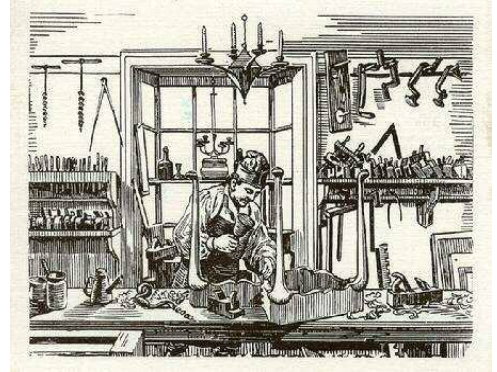


# The York Woodworkers Association

Newsletter for February 4, 2019

## Turning A Bowl From A Log

Greetings all and welcome to the February 2019 club newsletter. If you have suggestions for improvements, please email me at [martinsolutionsrh@att.net](mailto:martinsolutionsrh@att.net)  
Or [ron.martin52611@att.net](mailto:ron.martin52611@att.net)



**Message from the President:** A lot of water has flowed under the bridge since this class, literally! Rain, rain, rain, glad to see a bit of a break for even short periods. It won't be long until we will be begging for more!

I hope you all enjoyed the bowl turning in February and the tool sharpening session in March. The two classes go hand in hand. The same applies for our upcoming April class on dovetail joinery, both machines cut presented by Richard Summers and I will attempt to present my version of hand cut joints. We will learn about pins and tails and yes how sharp tools are important. Dull tools tend to tear wood fibers rather than cut them. You can find yourself working harder than necessary (not smarter). You will learn to recognize when to stop and freshen the cutting edge up a bit.

As much as I have come to like and enjoy hand cutting dovetails, I am looking forward to Richard's session. I have a dovetail jig but have major problems with the setup. Hoping Richard can wave the wand and make everything work for me.

By the way, the meeting will be at Jimmy Matthews' shop.

I know Ron sent out an email about the Charlotte woodworking show this coming weekend. Hope you all have an opportunity to go one of the 3 days. If they don't have it, you don't need it.

Any shop time is good time.

Don Lee

### The March 2019 Meeting: Monday, March 4, 2019

We'll be at Donnie Lee's shop – 5090 Lockhart Road, Sharon, SC 29742. Phone: 803.927.7800. Donnie will be presenting a program on Sharpening.



For our February 2019 meeting Donnie Lee presented a very informative presentation on making wooden bowls from logs. As always, his presentation was well organized, filled with valuable information and contained pre-constructed examples of finished bowls, platters and vases he had created.

Donnie started his presentation with a brief overview of turning from a log. From a log you can make a bowl, a platter, a vase, etc. In his demonstration, he is going to turn a bowl. The first thing is to choose your stock. He is going to turn the bowl from a piece of free, wet walnut. Wood formally designated for firewood. He doesn't buy wood for turning because of the large amount of waste lost in turning a bowl. He stated you could use green wood for turning. Green wood turns much easier, but the problem faced with green wood is it is going to crack, its going to move and distort. When he asked a professional bowl turner what he did about this, he replied "I don't worry about it, it just gives character to the piece." When you build furniture, you need some kind of plan – what are you going to build, what's the size of it, etc. The same holds true for bowl turning – if you can envision what it's

going to look like, that is your plan. Your plan may change throughout the process depending on what you run into as you turn. He also discussed what not to turn: pieces containing large or lots of cracks, pieces with lots of spalting (tree dying/rotting by a fungus) in it or wood where you can't get a good solid dovetail on the bottom of it.

Donnie emphasized sharp tools are a must for bowl turning. A dull tool will hurt you. Another thing you want to do is always to protect yourself – face shield, goggles/protective eyewear, dust mask, etc. Another thing he warned against was wearing gloves around rotating equipment. You can use them while setting the piece, but never while the equipment is in use. The dust mask he uses is called “Dust Be Gone” – it is relatively inexpensive (~\$30) and is washable.

As he turns, you will see him pull out a rule checking the depth (you always need to keep this in mind ) knowing where the bottom of the bowl is. Donnie also sands it while it is on the lathe and in motion. Starts with 120, then 220, then 320. If you are not going to use the wood for a while, you should use a wood sealer on it. What Donnie uses is called Wood Sealer and can be purchase at [Packard.com](http://Packard.com). Packard Woodworks, Inc. is in Tryon, NC. If you order one morning you will have it the next day. You can order their catalog and it's one of the best places for turning tools as well. The sealer is a water-based sealer for easy cleanup and dries clear. And the demonstration begins (Pictures 1 & 2):

**SAFETY FIRST!!!**



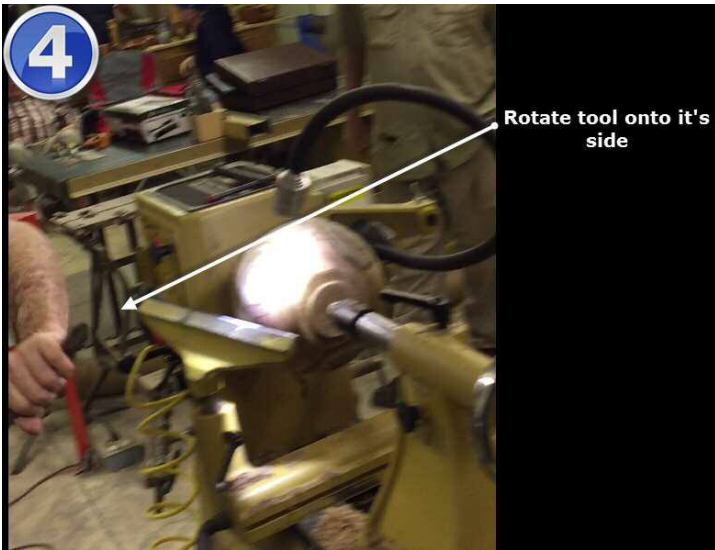
When you first start out turning a piece, 1) Move your tool rest around and get it positioned as close to the piece as possible, however be sure and rotate your piece around to ensure it clears the tool rest all the way around (because sometimes the piece will have knots or it may not be sawed out perfectly round and it will hit the tool rest. You have the a,b,c's of placing your tool on the tool rest: a) make certain your tool is anchored properly on the tool rest, b) look at the bevel and make sure it is positioned right, c) to make contact with the piece (Picture #3).



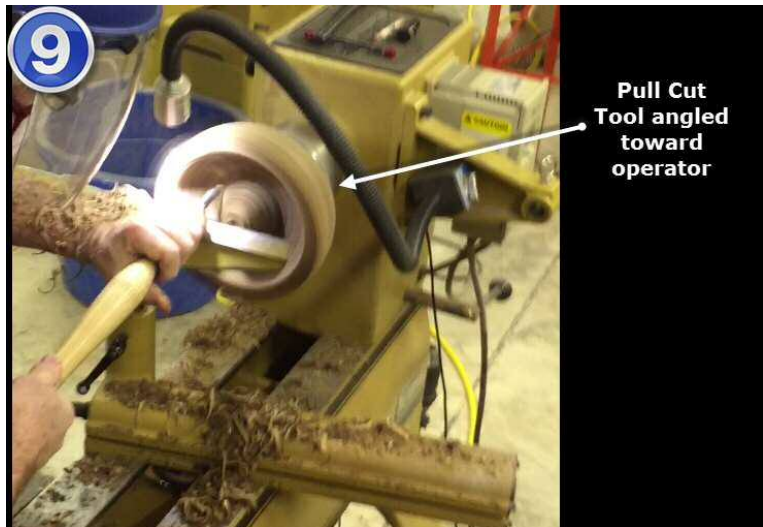
You don't want to get the tool too far away from the work piece, so as you take material off continually adjust your tool rest, so it stays close to the work piece. Make sure you turn your tool on its side, so you are using the very bottom of your tool to cut. While truing the piece up, Donnie was running the lathe at 900 rpm. Donnie said it is common to look at where the tool is contacting the piece, but you want to train yourself to look at the top of the piece so you can see exactly what the tool is doing.

Then he takes a parting tool and begins to form the dovetail for the base of the bowl so he can chuck it up. You also want to place your tool rest about 1/8" below center of the piece.

He measures the dovetail to make sure it is the right size to fit in the chuck jaws. He invited those who wanted to come up for a closer look. He was asked to demonstrate again how he holds the tool, the angle he holds it at and how he places it on the tool rest. 1) Rotate the tool onto its side (Picture #4) looking at the bevel in relation to the bowl and the contact with the tool rest (Picture #5). What you don't want to do is to roll the tool up and open the throat up (Picture #6) because what that is going to do is gouge a big hole and possibly throw the bowl and the tool and everything else at you. Donnie then took a tool called a negative rake scrapper (Picture #7) to scrap the edge and clean the bowl up a little bit. One other safety warning: NEVER adjust your tool rest with the machine running.



He removed the bowl from the lathe and reversed it so he could start hollowing the bowl out. (Picture #8). After some initial hollowing, Donnie reversed the angle of the tool and instead of having it angled to the right (away from him), angled it to the left (towards him). This is called a “pull cut” (Picture #9). This technique is useful when you have uneven surfaces. If your wood is grainy you can turn it and leave a cone in the middle. This actually helps the wood not distort while you’re working on it.



As you are hollowing out the bowl, you want to regularly measure and keep track of the depth, so you don't cut through the bottom of the bowl (Picture #10). A question was raised by a member, "Donnie your measuring the depth of the bowl, can you talk a little bit about how do you determine the thickness of the walls." Donnie said you can make it any thickness you want, but when dealing with wet wood, the thicker the wall the less likely it is to crack or distort. He left this bowl at about ½ inch. Next came the sanding. Donnie normally sands at approximately 350-400 rpm. Donnie starts out with 120 grit, then goes to 220, 320, etc. He uses 1-inch pipe insulation and wraps the sandpaper around that using a rubber band to hold it on to sand the bowl (Picture #11). You want to constantly rotate this because it will heat up and burn your sandpaper as well as your pipe insulation. Also, it is good to blow the grit out when you change grits.



Now he takes the bowl off and turns it around, closes up the chuck and covers it with something (i.e. cloth, rag) just something to protect the inside of the bowl; brings the tailstock up and puts it back in the tailstock indicator he created earlier. Now it's time to take the dovetail off (some people choose to leave it, but Donnie doesn't). He finalized by using a parting tool to take off all but about 3/16" and finally he takes a carving tool or gouge to knock off the rest.

Below the results:



**Finally, the finished bowl:**



**FROM THE EDITOR:** This concludes the February 4, 2019 newsletter on Turning A Bowl From A Log. I hope I have done you all and Donnie justice. Thanks, Donnie for a very educational, informative and exceptional meeting. I would also like to extend my apologies for taking so long to get this newsletter out to you. I try to make this as good a newsletter as possible however it does take tremendous amounts of time to create, document and supply this much detail. It is my honor to be able provide this service to such a wonderful and skilled bunch of folks. Hopefully I can supply you with March and April newsletter by the second or third week in April. Thanks for your understanding.

*Happy Woodworking,*

*Ron Martin*

*Newsletter Editor*

*Greatness is not standing above our fellows and ordering them around - it is standing with them and helping them be all they can be!*

