

# Calgary Woodturner's Guild Newsletter

March 2010

## **March Meeting**

President Don James called the meeting to order at 7PM. He announced that this was the AGM meeting. The minutes of the AGM as recorded by Jim Osenton follow:

### Minutes of the Calgary Woodturners Guild Annual General Meeting March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2010

47 members were present, constituting a quorum, President Don James presided

Duncan Robertson & Tim Dorcas were nominated for the board of directors

Moved by Peter Eddy and seconded by Dennis Milbrandt that nominations be closed. Carried.

Don James is retiring as he has served two 2 year terms on the board of directors.

Peter & Dennis join Jim Leslie, Mike Swendsen, Peter Eddy and Jim Osenton as board members

The financial statements which had been emailed were reviewed by Jim Osenton. They will be reviewed by the auditors, Lylle Cuthbert & Henri Lefbevre, by the April meeting.

Don James was thanked for his service as president.

Carl Smith listed the various committees that provide support to the group (ie; Spruce Meadows)

The Okotoks High School Woodturning Symposium will be on Saturday March 27<sup>th</sup> from 10 till 3 at Foothills Composite High School in Okotoks. The cost for members to attend is \$10 which includes lunch. Contact Cyril Reschney at 938-6116 if attending.

Ken Kindjerski noted the recent death of Luigi Molner, and his Vicmarc Mini lathe has been donated to the Calgary Woodturners Guild. Ken Miller volunteered to make a plate to be given to Luigi's partner.

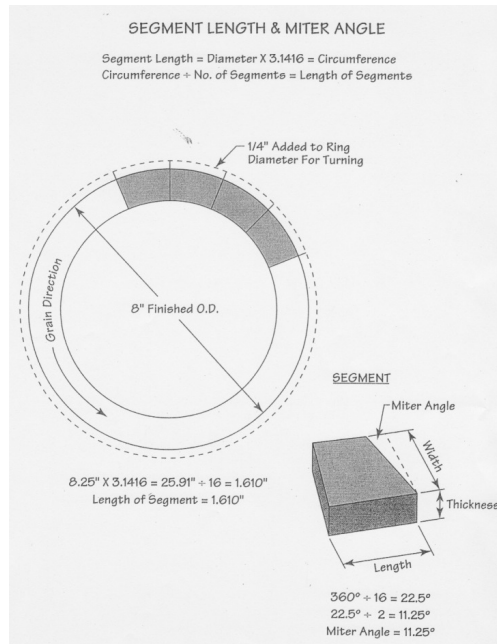
Moved by Dennis Milbrandt and seconded by Ken Kindjerski that the meeting be adjourned. Motion carried.

Following the AGM, the regular meeting continued. Two guests were present: Matt Smith and Jack Rigaux.

## **Demonstration**

Wilf Talbot and Ken Woodkey gave an excellent demo on segmented turning. Ken began showing how he lays out a bowl using ¼ inch squares to design the basic shape. After the design is complete, he cuts the pieces and uses a rubbing technique to fit them together during glue up. This allows for tuning the fit and minimizing gaps. He suggested a good disc sander with 80 grit

sandpaper is a requirement for this step. Ken uses rubber bands and clamps to hold individual sections together during this process. One of Ken's clamps was made using scrap Corian and a screw clamp.



#### SEGMENT LENGTH AND RING DIAMETER

EXAMPLE: Making a 12-segment ring that is 9in in diameter

$$\text{Mitre angle } \Theta = 180^\circ / 12 = 15^\circ$$

$$\text{Tan } \Theta = 0.2679$$

$$\text{Segment length} = \text{tan } \Theta \times \text{diameter} = 0.2679 \times 9\text{in} = 2.411 \text{ in.}$$

If you prefer metric units, simply substitute 230 mm for 9in. In this case

$$\text{Segment length} = 0.2679 \times 230\text{mm} = 61.617\text{mm}$$

This table shows tangents for rings of up to 40 segments.

No. of Segments	Mitre Angle $\Theta$ (°)	Tan $\Theta$
6	30	0.57735
8	22.5	0.41421
10	18	0.32492
12	15	0.26795
14	12.857	0.22824
16	11.25	0.19891
18	10	0.17632
20	9	0.15838
22	8.182	0.14378
24	7.5	0.13165
26	6.923	0.12142
28	6.428	0.11267
30	6	0.10510
32	5.625	0.09849
34	5.294	0.09266
36	5	0.08749
38	4.737	0.08286
40	4.5	0.07870

Wilf Talbot showed some of his work on segmented turning work and described some techniques he learned during a visit to Russ Fairfield's shop (<http://www.woodturnerruss.com>). Wilf spent a couple of days there learning how Russ makes his version of segmented turnings, and showed some of his latest work. This included an aniline dyed maple platter and some other items such as a cane that was segmented lengthwise.

Additional details and pictures of Wilf's work including a description of his methods will be provided in a future newsletter, as time and space are not available in this edition.

Peter Eddy asked Jim Osenton and Ken Woodkey to finish the square bowl demo but since it was getting late, it was decided to postpone that portion of the program for the next meeting.

### Dave Beeman's Draw

Following the break, some great pieces of wood were won during Dave Beeman's draw. Duncan Robertson was the lucky winner of the 50/50 draw.

### Critique

Ron Falconer presented the critique portion of the meeting. This included a painted, pierced vase and a unique lidded vase by Mike Swendson as well as a carved piece by Don James.

Thanks to everyone who brought in their work to display. It is always inspiring to see what other people are doing no matter what their level of experience.

### **Upcoming Events**

The annual turning event will be held at Foothills Composite High School, 229 Woodhaven Drive, Okotoks. It is anticipated the cost will be \$10 per head and that includes lunch. If people are intending to go, it would be appreciated if they would pre-register with Cyril Reschney at 403-938-6116 so they can get a handle on the numbers for lunch.

### **A note regarding the Okotoks Symposium:**

The date has been changed to Saturday, April 17 - 10:00AM to 3:00PM. Thanks to Jim Jones for this information.

### **Next Meeting April 6th, 2010**

The highlight of next month's meeting will be hollow turning. Volunteers can call Peter Eddy with ideas on aspects they may want to present or discuss. Involvement from members is encouraged.

### **Additional News:**

From the ***Cochrane Eagle***, a story about our very own Duncan Robertson !

*A gold medal should be awarded for quiet woodworking  
...if Cochrane's Duncan S. Robertson is any indication.*

**COFFEE WITH WARREN, with Warren Harbeck  
Cochrane Eagle, February 24, 2010**



Clockwise from top: Cochrane hand-tool woodworker Duncan S. Robertson uses squirrel tail plane and dozens of other razor-sharp planes and chisels capable of tissue-paper-thin shavings on his handcrafted products; correct saw technique results in precision joints, such as these dovetails which show no visible gaps under a magnifying glass; finished products include bowls, tightly fitted lidded box, yin yang box, and his signature “hidden-hinge” lidded boxes. Inset photos: (1) fine detail of “English-style” dovetail joint; (2) and (3) outside and inside of nearly invisible hidden hinge in lidded box.

Photos by Warren Harbeck

The 2010 Winter Olympics have reminded us once more of the splendour of passion and performance associated with gold-medal excellence in world-class athletic achievement.

Such excellence isn’t limited to sports, however. Right here in Cochrane, in my opinion, one of our coffee companions deserves recognition for his passion and performance in hand-tool woodworking.

I first met Duncan S. Robertson a couple of years ago at the Java Jamboree coffee shop. A discussion of Vivaldi – music is another of his passions – quickly turned to his joy of making small wooden jewelry boxes with the most amazing dovetail joints and invisible hinges imaginable.

He invited me to visit his home workshop in GlenEagles to see how it all happens. I finally took him up on his kind invitation a few weeks ago.

And what a workshop he has! This 56-year-old master craftsman has taken “a place for everything and everything in its place” to new heights: tool chests and drawers painstakingly constructed to the same high standards he’s set for his jewelry boxes, with custom-shaped locations for every tool in his vast collection. (The main image in the photo collage accompanying this column should give a pretty good idea of what I mean.)

If every tool has its place, it would be fair also to say every procedure Duncan performs has its own tool. In particular, I had never realized there were so many sizes and kinds of wood planes and chisels, each one so sharp you could shave with it – and no, I didn’t let him try them out on my beard.

It wasn’t so much the tools that amazed me, however, but what he accomplishes with them. He is committed to quiet woodworking – in fact, Quiet Woodworking is the name under which he carries out his artistry. With few exceptions, he does just about everything with hand tools instead of noisier power tools. There are, of course, the obligatory table and band saws, drill press and lathe, but they’re not up to the fine work for which he is famous.

What kinds of fine work?

Most obvious are his stunning dovetail joints, stronger than the boards they join, yet so precise and tight-fitting that no power tool could ever fashion them. Made with contrasting woods – tulip wood and figured maple, or poplar and mahogany, for instance – these joints are treasured design features.

An example of the single kerf, or “English-style” dovetail, is shown in inset image (1) in the photo collage. “The total width of the gap in the tail portion of that joint is about 25 thousandths of an inch, about the width of a single saw kerf,” he explained. “This joint is impossible to cut using power tools. Speaking as a hand tool teacher/user, this joint illustrates just how much more one can do with hand tools over power tools.”

But it’s the invisible “hidden” hinges for the lids of his boxes that Duncan regards as his signature work. He takes hand-sawn dowels, joins them to a box and its matching lid, and planes and finishes them on the outside so that they appear to be just part of the wood of the original box and lid, even to trained eyes. He’s perfected this technique to such a degree that other skilled woodworkers happily pay him \$750 a day just to learn his secret.

Really though, he told me, this kind of detailed work is more about passion than profit.

So, how did his passion come about? It all started back in Grade 8 in Duncan, B.C., he said, when he made his first coffee table in shop. But his addiction to hand tools really took off only about nine years ago when he met New Brunswick master craftsman Rob Cosman at the Calgary Woodworking Show.

“I fully credit him with getting me into hand tools,” he said of Cosman, a specialist in English-style dovetails and the man he regards as his mentor. “I’m good, but Rob is another level above me.”

Duncan has many interests in addition to woodworking, all of them guided by his motto, “‘Good enough’ is not good enough.” He builds houses and loves books. He teaches guitar, flute and trumpet, and plays trumpet with the Cochrane’s Riverside Jazz band.

Oh yes, did I mention he’s also made over 1,700 jumps as a skydiver, including gold-medal jumps at the 1984 world championships in Australia?

But those honours notwithstanding, I’d like to raise my mug in a coffee-cup toast for a more down-to-earth reason: To Duncan – on my score sheet, a gold medal champion in quiet woodworking!

**Jim Osenton shares some poetry...**

**THE LAMENT OF A WOODTURNER'S WIFE**

'Tis here in the shade of the sycamore tree  
I sit quietly reading, the cat on my knee.  
The sunshine is warm; there's no cloud in the sky -  
A beautiful day at the end of July.

The hum of the lathe is a comforting sound,  
With humming from turner re-echoing round.  
Oh, happy the man by his hobby fulfilled.  
Creating such beauty with hands that are skilled!

Then idly I ponder on what's being made;  
But please, no more bowls, 'cos I'm sadly afraid  
We must build an extension if folks want to see 'em -  
Some people add bathrooms - we need a museum!

Than all of a sudden, a crisis! Oh, dear!  
Such words are not fit for a lady to hear.  
I can guess what has happened - no need to explain -  
That stupid old bowl gouge has 'dug-in' again!

I put on the kettle, then went to the shed;  
"A nice cup of tea, dear?" was all that I said;  
"Don't worry about it, I'm sure it won't matter -  
Just make the thing smaller and call it a platter."

Now I'm in Ward 9 with a bowl on my head;  
A doctor and nurse at the side of my bed.  
This tale has a moral; its not very long -  
*Just leave him alone when the turning goes wrong!*

Adapted from lines by an unknown Australian author

**For Sale:**

*If anyone has anything they would like to list for sale, please send me details and I'll include it next month's newsletter.*

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Two DeWalt 9.6 cordless drills for sale. Both are in perfect condition and come with 2 batteries each plus their own charger and the hard shell case that they came with when new. I used them for drilling and driving #6 and #8 screws and they work perfectly for this. I would not suggest that they be used to build a deck! The price is \$75.00 for each drill. Here is a picture of one of them. The other is just the same.

Contact Duncan Robertson.

..And a reminder – the Vancouver West Coast Round-up will be held in Vancouver, BC September 10-12/2010. For additional info see [www.gvwg.ca](http://www.gvwg.ca) or email [mervgraham@shaw.ca](mailto:mervgraham@shaw.ca)