



# From The Shop



The newsletter of the Lehigh Valley Woodworker's Guild

Issue 03.2007

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### Upcoming Meeting Information

**Next Meeting: March 20th, 2007 (3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday!)**

**Location:** Lehigh Co. Senior Center  
1633 Elm Street  
Allentown, PA

### Speakers and topics:

- Carl Nugent on Finishing....
- John Uhler's shop tour....
- Take 10 – Members Q&A session

### February Meeting Highlights

Well, what can you say about a presentation by my good friend of many years, Bill Grumbine? Entertaining? Yes! Informative? YES! Hands on making wood fly? Yes! Funny? Actually he was pretty good this time.....

Bill gave a wonderful presentation before a packed crowd at our February meeting. Actually, when I heard Bill was the presenter, I told Gerry Chiusano to bring half the refreshments cause we'd be lucky to get many people. Good thing Gerry did not listen to me, but no one does anyway. We also had a nice turnout of guests, and I am sure Bill impressed them.

Bill started by talking about his wife's underwear. Actually the fact that he wears a shop apron so as to keep the wood shavings off his clothes that he tosses in the community clothes hamper and the wood fragments get deposited in everyone's clothes. I can imagine that would not be a lot of fun. After the undergarment discussion, Bill started off by saying that, if you do not own a lathe, then you are stuck with

square things. Interesting thought. And Bill also related that a lot of folks are under the misconception that you cannot turn identical spindles without an expensive duplicator. Well, unless you are using a CNC machine, there are no IDENTICAL spindles, just some pretty good spindles. Bill also pointed out that, since there are differences, however minor, from one spindle to another, it is real good luck with spindles that the legs go at far corners so you really need some bad spindles to notice differences. Placed next to one another, even good spindles can likely exhibit differences – this is hand made stuff! The message – go at it and, at first, decent but not perfect work may look real good if the table legs are far enough apart! Now if you are turning spindles for a railing, first of all you are taking on a lot of work, and secondly, you better be pretty experienced.



**Bill Grumbine ready for another fun and informative turning session!**

Bill advised that the first table leg is easy. Why? It does not have to match the other three! Bill was using poplar for his seminar because it cuts easy and he advised if you are going to turn in front of a crowd, curly maple is not the best choice. Poplar makes you popular?

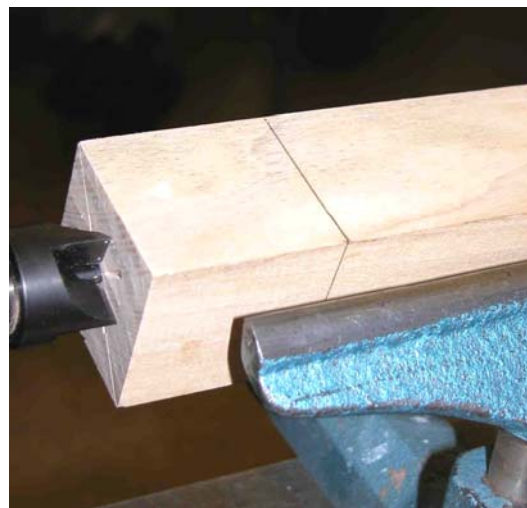
So – you start with square stock. At least, the pommel end (that'd be the square end or the transition from the square to the round.....) needs to be square, and the more true the entire starting piece is, the better off you are. The axis points need to be centered. Bill advised that he ALWAYS punches the center out with an awl because just trying to get the lathe centers to stay put is not going to work - we are pushing into end grain and end grain will usually not cooperate very well and will push the lathe centers away from where you want them. Bill had a neat tool that actually puts an "X" on the end of the piece. Bill advised that if a lathe center does shift off "center", it becomes the Tail Stock end (or round end), which is more tolerant of the shift as the wood removal into a round shape makes the shifted center the new actual center (got that? The fact that we are turning and making a round end lessens the impact of a slight shift in center point – or - the slight change in the long axis of the piece is likely negligible – recall the legs turned by Craig Bentzley in his presentation of the Queen Anne table – he shifts the axis on purpose.) The square end is always the head stock end. Lathe terms – headstock = closest to the motor, tail stock is – er – the other end!



**Bill cautioned that you do NOT drive the head end into the wood while resting on the lathe ways or bed – they can crack.**

During this presentation, Bill asked "How many people have a lathe?" – many folks, including me, raised their hands. Then he asked " How many of you have ever used them, and only a few raised their hands. I did not. Like Frank Klausz likes to say – "If you want to be a woodworker, you have to work wood. If you have the tools and you do not work wood, you are not a woodworker, you are a tool collector."

Bill then explained the use of a story stick. This is a stick where Bill writes all the stories he tells cause his memory is not what it used to be, and it never was that good. No – maybe that's not it. Maybe it is a stick that is the length of the piece you are turning and has all the major marks on it where major transitions and details in the work are located. And the major measurements, like the diameters at key points, are written down so you can pick up that story stick a year later and remember what to do with it. I guess it does tell a story at that.



**Mounted on the lath, you can barely see the crosshair marks used to find center.**



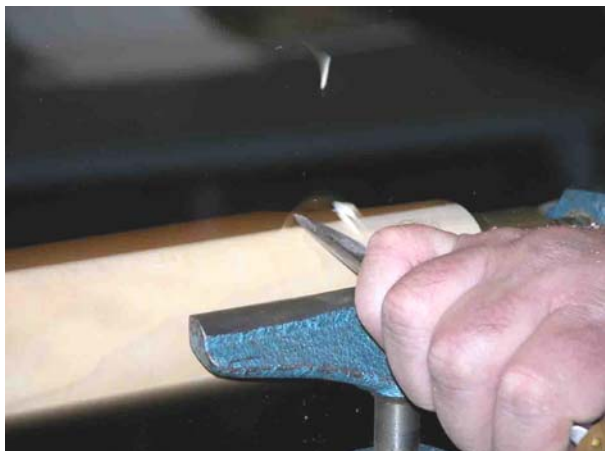
**A right angle square Bill uses to mark the pommel end.**

Bill started turning the piece with a skew. I have seen him do this before. It is typical that a new person on a lathe is taught to start turning the square stock into round with a roughing gouge. Bill likes using a skew. Yes, these can be tricky tools, but not if they are used properly. Any tool can be dangerous if misused. Bill suggested that the proper way to hold the tool is – put the tool where you want it to be in proper position on the tool rest and move your body to it and maintain that position as closely as possible. This makes a little sense, as opposed to holding the tool and approaching the work then holding the tool or moving the tool in a



manner that is not natural to your body. In the course of turning the pommel end, Bill talked a little about sharpening. Yes, we all know that sharp tools are safer than dull ones because they do not need to be forced to do work that dull tools are not prepared to do. Bill has an expensive diamond steel plate sharpener, but does well with a piece of plywood charged with diamond dust compound. Cheap and effective.

Bill cut the pommel piece by first cutting a small reference cut and then, to do the rest, by “sneaking up on it”. Bill used an oval shaped skew for this turning, advising that it slides better on the tool rest than a flat skew, and can be rolled on the tool rest as needed during cutting whereas the rectangular skew has sharp corners and does not lend itself well to this. Bill pointed out that a straight skew is a chisel. Yup, a chisel. In fact, you can use a chisel as a skew, but Bill does not recommend it. The secret of the skew – do not approach the halfway mark on the cutting edge of the tool – you can cut with the tip end or with the blunt end but NOT with the whole edge! It WILL – He repeated – WILL kick back.



**Making some chips – taking the corners off the the square stock.**



**Several items to note – the skew has an oval shape rather than a flat shape. Second, the tip is beveled, not square. See the text as to why a skew of this shape was chosen for use. Lastly, this lathe is actually running and bill is holding the skew on the round piece – if it bounces, there is more work to do.**

On that subject, a member noted that the skew Bill was using had a very short handle. A longer handle will enable the user to have greater leverage on the tool, but given that Bill is a professional and also since he has hands like hams, Bill is OK using the small tool. He said when he learns how to turn better, he will make a new bigger handle.

On the subject of steel – Bill uses all kinds and all brands. Yes, Sorby is a fine brand but he uses many Crown tools, the good old standby cheapy. Again, a properly prepared edge on a cheap tool will outperform an expensive tool with a poor edge on it.

Bill advised that when cutting the pommel end you expose a lot of end grain and you have to be very careful because end grain is not our friend. It does not like to be finely shaved and shaped. It likes to break apart and fly all over and make fools of us. Sneak up, slowly, cut finely. You need not try to get too fine a surface on the bottom of the pommel end, cause the only things that can see under there are little tiny kids who are too dumb to know, and dogs who just chew on them anyhow. Bill advised that Norm Abram will cut a pommel with a dovetail saw. Bill advises that the skew method works fine on most woods and the dovetail saw method is not necessary. During this “pommel” conversation, Bill was relating – if you have a 1/16<sup>th</sup> “error on legs on opposite ends of a table, who will see it? Who will notice it? Other than maybe Dave Bolash, who can spot weight differences in pieces of Wheaties by eye?



**Working toward the foot.**

Now it is time to make the leg round. This again is done with the skew. Someone asked about the ripples that sometime appear in round turnings and Bill advised it is from chatter of the tool as it moves across the wood – called harmonic oscillation. The wood actually vibrates and causes the tool to hop. You can sand it out, or change speed and slow down the lathe, which has other downsides, you can change the cutting angle, or you can live with it till later. Or, when you get experienced, you can wrap your free had around the spindle and dampen it SLIGHTLY to stop the oscillation. But - wait till you have experience. This

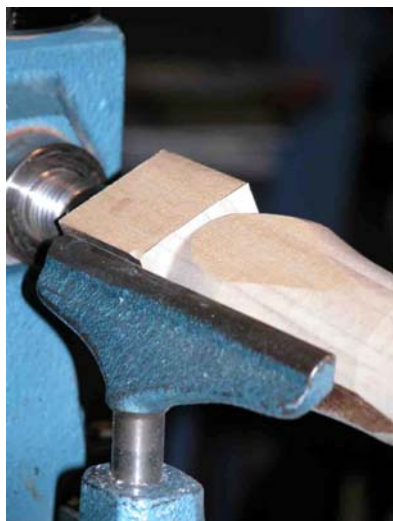
is not a technique to be used by beginners. Always remember where your hands are, Bill stressed! And, press lightly or your fingerprints will be history – the smell of burning fingertips is not a good memory and the char marks on the spindle not a good conversation piece.



Dampening harmonic oscillation ala Grumbine.



Starting the pommel cut – slowly!



Pretty much where you want it for now...

Alright - now you have a pommel and a spindle shaft. Now you get out the story stick. You can have this pre marked if you are working off of plans. If you are duplicating a piece, you'd mark it off of that piece. The story stick is indexed off the foot of the piece. The diameters you want to duplicate are written on the stick at their respective points. Bill uses different sized calipers, pre adjusted, so he will not get them mixed up. If you have three identical calipers adjusted to different diameters, it is very easy to pick up the wrong one. As he said it, if you pick up the wrong caliper and get the piece too big, you can always take off more wood, but if you pick up the wrong caliper and cut the piece too small, it is really hard to get the wood back on.



Sneaking up on the cut some more..



And some more,,,, Slowly!





**Time for the story stick – marking key points on the leg and the diameter target levels...**

Bill mentioned that the tips on new calipers are very sharp ended and WILL catch on the wood, so you will want to ease them a bit with a light filing. Also, if you want a finished diameter of, as example, 1 ½", cut it larger, because you will sand off more wood in the finish process and that will get it down to where you want it.



**Use of the caliper in getting the foot end diameter. Remember to leave material for sanding,**

While Bill was turning the leg and marking his points from the story stick, Bill advised that he is the person who has turned virtually all of the Weirbacher Ale tap handles, which I believe are shaped like bottles. He turned over 1,000 of these and estimates that he drank an average of a bottle per handle in the process.



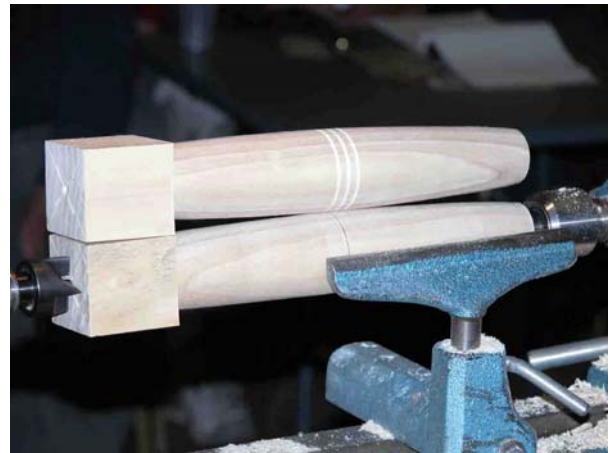
**Making the center leg detail with the tip of the skew.**

In the course of measuring for correctness in diameter, Bill cautioned that you really cannot measure properly at the pommel and need to stop the lathe FREQUENTLY when checking diameter at this end of the work. Essentially, on a leg the shape of the one Bill turned in this example, you have a foot diameter, a

pommel diameter, and a center diameter, and you use the skew to connect the dots. A fair curve, as he said it.



**Blow out a Pommel corner? Curve them all!**



**A nice pair of legs, a bottle of wine – life is good...**

When doing final sanding, you can use sandpaper to correct minor errors, but always sand at a lower speed or, again, the lightly toasted finger tips will set off the smoke alarm. Bill does NOT use any protection (where am I going with this.....) for his hands when holding the sandpaper. He points out that if the sandpaper is getting too hot to hold, the WOOD is also getting too hot and you may be burnishing it. Sand at a slow speed and use good cloth backed sandpaper. Bill uses Kingspoor. Costs more and worth it.



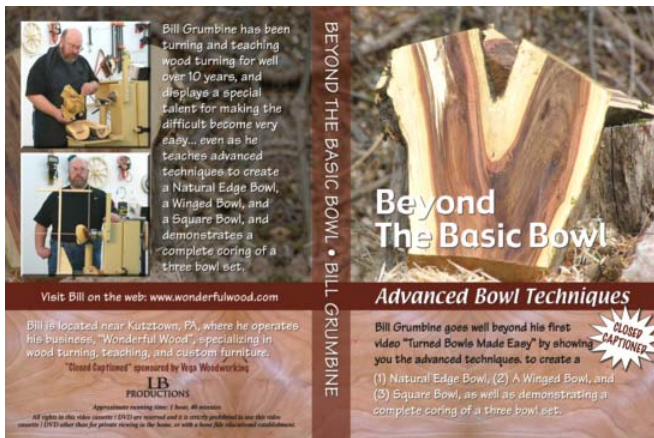
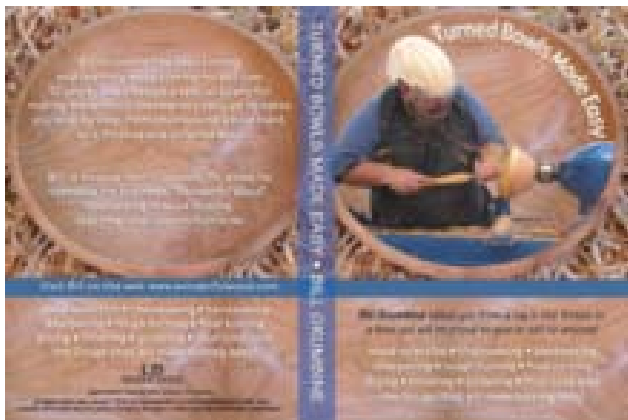
**Craig Bentzley asked Paul Anthony to ask Bill if he uses a lathe to sharpen his pencil ( I think that was it..). Craig**

and Paul were the self appointed hecklers. Good thing the emergency room is open at the hospital...

Bill opened the meeting up for questions...

A member asked which end of the tool Bill uses on the work piece, and Bill advised he uses the sharp end. The member obviously meant the tip end of the skew or the blunt end, but walked right into Bill's sense of humor. Bill advised he uses the short point for longer planing cuts.

Bill also mentioned that vertical errors are easier to spot than horizontal errors. Bill showed us what you can do if you accidentally blow out a corner of a Pommel – you just round all the corners on all the legs!



Bill has produced 2 videos, at \$29.95 each plus tax in PA. You can order them via his web site and he'll ship them for \$4.95 shipping and handling, or give him a call and he will bring them with him to a meeting and save the \$4.95. You buy two and get 10% off. I bought one, mainly because I also bought Ken Burton's book and Bill would not take my personal check for the second one cause he knows me too well. Maybe I will use my Delta mini lathe if I can find it after I clean my garage (in progress). I am not a spindle guy right now, but I have wanted to turn a bowl or two, especially since being taught by a fellow named Dan Saboe. Dan

did a presentation at a guild meeting a long time ago. He was a free spirit and a great guy who passed away shortly after. We miss him. Some of his tools live on – Bill Grumbine and I went down to Dan's home to help his wife price out his tools after he passed on, and Bill purchased some from Dan's wife. I am sure Dan would be happy knowing they are still in use.

Bill also gives classes one-on-one or a few folks at a time. Contact him for details. I think, based on the presentation, you know he will do a good job. (man, I hate saying good things about Bill, but he is, in fact, a good guy and a good teacher. He's also a friend.)

www.wonderfulwood.com  
ultradad@ptd.net



### Cancel Radio Box request!

Russ Reinhard advised that he no longer needs the radio boxes and so anyone who may have been interested in helping out need not apply. Other arrangements have been made.

### Waveland update!!

Allen Powell, our Hurricane Katrina conscience, advised that the furniture is still needed and still being shipped. There is still time to get your contribution on the trip there. Folks, these are the people you do NOT hear about on the news.

### Members Mart

From Craig Bentzley:

I've got one for you (if you're a southpaw):

Mayline Ranger professional steel drawing table. Top: 37-1/2" x 60", tilts to 50 degrees, with "VYCO" green vinyl board cover. Two drawers, (1) 36-1/2" x 27-1/2" x

1-3/4" deep, (1) 11" x 27-1/2" x 3-1/2" deep. Includes a Vemco model 612 LEFT HAND V-track drafting machine with model 4 protractor head (try finding a left handed machine on eBay!). This is used but the machine is in excellent condition, the table shows some wear. Disassembled and packs flat. The package would cost over \$1800.00 brand new. **My price: \$450.00.**

**Also:**

Andy got the aprons! \$20 per apron. Nice stuff!

**And the Woodcraft winner is...**



**Mr. Bond – Dave Bond!**

**Steering Committee Meeting Notes**

Andy gave the treasurers report and it was accepted. The refreshments are going well. Allen Powell will be providing SPECIFIC plans and instructions for the next batch of blocks. The 2007 calendar is going quite well. See the 2007 schedule!

**VIRTUAL SHOP TOURS! Other member presentations Welcome!**

John Ulher will be giving us a tour in the March meeting!  
 Joe Deevy will be doing a presentation on a trip to Williamsburg where the old strictly hand tool methods are demoed.

**Wood Specials**

**SHADY LANE TREE FARM**

Louise & Mike Peters  
 5220 Shimerville Road  
 Emmaus, PA  
 610 965-5612 Please call

**FLEETWOOD LUMBER & FLOORING**

BILL BURKERT  
 27 Rapp Rd.  
 Fleetwood, PA

610 944-8364 Please call  
**Member discount 5%**

**Bailey Wood Products, Inc.**

441 Mountain Rd.  
 RD#2 Box 38  
 Kempton, PA  
 610 756-6827

**Woodcraft**

Pkwy Shopping Ctr.  
 1534 Lehigh St.  
 Allentown, Pa.,18103

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<b>Guild Contact Person – E-mail</b>	
Russ Reinhard	

Note!! See specification sheet for blocks at the end of the newsletter!!



2007 Meeting Calendar:

Month	Topic	Speaker
January 16 <sup>th</sup>	Band Saw Boxes	Fred Matlack!
February 20 <sup>th</sup>	Grumbine turns spindles!	Bill Grumbine the remarkable!
March 20 <sup>th</sup>	Finishing	Carl Nugent
April 17 <sup>th</sup>	Carving Virtual shop tour - Uhler	Phil Alcock – NJ Professional Woodworkers Guild
May	Woodburning	Frank Rauscher
June	FESTOOL – new tool! Shop tour – Craig Bentzley's shop.	
July		
August		
September	Carving	Frank Rauscher
October	Annual Woodworking contest	

**NEXT MEETING – Tuesday, March 20th, Starting at 7:30, sharp. Allow time to arrive and be seated before start time.**

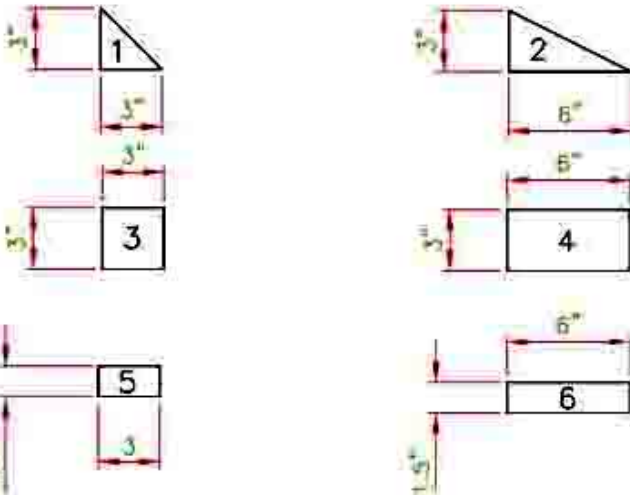
**Location: Lehigh Co. Senior Center**

**Topics:**

- Carl Nugent – finishing!!
- John Uhler – Shop tour!!
- Take Ten – 10 minute Q&A problem solver session

**Block Specifications!!**

Blocks are the thickness of the scrap material – typically 1.5 to 1.75"



Blocks are to be sanded smooth and corners are to have 1/8" radius  
No finish is to be put on the blocks

Lehigh Valley Woodworkers Guild  
Blocks for Kids  
Contact Allen Powell with Questions  
(610) 258 – 5546