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Keep Turning with the AAW

October 2019

Greetings!



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The advertisement features three images: a man wearing sunglasses and a wooden watch, a close-up of a wooden watch, and a pair of wooden sunglasses.

TURNING OF THE WEEK



[Cynthia Carden Gibson](#)

[and Laurent Niclot](#)

[Tea in Bloom](#)

5.5"

Holly, pyrography, acrylic, ink, gold leaf

WEEKLY PICKS: CONTEMPLATE COLLABORATION

Woodturning doesn't have to be a solitary process. Collaborating with others can be

an energizing and inspiring experience. It can open your eyes and push you in new, unexplored directions. When combining multiple artistic voices, the result can often be more than the sum of its parts. This week's picks are intended to encourage you to blend vision and voices by collaborating with others.



Ray Key and Hans Weissflog
Ebony
4" X 5.5"



Ray Key and Molly Winton
Canary Wood
3" X 5.5"

Ray Key Collaboration

One outstanding example of a collaborative project is the Ray Key Collaboration. After Ray Key passed away, his wife, Liz, with the help of others, found countless partly turned items in his workshop. After discussion with the [Association of Woodturners of Great Britain \(AWGB\)](#), it was agreed that these pieces would be sent to internationally renowned turners to finish in their own style. The resulting 124 pieces were exhibited and are being sold at auction. The proceeds from the sale will be divided between Liz Key and the AWGB. All the finished pieces have been photographed and are in the process of being auctioned off. **The auction closes October 13th 19:00 BST.** [Browse the auction collection.](#)

Articles of the Week

In his article, "A Bridge in Time: Reflections on Creative Evolution," from the June 2017 issue of *American Woodturner*, Steve Loar explains that the adrenaline rush of creative problem-solving, exploration, and risk is at the core of why he makes things. He further describes collaborations that helped to feed his exploration and evolution as an artist.

[Click here for a direct link to the article.](#)

A BRIDGE IN TIME

Reflections on Creative Evolution
Steve Loar

EARLY INSPIRATION



Spaulvinder, 1978, Cherry, mahogany, 5" x 12" (13cm x 30cm)

Spaulvinder was inspired by Roger Dean's futuristic and action-filled artwork. This began an exploration in woodturning beyond utility into conveying a sense of life and motion.

Roger Dean, *Patelin Charge*, Painted and © Roger Dean 1972, rogerdean.com

I have an acute affliction, but I am certainly not alone in having it. Many in the contemporary woodturning field share and even embrace this affliction. I call it Utility Deficit Syndrome (UDS). As I consider and plan useful turned objects like bowls, platters, and rolling pins, my brain switches into "what-if" mode before I can even begin the work. I appreciate the skill required to make utilitarian pieces well; simple beauty is not easy. But no matter how great a part of me aches to make useful things, the effort always ends up the same: I consider ways of subverting the process in favor of artistic expression. My use of the lathe is not the entertaining, stress-relieving experience many describe. I can't put a piece of material on the lathe and just turn a shape. Much of the time, I try to express some sort of story, feeling, action, or relationship. Such is my UDS.

My thirty-six years of teaching design and woodworking have provided me with a multitude of ways to think, consider, revise, and expand my ideas. The adrenaline rush of creative problem-solving, exploration, and risk is at the core of why I make things.

Embracing UDS

I first became aware of my UDS "condition" many years ago, when my local chapter hosted Richard Barban. As one of the early successes in professional contemporary woodturning, Richard spoke from a position of experience and authority. So when he discussed his use of wooden dishes and bowls, like for breakfast with milk over cereal, my mind reeled: "He puts milk in a wooden bowl, then eats out of it? Then he washes it and uses it again later?" I was struck dumb. It had literally never occurred to me that someone would actually use wooden objects for food. As the years passed and I learned of the utilitarian history of woodturning, with its almost exclusive dedication to useful objects, I began to see how differently some of us were looking at this common tool—the lathe—and its potential.

Fortunately, the post-industrial arts woodturning community has accepted that I—and others with UDS—are driven to take artistic risks. Even a casual perusal of the Instant Gallery at an AAW Symposium shows the extent to which

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Jim Christiansen and Gerrit Van Ness have collaborated to present the article, "Aiming for Quality in Design," from the Summer 2004 issue of *American Woodturner*. The article offers a list of

design concepts or principles that the turner can embrace to assess the quality of a particular design. It's their hope that by looking critically at a piece of work while considering each item on the list, you will produce better work.

[Click here for a direct link to the article.](#)

Aiming for Quality Design

Jim Christiansen and Gerrit Van Ness

Once you reach a point of mastering the basic turning skills, you're capable of turning out high-class work. You, you! It is a natural step, then, to make the attempt to develop new styles and to find ways to personalize work.

Design work of this sort is not an easy task. Producing work that is only slightly different from previous efforts takes a lot of thought and experimentation. A number of woodturning books are available that try to provide ideas and even rules to guide the woodturner in finding his or her voice. There is, however, no agreed upon path or method that leads to becoming an effective designer.

It is helpful to listen to the experts who give guidance. However, when you attend as many conferences and read as many design books as we have, conflicting information and opinions are evident. From our perspective, there is no organized scheme to develop a personal philosophy or approach to design.

We are proposing a list of design concepts or principles that the turner can embrace to assess the quality of a particular design. It is our hope that by looking critically at a piece of work while considering each item on the list, you will produce better work.

Before we present the list, we would like to provide an operational definition of the word *concept*. It might be helpful to define concept as an idea that cannot be defined adequately using words. For example, try defining the color *black*. Or try defining a *good curve*. The truth is,

we know many things that can't be described using words.

Just as a child learns the difference between a dog and a cow by experience, woodturners learn design concepts the same way. To learn the concept of balance, a teacher asks us to hold and feel a large number of bowls and points out which have better balance. After numerous examples, we develop the sensitivity to make better discriminations and assess what good balance actually *feels* like.

Assessing the beauty of a particular curve also requires that we have a guided experience learning how to make more precise judgments. We need to be exposed to many examples of good curves and curves that are not so good. There may be some mathematical formulae that describe all good curves.

Use the list that follows as a guide to help you look systematically at your work to discover all the strengths, weaknesses, and possibilities.

Concepts related to good design

1. Thematic coherence
Good design usually has a goal. The individual elements of the piece should all support the design goal. Choose the size of the parts, the shape, texture, and color to support your designer's intent. If the "theme" of the work is organic, the parts should in some way express that focus or idea. The design of every part should make sense and show some consistency in style. Important ideas related to this concept also include repetition, rhythm, variety, and balance.

2. Pleasing curves
Pleasing curves generally contain no flat spots. Curves that vary are generally considered to be more beautiful. Given that even seemingly simple curves can vary a great deal, selecting the best option for a piece of work can be a lifetime quest. We recommend that turners save examples of their work so they can compare earlier pieces with

Video of the Week

Al Stirt demonstrates his techniques for creating square and carved platters at a meeting of the Woodturners Guild of North Carolina.

[Al Stirt Carved Square Platters \(TRT 1:30:19\)](#)



Quotes of the Week

"Collaborations should never be forced and not all ventures in the process are necessarily going to succeed. Experimentation without inhibition can lead to a fruitful experience. But more importantly, the finished work needs to have the voice of

everyone involved."

-Jacques Vesery, *American Woodturner*, Winter 2004

"When you create something, you're likely to regard it as precious. Handing a work over to someone else involves release and trust. You have to let go not only of the piece but what you might do with the piece. You have to allow for the possibility that another craftsman might do something at least as valuable as you might, or maybe not. If what your collaborator does is no different from what you would do, there would be no point in collaborating. Your collaborator must have a vision different from yours. The work should not only reflect both of you (or all - however many there are) but should be more than the sum of its parts. The best work will come from compatible spirits and common commitment to quality; it will be a unique blend of all who do the making."

-Mark Sfirri, *American Woodturner*, December 1993

SEE YOUR STORY IN KEEP TURNING

Has your chapter done something extraordinary to promote woodturning in your community? Have you participated in an awesome woodturning event? Do you have fantastic woodturning photos as well? Send your short story and photos to AAW at memberservices@woodturner.org.

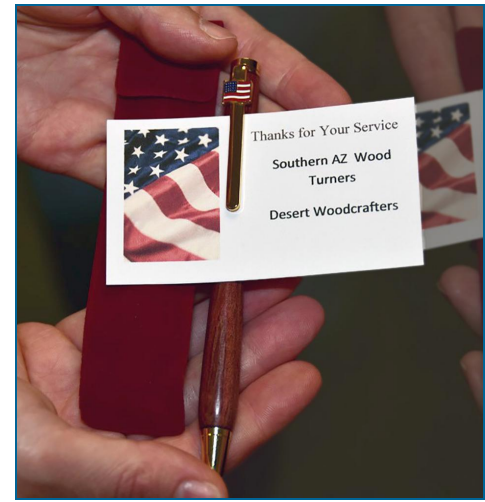
ERNIE SHAFFER, 98, WW II VETERAN, KEEPS TURNING

Ernie Shaffer has been around wood his entire life... In Oro Valley, Arizona, Ernie is known as the guy in his 90s, sprinkled with sawdust, who creates beautiful things in his woodworking shop, formerly a one-car garage...He is largely self-taught as a woodturner, but he shares his knowledge with friends and family... Ernie's son, Ron, who lives in California, has a lathe identical to Ernie's, and he also is now an accomplished turner. Ernie has made a variety of things: Bowls, chip and dip sets, platters, cracker trays, salt and pepper sets, pendants, and bangle bracelets. He is generous with his work, making pens



for servicemen overseas and bowls for Beads of Courage, a program for seriously ill children. He has donated pieces for several charity auctions. He doesn't sell his work; he gives it all away to family and friends. At the age of 98, Ernie is still producing beautiful wood pieces. He belongs to the [Desert Woodcrafters](#) and to the [Southern Arizona Woodturners Association](#). He spends less time in his shop than he used to; he gets tired. He's earned a little rest.

[Read the full article, "Ernie Shaffer, 98 Years Old and a World War II Veteran," by Tere Bergman and photos by Kayla Funk, from the July 2019 issue of The Heart of Oro Valley.](#)



PENS FOR PURPLE HEART PATIENTS

The [Southern Arizona Woodturners Association, Inc.](#) and the [Desert Woodcrafters](#) chapters have delivered 180 pens to the VA Hospital in Tucson in only the last nine months. The hospital distributes the pens to Purple Heart Recipients who are patients.

Pictured above from left to right are, Mandy Martell, MHA CAVS Chief, Voluntary Services; Paul Swane; Nicole Thurston, U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs Visual Information Specialist; and Ken Tower, representing both clubs.

WWW TURNS TEN

The Worland Wyoming Woodturners (WWW) chapter is celebrating its 10th year in existence and has marked the occasion by turning boxes for the [Beads of Courage](#) program. One member, Jodi Bennett, notes, "Over the past several years, the colorful characters that make up the Worland Wyoming Woodturners have earned top status in my heart as dear friends, mentors, and teachers. Our meetings are an amazing break to do something I love with people that share the same passion. My life has been so blessed by the Worland Wyoming Woodturners. I can honestly call my club family!"



Pictured above right are members of the Worland Wyoming Woodturners, with their Beads of Courage boxes. From left: Canton Green, Dave Morgan, Doug Hepp, Jodi Bennett, Sam Angelo, Don Day, Mike Patrick, and Ryan Green.



ALIFE'S WORK: THE PHILOSOPHY OF A CRAFTSMAN (TRT 17:03)

This video is a documentary short by British Filmmaker Ben Spilling. Released in 2018, the film's primary subject, Peter Korn, founder and Executive Director of the Center for Furniture Craftsmanship (CFC), discusses the challenges and rewards of craft. The film includes commentary from CFC instructors Tom Caspar, Aaron Fedarko, Beth Ireland, Tim Rousseau, and Craig Satterlee, as well as gallerist Bebe Johnson and manufacturer Thomas Moser. [Click here to watch video.](#)



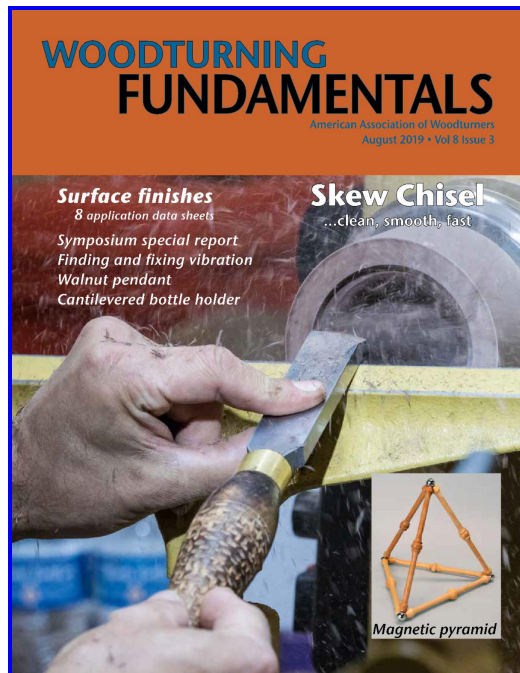
2019 EOG RECIPIENT: GIRL SCOUTS

"The Girl Scouts mission is to build girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place." Woodturning provides a wonderful opportunity for all three - courage to try something new, confidence that they can do it, and the character that comes with trying, failing and trying again.

Two years ago, Girl Scouts had no organized opportunities for girls to learn proper use of power tools. With the help of AAW and the local Minnesota Woodturners Association (MWA), an AAW chapter <http://www.mnwoodturners.com/>, Girl Scouts now has an avenue to explore the lathe through woodturning. In 2018, with the help of the MWA, Girl Scout adult volunteers and high school age Girl Scouts experienced turning. The adult volunteers enjoyed turning as much as the girls. We realized that if

we had equipment for the adults to practice on, we could get more women involved and these women could help with chapter Girl Scout woodturning classes. An AAW EOG grant provided woodturning equipment for training and practice of registered adult Girl Scout volunteers in the Minneapolis Lakes Service Unit, Woodbury Service Unit, and Pine Tree Ridge Service Unit. The goal of the equipment continues to be to teach basic lathe safety, operation, and basic spindle turning to adult volunteers. In turn, these adults will then assist experienced woodturners during local AAW chapter classes for high school Girl Scouts. As the adult volunteers progress in their skill, they can become teachers and active members of local AAW chapters." Natalie Broshar, Minneapolis Lakes Girl Scouts

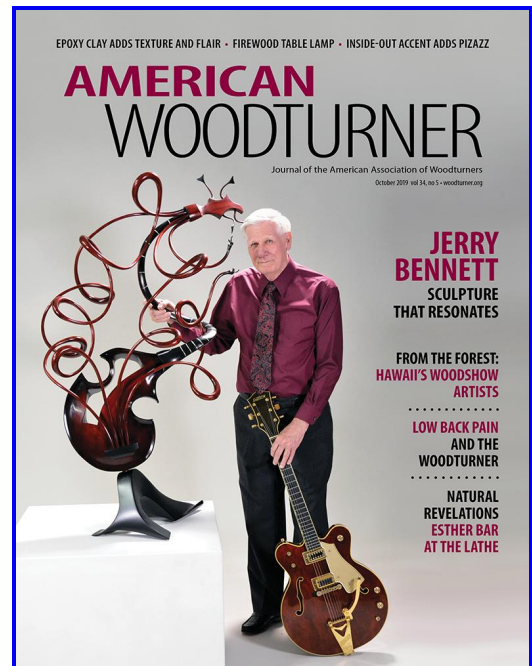
AAW Grants are available to individuals, chapters, schools, and non-profit organizations. Regular AAW Grants are awarded on an annual basis. To be eligible, applications must be received by December 31 for grants given in the following year. However, Women in Turning (WIT) grants and others for under-represented populations, events, and exhibitions are awarded quarterly. [Learn more about AAW's grant opportunities.](#)



WOODTURNING FUNDAMENTALS

The August 2019 issue of Woodturning FUNdamentals is available online. The issue includes tips on how to cut wood precisely with a skew chisel, finding and fixing lathe vibration, and sizing gauges for scroll chucks. You'll learn about the domestic hardwood, walnut, and eight great surface finishes.

[Click here to view the current issue.](#)



AMERICAN WOODTURNER

The October 2019 issue of *American Woodturner* includes the following features: Firewood Table Lamp, Epoxy Clay Adds Texture and Flair, A Closer Look at Ornament Finials, Low Back Pain and the Woodturner, and Jerry Bennett: Sculpture that Resonates, to name a few.

[Click here to view the current issue.](#)



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- Useful Panel Topics



Dan Tilden, Madrone burl #5



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Mark Sfirri, Rejects from the Bat Factory

Watch for updated information at tiny.cc/Louisville2020. Or scan the QR code.



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