



South Saskatchewan Woodturners Guild

February 2010 – Issue 2

The South Saskatchewan Woodturners Guild is a newly formed group meeting on the third Tuesday of every month. While meetings generally begin at 7 in a meeting room at the Neil Balkwell Centre we plan on meetings outside of that location as well.

IT'S YOUR TURN

Members of the Sask South Woodturners Guild thank Paul Omilon for sharing his shop and ideas at our January meeting. It was a great opportunity for everyone. Thanks Paul.

I had a chance to pose a few questions to Paul and here are his responses.

How did you get into wood turning?

I guess like other turners, I got into the hobby by “chance!!” I was in Saskatoon on business one day and stopped in at Wood N Work to visit.. During the conversation I was asked if I would be interested in wood turning (at the time I was building furniture as a hobby). Mike Husaluk was giving a seminar on turning and it was suggested that I should give it a try. The rest is history I guess. This was in the spring of 1990. On the last day of the 2.5 day session, I bought a General 260 late with riser kit from Wood N Works. In 1991 I also took instruction from Richard Raffin.

What was the first thing you turned?

The first turning attempt was some spindle work and bowls. Shortly thereafter I made my first lidded box (after Richard Raffin’s instructions).

What inspired you to get seriously into this hobby?

Once I got hooked with Mike it was no time at all that I was turning every scrap piece of wood I could get my hands on.

How many years have you been turning?

I have been turning for 20 years

How did you get into the turning of large columns?

I began turning spindles professionally in 1991. My customers kept asking me to turn longer and longer spindles. Eventually I began to think in terms of large columns and began searching all over for turners that had experience in turning such items. This eventually lead me to discuss my column interest with Mark Baker, Editor of Woodturning magazine out of the UK. I had

met Mark when he was the senior sales person for Sorby Tools out of Sheffield England. Mark was kind enough to discuss my interest with UK turners however when I met with some of them in London, they collectively could only offer me “good luck” with taking on such a project.

How long have you turned them?

I turned my first four large columns in 2002

What is next in your turning life?

I would like to get into bowl and hollow form turning in the near future.

Have you any tips for new turners?

For new turners I would advise to focus on safety issues and practice turning with any material available. Safety issues include wearing protective dust filtering equipment, use of dust extraction in your shop, keeping your shop clean which will reduce accidents and fire hazards. Ensure you have good contact between your turning tool and the rest and in most instances ensure you have good contact with the tool bevel and the wood piece.

What about tips for experienced turners?

Although turning is a fairly solitary hobby (vocation), it is important to maintain contact with persons with like interests. Your turning skills might be great, however, it is helpful to read material (i.e. Woodturning magazine and American Woodturner (AAW),



Paul shares some ideas with members of the Guild

and to talk to others (associations like AAW, SSWG, etc) to develop fully your own artistic skills. Many professional woodturners look at other mediums such as pottery, paintings and sculpture to generate ideas.

Woodturners also look to nature for inspiration such as flowers and other plant life.

What was the most interesting experience in turning?

Turning all the wood spindles and newels and half newels in my curved staircase.

What was your most satisfying project?

The challenge was to turn over 90 spindles (2" x 2" and 5" x 5" newels and half newels) with such accuracy that a critical eye could not detect any deviations.

Have you had any accidents or near misses?

Fortunately I have not had any serious accidents or injuries to date. I have suffered the odd rapped knuckle from the wood or chuck in the beginning but very rarely since then. I have never had any wood come flying off the lathe to date, which I attribute to careful mounting of the material on the lathe and ensuring "all is clear" by turning the material by hand BEFORE turning on the power.

How long have you been teaching turning and where?

I began teaching spindle turning



Paul prepares to offer a few tips on spindle turning

in 2007 at the Neil Balkwill Center in Regina. This was my first teaching experience in wood turning and I enjoy it immensely.

What is next? Are you going to continue turning columns or do you have some new goals now that you are retired.

I expect to expand my turning to include bowl and hollow form turning. I will of course continue to turn spindles into the future as such skill sets I expect will be useful in developing a more artistic approach to my hobby.

What do you think the Woodturners Guild will offer its members.

I expect that SSWG will offer a venue for the exchange of turning tips, techniques, design and finishing among all our members at all skill levels. The Guild could also expand in the future into developing student programs in

wood turning at our education institutions. I expect that we could also bring professional turners into our meetings for demonstrations and discussions. In the few meetings we have had to date, I feel that I have already benefited from an exchange of information. Thanks Paul for your input and direction.

*In the section of the newsletter titled **Its Your Turn** we hope to feature members of our group in an effort to not only learning about them but to hear more about what drives a woodturner in his pursuit of interesting and artistic pieces.*

INTERESTING WEB SITES

Try going to www.youtube.com. Then do a search for Richard Raffan. You will find a number of short videos with loads of turning tips.

Another site of interest is found by doing a search for Mike Hosaluk using Google. There will be a number of interesting sites pop up for your consideration. I personally liked the Tool Rest site. Lots of info there. Many others at this location are very good as well.

A third site I found interesting was also found at www.youtube.com. When you get to youtube do a search for wood turning videos. Lots of stuff to choose from here. Many of the videos posted on this site are done so by turners of with various levels of turning skills. Please remember that fact when taking tips and hints from this particular site.

Good Luck.

HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR WOOD SHOP'S WORKFLOW USING THE 5S PROGRAM

By Steven D. Johnson
Racine, Wisconsin

Implementing the 5S Program in your workshop (whether you are a hobbyist or pro) will make your shop time more enjoyable and more productive. You will experience less frustration, you will work more safely, and the chances are pretty good that the work you turn out will be of higher quality. It is based on five Japanese words (all beginning with the letter "S").

The 5S Program is a component of Lean Manufacturing, and is intended to help produce higher efficiency and quality and to reduce waste. The origins are a bit murky, some claiming that the Japanese learned it from Henry Ford and Frederick Taylor (author of *Scientific Management*, 1911) and that 5S is a direct outgrowth of

Ford's CANDO program, while others say that 5S is a result of the pioneering work that Sakichi Toyoda, the founder of Toyota did in conjunction with his son and his chief engineer. Regardless the history, this sound and widely emulated program is based on five Japanese words, all beginning with "S".

The five Japanese (or more correctly, Nippongo) words have been transliterated and translated into English. They are, Seiri (sort), Seiton (straighten), Seiso (shine), Seiketsu (standardize), and Shitsuke (sustain). Implementing 5S in your shop, whether you are a hobbyist or pro, will make your shop time more enjoyable and more productive. You will experience less frustration, you will work more safely, and the chances are pretty good that the work you turn out will be of higher quality. You will also gain space, as organization is a key ingredient of any 5S program.

A 5S program does not require you to strip your shop to the walls and start over. It works with your existing layout, and instead concentrates on cleaning up and organizing. Unused tools, equipment, and supplies are removed. Pertinent tools and supplies are organized into logical "work groups" or "kits" and are labeled or even color-coded to provide an easy visual reference. Methods are implemented to standardize certain tasks and the process itself, and then systems are put in place to maintain the new order and achieve repeatable results.

Sort

The first step in the process, Seiri, has been Americanized as "sort" and is a pretty accurate translation of this critical component. In addition to being woodworkers, we are all, to some degree, tool collectors. The Sort phase of 5S'ing your shop is to critically examine your collection of tools and remove those that are not used.

The advantages are multifold. Since upgrading to a fine quality jack plane, the old bargain plane that I bought years ago at a home center has been nothing more than a non-powered dust collector. The few dollars it sold for on eBay went into my "stash" for future tool purchases and the newly acquired shelf space went to a tool used much more frequently, but that had formerly been stored inside a cabinet.

This experience was an epiphany of sorts. Instead of groping inside a cabinet for a tool I use often, it is now right on the shelf where I do most of my work. A tool I never used is no longer cluttering my workspace, and I freed up a couple of dollars in the process. Seiri – I could learn to love the language!

Take a few moments in your shop and think through the "sort," or Seiri, phase of 5S. Are there tools you never use? Or are there tools you use so infrequently that

perhaps storing them somewhere besides in your shop would make sense? That collection of nuts, bolts, and assorted hardware you are hoarding has needed sorting and organizing for years. Do you really need that one hinge without its matching half? Do you really need that coffee can of bent nails (admit it, I know you have one)? Chances are, there are three, five, or ten common fasteners you use 95% of the time, and everything else is just eating up space and gathering dust. At the current cost of scrap metal, 20 or 30 pounds of unused hardware will not make you rich, but it will pay for the gas to get it to the recycling center and the space you gain will make you more efficient.

For me, the sort phase is a continual process. I force myself to seriously ask the question, "Will I ever use this 5/8" X 3/4" X 4" piece of cherry, or would I be better off using it as kindling in the fireplace? I now keep a box close to the door, and small cut-offs go directly into this "tinder box" instead of my scrap bin. Space gained, clutter eliminated, efficiency improved!

Set in Order

Seiton, straighten, or "set in order" is the next step in 5S'ing your workshop. Ben Franklin said "A place for everything and everything in its place," but for his adage to hold true, he must have exercised Seiri first. Until you sort and dispose of unused tools and materials, your "place for everything" will consume your shop and there will be no room to have "everything in its place."

After you have gotten rid of everything you do not use, it is then much easier to "set in order" what is left. If you do layout work at your workbench, all your layout tools should be close at hand. Clamps close to your assembly table, drill bits by the drill press, and push blocks by the table saw make sense, but few are diligent about purposefully rearranging things to achieve these logical goals. In the middle of a glue-up that I had rehearsed and tested, I discovered I needed a couple more clamps. The trip to the other side of my small shop did not take a lot of time, but it was frustrating and added to the stress of an already complicated glue-up. A little rearranging solved the problem forever.

Straightening, or "setting in order" should include labeling. Yes, I know, you are the only person in your shop and you remember where everything is – sure! And ask yourself honestly, "How much time have I wasted in the last year looking for something?" A Brother P-Touch labeling machine is one of the best "shop" investments I have ever made. With clear, white, or yellow label tape in a variety of sizes, you can make labels for everything, and months or years from now, those labels will be as clear and legible as they were the day you made them. There is certainly no need to label everything, but "hidden" storage, like cabinets, drawers, bins, and boxes should always have labels. You may also want to label

certain tools that (only) fit certain machines. For example, I would not think of labeling every Allen wrench, but the Allen wrench that is needed to adjust my router table fence is labeled, and it is stored in the same drawer with my router collet wrenches. This is the essence of "setting in order." Label items that are used often and that might be easily confused with other similar items, then put these items in proximity to where they are most used.

The Seiton, or straighten phase of making your shop more efficient, comfortable, and productive need not be done all at once. Like all of 5S, think of Seiton as ongoing, continual improvement. If you notice that you are consistently using a certain chisel when fitting mortises and tenons, keep that chisel stored close at hand. In some circumstances, I have even bought a duplicate tool, simply because I was constantly using that tool at two different places in my shop, and it was never in the place where I was working. The few extra dollars for a duplicate tool has saved me time, time and again.

Shine

Resisting the temptation to mount my editorial soapbox, I will concede to one indulgence, and write that Seiso, the "shine" portion of the 5S philosophy, is my favorite. After sorting through tools and materials, disposing of what is not needed, and then straightening and organizing what is left, a good thorough cleaning, and daily diligent upkeep, will make your shop safer, more pleasant, and more efficient.

I do not own the best dust collection system (saving my scrap metal money for a new one!) but I suspect that even with the best, some stray chips will still get away. Like gassing up our vehicles, no matter how much we shake the hose, tap the nozzle, and keep our fingers crossed, some gas always drips out onto our newly washed and waxed paint.

My jointer "spits" some shavings out the side, and there is always a little pile underneath the machine when I move it. The planer has very efficient chip/dust collection, but chips still escape the whirlwind and settle on the floor. The same is true for every other power tool, and the pile of shavings at my feet after a good workout hand planing a tabletop is impressive. You may think me a bit too "Felix Unger-ish," but a couple of minutes vacuuming every hour or so makes the work environment more enjoyable, and infinitely more safe

Standardize

Seiketsu, the fourth step, is to "standardize" the first three components of 5S. A better word might be to "inculcate," which is to instill an attitude or habit through instruction and repetition. After your initial "sorting" of items in your shop, and then "setting in

order" what is left, you may find yourself briefly disoriented at times, as in "Now where did I put that half inch mortise chisel?" Don't worry. Herein lies the true beauty of the 5S system.

If, in the Seiton, or straighten phase, you put that chisel in the right place, you will quickly adapt to its new location and that location will become second nature. You will find yourself reaching for and grabbing the chisel without consciously looking. You will enjoy concentrating more on your work and less on "where is that tool?" And, if you did not put it in the right place, you will also quickly discover the inconvenience, and you will move it until it is in the right place – until it just feels "right."

Sustain

As you can no doubt see, 5S is an ongoing process. It can easily become a workshop "way of life." Once you realize how much more fun your shop time can be, once you recognize that you are spending more time building and less time looking for tools, jigs, parts, and materials, and once you come to realize the safety and efficiency benefits of sorting, straightening, and cleaning, you will be hooked. The beauty is, you will probably be subconsciously hooked. Sorting will become second nature. Orderliness will become rote. Cleanliness will be a passion (or at least a habit). And when all of this occurs as a part of your regular routine, you will have standardized the process (Seiketsu) and in so doing, will have also achieved the fifth "S," Shitsuke, or "sustain."

Implementing 5S principles in your woodworking shop will heighten your enjoyment, extend your creative time, maximize your space, and enhance your safety. Give it a try!

The foregoing article is an adapted version of an article appearing at the web site,

www.highlandwoodworking.com

Steven Johnson, the author, is recently retired from an almost 30-year career selling medical equipment and supplies, and now enjoys improving his shop, his skills, and his designs on a full time basis (although he says home improvement projects and furniture building have been hobbies for most of his adult life).

TURNINGS

Members of the South Saskatchewan Woodturners Guild have been bringing in samples of their work for others to enjoy. Here are a few samples:



A large bowl by Dale Lowe



Peter Chernoff brought in a beautiful cup he turned



Small turnings by Paul Omilon

WIPE ON OR BRUSH

Author Steve Mickley (this article was a reply on another woodworking forum and was submitted by Glenn Bird.)

The only significant difference between applying varnish using the wipe-on technique vs. **applying varnish with a brush** is ease of application. The product is the same, and you will get identical protection however you apply the varnish. Once the finish film is on the wood it makes no difference how it got there. Therefore, if you have been having problems applying varnish with a brush; if you are getting trapped air bubbles, brush marks, sags, runs, and other “glitches”, then give this technique a try. I think you will find the wipe-on method as close to “goof proof” as a finish can get.

Rather than buying a product labeled as “Wipe-On”, let me suggest at the outset that you make your own. Wiping varnish is very easy to make and your “home brew” will be functionally equivalent to any of the commercially prepared products; wiping varnish is simply full strength varnish that has been thinned sufficiently to allow it to be wiped on. Therefore, why pay a finish manufacturer for a can that is approximately half full of thinner? Use the varnish that you already own and thin it with the mineral spirits/paint thinner; a product that is probably already in your shop. The standard “home brew” recipe is varnish thinned 50/50 with either mineral spirits or naphtha (naphtha flashes of faster and should not be used with varnish labeled as “Fast Drying”). It is also a good idea to use gloss varnish so as not to create problems with improperly mixed flattening agents. If you use semi-gloss or satin it is **very important** to stir the varnish thoroughly before you thin it, and to stir it frequently as you apply so as to keep the heavy flattening agents in suspension and evenly distributed throughout the finish. If you don’t, the heavy flattening agents will settle and you will get a “streaked” and uneven sheen finish.

The most often sited benefit of wiping varnish is its ease of application—even on vertical surfaces, or on projects with lots of moldings and turnings it is easy to get a drip free, run free application. As with most *improvements*, there is also a downside. In the case of wiping varnish the downside is that you must apply more coats of the thinned varnish in order to get the same build that you would obtain with two or three coats of un-thinned varnish applied with a brush. It should be apparent that since you (or the manufacturer) have thinned the product up to 50% you should expect to wipe on two coats for every un-thinned coat applied by brush. However, there is a bit more to it than that. Since un-thinned varnish has more solids relative to solvent it goes on thicker. A typical un-thinned coat will be on the order of 2-mills thick, thus, a three-coat schedule will produce a surface film about 6-mills thick in total. The typical wipe-on coat, because of the additional thinner, may come in at less than 1-mil, depending upon how much you wipe off (back to this point in a moment). The bottom line is that, as a rule-of-thumb, it is appropriate to use a 3:1 conversion; that is three coats of wipe-on

varnish to approximate a single brushed on un-thinned coat.

How you apply your wipe-on varnish will also impact the number of coats required. If you wipe on a coat, allow it to cure, sand, and wipe on the next coat the process will be unnecessarily slow, and ultimately will require more coats to achieve the same build. There is nothing sacred in the following schedule (there are many acceptable variations), but I have found it effective. I apply the first four coats in rapid succession, allowing the previous coat to simply become “tack free” before the next coat is applied. Depending upon temperature and humidity the time between coats is usually 45-minutes to 1-hour. Clearly, since the varnish does not cure in this length of time I **do not sand between coats**. I also do not *wipe-off* any more material than necessary to prevent runs and sags. I then allow the finish to cure for at least 8-hours. Then, to prepare for the next “set”, I lightly sand with 220g-320g to remove dust nubs, etc. I then wipe on three more coats following the same schedule (**tack free/no sanding between coats**). Again, I allow the finish to cure for at least 8-hours. This time I look for any “problems” and remove any runs, sags, etc. with a cabinet scraper (you can use a fresh utility knife blade held vertically and scrapped lightly over the surface). I also lightly scrape and/or sand the surface with 400g-600g before I apply my last “set”—three more coats wiped on as before. I find that by using the three sets of three coats (four in the first set) I can obtain effectively the same varnish build, in about the same period of time that I get with three un-thinned coats applied with a brush. If the last three wipe-on coats dry a bit "rough" you can rub out your finish. I will cover rubbing-out in a separate article. For now, just remember to wait for the varnish to fully cure before you use any abrasives or rubbing compound. Two to three weeks will give plenty of time for the new finish to harden before you rub it out.



Dale demonstrates sharpening techniques



Bowl turning – an art in itself



Members attempt to identify a variety of turning tools.

SHARPENING AND TURNING TIPS

Dale Lowe led the March meeting of the SSWG with demos on sharpening and turning bowls. There were lots of questions and many great ideas exchanged.