



A Chapter of the American Association of Woodturners

# AS THE WOOD TURNS



February 2023

Issue 297

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Kevin Oye, Steve Wiseman, Joe Centorino and Cindy Atoji Keene dedicate the usu. Full story on page 4.

## Meeting January 24, 2023—Notes by Jeff Keller

- Guest: Steve Kelley of Wrentham
- Welcome new member: Ed Jones
- **Joe Centorino** began by saying the Executive Committee had decided to propose **Ian Manley** for a Lifetime membership to the club. Members voted and unanimously approved this measure.
- Joe urged members to go on the club website and check the events calendar on a regular basis. Up next is the Scituate Men's Club Breakfast on Tuesday, February 7th. We will be attending and doing turning demos as well as acquainting them with our group. The breakfast begins at 9:00 am. Joe continued, "The event is located at 333 First Parish Road in Scituate. Contact new member **Ernie Leep** (eoleep@yahoo.com) for further information or myself."
- Joe reminded us that the primary mission of the Massachusetts South Shore Woodturners is to promote wood turning on the lathe. Selling items is fine but it is secondary. With that in mind, the club sponsors five events a year to include the Maple Festival and the Corn Festival at the South Shore Natural Science Center in Norwell, the South Shore Arts Festival in Cohasset, the Marshfield Fair and the Arnold Arboretum Show in Jamaica Plain. If a member has another event he or she would like the club to participate in, the club

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## NEXT MEETING Tues, February 28

7pm at the "Dust Bowl"  
409 Washington St.  
Abington, MA 02351

*Refreshments by:*  
**Billy Martin**

*Demo by:*  
**Lenny Manderville**  
**Bracelet - Bangles**

## NEXT HANDS ON

Saturday Feb. 18 & Mar. 11  
9am—12pm

*Need a Hands On mentor?*  
Contact Glenn Siegmann  
siegs@gmail.com)

# Savings: from the president



Welcome to 2023, If the overflow crowd at the January meeting is any indication it is shaping up to be an exciting year for the Club with more members getting actively involved!

There appears to be a large contingent heading to Totally Turning in March as well as interest in a more extensive IRD program so stay tuned.

We continue to have a core group of about a dozen members on the Thursday night Coffee & Chat sessions and it is a great forum for idea exchange, random questions with no set agenda. Watch for the Thursday morning email reminder and join us for an hour.

As always,  
Safe turning!

(Continued from page 1)

can vote on it and the member can act as the lead for the event on behalf of the club. Or the member can just take it on individually. **Wayne Miller** added that if the club does not vote and approve of participating in the event, then the AAW insurance will not cover it.

- Joe added that he had received a recent letter from Sheryl from the *Arnold Arboretum* thanking us for our participation and support in their show last Fall. She also included an envelope to return with a donation for them. The club has given a \$100 donation in the past and this amount was voted on by members and passed, to be sent to her again.

- John DelRosso at the Arboretum had asked the club if we would be interested in coming there on March 28th from 12:30 to 3:30 to participate in receiving some sassafras wood. Six members responded in the affirmative.

- Joe said the club trailer is in need of some body work and a wrap with the club name and logo. The work and the wrap is estimated to cost \$2500 to

\$3800. Does anyone have a body shop connection?

- The club received a check for \$2,000 from the *New England Kenjinkai* as thanks for the club's participation in their USU project and celebration. This was a two year project which involved turning a large vessel by Joe and **Steve Wiseman**. Read all about it on page 4. Joe said the club would put the money into its scholarship fund.

- **Horace Lukens**, our new secretary, said that out of 109 members listed on our website, there are only 36 faces pictured. So he urged members to update their photo for the site.

- **Charlie McCarthy** announced that the club has \$3,480. on account; \$1,421 is for scholarships, leaving a net of \$2,059. Rent is due in March (\$525.00). Steve added that the scholarship fund will pay for attendance to events but not for travel.

- **Molly Johnson** said the Women In Turning (WIT) group had no news at the moment. However the February edition of *American Woodturner*, the AAW magazine, showed their collaborative project, "Team Round the

Clockers" on page 49. Turners involved were **Kathleen Gardner, Melissa Fantasia and Molly Johnson**. (See WIT—below.)

- **Bob Allen** on professional demonstrators: "Right now there are so many people doing their own programs. People are getting away from large groups. Also many are not doing in person demos. What about local turners from other clubs? (See *Announcement on page 7.*)

- Joe said the Cape Cod club is in the process of ordering JSP respirators and parts for them from the UK. **Mike Fullerton** is coordinating the purchase (*Note: the order deadline has passed.*)

- **Ed O'Riordan** recently hosted a successful chainsaw party that harvested some cherry. (*Photos on page 8.*)

- **Ava Rothwell** announced that the recent fundraiser for *Win-some Farms* raised \$24,000. (*See page 8.*)

- Steve told us that *Woodcraft* is having a bowl turning contest at their Walpole store location through February 4th. Up to two bowls per person can be entered (*Note: the deadline has passed.*)

# WIT

## Women in Turning



Roadster by Karen Popp. Walnut and Mystery Wood. Vroom!

Some WIT members spent time in their own shops this past month transforming wood and resin. Two results shown here.



Harry Potter-style Elder Wand by Karen Popp. Shop wood, turned, textured, painted, and decorated.

Winter is a great time to learn new turning tricks. There are options and inspiration to be had in-person and virtually. Check these out—

Local In-Person Event: [Totally Turning \(link\)](#) in Saratoga Springs, NY (March 25-26).

### [Virtual Events \(link\):](#)

WIT Presents | 2023 Artist Showcase: Nicole McDonald and Elizabeth Weber  
Saturday, March 4th, 2023.  
4 pm Eastern Time

WIT events are open and free to everyone.

Lyle Jamieson | Turning a Thin-Walled Goblet (Charlie M. could totally teach this class)

Stewart Furini | Shape and Color: Turning and Coloring a Wide-Rim Bowl

- Molly Johnson



# Hands On

Saturday, January 14, 2023 at the Dust Bowl

by Sonny Tice



Ron Reynolds and Lenny Mandeville take a moment to catch up



Doug Hasting listens in as Richard Godmintz gets instruction from Wayne Miller while Peter Soltz observes from a distance.



Carolyn Marks, a friend and guest of Secretary Horace Lukens talking with Charlie about how to turn Cocobolo boards into a bowl while Peter Soltz looks on.



Tim Rix and Tom Richie having a discussion



Paul Conca gets some pointers from mentor Ken Lindgren. We hope to see the finished turning at Show & Tell.



Jeff Keller providing some guidance to Bob Monaghan on turning a finial but as Jeff relates, "Bob didn't need any help at all"



Charlie McCarthy has the treasury open for business!



Busy scene at the January 14<sup>th</sup> Hands-On at the "Dust Bowl"



Hands-On Coordinator Glen Siegmann and Mike Fullerton checking some facts





Original Usu

# Making a Japanese USU

Dedicated on Saturday, January 14, 2023 in Lexington, MA by Joe Centorino

*Making and distributing mochi strengthens the group spirit. Our current usu was made by a former member of the Kenjinkai out of an old tree trunk; his name is carved on the side of the usu in Japanese. While very beloved, the usu is cracking, which is why we sought the help of Joe Centorino and Steve Wiseman to replace the piece."*

committee unanimously accepted our proposal.

about 5 feet in diameter. Beech is a very hard wood with beautiful grain. However we found that the geometry of the log was also very important so that the wood would dry evenly. We needed to find a log that had the pith right in the center and concentric ring structure so as to minimize warping and stress during the drying period.

In the usu, we pound steamed rice into a sticky mass to produce mochi, which is traditional food for Japanese New Year.  
- Courtney Goto

*(This article is excerpted from a piece by Joe Centorino that will be published in the American Woodturner, AAW magazine in a future issue. Stay tuned!)*

## It Began With an Email

On January 28, 2021 I received an email from Courtney Goto, a committee member of the New England Kenjinkai.

Courtney wrote: *"The New England Kenjinkai is a Japanese American community group which was founded over 40 years ago. "Kenjinkai" is a Japanese term meaning association of people from the same prefecture or region; thus, it's appropriate for our group, which draws from Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, and beyond. We come together once a year to observe Japanese New Year, or Oshogatsu, sharing food, friendship, and stories. The centerpiece of our celebration is the making of mochi in a wooden usu, a large mortar used with a pestle called kine.*

*In the usu, we pound steamed rice into a sticky mass to produce mochi, which is traditional food for Japanese New Year.*

Courtney remembered having seen bowls at a Boston craft show she went to a few years ago and first heard about the term "woodturner", searched online for Boston-area woodturners and found our chapter. She said *"emailing you with my inquiry felt like a long shot since I wasn't sure what woodturners do or if anyone would respond."*

Her committee reviewed our credentials and asked about references which the Arnold Arboretum and the Attleboro Arts Museum provided. Taking into account our commission for this effort would be to cover the cost of materials and upon a satisfactory outcome they could make a donation to the Woodturning Club, the



Catalpa wood section

## The First Challenge— Finding the Right Wood

Using the existing usu as an example, coupled with online research we knew we needed a large piece of wood, at least 20" in diameter and 2 feet in length. Kevin Oye, a committee member, had access to a large piece of Catalpa which I picked up in Lexington.

We also had access to some very large Beech from a tree felled in Duxbury, measuring

## The Next Challenge— Turning 500 lbs!

While looking for the right wood for the usu we also needed to figure out just how were were going safely move, mount and turn a 500 lb log and in what order we would have to turn the various profiles.

To help with this we crafted several 1/2 scale prototypes from scrap wood. The committee told us they wanted the usu to be stable during the pounding but also much lighter and easier to transport than the current one.

## Prototyping the Design

Keeping in mind what we wanted for shape and portability, we worked out a plan for turning the side profile then top and bottom "bowls" using different spur drives and face

*(continued)*

(Continued from page 4)

plates and a live center for support. We also experimented with making a two-piece usu with the top “bowl” secured to the base using a PVC fitting to divide the weight. We made a segmented model using kiln-dried maple which eliminated the need for drying a large log and reduced the exposure of end-grain, but also left an abundance of glue joints which might not hold up to the pounding. Finally Steve and I decided to go with a single piece, hour-glass design.

### The One That Got Away

Our 5th prototype was a full scale model which I had



5th prototype with fatal flaws!

hoped might be a candidate for the final usu. It was turned from a piece of Maple in summer 2021. It allowed us to work out some of the physics of working with a heavy log while avoiding injuries! Unfortunately #5 did not have the optimum grain geometry and succumbed to the severe August heat. The photo shows the fatal cracks.



We considered several designs—including multipart and segmented. Ultimately we went with a single piece, hour-glass shaped design.

### The Wood Found Us

We continued our search for just the right log, eventually selecting a piece of oak from a tree service in Norton, MA. Due to the weight of the log, approximately 500 lbs., we used an hydraulic lift table to move and lift it to the lathebed height. It required the coordination of four people to transfer and mounted on the lathe.

### Commence Turning!

We started by using the club’s Powermatic lathe with a 20” swing; we trimmed the log with a chainsaw then drilled a recess for the drive spur. The log needed to be mounted securely and revolve without hitting the ways.

We used an outboard tool rest

and began turning at about 60 RPM before the lathe started vibrating from the unbalanced load.

Turning between centers (a



Steve uses outboard tool rest

spur drive and live tail center) and with the grain is known as spindle turning—normally

safe and stable, allowing the

turner to use high speeds. However when the “spindle” weighs 500 lbs and is 20” in diameter that ups the risk! Newton’s Laws of Motion were in evidence as we started to work. The process was slow but steady as Steve and I took turns peeling off layers of wood to get a perfectly round and *mostly* balanced cylinder. We were able to increase the speed to between 200 and 300 rpm and begin turning the hourglass-shaped profile.

Even with a well-rounded cylinder the piece was still a little off-balance because the density and moisture content of the wood was not evenly distributed. This limited our maximum safe turning speed.

Once the outside profile was turned we focused our attention to hollowing out the base and top bowls.

(continued)

Watch the video at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4\\_iSUqz4taw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4_iSUqz4taw)



Steve Wiseman positioning the tail stock after the log is centered on the drive spur. We removed the bark for extra clearance and safety during turning.



With the hourglass profile defined, we began the hollowing process.

## Hollowing

We replaced the drive spur with a face plate mounted on the lathe spindle, screwed to the log. The hour-glass profile allowed us to insert a steady-rest, a support structure with a set of 3 inline skate wheels that ride along the piece as it revolves and reduces the load on the lathe bearings.

We maintained the tailstock for



Tailstock supports the center spindle during hollowing.

support, leaving a “spindle” in the center as we hollowed out the base. We removed this spindle later with carving tools.

Once the base was hollowed, we repeated the process to hollow out the top bowl using a jam chuck (a face plate attached to a piece of wood that fit snugly inside the hollowed out bowl) to drive the piece on the lathe.

At this point the usu weighed about 96 lbs. We coated the surfaces with AnchorSeal, which slowed the drying process and minimized cracking and checking. There were some minor cracks around the pith which we expected and dealt with using epoxy later in the process.

## Drying & Final Turning

The usu sat in my shop for almost a full year before we remounted it on the lathe and “tuned it up.” There was very little distortion or warping thanks to the even grain geometry. The moisture content reduced from 24% to 12%; after

final turning and sanding the usu weighed in at a slender 56 lbs.



Air-dried over 1 year, the usu was ready for final turning.

There were minor cracks spaced all around the piece but nothing of structural impact. We filled the voids with a mixture of oak sanding dust, dye and slow setting epoxy in batches of an ounce or two at a time. The usu was reoriented for each pour to facilitate getting the epoxy mixture all the way into the cracks without air bubbles.

## Embellishment

With the cracks filled, the piece needed to be sanded and inscribed with the Japanese characters requested by the New England Kenjinkai Committee:



*/zhēnxīn/ (ginsee)*, which means “heartfelt and sincere” and was carved on the original usu along with the name of the original carver.

Steve and I decided to coat the inside of the top bowl with a clear, quick-coat epoxy finish. I adapted a rotisserie motor to my lathe to revolve the usu at about 3 rpm to allow the epoxy to flow evenly over the interior surface



A rotisserie motor revolved the usu at 3 rpm to allow the epoxy to flow evenly over the interior surface.

of the bowl. The outside and underside of the usu has several coats of a shellac-based sealer. I also fashioned a pair of kine to go with the new usu as well as a detachable set of handles to facilitate moving the usu.



Detachable handles facilitate moving the usu.

The entire project took 2 years to complete and was a fascinating learning experience.



Kevin Oye, Joe Furugori and I made a trial batch of mochi. The epoxied surface prevents water from soaking into the usu. Cleanup is very easy with a scrub brush and water.

## Oshogatsu Celebration Year of the Rabbit!

On January 14th, 2023, the New England Kenjinkai celebrated their 45th Annual Oshogatsu (Japanese New Year). The assembled group, over 60 people, enjoyed good food including many traditional Japanese favorites and a host of desserts involving mochi with sweet and savory flavorings. The afternoon was marked with traditional ceremonies.

Steve, my wife, Chris, and I, along with club member Melissa Fantasia attended the event where Steve and Joe presented the new usu to the Kenjinkai. The assembly listened to the story of the new usu and enjoyed a 3 minute video which captured the high points in its making.

The Kenjinkai enthusiastically and graciously accepted the new usu and dedicated it in a ceremony, shown in the photo on page 1. It involved anointing the usu with sake and honoring the tree from which the wood came.

The Kenjinkai raised donations in honor of the old and new usu and past members and presented a gift of \$2,000 to our club. Steve and I with our executive committee decided to apply this windfall to the club's Memorial Scholarship fund to promote the advancement of woodturning and further the education of our members.

- Joe Centorino

Announcing



# Demo: Off-Center Platter with Beads

With Charlie McCarthy

by Jeff Keller

## Message from Bob Allen



Much interest and discussion was expressed at the January meeting about professional turners programs being presented for MSSW as a group event. In the past, prior to COVID and IRDs, the club had typically brought in two professional turners each year as presenters. These programs were funded by a combination of attendance fees and club funds. Since COVID, the club has relied on IRDs and Zoom, and that delivery method has been expanding ever since.

For the future, I am looking for program suggestions under three categories:

1. What projects would you like to see presented?
2. What demonstrator would you like to see?
3. What demonstrators doing what projects? (#1 + #2)

Please send your ideas and suggestions in writing to Bob Allen, via text or email:

919-985-5668  
trn3345@gmail.com



Charlie McCarthy's beaded platter in maple.

Charlie demonstrated a technique for turning a beaded, off-center platter which was documented in a recent AAW newsletter article and reprinted from American Woodturner Summer 2007 issue. AAW members can read the story online ([Keith Gotschall "Off-Center Exercise" - Platter with beads](#), p.36).

Charlie started with a 2 1/2" by 7" piece of maple for the demo. He set his blank up to turn between centers using a screw chuck. He had drilled two 5/16th inch holes in the blank—the first one on center, and the second hole for the off-center position, only 3/4" from the first center. It only takes a small off-center difference to make a large visual difference!

He trued up the face first and then the outer edge using a 5/8" bowl gouge with the Ellsworth grind at a speed of 800 rpm.

He then made a mortise 1/8th of an inch deep and mounted the blank into the chuck using the mortise part to secure it. Next

he defined the top edge and turned the rim 3/8ths of an inch thick. He said, "I like to use a 3/8ths inch beading tool for the

bowl. Next, he turned it around and hollowed the center being careful not to go too deep nor too close to the edge.



beads."

Next he mounted the blank in the off center position. Now off center, the piece has already had its rim defined, so Charlie told us that he only needs to cut up to it.



Charlie cut a lot of air approaching the bottom of the bowl. Only 3/4" off-center was plenty!

While Charlie's technique is very similar to that described in the article by Keith Gotschall, Charlie prefers to make the screw chuck holes on the drill press instead of using a handheld drill. He gets straighter holes and a more consistent depth. He also finds it more expedient to drill both holes at the same time, rather than interrupting the workflow on the lathe.

This is the bottom of the





# Chainsaw Party - Cherry On Top!

Saturday, January 7, 2023 in Waban, MA

by Sonny Tice

Ed O’Riordan led a chainsaw party at an address in Waban, MA with a fallen cherry tree, 14” at the base and 10” inches towards the top. Ed was joined by club members—



Ed O’Riordan expertly carves the cherry



Tim Rix and Ken Lindgren assess the wood options



Working in red checks and blue checks are Jim Briggs and another club member.



Ed considers his next cut while tending to chainsaw settings.



The chainsaw crew with canine support: (L-R) Bill Vey, unidentified club member, Tim Rix, Jim Briggs, Ken Lindgren, and Ed O’Riordan.



At left, Ian Manley receives the MSSW Lifetime Achievement and Membership award from Joe Centorino. The award was presented at our January 2023 meeting.

## Member Ava Rothwell says:

Thank you to all the turners who generously donated their pieces to help raise funds for *Winsome Therapeutic Riding Academy* in Randolph, MA. We ran two events in December and raised about \$24,000! This will help many more special needs students and veterans enjoy time with the horses.



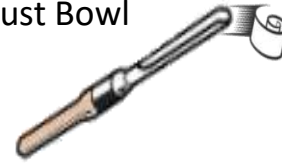




# Show & Tell

Tuesday January 23, 2023 at the Dust Bowl

Compiled by Joe Centorino  
and Jeff Keller



Show & Tell table tells the story!



Steve Gilman Catalpa Bowl finished with  
Minwax Polycrylic



Mike Fullerton Walnut & Maple Spiral Bowls (L-October, R-November)



Steve Gilman Sumac Lidded Boxes finished with  
Minwax Polycrylic



Bob Monaghan—Egg Turner



Bob Monaghan —  
Ebony finial (L); Maple  
finial (R)

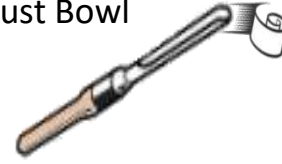


Ernest Leep—Bowl

# Show & Tell

Tuesday January 23, 2023 at the Dust Bowl

Compiled by Joe Centorino  
and Jeff Keller



Ernest Leep—larger bowl



Ken Lindgren (L-Before, R-After) Design change on  
embellishment



Steve Wiseman—bowl



Fred Johnson—Bowl & Vase



Basket Illusion Bowl by Kevin Coughlin.



Steve Wiseman—bowl with  
resin inlay



Jeff Keller—gavel on plaque with insignia



Wayne Miller—lidded vessel  
from burl



Steve Wiseman—Kangaroo  
with Joey!