



# Slightly *Skewed*

Volume 10, Number 9 - October 2002

## *Next Meeting:*

Sunday, October 13, 2002  
2:00 p.m. Sharp at  
Crescenta Valley Regional  
Park Recreation Center.

**Presentation:** Damon  
Siples: "Methods of Dust  
Control".

## *Challenge*

This month's challenge will be to create the most beautifully decorated turnings.

## *Brigantines*

### *Report*

*By Bill Kelly*

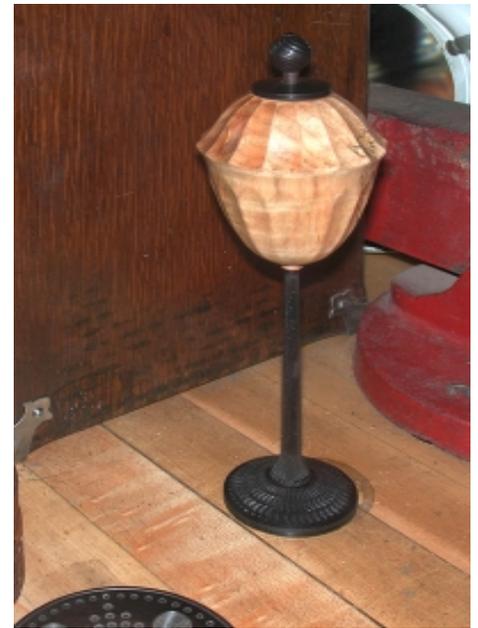
The newly launched and fitted Irving Johnson joined the other tall ships from around the world at the Tall Ship's Festival held in the Los Angeles harbor and San Pedro. Although not completely finished, she did set one staysail in the parade.

Our woodturners responded enthusiastically to our call for help. Dennis Siples' purpleheart stanchions have been installed as supports for the five rails. They are magnificent! Bob Barnes, Damon Siples, Bob Denbo, Amy Earhart, P.J. Hays, Jack Stumpf, and Amos Thomson made short work of producing over eighty berth light mounting in Honduras

## What in the Heck is a Holtzapffel Lathe?

By Don Comer & Cheryl Schneiders

That question was answered for a small group of GWG members by Jim Richardson who held a fascinating workshop on ornamental wood turning Saturday Sept. 21. Jim has an ornamental Holtzapffel lathe that was manufactured in 1820, which makes it about 180 years old. For perspective this was within the lifetime of Thomas Jefferson, and Andy Jackson was still a relative youngster. One might think that such a venerable antique machine would be under glass in some museum but obviously it isn't. Jim uses on a daily



*In a photo its difficult to do justice to this beautiful, unbelievably light, fluted covered chalice.*

**basis to produce exquisite, faceted, sculptured boxes, chalices and medallions.**

The Holtzapffel is more like a large, precision, hand-built watch than a machine shop tool. It has so many attachments and accessories; Jim expects it to take him several more years to understand all the things it can do, and it's doubtful that any one machine manufactured today can match its capability. It enables the wood turner to work in four different modes, Plain turning (in which the piece is turned and worked by hand tools such as most of us do); Index turning in which the



*This birdcage box is a fine example of work from the Holtzapffel Lathe.*

piece is rotated a few degrees at a time while a powered rotary tool cuts flutes in the longitudinal plane; spiral turning in which the piece is turned while the feed screw is turned at a matching rate, again moving the tool in a the longitudinal direction, but while the piece is being rotated, and finally, Lateral turning in which the work turns but also moves laterally by means of a traversing mandrel. This final method is used for cutting rosettes and threads.

One of the most valuable features of the Holtzapffel is its indexing faceplate which has thousands of holes to allow for any indexing pattern a wood turner might imagine but no markings, so that the turner must turn, then count and skip to the next hole in the pattern, and hope against hope that he (or she) doesn't miscount.

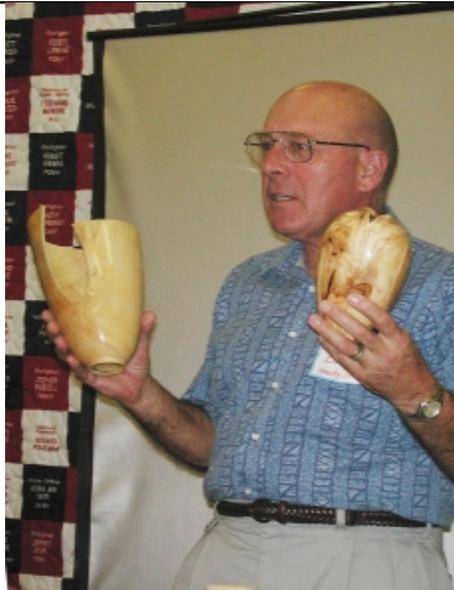
Nothing associated with the Holtzapffel Lathe is easy. Since there was no electricity when this lathe was built, originally, it was foot powered by pumping a treadle. Now it can be powered by either the treadle or by an electric motor, but in either case, a network of pulleys is required to drive both the piece and the assortment of tools that mount the sliding compound tool rest. Although there are hundreds of screws and threaded fittings on and associated with the lathe, there were no standards at the time it was built so every thread is unique. Jim has several hundred bits and pieces to go with the lathe and he freely admits that he has yet to figure out what many of them are supposed to do. Don says, "To me, it seems like a question of whether this is man mastering the machine or the machine mastering the man." And lest he be taken to seriously, he adds, "Just kidding, Jim. Hang in there;."



*Jim working at the Holtzapffel. The belt in the foreground goes to an overhead transfer above and then, via another belt, to the crossfeed toolrest.*

## Show and Tell

Bill Haskell brought two pieces he recently turned from very dry wood. He notes from his personal experience that dry wood does indeed create lots of dust and no shavings and that he has reached the point where he really prefers to turn green wood because it is so much easier and because it creates less dust. Both of his pieces were been carved after the turning was complete. One piece is turned in box elder and has a descending rim leading to a vertical oval cutout. The other piece is a tall enclosed vessel in olive which began



life many years ago as a tree in his neighbor's yard. From one of his neighbor's trees obtained. It has a carved fish-mouth opening. Both pieces were finished with a thin CA base coat over which several coats of spray lacquer were applied. They were sanded with 320 grit and buffed with white diamond.

Carey Caires submitted two very tiny tops

Bill Pounds submitted a string powered top fashioned in maple and Jatoba and finished in tung oil.

Michael Kane submitted a Silver Maple hollow vessel with a lacquer finish.

Carl Stude (below) entered a wonderful 24" top that required a mechanism worthy of Rube Goldberg to set it motion, but once fired up, it seemed to spin forever. The disk was built up of 19 pieces of



walnut and then finished in lacquer.

Mel Mason (below) submitted a hollow vessel of silver maple and a natural edge bowl turned from Myrtle burl. He wrote that they were

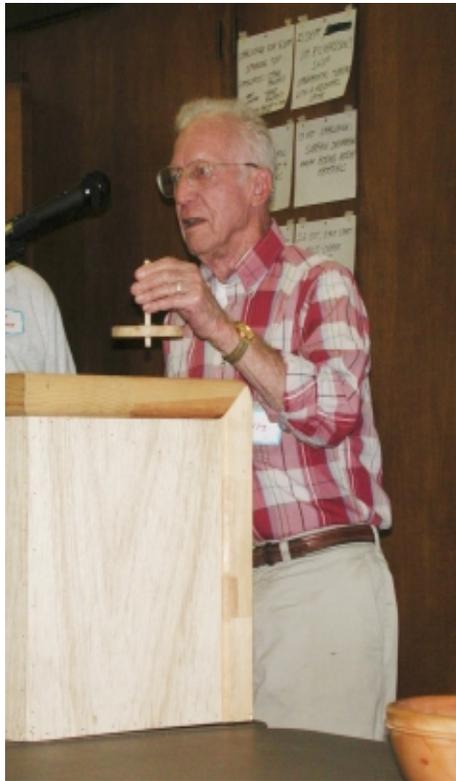


finished in waterlox or arborwax or something ending in "x" which was

the only readable letter.

Jim Blumenkranz (below) entered a hand-driven top. The body was turned from olive wood and it was fitted with a pecan stem.

Steve Dunn (below), our industri-



ous supplier of many shades of green, submitted four of his trademark hats, three small ones fashioned from madrone and magnolia, and one large



one made from pepper wood. All were finished in lacquer.

Bill Noblis describes his submission as a "ZZ Top" made from a toilet seat, an award plaque, a broken shelf, a broken kite dowel and elm scrap. He notes that it was finished "as little as possible". We just report. You figure it out.

Bob Stumbo submitted four Christmas ornaments, a maple burl icicle from box wood, a spalted black acacia icicle with a maple twist, an ash icicle with a cherry twist, and a buckeye burl icicle with a maple ring. All were finished with Deft lacquer. Busy Bob also submitted a square edge bowl of black acacia and two natural edge bowls turned from maple burl. All were finished in Deft lacquer.

Dan Hogan entered a the winning string powered top that was made from Manzanita burl



Three tops belonging to Carl Stude, Don Comer and Dan Hogan.

# President's Column

By Don Comer

The pace of preparation for the AAW National Symposium; scheduled for June 27, 28 & 29, 2003, is starting to pick up. The Conference Committee has called for a meeting of representatives of Southern California local chapters for October 26 at the Sheraton Pasadena Hotel. Attendance is restricted, since they are inviting representatives from all of the Southern California chapters, so Dan Hogan, Bill Haskell and I will represent the GWG. Bill has accepted the job of primary liaison between the local chapters and the National Committee. That's a big job so we should all give Bill all the help we can.

The next nine months or so are going to be an exciting and interesting time for the GWG membership. It'll be easy for all of us to go to the Symposium in Pasadena, but they'll need a lot of volunteer help before and during the Symposium to make it work. We'll know more about that sort of thing after the October 26 meeting.

The AAW has called for ideas for a special logo to use on the 2003 tee shirts, name badges, registration envelopes, and brochures. Each chapter is eligible to submit one, so bring your idea to the October 13 GWG meeting. We'll vote on the best (most popular) one and I'll forward it to the AAW.

They also are asking for local people to demonstrate at the Symposium. Here's your chance to show those Easterners we have great turners out here too. For more details see the fall issue of the American Woodturner.

I know I'm biased, but I think the Board has done an excellent job this year. Even so, several of the officers have decided that it would be best for all concerned if we elected new people to take over next year. The following

jobs are open for new nominations: President, Vice-president, Editor and Secretary. Every member is part of the Nominating Committee. So; decide who you would like to be which officer, ask for his/her permission and be prepared to nominate them at the October 13 meeting. All of us want the club to progress but we need new blood to keep the momentum going.

Our last meeting (September 8) was both thought provoking and fun. Dr Kenneth Roth's presentation on "The Hazards of Dust Inhalation" gave us all many reasons to give more consideration (and perhaps more money) to dust control.

Earleen Ahrens gave us a report on her progress on the Brand Library show we will have in parallel with the AAW Symposium. It's a chance for all of us to show all levels of turning skills and perhaps sell a few pieces to pay for more wood or tools.

Bill Kelly told us about the Tall Ships parade he participated in. The two brigantines they have been building are nearly finished, although there are a lot of details to clear up. Bill is working to get us rides on the new boats later next year.

The Top Challenge was a fun break from our usual challenges. Bill Pounds won the most Interesting Top category. He declined to spin it for us; too pretty I guess. Jim Blumenkranz won the Hand Powered category with a precisely balanced top he entered last year. In the String Powered category, the string on Carl Stude's Infernal Starting Machine broke; otherwise his top might still be spinning. Dan Hogan's entry outlasted my illegal alabaster top. It just goes to show; cheaters never prosper, unless you're a CEO.

***Don't forget the election next meeting, Oct 13***

Don Comer

## Calendar

Nov 10: *Presentation:* Mark Fitzsimmons - How to mount that big rough piece of wood on the lathe or how to find a diamond in the rough.

*Challenge:* Christmas Toys

Dec 8: GWG Holiday Affair and Auction.

## Saturday Workshops

(start at 9AM)

Oct: 19 Soren Berger; \$20; Lunch provided

Oct 26 Tex Isham Multi-Center turning.

Nov. 16 Dick Lukes. Photographing your work.

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