



Chapter of the Association of American Woodturners

May 2025

Newsletter

Issue No. 5

The Smoky Mountain Woodturners Chapter of AAW meets each month of the year on the 3rd Tuesday of the month starting at 6:30 pm. Our meetings are in-person and on ZOOM. To attend zoom, visitors should send their email to jevogelsang@charter.net. Guests are always welcome. Location: 8023 Kingston Pike in Knoxville. *Woodcraft Knoxville* (our sponsor) is near Trader Joe's and one block from West Town Mall.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE – May 20, 2025

We had a great turnout for our first Spring Workshop in quite a while. Nick Cook did his usual amazing demonstrations (13 items altogether) for a full class of woodturner's. His mastery of the skew chisel never gets old. Sundays workshop produce two projects completed by all the participants. All of Nick's projects will be in our silent auction at this year's Christmas Party. Our next workshop will be in the fall (October 25-26, 2025) hosted by Mark Gardner, who will be showing us how to create a shrink box from green wood. On Saturday there will be demonstrations, and Sunday there will be turning on the lathe (10-person limit).

Ron Comtois was our featured woodturner this month showing us how to turn a baby rattle. Ron had a well-prepared demonstration and kept the attention of all in the audience. Turning one of Ron's baby rattles will be the challenge project for next month. Thanks again Ron for a well thought-out and well-presented woodturning demonstration.

Although we were under severe weather warnings and at the start of summer, We still had a good showing with twenty-nine members in attendance and eight members on Zoom. Paul Freeman broke Gordon's streak of winning the J.C. Campbell raffle. While Ron Comtois won the Arrowmont raffle. Randy Fritchman won the Bring Back the Box raffle.

Our June meeting will feature Roy Cuff explaining the intricacies of stabilizing wood. This is something everyone should know about if they are turning burl or very punky wood. Remember if you are turning and running into a problem area, please reach out to the club members for help. The list of mentors is on the web site, and most of the projects demonstrated are also there. The SMWTS web site is a wealth of information.

Keep Those Chips Flying — Gordon Sloane

\$30 DUES are DUE \$\$\$

Checks to:
**SMWTS, PO Box 50141
Knoxville, TN 37950-0141**

May Wood Donations

*Supplied by
Roy Cuff
Gordon Sloane*

Attendance

**29 in person
8 on ZOOM**

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Treasurer's Report - Jack Harris

For the Woodturners' Weekend, Jack paid Nick Cook \$1650.00. Members paid \$800.00 for the Sunday workshop making it total expense of \$850.00 from the club's account. He also reported that as of the meeting we have 73 paid members. That is a little less than last year, but several have moved.

Fantasy of Trees - Don Adams

Turn ornaments now; don't wait until November!

Beads of Courage - Bill Thurman

Six wig stands were brought to the meeting! Boxes are still needed at Children's Hospital.

Pens for Troops - Randy Fritchman

Randy has pen kits—ask for them!

Educational Project — Wear's Valley Ranch

Jake Niedlinger reported the school year has ended so the schedule for summer will be different. Pat Brown, the school employee in charge of woodturning classes, is retiring at the end of the summer. We need to see how things develop.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Wood Auction - John Jordan

Jake reported for John. A friend of John's has donated

Quarterly Challenge - Randy Fritchman

The Demo Challenge for June is turning a baby rattle [following the May demo by Ron Comptois].

We encourage every member to attempt to replicate each month's demonstration program idea and bring the project to our monthly Show and Tell. A random drawing will be held at the end of each quarter. The winner will receive a \$50 Woodcraft gift card.

Procedure: When you bring in a Quarterly Challenge item for Show & Tell, put your name on one raffle ticket and put it in the hat. **CHANGE:** *Time allowed to complete a quarterly-challenge project is any time this calendar year.*

Bring Back Box — Won by Randy Fritchman

Scholarships (for Dec. draw) —

Arrowmont: Ron Comptois

JC Campbell: Paul Freeman

Thanks to Jake Niedling, Professional Turner, **MARK GARDNER** will be doing a demo in fall.

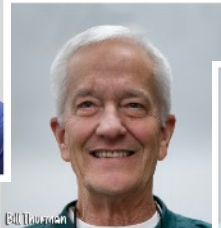
Safety Message - Colin Chambers (substituting for Gordon Fowler)

Colin talked about using calibers correctly. Remember to round the points and to think about how you're holding calipers in your hand. He also pointed out that the emergency switch on a lathe should be mounted on the right.



Club Calendar: General Meetings, 2nd Tuesday, 6:30 pm, Location: Woodcraft Knoxville
 Board of Directors, 3rd Wed., 6 pm, Location: Woodcraft Knoxville

January 8 - 1st Quarter Board of Directors meeting, 3rd Wed of Jan, April, July, Oct, 6 pm, Woodcraft
 January 21 - General Meeting - Richard Hoffman - Unusual Beads of Courage Boxes
 February 18 - General Meeting - Jake Niedling - Hollowing Made Easy
 March 18 - General Meeting - John Lucas, Cookeville turner - Inside / Outside Turning
 April 9 - 2nd Quarter Board of Directors meeting, 3rd Wed of Jan, April, July, Oct, 6 pm, Woodcraft
 April 15 - Gordon Fowler - Platter with a Crotch
 May 3-4 - Spring Woodturners Weekend - Nick Cook (demo & workshop, Sat & Sun, 9 am - 3 pm)
May 20 - General Meeting - Ron Comtois - Baby Rattle
 June 17 - General Meeting - Roy Acuff - Stabilizing Wood
 July 9 - 3rd Quarter Board of Directors meeting, 3rd Wed of Jan, April, July, Oct, 6 pm, Woodcraft
 July 15 - General Meeting - Colin Chalmers - TBD
August 19 - General Meeting - Annual Wood Auction
 September 16 - General Meeting - John Jordan - Handbell Ornaments
 October 8 - 4th Quarter Board of Directors meeting, 3rd Wed of Jan, April, July, Oct, 6 pm, Woodcraft
 October 21 - General Meeting - Michael Anderson - Covered Calabash Bowls
October 25-26 - Fall Woodturners Weekend - Mark Gardner
(demo & workshop, Sat & Sun, 9 am - 3 pm)
 November 18 - General Meeting - Ted Palfrey - Hollowing
 December 16 - Annual Christmas Party



Officers:

Gordon Sloane, President
 Randy Fritchman, Vice President
 Bill Thurman, Secretary
 Jack Harris, Treasurer,
 Ron Comtois, Past President

Members, Board of Directors:

Maria D'Elio, 2024-25
 Colin Chambers, 2024-25
 Jerry DeLaurentis, 2024-25
 Gordon Fowler, 2025-2026,
 Mike Johnston, 2025-2026

Committees:

Beads of Courage / Wig Stands: Bill Thurman
 Education/Wears Valley: Robert Law
 Fantasy of Trees: Don Adams

Coming Events — Aug. 19, 2025
ANNUAL WOOD AUCTION
 AT OUR AUGUST GENERAL
 MEETING

Bring lots of good wood with at least
 1 flat side
 AND
 Lots of money \$\$\$\$\$

Business

Gordon reminded everyone that after March the membership committee will reach out to those who haven't paid their annual dues. Also, the by-laws were changed, but the membership fee remains \$30.00 per year. If a new member joins during the last quarter, then the membership will be carried over to the next year.

WOODTURNING WEEKEND—WITH NICK COOK MAY 3-4, 2025



Nick is a professional production turner whose studio, of 35 years, is in Marietta, GA. We were very happy to have his demonstration of 13 turnings (!) on Saturday and his guidance for the Sunday workshop. We also had individual help from Gordon Sloane, Colin Chalmers, and Jake Niedling—Thanks! The Sunday activity resulted in two pieces, the Mystery Salt Shaker, with no moving parts, and a small lidded box. We all took home some wood to try the other pieces he demonstrated. Thanks to Nick and everyone there, it was a great weekend!



Nick turning an Ambrosia Maple Platter



Coffee Scoop



Pepper Grinder



Mystery Salt Urn



Turning the funnel for the Salt Urn



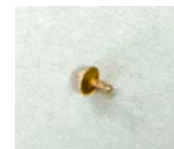
Walnut Lidded Box



Signature Acorn Boxes

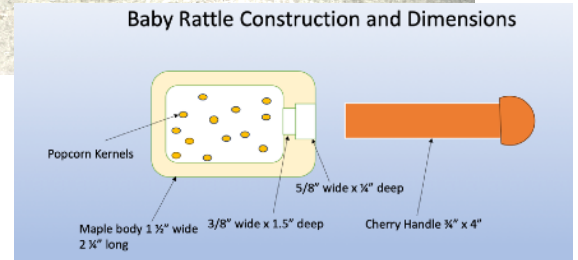


Maple Lidded Box



Spinning Tops & a Tiny One, too

MAY DEMONSTRATION by RON COMPTOIS: Turning a Baby Rattle



Our Demo for the month was done by Ron Comptois. He showed us how he makes a baby rattle. He uses popcorn inside the rattle. Turned out of two pieces of the wood, the rattle portion is hollowed out leaving a tendon for remounting on the lathe. He turned a handle, then put the popcorn in before glueing with Thick and Quick Titebond (because it dries clear). Normally, he lets it dry overnight. For the finish, he usually uses CA glue because of its hardness. It stands up to baby teeth and pounding. Size is critical for the safety of the baby. Ron makes them a bit smaller because young babies (3-6 months) can handle them and not reek havoc on furniture. Standard recommended size is 2 inches in diameter. Go to the chapter website: SMWTS.org to see Ron's step-by-step & illustrated **handout**. It will surely help you turn a baby rattle yourself for the Quarterly Challenge. Bring it in for Show & Tell in June, July, or August. **Thanks, Ron, for an excellent demo!**

What's Happening at the Ranch in May?

The May workshops provided the opportunity for our students to practice their turning skills and learn new ones. Our beginners practiced all the key skills they've learned this year by making coffee scoops. The intermediates learned how to turn a baby rattle with captive rings. This introduced them to a new tool (captive ring tool).

Our schedule shifts slightly for the summer months since May ended the Spring Semester. Wears Valley Ranch is a year-round program. The summer schedule provides for remedial education and a focus on Arts, Crafts and Summer Camp.





ANNUAL SERVICE DAYS & FOUNDERS DAY - 2025

Each year as part of our commitment to WEars Valley Ranch, we hold a Days of Service weekend to Service the Equipment, deep clean the Shop, add any new projects we've planned and more. Our members volunteer their time to prepare the facility for the coming year. This year's volunteers included:

Keith Martin, Tom Neckvatal, Scott Morrow, KSteve Kozik, Roy Cuff, Scott Duncan, KChristopher Burt & Stan Roberts. Also participating were committee Members (Instructors), Bill penicks, Ed Lewis, Jake Neidling & Bob Law.

On the Saturday following the Days of Service, our students, with the assistance of Pat Brown & Bob Law, hosted the attendees of this year's Wears Valley Ranch Founders Day Activity. Members of the Board of Directors, Major Donors, Past Staff Members & Friends of the Ranch along with their families made up the cross-section of visitors to the Shop. Our student representatives, Melanie, Hannah, Kaydn & Bruce did an outstanding job of demonstrating & answering questions. Pat & Bob provided the history & purpose behind the woodturning program at the Ranch.

We are grateful for the continued support of our Chapter Members for this educational program.



SHOW & TELL — MAY 20, 2025

Platters — from krotch wood





MAY FLOWERS

Bill Penicks turned 4 wig stands—Sorry, Bill, we didn't get photos.

