



The Smoky Mountain Woodturners Chapter of AAW meets each month of the year on the 3rd Tuesday of the month starting at 6:00 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. MEETING Location: 8023 Kingston Pike in Knoxville. *Woodcraft Knoxville* (our sponsor) is near Trader Joe's and one block



Wow, 2025 was a fantastic year. We had a lot of great demonstrations from unique beads of courage boxes, inside out turnings, stabilizing wood, lidded calabash bowls, to hollow forms. And we ended things with a nice sit-down catered meal, great fellowship, and an exciting Dirty Santa at our Christmas party. We need to give thanks to Gordon for leading us through such a year!

The Board met January 6th and elected new officers for 2026. Results are Bill Thurman, President; Gordon Sloane, Vice President; Gordon Fowler, Secretary, and Jack Harris, Treasurer.

Andy Milligan and Ron Comtois have put together a great agenda for our Club's turning weekend at Arrowmont on March 20-22. All lathes are full, with a waiting list. If you have an interest, contact Andy or Ron and they can put you on the waiting list.

We got off to a good start for 2026 with Cindy Drpza coming into our meeting by Zoom. She really knows her finials, and her skill level is amazing. I am sure we all were able to see something new in approach or design features. We are actively developing the club's 2026 calendar. The next couple of meetings are confirmed and will give us ideas on how to enhance our turnings. In February, Jack Harris and Colin Chalmers will be introducing us to *Carving your Turnings*. Then in March, Pauline Bayne will share *Pyrography Techniques for Your Woodturnings*.

Are you going to the AAW Symposium in Raleigh, NC on June 4-7? If you are, and you want a \$40 discount, see Gordon Sloane. If the club has five members attending, we can get the discount.

Did you know that Colin Chalmers conducts classes in his shop in Kingston, TN? He is offering for one club member to have the opportunity to attend one of his two-day classes each quarter, only paying a \$50 material fee. The first opportunity will be in April. Jim will send out an email later asking you to reply, if interested. Then these names will be used for the drawing in March. We will share the dates when they are available.

Ron Comtois, who is leading our efforts to support the Fantasy of Trese, is looking for a helper who would be willing to take over in 2027. If this is something you think you can do, please talk to Ron.

Looking forward to having a great year, and with the help of the Board and our members, I am sure we will. Let's all continue to help each other develop our skill levels and have a great fellowship along the way. Keep making shavings!

See you in February, Bill

**ANNUAL DUES of \$30 are due –
January through March 31
Please Pay at a Meeting or Send
\$30 annual dues to:
SMWTS Treasurer
P. O. Box 50141, Knoxville,**

2025 Club Calendar

General Meetings 3rd Tuesday: 6 pm, Location: Woodcraft Knoxville
Board Meetings, 2nd Tuesday, 5 pm, Location: Woodcraft Knoxville - open to all

- January 6 - 1st Quarter Board of Directors meeting, 3rd Wed of Jan, April, July, Oct, 5 pm, Woodcraft
- January 20 - Cindy Drozda: *Finial Box –an IRD, Interactive Remote Demo*
- February 17** - **Jack Harris & Colin Chambers: *Carving your Turnings***
- March 17 - Pauline Bayne: *Pyrography Techniques for your Woodturnings*
- March 20-22** - **Arrowmont Turning Workshop (reservations filled)**
- April 7** - 2nd Quarter Board of Directors meeting, 3rd Wed of Jan, April, July, Oct, 5 pm, Woodcraft
- April 21 - Ron Comtois: *Offset Napkin Holder*
- May 19** - **Annual Wood Auction**
- June 16 - Jake Niedling: *TBD*
- July 7** - 3rd Quarter Board of Directors meeting, 3rd Wed of Jan, April, July, Oct, 5 pm, Woodcraft
- July 21 - Ted Pelfrey: *Embellishing Hollow Forms*
- August 18 - Bob Henrickson - *TBD*
- September 15 - John Lucas - *Using a Router at the Lathe*
- October 6** - 4th Quarter Board of Directors meeting, 3rd Wed of Jan, April, July, Oct, 5 pm, Woodcraft
- October 20 - Covered Calabash Bowl - *TBD*
- October 24-25 - Fall (demo & workshop, Sat & Sun, 9 - 3**
- November 17 - John Jordan - *TBD*
- December 15 - **Annual Christmas Party**

2026 Officers, Board, & Committees



Board of Directors:

Randy Fritchman, 2024-26
Pauline Bayne, 2025-26
Maria D'Elio, 2026-27
Colin Chambers, 2026-2027

President
Bill Thurman

Vice President
Gordan Sloane

Treasurer
Jack Harris

Secretary
Gordon Fowler

Committees:

Beads of Courage / Wig Stands: Bill Thurman
Education/Wears Valley: Robert Law
Fantasy of Trees: Ron Comtois
Membership: Maria D'Elio & Jerry DeLaurentis
Mentoring: Ron Comtois
Newsletter: Pauline Bayne
Pens for Troops: Randy Fritchman

Photographer: Randy Fritchman,
Assisted by Terry Fritchman
Program: Gordon Sloane, Colin Chalmers,
& Jake Niedling
Safety Officer: Gordon Fowler
Video/Internet: Jim Vogelsang, Website
Andy Milligan, Video

Wood Auction Contributors:

Gordon Sloane, Bill Thurman, Seth Simmerman,
Dick Hammat, Ken Godwin, Harry Ford

Visitors:

One visitor, who joined the club, **Kyle Leinhans—Welcome!**

COMITTEE REPORTS

Treasurer's Report - Jack Harris

2026 SMWTS Projected Budget —from the Board meeting

Balance from 2025:	\$11,684.76
Projected Income:	\$7,391.00
Projected Expenses:	\$9,174.23
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Projected Ending Balance: \$9,901.53	

As Jan 20, 2026 the balance was \$9853.

Fantasy of Trees - Ron Comtois, new chair, to be aided by Maria D'Elio & Don Adams

And the 2025 \$50 Woodcraft Gift Card Winner is Sam Delozier!

Ron reported that the FOT raised between \$4-5,000 from our ornaments and other turnings at the November event. As we turn ornaments this year, let's concentrate on more elaborate or embellished items with really good finishes. Any turned items may be donated.

Pens for Troops - Randy Fritchman

He has pen blanks for the asking & just needs finished pens.

NEW OPPORTUNITY

Colin Chalmers is offering a free two-day class (plus material fee) at his woodturning studio (in Kingston) per quarter to any member chosen by raffle. Details will follow. *There will be a*

January Attendance
34 present, plus 14 on ZOOM

WINNERS

Bring Back Box — Suspended for 2026

Scholarships - Annual winners:

Arrowmont: Dan Land
JC Campbell: Jerry DeLaurentis

January Drawing:

Arrowmont: Lucy Bobb
JC Campbell: Lucy Bobb

Business - Bill Thurman

National Symposium, Raleigh NC, June 4-7, Gordon Sloane is coordinating / recruiting at least 5 members in order to receive discounts on the registration fee. A *national meeting this close is unlikely in the next 5 years. Let's have lots of members there.*

Arrowmont Weekend, March 20-22: Ron reported that those who have signed up need to contact Arrowmont directly to pay for room and board. \$120 is paid to club for tuition, plus a materials fee, to be decided.

New Ideas for the Newsletter - Pauline Bayne

Bill Thurman has suggested:

1. Feature a short bio of a different club member each month. Pauline will start with our new President, Bill Thurman.
2. Let's all participate:
 - Member-submitted short articles, such as:
 - favorite finishes and why
 - clues to better sanding, etc.
 - Tips & Tricks

Do let Pauline know if you would like to do this, or she might just recruit you anyway.

FEATURING SMWTS MEMBERS
—2026 President, Bill Thurman—

Who is this new President? His name is Bill Thurman, who was born in Chattanooga TN and now lives in the Choto Community in West Knoxville. Bill has been married for 52 years and helped his wife raise 4 sons. Now they also have three daughters-in-law with 10 grandkids, and he says he is fortunate to have them all in Knoxville. Bill Graduated from Tennessee Tech in Mechanical Engineering, and his career focused on HVAC design, construction, and operation. The majority of his career was spent at Children's Hospital. [Seems he is perfect as our chairman for Beads of Courage and Wigstand, doesn't it? —editor]

In the mid 80's, he had a knock-off of the Shopsmith. He only accomplished a few spindle pieces with it before taking a sabbatical from wood working to began involvement with the Boy Scout—because his oldest came home in the first grade and said he had joined. All four boys achieved Eagle Scout.

Around 2016, Bill was looking at retirement (retired in 2018) and decided to get back into woodworking. Then in 2023, one of sons was encouraging him to get a laser engraver to compliment his small craft projects. After researching, he decided that was too much like work with all that computer work. So off to Internet to see what was involved in woodturning. He states it would have been nice to know about the club before embarking on the journey. Bill enjoys making shavings and considers himself a woodturner in progress.

December's Secret Auction — Thanks to all who contributed auction items that netted \$613.00 for the Club!

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|---|---|
| 1. Nick Cook - Nick Cook Notebook & Demo Tools | 8. John Jordan - Wood for Turning |
| 2. Roy Cuff - Carbide Turning Tool | 9. Jake Niedling - Hand-Turned Ornament |
| 3. Randy Fritchman - Battery-Operated Chain Saw | 10. Ted Pelfrey - Demo Piece |
| 4. Gordon Fowler - Tabletop Epoxy Resin | 11. Gordon Sloane - Negative Rake Scraper |
| 5. Mark Gardner - Demonstration Pieces | 12. Gordon Sloane - <i>The Wood Book</i> |
| 6. Ken Godwin - Self-Centering Pen Vise | 13. Gordon Sloane - <i>Woodsmith</i> Back Issues, 2007-20 |
| 7. John Jordan - Mystery Gift | 14. Woodcraft - Tool Roll & Wood |

DEMONSTRATION: CINDY DROZDA - A FINIAL BOX



This was our first IRD = Interactive Remote Demonstration, in which Cindy Drozda visited us via Zoom. The demo, itself, was pre-recorded, but we could ask questions by microphone, and she would stop the video to answer and discuss the question. Jack Harris introduced Cindy and the demo.

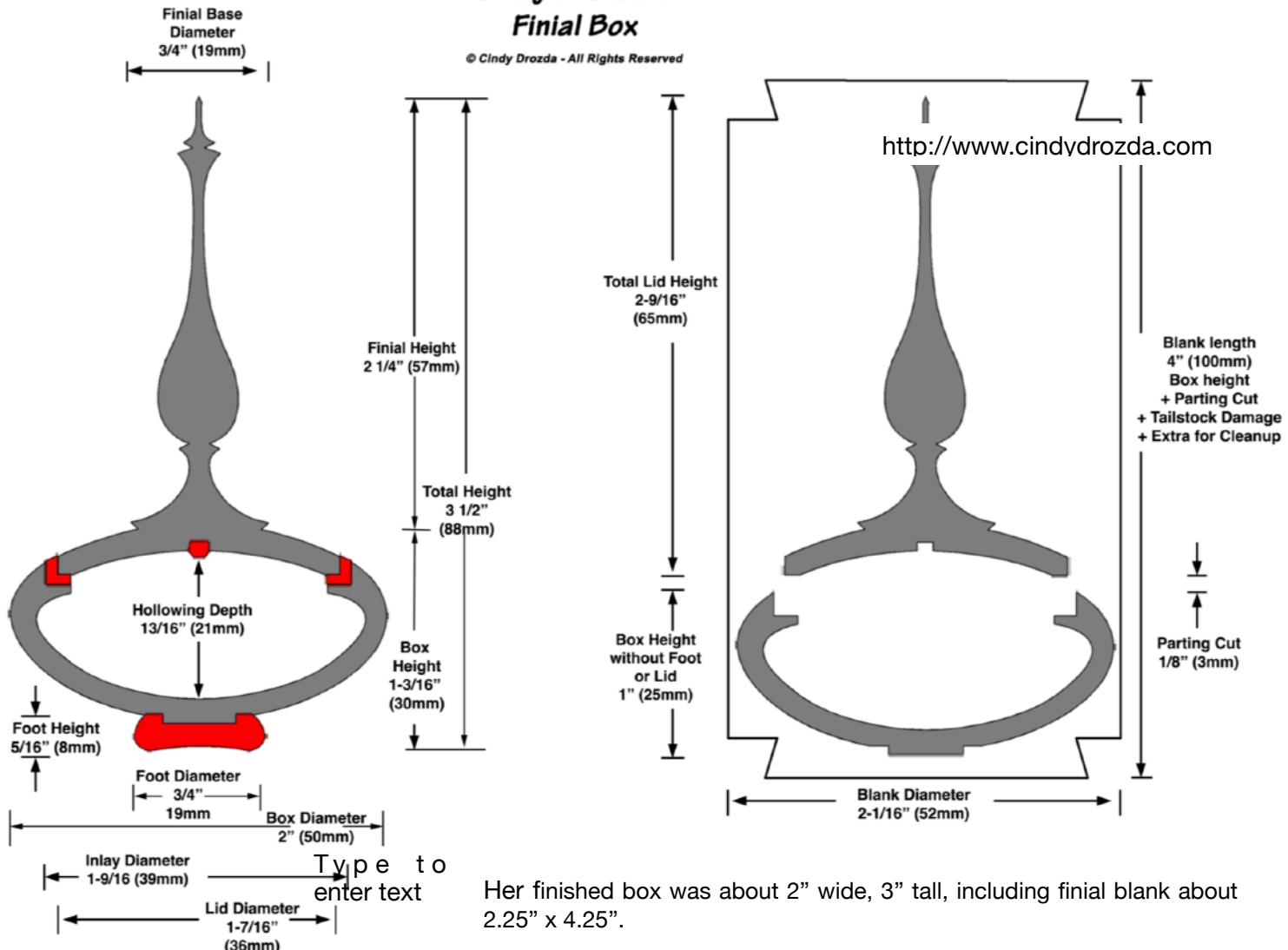
It was quite a successful "first" due to Cindy's expertise and careful descriptions of techniques, tools, and the why's / wherefores of finial turning, a real specialty of hers. She sent us handouts from the demo, available on SMWTS.org under *Handouts and Videos*. Some of that information is provided here as well.



Cindy Drozda, the Fine Art of Woodturning
<https://cindydrozda.com>

Cindy Drozda's Finial Box

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Her finished box was about 2" wide, 3" tall, including finial blank about 2.25" x 4.25".

Her handouts include 4 Guidelines that Cindy says will help you turn successful finials.

Guidelines to Successful Finials

1 – Take away the tailstock.

Removing the "nub" at the tailstock end was a major cause of breaking finials for me. Without the tailstock, I rarely break one on the lathe. The extra support that the tailstock gives is not worth the price to pay!

2 – Balance the cutting forces on the piece.

Equal pressure on either side of center - from the tool that's doing the cutting, and a finger, will support the piece much better than the tailstock would have. I also feel that my finger does more than oppose the cutting forces. It also gives me feedback about how my cuts are going.

3 – Always work on well supported material.

This means to complete each detail before moving on to the next one, working from the tailstock end toward the headstock. It does require more planning of the shape of the finial, because it doesn't really work well to go back to the very tip and "just shave off a little more" after the finial is thin.

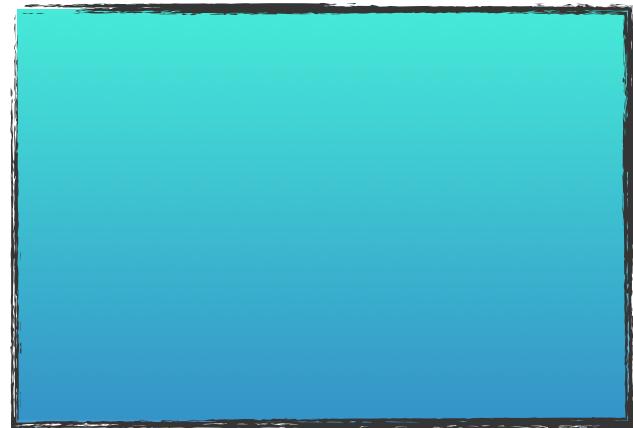
4 – Use a light touch and a careful aim.

Probably the most important ingredient in your formula for success! Also perhaps the most difficult to learn. It doesn't pay to get in a hurry. Being able to make a very light cut allows you to fine tune the form, as well as putting less cutting force into the workpiece. And fine details are created by accurate placement of the tool (combined with those "very light cuts").

Tools used by Cindy in this demo:

1/16" (1.5mm) Parting Tool
1/8" (3mm) Parting Tool
3/8" (10mm) Beading and Parting Tool
3/8" (10mm) 40/40 Bowl Gouge (or round carbide cutter)
3/8" (10mm) Finial Gouge or regular Spindle Gouge
1/4" (6mm) Vortex Tool
3/4" (19mm) Arc Negative Rake Scraper (or other round scraper)
3/8" (10mm) Ray Key Signature Spindle Gouge, regular spindle gouge, or depth drill
1/2" (13mm) Square Recess Scraper or other square scraper
1/4" (6mm) Pyramid Tool
1/2" (13mm) 50/50 Negative Rake Scraper, or skew, or similar
1/2" (13mm) Hook Scraper or other small hollowing tool, or round scraper
General Brand Vernier Caliper (for scribing and measuring)
Drill Chuck and bit for drilling a jewel hole
Wall Thickness Caliper
Depth Gauge
Center Finder
Awl
Ruler
Live and Drive Centers (smaller diameter ones are nice)
Scroll Chuck that can hold the tenon on your blanks
Sandpaper and Finishing materials of your choice

You can see all the tools she makes & sells at her online store on her website, just click on "Products" on <https://CindyDrozda.com>.



... from Cindy's website





Sponsored by



Smoky Mountain Woodturners

If you have questions about our SMWTS educational program at the Ranch or would like to participate as an instructor, contact Bob Law - rockytopbob1@gmail.com

What's Happening at the Ranch in January?

It's a short report this month because our Workshops were moved to the 29th. A week after this update was submitted for the Newsletter Our Workshops, originally scheduled for the 3rd Thursday of the month, were moved due to the weather (partial day of school).

This month, Jake Niedling will be teaching the Students to turn a ring holder. We'll include photos with next month's Report.

Open Shop Thursdays are progressing ahead of schedule. Students enjoy working with Tommy & Bob to practice their skills and complete projects.

January also marks the beginning of the Winter/Spring Semester. We welcomed several new students and as a result, have added a new group at the 1:00PM workshop on Thursdays.

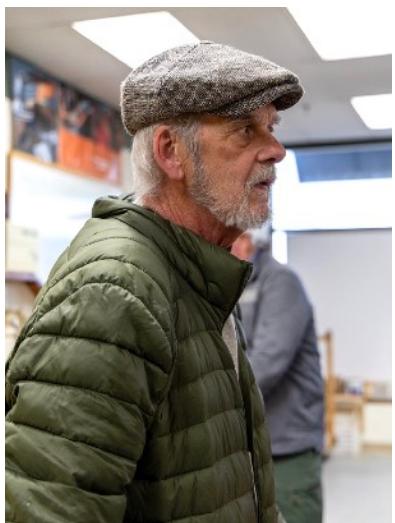
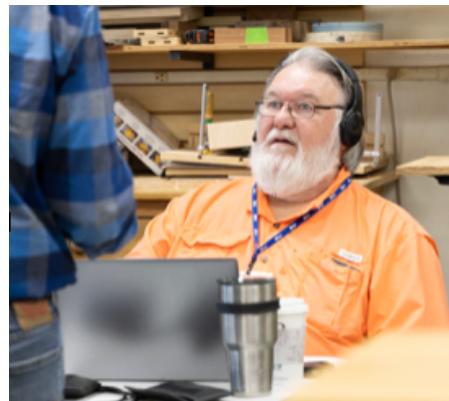


from Bob Law, Chairman
Education / Wears Valley Ranch Committee

SHOW & TELL



Candid Club Photos



JANUARY 2026 Board of Directors Meeting

