



from the Editor



With the ongoing and expanding interest in penturning, we're pleased to introduce what will be a regular column on penturning. The column author, Kurt Hertzog, is no stranger to penturning. He started his woodworking career making pens and over the years has continued to refine his skills. Kurt has demonstrated the finer points of penturning in many forums, including the Utah Woodturning Symposium in Provo and the AAW Symposium. He is a founding member of the Pen Makers Guild and is one of the Guild's five council members. Look for a variety of penturning topics ranging from

beginner to expert level which will be featured in Kurt's column.

Speaking of the Provo Symposium, I would like to publicly thank Mike Mahoney for the great job he and his crew did with the 29th Annual Utah Symposium. As you may or may not know, the Symposium moved from its longtime home at Brigham Young University in Provo to Orem's Utah Valley State College this year, and Mike graciously agreed to become Symposium Director in order to keep this longest running symposium going. With any new venue comes growing pains and there were some issues with sound and noise, but nothing that can't be rectified next year. Overall, the symposium was a success and several new events were featured, the most appreciated being the "Hands-On Expo" where attendees had the opportunity to "test drive" the latest new tools. Next year will mark the 30th Anniversary, so get your registration forms in *early*. For additional information about the symposium, please go to the website at www.utahwoodturning.com.

On a sadder note, we recently learned that one of our contributors was killed in a tragic traffic accident. Bill Sullivan was noted for both selling and turning Norfolk Island Pine (NIP), and wrote a definitive article on turning NIP in the first issue of *Woodturning Design*. Bill was the type of person with whom you became friends after just one meeting and he will be missed by the turning community. He had one unpublished article in our stockpile, and his wife, Patty, has graciously allowed us to run it in a future issue. Our condolences go out to Bill's family and friends.

Look for Kelly Dunn's article in this issue on making a hollow cup center from an old, used spur drive center. This article is a follow-up to daughter Rachel's article on making "One Piece Desk Pens" in Issue #17. The cup center required for making her pens is no longer available and Kelly offers a solution to this problem. By the way, one of Rachel's pens brought \$80.00 at the benefit auction of the Utah Symposium. Congratulations, Rachel.

In addition to the new penmaking column, we have articles on making a spatula by David Reed Smith, a brass bullet pen by Bob Roehrig, and a dressed-up outboard handwheel by Harry Gilliland. We also have feature articles on turning bone by Carol Rix, a Mike Darlow DVD review by Andy Johnson-Laird, and an introduction to measuring tools by Scott Roberts. And last, but not least, Pam Reilly shares her techniques for mosaic surface embellishments in the first of a two-part series.

Happy turning!

Woodturning Design

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We are indeed fortunate to have such a creative and knowledgeable group of turners on our list of writers for this issue. A more talented group of individuals would be hard to find:

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The Journey from *Penturning to Penmaking*

by Kurt Hertzog

Make It a Great Writer

Welcome to our first regular penturning column in *Woodturning Design*. Although our goal is to limit the column to just one or two pages in each issue, we'll use that space to cover important topics from the very basics to the more exotic and esoteric issues. We'll rotate through the different skill levels to help penturners move their skills forward, improve their results, and open new horizons in penmaking.

WHY PENTURNING TO PENMAKING?

The title for the column was chosen carefully. A novice turner can be taught the process and can probably make a pen in about an hour. And though turning a pen is a pretty straightforward process, it is, in my opinion, far more difficult to become a penmaker. Regardless of how many pens are made, there are many penturners who never make the transition to penmaker. Attention to detail, fit and finish, material selection, kit adaptations, custom parts, and individual creativity all help distinguish the product of a penmaker from a penturner.

Penturning has come a long way with advances not only in tools, equipment, kits, and materials, but in design as well. Therefore, the goal of this column will always be to

help identify the little details that make a difference, and will help you to explore methods so you can use them to your advantage. Along the way, we'll keep you informed and share tips and tricks on every facet of penmaking from material selection to final presentation.

TOPICS FOR COMING ISSUES

There are many topics to be covered in coming issues. Many of the tips and ideas may appear to be simplistic and "beneath you," but keep in mind that our target audience encompasses people who have never made a pen to those who are true pen artisans. Regardless of the particular skill level being addressed in a particular topic, there may even be some nuggets there for the more experienced.

On the other hand, when the topic is beyond the interest and needs of the newer penturners, it certainly won't hurt to tuck that information or technique away for future use. For example, if your goal today is to get all the pieces turned without splitting off the tubes, you may not be interested in pouring your own custom polyester resin blanks. However, there will come a day when that topic will be appropriate and of interest.



Fig. 1

After I've spent the time creating a pen, I always fit it with the best writing inkfill that I can get.



Fig. 2

While the "Cross compatible" or other pen-style inkfills are very similar to the good writing inkfills, there are diameter, construction feature, and length variations.



Possible topics to be covered in coming issues (not necessarily in this order) include drilling and gluing pen blanks, glues available and advantages of each, techniques for facing pen blanks, matching the grain, turning the pen for optimum fits, making your own pen parts, losing the centerband, finishes A to Z, sanding effectively, and more.

TODAY'S TOPIC—MAKE IT A GREAT WRITER

There are many things that make a pen a joy to own and use. This might range from the look and feel of the instrument and/or to the sentimentality attached to it. Though these are important, I think that there are three absolutely key characteristics that can make or break a pen, and these are the look, the feel, and how the pen writes.

With that in mind, the first and most simple thing that penmakers can do to improve their pens is to put in them the best inkfill available (see **Fig. 1**). Pen kit manufacturers are under tremendous competitive cost pressures, and while they do a good job, they simply can't put the money into the kind of inkfill that your work deserves.

Tip extension impacts both the looks and writing feel; therefore, not only should the kit-supplied inkfill be replaced, but you should use your intended inkfill when you are pressing the transmission to depth. The look-alike inkfills shown in **Fig. 2** are similar in size and shape, but not necessarily exact.

Also, during assembly, don't press the transmission to a predetermined depth. Nothing screams "newbie" more than the inkfill extending too far out the end—unless



Fig. 3

From the too short to the obviously way too long tip extension. Take the time to use the intended inkfill to do the press in the assembly of your pen.

maybe if it's a pen with a ton of funky beads and coves on it! Press to a shorter than necessary depth, install the inkfill, extend it, and take a look to see how much more you need to press to make it look the way you want. If necessary, remove the inkfill and press the transmission a bit deeper. Repeat this process as you creep up on the correct depth; with a little practice, you'll get so you can do it in two presses. It only takes a few moments, but the look and feel will be worth it. You can see in **Fig. 3** that tip extension does make a difference.



Kurt Hertzog

Kurt Hertzog is a turner who enjoys the entire continuum of woodturning—from making his own turning tools to photographing his finished work. He began woodturning with pens, and though he has branched out turning a bit of everything, he still enjoys returning to pens. A frequent demonstrator and instructor of many facets of woodturning, he particularly enjoys teaching sharpening, workholding, and advanced penmaking. Kurt is council member in the Pen Makers Guild, the current webmaster for two AAW chapters, and a past officer in several others. You can see examples of his work at www.kurthertzog.com, www.penmakersguild.com, and www.wnywoodturners.com.