



# CHIPS & Chatter

THE SILICON VALLEY WOODTURNERS' NEWSLETTER

## Gordon Rockhill turns square.

*Gordon Rockhill turns the underside of a square bowl, developing the wings.*



Gordon Rockhill of West Bay Woodturners showed off his square-edge bowl techniques at the April meeting.

Gordon says that not all square edged bowls are square. They may be rectangular or diamond shaped, or even irregularly shaped, with the bowl located somewhere on the surface. You need a good idea of the shape you're working toward before you start. The "rectangular" part also need not be flat. It could form a variety of curves. You can have big bowls with little wings, small bowls with big wings, and everything in between. The wings can droop down so low they touch the table and suspend the bowl, like feet.

Gordon showed several small sample bowls

and discussed the successful and not so successful elements of each, before showing us how he turns them.

Gordon mounted a green blank of bay laurel, about 8" square by 2.5" thick, on a pin chuck. He decides where the wings are going to be, and marks the edges of the piece where he's going to stop cutting. He also marks the position of the bowl on the bottom of the blank. Then he begins cutting wood from the bottom of the wings, using a pull cut from the center to the corners. He cautions us to keep fingers away from the tool rest and the invisible corners whirling around.

He removes wood from below the wings, then begins shaping the bottom of the bowl. He gently removes wood and tool marks from



*"Square edged" bowls can have many different shapes.*

*What's important is the illusion of a bowl poking through a solid sheet of wood. Proportion is also important. The top bowl is a little too large for the around it.*

# PRES SEZ



What a great demo we had with JOHN JORDAN! I wish everyone could have seen him. He does not come west very often. So who's next? Soren Berger, I think. He also is a great person to see for a turning demo. He will be here in June. Be sure to sign up for that demo.

Each person we see adds something to our own toolbox. For me, John Jordan's hollow forms are what helped me get started in woodturning. Bob Stocksdales HOOKED me on Natural Edged Bowls. Soren got me involved with the roughing gouge. It goes on. Each person has helped me grow as a turner and artist. I enjoy turning because of the experiences and expressions I get from the people and the wood. This is also where

our Club and the AAW can help us grow as Woodturners. See as many demonstrators as you can. Go with us to UTAH. What an opportunity that venue is, to see many different turners from many different parts of the world. This is an annual get together and each time is different with different people and events.

The AAW puts on a great annual Symposium. Each year that event is in a different place in the country. Last year it was on the west coast in Pasadena. This year it is in Florida. Next year it will be in Kansas. Some of us are already making (I can't wait) plans to go to that event.

My point is, take in as much as you can, see the different turners, demonstrations and classes or workshops too. This will help you grow as a turner and artist, I know I have.

*Rich*

## Next Meeting

Join us on Wednesday, May 5th, at 7 P.M., when SVW celebrates its annual Top Night! Location: Rich Johnson's Woodturning Center in San Jose.

Rich's Center is located behind his home at 14979 Joanne Ave., San Jose. From Hwy. 680, take the McKee Road exit East about 1.5 miles to Toyon Ave. Turn left and go 0.6 mile, turn right onto Joanne Ave.

Bring your chair and items for Show and Tell. We all learn together.

PRESIDENT'S CHALLENGE: SPINNING TOP!

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# TURNING OUT

## Show & Tell and President's Challenge

Mike Magrill brought bowls of Tennessee cedar and pepper tree. The pepper bowl was natural edged, though the bark came off. Both were finished with 50% Deft lacquer over sanding sealer.

Jim Gott presented a red bark eucalyptus natural edged bowl, stabilized with CA glue. He finished it with 75% Deft lacquer.

Bill Robinson brought a pittosporum potpourri bowl, made with a Dege hollower. He finished it with Deft.

John Lipka brought a manzanita goblet and a bowl. He



also showed two spalted oak bowls, one with a walnut base. He finished both with lacquer.

### President's Challenge

Phil Roybal led off with a Gothic pattern walnut candlestick, finished with Watco and wax.

Herb Green brought two chess pawns, one of holly and the other of blackwood.

Mike Magrill made three tool handles, two of Lyptus, Weyerhaeuser's genetically engineered tree that is similar to mahogany. The third handle was of maple. All



*Clockwise from top left: Jim Gott, Mike Magrill, Phil Roybal, Herb Green, John Lipka, and Bill Robinson.*

*Continued on page 4.*



*Challenge,  
con't. from  
pg. 3.*

were finished with Deft. Dick Pickering showed a feather duster with cherry handle. He also brought a make up, his segmented lamp with 644 pieces.

Rich Johnson brought a bunch of string puzzles that he made for a craft fair.

Jim Gott brought a bubinga and blackwood pen, finished with Deft.

Lloyd Frisbee brought a candle holder of maple, finished with Mylands friction polish.

Bill Robinson made a candlestick holder of cherry. He finished it with Deft.

John Lipka showed off a rolling pin of oak, birch, red palau, and other woods, finished with walnut oil. He also did a zebra



wood lidded box as a make up.

Mike Rude brought Swedish yarn winding sticks of cherry, mahogany, and other woods, finished with Mylands friction polish and wax.

Ace showed an Olsen cherry tool handle and two makeups: a throughlay vase for Glue Up, and a glass jar with wooden lid for Lidded Box.

Jim Keller brought a pinstripe vase made of wenge, holly, ebony, and veneers as a make up for Glue Up. Unfortunately, we missed pictures of Ace's and Jim's work.

Dick Pickering and Lloyd Frisbee won the drawing.

Next month's challenge is Tops.

*Clockwise from top left: Mike Magrill, Lloyd Frisbee, Bill Robinson, John Lipka, Mike Rude, Jim Gott, Rich Johnson, and Dick Pickering (twice).*



*Square  
Turning,  
con't. from  
pg. 1*

the wings, developing the droopy wing look he wants. He periodically stops the lathe to check his progress. It's easy to get the wings outboard of the disc too thin, thinking you're cutting evenly all the way across, so it's important to check wing thickness as you cut. Finally, he shear scrapes the wing undersides.

Gordon points out that one can eliminate a lot of sanding effort by putting a fillet between the wings and the bowl walls. But part of the charm of this type of project is the illusion of a bowl sticking up through a piece of wood, and that requires a very clean transition from bowl to wings.

The underside complete, he cuts a tenon on the bottom of the bowl and reverses it in the chuck.

He starts with the tool on the rest, level, past the outside



*(Top) Gordon begins hollowing the bowl.*

*(Bottom) When shaping the top of the wings, he stops the lathe frequently to check wing thickness.*

of the corners. Then he cuts very slowly on the outside edge, so he doesn't knock the corners off. He sets the tool rest at an angle, then maintains the tool at 90° to the rest to insure that he cuts the proper angle on the droop of the wings. He cuts from the outside in because it goes faster. Again, he periodically checks for even wing thickness, because it's easy to get the outer edges too thin relative to the inner surfaces.

Gordon controls the tool with his body, moving his whole body to follow the curve of the wings without letting the tool dig into the wing tips. He says he usually hollows the bowl before turning the top surface of the wings so he has a better picture of where the bowl will come through the wings. He finishes the top surface with a skew scraper, tilted up 45° as a shear scraper.

With the wing surfaces complete, Gordon shapes the top rim of the bowl so it appears to flow into the bottom curve. Then he hollows the bowl in the traditional manner, bringing the wall thickness to a bit less than 1/4".

Sanding these bowls is very tricky. Because of the way the planes come together, one has to do most of the sanding by hand while the piece is held in the chuck. Thus you'll probably spend more time sanding than turning. He would sand the bottom before reversing the piece. He starts with very coarse paper to get the ridges out, then eases up on the coarse paper, before going to finer grits.

The result is an eye catching and unusual bowl. Thanks for a great demo, Gordon!

## MENTOR PROGRAM

Our Mentor program now includes five volunteer mentors. Contact Phil Roybal to join the list. Members who need some help (but not formal lessons) can contact:

Rich Dege	(408) 272-8122
Jim Gott	(408) 265-9501
Rich Johnson	(408) 254-8485
Ron Newcomb	(510) 797-6665
Phil Roybal	(408) 255-4789

# EDITOR'S NOTES



## JOHN JORDAN HOLLOWS AND CARVES

Noted Tennessee woodturner and Stubby lathe distributor John Jordan spent a day with Silicon Valley Woodturners. He talked about his philosophy, and demonstrated how he makes his carved and textured hollow forms.

Turners who signed up for the Saturday session got a chance to talk to John about tools, techniques, and design. We also learned cool tricks for texturing with steel and brass brushes.

John talked about his line

of hollowing tools, which he used during the day. He also demonstrated how he lays out and carves his pieces with hand and power operated carving tools, and power hammers. Over the course of the day, he shaped, hollowed, and textured the form shown in the pictures.

John knows a great deal about wood and how to compensate for its less desirable features, and he's casting that knowledge into an upcoming video, to be available next month in VHS and DVD formats.





# STAFF REPORTS & OTHER BUSINESS

## **RICH JOHNSON (PRESIDENT)**

Our club picnic is set for Saturday, July 17th, at the Johnsons' house. It's a pot luck, with the club supplying the meat. We'll have an instant gallery contest for work done since last July. There will be a variety of categories announced on our Yahoo site, and members can enter up to two pieces per category. Attendees will vote on the entries during the afternoon.

## **HERB GREEN (VP/PROGRAMS)**

Top Night is coming up, with prizes for the longest spinning tops in the following categories: smallest, largest, glue up, string launched, power launched, musical, tipsy, and most unique. Best of Show goes to the longest spinning top overall.

Upcoming workshops include Soren Berger on June 19th, Neil Scobie on August 7th, and Andi Wolfe on October 17th. Sign up with Herb for \$25 per workshop.

## **PHIL ROYBAL (SEC'Y./EDITOR)**

The latest SVW Library list and Ironman chart are posted on our Yahoo group site. Now that I have info from the Croquet Challenge Rules Committee, I'll have ball/mallet gauges available at the next Sawdust Session.

## **CRAIG THORSON (LIBRARY)**

Late member Dick Jessing's widow has donated half his library of woodworking books to the club. They are now available for check-out at \$2/month. See the complete listing on our Yahoo group site under FILES.

## **JIM GOTT (TREASURER)**

### INCOME

Apparel	\$20
Dues	\$35
Library	\$46
Raffle	\$35

### EXPENSES

Decker demo fee	\$50
Challenge prizes	\$20
Check printing	\$15.95
Pickering (Vasona Turn Off fee)	\$131
Pickering (SVW patches)	\$335.58
Domain name renewal (5 yrs.)	\$65

NEW BALANCE (spendable) \$1458.39

## **DICK PICKERING (APPAREL)**

We now have embroidered SVW patches available, at \$5 each. Members can sew these onto navy or white shirts, caps, and other items, instead of incurring the expense and delay of having these items individually embroidered.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

The annual Picnic and Turn Off will be at Vasona Park on September 18th. Our site is flat and grassy, perfect for the Croquet Challenge. The picnic is pot luck, and members who have them should bring sun shelters for shade.

We will play by "Backyard Rules", as defined in the association web site. Lloyd will provide by this weekend. We'll provide hoops for everyone.

Clubs turn their own balls and mallets. Balls are 3 5/8" or smaller, any weight, made of wood. The mallet heads vary from 7-9", and are no more than 3 5/8" diameter, with any length handle.

There will be an instant gallery, but no trophy. Winner of the croquet game gets the annual plaque.

*Con't.  
from  
pg. 7* Al Gore reports that our latest newsletter is now up on the web site, and welcomes your ideas on how to improve the site. Also, members who have pictures to place on their page in the site should send the images to Al.

Craig Thorson made a motion that the club should purchase the Jet minilathe, chuck, stand,

and cart of Rich's that we've been using for shows and demonstrations. He moved that club should pay \$620 for the lot, Rich's purchase price, since it's been used almost exclusively by the club. The motion was seconded and approved by voice vote.

## FOR SALE

Even Roy wants to know...

### How did you do that?

Rich Johnson's Woodturners' Boot camp.

Learn the basics, from chainsaw to polish.

An all day class. Book available. Sign up now. (408) 254-8485.



### Woodfast lathe for sale

16" capacity, variable speed, good condition.

Credit card OK. E-mail Josh Salesin at [jls-epi@pacbell.net](mailto:jls-epi@pacbell.net) for more info.

### Affordable Elegance Custom Embroidery



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