

# Kurt's clinic

Kurt Hertzog answers readers' questions

**I have been turning for only a short time. I have been trying various woods to learn what I like. Are there woods that are your favourites? Why?**

Over the years I have turned many different species. I try to pick the species specifically based on my planned result. That aside, I do have favourites that I like to turn. Where I live in Western NY, we are very near some of the finest cherry forests in the US. Not only is the Western Pennsylvania Cherry excellent but it is nearby. I find cherry an excellent wood for many of my turnings. It turns well, has a wonderful look and, depending on the application and UV exposure, it will take on marvellous patina over time. I am particularly fond of the pitch pockets that are often found in cherry – they add so much character. I try to use cherry when I can.



My other favourite wood is African blackwood. I use it almost exclusively for ornament finials. It turns well, holds excellent detail, sands to a mirror finish, and needs no additional finish. Unnoticed by many is the pretty grain and multitude of colours evident in African blackwood. Up close, it is a very well figured and multi-coloured wood.

**1** I'm a big fan of cherry. Available locally, it turns and finishes well. It often is attractively figured, interesting pitch pockets, and ages with a beautiful darkening patina **2** My go-to wood for finials, stands, and anything requiring crisp detail is African blackwood. Not only a great turning wood but it sands and finishes to a mirror requiring no added finish.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KURT HERTZOG

**I saw your cover on WT381 which you guest edited. What a dramatic change from the normal covers. What prompted that and how did you get away with it?**

Over the years, I've had a few covers from the various magazines I've written for. Most of the time, only I know it is my shot on the cover since it often shows my hands, turning chips, work in process, or the like. The guest editor covers have tended to be a headshot or candid of that guest editor in the shop making chips. I had a discussion with my editor to see if we might do something different. I had concocted several themes that were a departure from the norm. The one I really liked the best and which was ultimately selected with the 'Kilroy' concept looking through a few of my turnings. With no need to get my smiling face plastered all over the cover, it was a fun idea that I think lightens up things a bit. My next cover, *WT381*, wound up being a bit different but perhaps a bit less far out than I was trying for.



**3** The selected cover for *WT374*. My creation along the lines of the age-old 'Kilroy' look that appears in unusual places **4** The *WT381* cover that illustrates my 'get outside and get some air'. When the weather cooperates, I roll the big Oneway out of the garage and on to the driveway **5** A shot that didn't make the cover but is the proverbial end of the dusty trail. Having a sit down and rest on a turning- outside afternoon **6** One of my favourites submitted for consideration. Some of my work being looked on by a photo of me looking out from the iPad **7** Another shot created for cover consideration. Me doing some one-on-one teaching in the shop. Just for chuckles I'm teaching a skeleton bought for Halloween decorations.

**What is your take on the Zoom club meetings? They don't seem to be disappearing as quickly as I expected.**

I accept that Zoom or other remote technology advances will continue impact face to face gatherings. Now that the virtual events are being done for convenience and cost rather than the prior lockdown reasons, I think we will enter a new meeting environment. I expect that we will morph into a hybrid model. We may see face-to-face events, totally virtual events, and a marriage of the two. The in-person events have their advantages of the social interactions, touching and feeling the various turnings, and direct feedback on instruction-type situations. The virtual events obviously are far more convenient and economical. Putting the two together provides the best of both worlds. Attendees get their enjoyment and benefits, as do those far away or unable to attend. Now you can have attendees and potential club members from far corners of the globe. You'll also have captured a version of the event for future reference or sharing. As I accept the inevitable, I still personally favour the getting-together events. Perhaps just because my first 25 years or so of woodturning were solely those types of club meeting, symposia, or other type of show.



**I'm moving my lathe to the other side of the shop. My turning buddies are telling me that I should lag the lathe to the floor. I didn't do this originally and am torn about their advice. What do you recommend?**

The fastening of your lathe to the floor is a controversial topic. Some say it should be anchored securely and that will prevent vibration. I'm of the opinion that lathes should be free of anchoring. If your work is causing the lathe to vibrate, I suggest that you take the time to adjust the speed up or down to find the correct rpm. Failing that, check for the best balance on the work and adjust as needed to put it in balance. Sometimes remounting or counterweights do the trick. I believe that lagging your lathe to the floor lets you turn with balance being way off. Using the floor of your shop as a huge weight sink seems to instill false security with a potentially unsafe condition. There is an extensive lathe setup article in my column in *WT254* – Lathe Setup.



**I need to ship wood to my buddies from my stockpile but am dismayed at the high cost of shipping. Any carriers, tricks, special rates, or other way to save a few bucks?**

You think your wood is heavy? You should try shipping green wood. As you've noted, wood is usually heavy in the blank form. Since you seem to be shipping less than a pallet load, you are faced with the standard methods and the usual cast of shippers. You said 'bucks' so I'll assume you are in the US, only because I have little experience shipping anywhere else. The best value I have found is the flat rate USPS boxes. You can get the boxes for free at the post office. Once you pack it and seal it, don't deform it cramming in too much, the cost is the same regardless of the weight. I remember shipping a box of chucks for a class in FL. If you have much more than will fit in their largest box, you are going to have to use the other carriers. UPS, Fedex, and perhaps others but I avoid anyone but those two. Sorry that I don't have any real tricks. Ship only what you need, trim away any excess that will only get trimmed at the other end. Perhaps you can volunteer to hollow some of the turnings for your buddies. It will lighten the load.



**8** Personally, I enjoy the in-person teaching and demonstrating. The interpersonal interactions between myself and the audience on hand is why I do any teaching or demonstrating **9** In my opinion, a lathe adjusted properly and weighted with ballast, tools, equipment, or material will stay put if properly loaded and used. Lagged only to the height adjustment woods **10** Some cutoffs from a friend on the West Coast of the US. In one of the flat rate USPS boxes, anything fitting (up to 70#) into the 12 x 12 x 5 3/4 in goes coast to coast in the US for \$22.