

Guest editor's letter

Kurt Hertzog

What is Woodturning to you?



If you are like me, sometimes you reflect on why you do certain things? Why go here or there; buy that brand; belong to that organization; live where you do; and more? For discretionary items, thinking about “why” can be interesting. An example might be, why are you currently involved with woodturning? Did you grow up in the craft or business or go into the trade after school or the service? Some are professionals or collectors but most of us got involved with woodturning as a hobby or pastime. It was an enjoyable way to spend some available hours like gardening, or sketching, or reading. Many of the baby boom generation got a woodturning tease in school in the era when wood shop, metal shop, and auto shop was part of the secondary education curriculum. After that tease, woodturning probably fell into an abyss as life took on more pressing life issues for most all of us.

Like me, perhaps you had that 20-to-40-year gap from the exposure to woodturning in junior

or high school until you picked up a turning tool again. The biggest influx of new turners in my classes have always been recent retirees who now have some discretionary income and time to fill. It is the immediate gratification of woodturning that brings in those “new” turners who range from the just curious to the soon smitten. As they learn something and become more proficient, you can see the joy in their faces. It can now become a pleasurable pastime, a part-time craft business, and for some a full-time new occupation.

When I reflect on it, I believe the learning aspects become the challenge with all the tools, equipment, materials, and techniques to master. As you get farther in your proficiency, sharing your capabilities with the learning turners can then become an enjoyable challenge. Whether demonstrating at the local craft fair, working with school students, demo’ing at a woodturning event, or creating YouTube videos, the sharing becomes the satisfaction aspect of turning.

Of all the reasons I do woodturning, I think the social aspect of turning is the most important. As I write this, I’m getting ready to fly out to the AAW Symposium in Chattanooga TN. It is the first face-to-face event in a couple of years. Has there been virtual events during the lock down? Sure. Are they the same? Certainly not! Sitting in the demos amid the wood chips and personal interaction is far more satisfying than watching even the best demo on your computer. Being there in person with old friends from around the world, making new friends, experiencing the instant gallery up close, and walking through the trade show can’t be replaced with a video regardless of how good and realistic. As the world reawakens and symposia, club meetings, and face-to-face classes resume, take a moment to reflect on your woodturning and what is important to you. Regardless of the reason(s), take a few moments to savor the pleasures woodturning has brought to your life. *Kurt*



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