



IWG News



The Newsletter of the Island Woodturners Guild

April 2026

About the IWG:

The [Island Woodturners Guild](#) meets from 1:00 - 4:00 PM on the 4th Saturday of each month (except for July/Aug) at the Central Saanich Senior Citizens' Centre, [1229 Clarke Road](#), Brentwood Bay, BC.

Visitors are welcome.

Executive Committee

President:

Hovan Baghdassarian

Vice President:

Virginia Lee

Treasurer:

Chris Leach

Secretary:

Michael McEwan

Members at Large:

Tim Karpiak

Harvey Pfluger

David Blair

Past President:

Don Costello

Newsletter Editor:

Virginia Lee

The IWG gratefully acknowledges the support of the following companies:

[Artisan Wood to Works](#)

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THE PRESIDENT'S TURN

Hey everyone,

Welcome to spring in all its glory. It's nice to be biking to work and not constantly getting rained on. After a nice extended break through winter everything is growing again which means mowing and edging and weeding and chopping and hauling. Based on some of the places I have visited I suspect that many of you will be joining me in some spring gardening.

We have 3 months ahead of us until we take a summer break and some fun demonstrations in front of us. This month we will have a guest demo from Malcolm Zander, a truly accomplished turner who does some amazing work with piercings. I would encourage you to take a look at his website and you will find some very unique and beautiful pieces. In May we will be having our AGM and then following that Dave Roberts will be giving us a demo on how to turn a peppermill. I know years ago I bought the pieces for a pepper mill, but never got around to turning one, so I think this will be a very interesting and practical demonstration.

I also wanted to share something that has been on my mind lately and we have been discussing at Executive. I have been paying close attention to the membership numbers having been on Executive for a few years and now more acutely as the President. For many years we have historically had membership numbers well over a 100, maybe even into the 120s/130s.

Currently our membership sits at just over 80 members. While it feels like this last year or two we have stabilized the number of people attending in person and online, the numbers are certainly lower than when I first joined the guild some time ago. We have been having discussions as an Executive on how to boost those numbers. Certainly the work of our social media accounts is giving us more profile and we recently had a few new members join which is very heartening.

However, I think it is important to us all to ensure that this guild continues in good shape for many many years to come. I would

encourage you to join us in thinking about and taking action on encouraging new members to join the guild and take advantage of all the wonderful things it has to offer.

If you know people who may be interested please invite them out to meet us. If you see someone new at a meeting, introduce yourself and make them feel welcome, if you have an idea on how to get the word out to groups (think something like the Camosun woodworking program) and need help please reach out to myself or anyone on Executive.

Well I think that's all I have to say for this month. Looking forward to seeing you all at the April meeting.

Wishing you smooth cuts and steady hands!

Parting off,

Hovan

NEXT MEETING: SATURDAY APRIL 25TH: 1:00 p.m.

MALCOLM ZANDER DEMONSTRATION



Malcolm Zander began turning in 2000 and obviously has lace fetish. This he blames on Binh Pho, whose seminar in Albany he attended in 2003, after which he immediately went out and bought a dental drill and compressor and airbrush. He is very interested in form, seeing different manifestations of form in wood, fibre, glass, and ceramic art, and is exploring these differences and similarities in his turning, together with the influences of texture and colour.

This will be a remote demo on Zoom and the meeting invite will be sent out April 23rd.

MARCH 2025 MEETING RECAP



JEFF HORNUNG

Jeff Hornung demonstrated his techniques to embellish a turning to look like a bronze bowl using reactive metallic paints in an interactive remote demo. He will discuss the use of paints as well as form, chucking options and techniques to create the illusion of a weathered bronze piece. The meeting video and detailed transcript, including recommended products can be found on our website in the Members' Area. You have to log in [HERE](#) to view.

The video is also a good resource both for seasoned and new turners, to refresh your basic bowl turning skill knowledge.

OUR WEBSITE HAS TAKEN OFF!

We struggled for quite a while trying to speed up our website. Our original hosting company got bought out by another company which got bought out by another company and the servers for the original company were old and not updated to newer technology. The website was SLOW! The webmaster could turn a bowl while waiting for it to load. We tried moving to a different host and that ended up being a bit of a disaster but finally have found a new hosting company and are pleased to announce that the website is so much faster.

For those members who have forgotten their username and password, please send the webmaster an email (webmaster@islandwoodturners.com) and you will be sent the information you need to log into the Members' Area.

All of our meeting videos, Show & Tell photos, etc. can be found in the Members' Area as are all the archived newsletters. There is an amazing amount of information in the newsletters, especially the ones the former newsletter editor, John Kilcoyne, put together.

INPUT NEEDED: SUGGESTION FOR JUNE MEETING

We are finalizing a list of topic ideas for our June meeting, which will feature **short, hands-on demonstrations** covering techniques of interest to turners at all levels.

Some initial ideas include:

- **Workholding options:** types of chucks, jam chucks, and tail centers—when and why to use each
- **Lathe tools:** which gouges to use for different cuts and forms
- **Tenons:** how to turn strong tenons and effective methods for removing them
- **Jigs:** common shop-made jigs and how they can improve accuracy and safety
- **Indexing wheels:** what they are and practical ways to use them
- **Wood defects:** what to watch for and deciding when to turn through a flaw—or turn it into a feature

If there's something you've always wondered how to do, or want to demo, we'd love to hear from you. Email your questions or topic ideas to webmaster@islandwoodturners.com, and we'll add them to the list. Submissions are anonymous—so there are truly no stupid questions.

101 WOODTURNING COURSE

Are you or someone you know interested in taking the IWG 101 Woodturning course this fall? Email Don Costello (don@teamwhoswho.com) for more information and to get your name on the list. If you would like to be an instructor, let us know.

MAY AGM

May will be our very quick AGM. It will be followed by an in-person demonstration of turning peppermills by member Dave Roberts.

THE LIBRARY

The Library Box is opened at the beginning of every meeting. There is no sign out requirement, just take a book or video and return it when you are done.

NEWBIES' CORNER

Don't Fear the Skew!

A.M. Turner's Guide to the Skew Chisel 🐭

Greetings from the shavings-strewn floor of my workshop! I'm A.M. Turner, your resident woodturning mouse, and today we're diving whiskers-first into one of the most misunderstood tools in the spindle-turning world: the *skew chisel*. It's elegant, versatile, and yes—occasionally terrifying. But with a bit of practice (and perhaps a calming cup of chamomile), you'll soon be slicing clean ribbons like a pro.

Skew Chisel Anatomy: Flat vs. Oval, Big vs. Small

Flat (Rectangular) Skews

- *Pros:* Easier to sharpen, more stable on the tool rest.
- *Cons:* Square edges can catch—rounding them helps.

- *Best for:* Beginners and those who like predictable control.

Oval Skews

- *Pros:* Roll smoothly on the tool rest, great for finesse.
- *Cons:* Trickier to sharpen evenly due to the curved profile.
- *Best for:* Experienced turners who enjoy a silky glide.

Size Matters

- $\frac{1}{4}$ " to $\frac{1}{2}$ " : Ideal for delicate work—think finials, mouse-sized goblets.
- $\frac{3}{4}$ " to $1\frac{1}{2}$ " : Great for planing cuts and larger beads.
- *Tip:* Choose the *widest skew you can comfortably control*. Bigger blades offer more stability.

Grind Profiles: Angles and Edges

Skew Angle (20–30°)

- Shallower angles (closer to 20°) are more aggressive; steeper ones offer more control.

Bevel Angle (25–45°)

- 25°: Razor-sharp but fragile—like my cousin who tried turning granite.
- 45°: Durable but less smooth.
- *Sweet spot:* Around 30–35° for balance.

Radius vs. Straight Edge

- *Radius:* Easier for rolling beads and avoiding catches.
- *Straight:* Precise for planing and V-cuts.

Types of Cuts and Their Uses

Cut Type	Application	Benefits	Drawbacks
Planing	Smoothing spindle surfaces	Glassy finish, minimal sanding	Requires precise angle control
V-Cut	Decorative grooves, transitions	Crisp detail, layout reference	Can catch if rushed

Bead	Rounded decorative elements	Adds visual interest	Rolling motion takes practice
Pommels	Transitions between shapes	Clean separation	Needs sharp edge and finesse

Techniques for Each Cut Type

Planing Cut:

- Hold the skew chisel with the bevel rubbing flat against the wood surface.
- Use a smooth, controlled push along the spindle to create a glassy finish.
- Maintain a consistent angle to avoid catches and tear-out.

V-Cut:

- Present the skew with the corner of the blade leading.
- Use a slight slicing motion to carve crisp grooves.
- Control depth carefully to keep cuts even and avoid catches.

Bead:

- Roll the skew gently on the tool rest as you move along the spindle.
- Use the curved bevel edge to shape the rounded bead.
- Practice smooth transitions between beads for a flowing look.

Pommels:

- Use the skew to define clean transitions between shapes.
- Employ precise bevel contact and steady hand pressure.
- Keep the edge sharp and use finesse to avoid tear-out.

Practice Drills for Skew Mastery

1. **The Bead Parade** Turn a series of beads from ¼" to 1" across a spindle. Focus on rolling motion and tool control.
2. **V-Cut Ladder** Create evenly spaced V-cuts along a dowel. Try to match depth and spacing.

3. **Planing Perfection** Smooth a square blank into a cylinder using only the skew. Aim for a consistent surface with no tear-out.
4. **Skew-Only Project** Try a simple mouse-sized candlestick or pen body using only the skew. It builds confidence and forces finesse.
5. **Catch-and-Release** Practice intentional catches (on scrap!) to learn recovery techniques. It's oddly empowering.

Video Resources for Skew Chisel Techniques

- **Richard Raffan on Skew Chisel Basics:** A clear, detailed video covering peeling, planing, shearing, V-cuts, and beads with demonstrations from above and side views. [YouTube](#)
- **Stewart Batty Demonstrations:** Look for Stewart Batty's workshops and demos on spindle turning and skew chisel use, often available through the AAW or his personal channels. Stewart's father, Allan was a legendary wood turner and has a notable video is "The Skew Chisel with Allan Batty" on YouTube. [YouTube](#). I encourage you to take a look.
- **Mike Mahoney Skew Techniques:** Mike Mahoney's videos showcase smooth, controlled skew cuts and finishing techniques. His YouTube channel has many spindle turning tutorials. [YouTube Channel](#)
- **Glenn Lucas Tutorials:** Glenn Lucas offers excellent instruction on skew chisel handling and cuts, including beads and V-cuts, often shared via AAW or his own platforms. One useful video is his sharpening tutorial on YouTube. [YouTube](#)

These videos provide excellent visual guidance from master turners and are highly recommended for improving your skew chisel skills.

Final Thoughts from the Lathe

The skew chisel isn't just a tool—it's a philosophy. It teaches patience, precision, and the art of listening to the wood. Whether you're turning a full-sized spindle or a thimble-sized goblet like me, the skew rewards those who respect its quirks.

So grab your skew, take a deep breath, and let the shavings fly. And remember: even the tiniest craftsman can make mighty curls.

A.M. Turner – Bio



Nestled in the serene forests of Vancouver Island, **A.M. Turner** is an artisan, storyteller, and master of craftsmanship. With a cozy workshop filled with well-loved tools and the scent of fresh cedar, Turner finds magic in the details and loves to share them with others who are interested in the delicate art of turning wood and the quiet beauty of handmade things. A.M. Turner celebrates the connection between craft and storytelling, inviting readers and woodworkers alike into a world where imagination and tradition intertwine.

TRICKS & TIPS

Has this happened to you?

Woodturning A Big Yew Bowl w/ Bowl Turning Accident

(description below)



GettingODone
1.71K subscribers

Started this bowl few months ago and ended up launching it off my lathe. I decided to pick the piece up again and finish what I started. Reasons for the bowl coming off was:

1. Tenon was too small for the mass of the bowl 2. Tenon

was also too sharp making it so the jaws only contacted a small part of the wood 3. Jaws I was using were too small as I didn't have the right size at the time 4. Aggressive cuts didn't help either but I am making it one of the reasons why as the wood was very dry and hard putting a lot more force into the physics of woodturning This isn't the first time I have had pieces come off but I must advise people to use every precaution possible as lathes can be very dangerous when placed into inexperienced hands. Only turn what you can handle and what the lathe can handle, I could have avoided this all together if I stepped back and stopped as I knew the jaws were too small for the piece.

Use Your Scraps!



Quick use of scraps to make **MONEY WOODTURNING.**

Tomislav Tomasic Woodturning
99K views • 2 years ago

[View the video HERE](#)



ThePapa1947
65.6K subscribers

[The Radial Radial Feature Ring Wood Turning](#)



NOTE: Any websites or videos mentioned for inspiration are provided for informational purposes only and are not endorsed by the Island Woodturners Guild. Use your own discretion when visiting the websites and using techniques shown in videos. Always use safety gear.

IT'S YOUR TURN

We're on Social Media! Follow us on Facebook and Instagram. You can scan the QR code below or click the social media icon.



PARTING OFF

Our AGM is coming up at our May meeting. We keep it short. Thank you to everyone who steps up to serve on our Board.

WIT Scholarship Available



2026 Pacific Northwest Women in Turning Scholarship



With the help of a generous donor from the Seattle Woodturners, the Seattle chapter of Women in Turning (WIT) is now offering a Pacific Northwest WIT Scholarship (\$1000), to be awarded annually to an outstanding emerging woodturner for use towards professional development opportunities. To be eligible, applicants must be women or otherwise under-represented woodturners who reside in the Pacific Northwest (including British Columbia, Washington, Oregon, and Idaho). The scholarship is intended to encourage woodturning as a lifelong pursuit, extend the accessibility of the craft, and contribute to the cultural vitality of the Pacific Northwest.



Deadline: August 1



Scholarship Criteria:

- Applicant must be a woman or other historically under-represented woodturner;
- Applicant must be 18 years of age or older;
- Applicant must be a resident of the Pacific Northwest (including British Columbia, Washington, Oregon, and Idaho);
- Awarded to the applicant who best articulates their creative intent and the anticipated educational impact of the scholarship as well as demonstrates the highest quality of work (based in equal measure on technical merit, composition/design, originality of work, and clarity/effectiveness of ideas);
- Scholarship is to be used for classes and professional development opportunities (e.g. residencies, mentorship, etc.);
- Scholarship recipient agrees to give a presentation/demonstration relating to their educational experience:
 - Recipient's resulting work will be promoted at a Seattle Woodturners meeting/event and will be featured on the club's website/social media channels;
 - The Seattle Woodturners will cover any costs associated with travel and lodging;
 - Recipient agrees to donate a signed art piece for the annual Seattle Woodturners auction;
- Applicant consents to the use of application images/content by the Seattle Woodturners in marketing materials promoting the scholarship, including:
 - Bio;
 - Headshot, photograph(s) of work, logo, or other image to be published with bio;
 - Applicable social media handle(s) and/or website address;
- Applications will be reviewed by a committee of representatives from the Seattle Woodturners and will include external artists and arts professionals;
- Scholarship committee representatives are not eligible to apply;
- Incomplete applications will not be considered.

CONCLUDING THOT

