

Kurt's clinic

Kurt Hertzog answers some readers' questions

Ideas for club meetings

Question: I'm looking for some fresh ideas for our local woodturners club monthly meeting. We have show and tell, a turning demo, and a wood raffle. We need to pick things up. What do other clubs do? Any suggestions we can adopt?



PHOTOGRAPHS BY KURT HERTZOG

Answer: In the fun part of the meeting when the business part has been toughed out, you've already got the most common items. To those you can consider adding: a guest speaker; a question and answer session; expanding your raffle to include tools/hardware/discount coupons to local or internet/mail order merchants; and, on occasion, tours. These are just a few ideas. On the guest speaker, ask a non-member local turner of note. They can be a local pro, a talent from another club, whether local or within reasonable travel distance, or specialist in some field of interest. Most will come for free or perhaps dinner with the executive before the meeting. Question and answer can be free flowing with questions from the floor and answers by any and all of the membership who have some advice. Your raffle can be adapted to be more diverse but self-funding by offering

ticket participation at a level that will cover the cost of a prize. Something everyone can use in a modest price range. Often, local merchants will donate these just for the publicity you give them. 50/50 raffles are popular. The winner gets half the pot and the other half goes to the club. Consider an occasional tour of a local woodworking, woodturning, lumber merchant, or other interesting site. Have your meeting there. Hold the meeting on a weekend day at a convenient time. Most facilities will allow groups to do this if approached properly, order is maintained, and the safety requirements are adhered to. Hold your regular meeting and add the tour of the appropriate parts of the site to the meeting contents. Mix and match to add some variations and some spice to the meetings so they don't become too rote and stale.

Workshop lighting

Question: I'm finding my overhead lighting at my lathe isn't enough anymore. Any advice or recommendations for a new lathe light?

Answer: You may consider replacing or expanding your current lighting to start. I have two 4ft double bulb fluorescents directly over the bed of my lathe. I have recently changed those fixtures to LED lighting. Now, these two 4ft double strip LED lights output far more lumens and do it for much lower electrical cost and low heat. To this lighting, I have added several forms of task lighting. Behind my lathe, I have an added power bracket with many duplex electrical outlets properly wired. The bracketing is sturdy and supports several

goose-neck industrial light fixtures. These are movable as needed and can be positioned as close or as far away as needed for the light as well as being able to safely turn. I have magnetic base goose-necks too. A wide variety of lamps is available. Try your woodturning retailer, internet/mail order vendor, or the industrial supply houses. Lamps are offered with shields to protect the bulbs, CF lamps, or LED light sources. They should be a buy once, last forever kind of purchase for your shop.



Look for high-efficiency, high-output overhead lighting to couple with task lighting as needed and use directional lighting to help see clearly



Best click pen kit

Question: I turn mainly wood pens and I like click pens. What's the best kit for the money? What do you recommend for the best writing pen?

Answer: I'm sorry I can't recommend the best click pen kit. I haven't found one that I am very happy with. I find them all relatively fragile and prone to short life. On the best writing pen, no pen really writes. The installed inkfill mechanism does the writing. I'll rephrase your question to 'what is the best writing inkfill?'. That question really is subjective. I rarely use the kit inkfill. They work but are necessarily very low-cost products. I favour using the genuine inkfill for that style of pen. For the 7mm Cross style pen, I use a genuine Cross inkfill. For the Parker or Sheaffer style, I use a genuine Parker or Sheaffer inkfill. Be cautious ordering since the retailers label replacements as Cross-style or Cross-type, etc. Buy from a pen shop or a stationers in the authentic retail packaging to get the real thing. I am willing to pay the cost difference. There are quality inkfill manufacturers that make products that fit the various styles. You can certainly choose those if you wish. The acid test is writing with them. Put two inkfills into two pens that are essentially the same heft and feel. If you can't tell the difference between them writing, then buy the less expensive inkfill. If you can tell the difference, make



Unless it is an unimportant giveaway, I always opt for the high-quality inkfill to be certain it writes as good as it looks

a value judgement whether your pen is worth installing the inkfill that will do it justice. BTW, AT Cross owns Sheaffer.

Send your questions to Kurt's email: kurt@kurthertzog.com