doing something time is not a factor. A gardener has to wait months or years for a plant to grow. Sometimes the plant dies and it is all for naught. It is not in reality for nothing but rather it is part of learning. It is the process of creation that spurs you on.

When the AAWs journal has articles dealing with club ethics it has lost sight of the organization's original purpose to disseminate knowledge of turning around the world. Lets get back to basics. We are members because we love to turn and like the company of like minded people. We want others to appreciate what we do. The AAW should focus on education.

Jim Diamond's Demo 2/21

By Doug Ruggiero

Jim gave February's demonstration, filling in for Bob Brady. Bob unfortunately had broken his ankle when he slipped on some ice. Jim started off his demo by discussing design and form. Form refers to a line that flows. There are closed forms and open forms. The side comes in on a closed form. The opening is not the widest part of the turning. The sides go out and the opening is nominally the widest part on an open form. Jim suggests not putting the widest part below center on a closed form, but to put it about 1/3 down from the top. Jim made it clear that it is not wrong to put the widest part below center, but he feels it tends to make the piece look chunky.

Jim continued with how the shape of the