

# Kurt's clinic

Kurt Hertzog answers readers' questions

**My club has a Show & Tell feature at each meeting. There are plenty of interesting items with many things to learn, but there are some presenters who drone on and on about minutia, shortchanging those later in the programme. Suggestions?**

Having been a member and holding a variety of offices in four different AAW chapters, I know the feeling well. At times I was responsible for keeping meetings moving and on time. The Show & Tell items are on display ahead of time during the meeting to look at and enjoy. You can formulate questions you'd like to ask of the maker. I always believed asking when the entire group could hear the question and answer was far more valuable than you just tracking down the maker before that part of the meeting for a private explanation. I tried to encourage folks to hold their questions so all could benefit during the actual show and tell segment. As you've said, there are some who are enamoured with the sound of their own voice. For those whose lives may not have afforded them as much stage time as they wished, preventing them from monopolising too much of the time available at the expense of the rest of the attendees makes for a more enjoyable event. There are several methods that can help with this problem. It is not your place to solve this (unless you are an officer), but rather the officer responsible for the meeting operation. You can let that officer know, although I'm pretty sure they already know, that this is quite unfair and a problem in your opinion. That officer can talk to those who repeatedly exhibit this trait. This discussion should be done offline and quietly. Publicly embarrassing the individual accomplishes little positive. A simple explanation to them that sufficient time needs to be afforded to all can often help. If that doesn't work, in the future when this happens, the

responsible officer can interrupt when their fair share of time has been consumed. Something as simple as: 'We need to keep moving so I suggest we move on, and you can pursue more questions/ explanations of this presenter after the meeting or offline.' Another great fix for this problem is the break-in with: 'Since this is quite popular and has a lot of questions, let's ask this presenter to prepare it as a club demonstration for a future meeting.' Setting a hard time for all of the presenters to live within defeats the purpose, since some will take only moments and other minutes, so there is wiggle room on each presenter's time allotment. Whomever is charged with trying to fix this needs to be cautious in either method lest they offend the party, and they then stop participating. That isn't the goal. The goal is to run the meeting on time, enjoy the various facets of the meeting, and not be handicapped by the time-hogs who seem to be unaware that they aren't properly sharing the time. I'm sure there are other methods but one of these always worked nicely when I needed to employ them.



PHOTOGRAPH BY KURT HERTZOG

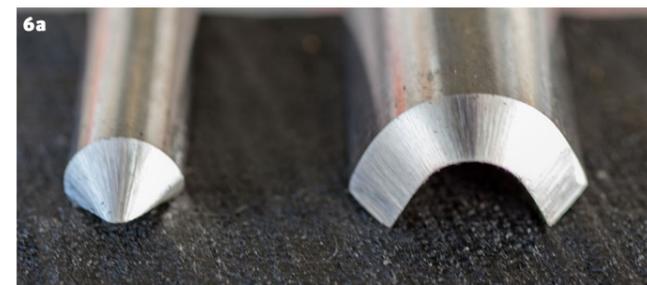


**1** If someone gets a bit too long winded in their portion of show and tell, try the couple of polite methods mentioned in the text to get back on track.  
**2** With folks having time to examine the show and tell items ahead of time, they can formulate their questions for the show and tell portion of the meeting.

**Over the years, you've written a lot about tools and tool steels. What is your favourite? Why?**

I have written considerably about tools over the years, including the various steels involved. Not to cop out but I don't have any real favourite. I have a few older carbon steel tools that I treasure. They accept a very keen edge and cut very nicely. They do need to be sharpened more frequently and with care lest the temper be impacted. The bulk of my tools are HSS from the various manufacturers. The rest of my tools are a smattering of everything to power metal alloy tools, along with some carbide tools. I hesitantly say there is no perfect steel. Every steel has its strengths and weaknesses. Tweaking the chemistry to enhance one performance characteristic usually comes at the expense of another one. Every alloy is a combination of the performance trade-offs made at the formulation. There are also some interesting speciality processes that claim to enhance the tool steel performance.

If there was the 'perfect' steel for our tools, everything would be made from it. By virtue of its perfection in function, it would be the norm and poured in high volume, enhancing its cost aspects too. From the many tool-making classes I've taught, we've always been successful with O1 tool steel because of the ease of heat treating. I have a batch of these that I've made that see very frequent use, along with the other commercially available tools in my kit. The production turners, especially based on their typical production run, will likely have their own favourite tools and steels based on their functional lifetime, initial cost, serviceability, edge holding characteristics, keenness, and more. For my needs, any quality tool from nearly any tool steel performs well when it is sharp. So, to close this question, I'm going to indicate that my favourite tool and tool steel is one that is properly sharpened and ready for use. A motto to live by, if you can, is to buy based on value, not on price. That should keep you out of the pot metal alloys and in quality metals that will serve you well.



**3** Regardless of the size or brand, I find that if I can put a good edge on a tool and it gives me reasonable service, I'm not bound to any specific metallurgical alloy. HSS serves me well. **4** The best advice I can give turners, both new and not so new, is to get a decent sharpening system and learn how to use it. I can't think of a better investment. **5** Learn to put a quality edge on your tools that can provide a great cutting capability. This is one of the foundations of good turning. **6** Any quality tool steel that you can quickly touch up to get back into service is a winner. Of course, the hard-working production pros can have different needs than I.

**Our club is reducing the number of on-site demos and classes in favour of more remote demos. Do you think this trend is going to kill off the in-person on-site demos?**

I believe that the advantages of remote demos will continue to popularise them, reducing the demand for on-site demos. There are too many advantages to remotes. Let's forget the lockdown situations. In our returning to normal environment, the absence of travel costs and times for the demonstrator as well as the larger, multiple

audiences that can be simultaneously included, are key positives. The clubs can benefit from reductions in costs as well as eliminating the potential problems that can arise with demonstrators and tools travelling from afar. With many demonstrators charging by the head, the club also isn't out on a limb for the potential high cost per person that can occur with onsite demos that haven't been subscribed well. Will onsite demos and hands-on classes die? I think they will certainly be reduced but I think they will still be around in a reduced capacity.



**7** Remote demos offer many cost and time advantages to the clubs and the demonstrator. They will grow in popularity, but I don't see the hands-on classes/demos going away completely. **8** Not only does the demonstrator doing remotes get to stay at their home shop, they also don't need to cart along everything that they might need during a demo. **9** While I concede that remote demos will continue to grow, I'm personally a big fan of up close and personal demos – especially the explanations to the group.