



**Joe Fleming**  
**“Airbrushing Demystified”**  
**April 10th**  
**8:30-12:30**



Joe will detail what is involved in getting started using an airbrush to enhance your work. He will cover equipment selection and maintenance, paint and dye selection, wood preparation, basic painting skills, some more advanced concepts and cleanup.

**Artist’s Statement:**

*Woodworking provides me with an outlet for my creativity. I enjoy finding a piece of wood, envisioning what it can become, and then transforming it into a beautiful art or craft piece. I make both art pieces and functional pieces, but I always strive for beauty. My woodturning consists all types of turning disciplines including bowls, hollow forms, platters, vases, boxes and furniture components. I use a variety of wood species in my work including local urban forested woods like eucalyptus, and other reclaimed wood. I also use wood from certified forestry projects in the Pacific Northwest, Mexico and Australia.*





A CALIFORNIA NONPROFIT CORPORATION  
LOCAL CHAPTER AAW

## Club Meetings

### *Club Meetings-*

Meetings are held on the 2nd Saturday on each month by Zoom conferencing. Invitations are posted to all members: guests are welcome by request to: [membership@bayareawoodturners.org](mailto:membership@bayareawoodturners.org) who will forward an invitation to the next meeting.

Zoom sessions open at 8:30am. The meeting start time is 9:00am.

See [bayareawoodturners.org/](http://bayareawoodturners.org/) for club information.

### *BAWA Officers Meeting -*

The Association's officer meetings are held each month. Contact Jim Rodgers at: [president@bayareawoodturners.org](mailto:president@bayareawoodturners.org) for more information.

## 2021 Event Schedule

April 10th	<p>Joe Fleming 'The Airbrush Demystified' 8:30-12:30</p>
May 8th	<p>Michael Kehs Carving 8:30-12:30</p>

The Bay Area Woodturners Association is a local chapter of the American Association of Woodturners. Our purpose is to provide a meeting place for local turners to share ideas and techniques and to educate the general public regarding the art of turning. The Association usually meets the second Saturday of each month. The Association periodically sponsors exhibitions and demonstrations by local and internationally known turners.

President  
Jim Rodgers  
[president@bayareawoodturners.org](mailto:president@bayareawoodturners.org)

Vice President  
Richard Dietrich  
[vp@bayareawoodturners.org](mailto:vp@bayareawoodturners.org)

Secretary  
Steve Griswold  
[secretary@bayareawoodturners.org](mailto:secretary@bayareawoodturners.org)

Treasurer  
Rick Nelson  
[treasurer@bayareawoodturners.org](mailto:treasurer@bayareawoodturners.org)

Member at Large  
Larry Batti  
[memberatlarge@bayareawoodturners.org](mailto:memberatlarge@bayareawoodturners.org)

President Emeritus  
Kim Wolfe

Pleasant Hill Adult Education (PHAE) Liaison  
Jim Rodgers  
[Jlrogers236@comcast.net](mailto:Jlrogers236@comcast.net)

Librarian  
Cindy Navarro  
[librarian@bayareawoodturners.org](mailto:librarian@bayareawoodturners.org)

Membership  
Hugh Bevin-Thomas & Karen Rice  
[membership@bayareawoodturners.org](mailto:membership@bayareawoodturners.org)

Store Manager  
Richard Kalish & Michele Freeze  
[storemanager@bayareawoodturners.org](mailto:storemanager@bayareawoodturners.org)

Webmaster  
Jeff Tanner & Greg Ketel  
[webmaster@bayareawoodturners.org](mailto:webmaster@bayareawoodturners.org)

Newsletter Editor  
Louie Silva  
[newslettereditor@bayareawoodturners.org](mailto:newslettereditor@bayareawoodturners.org)

Video Coordinator  
Dave Bentley, Larry Batti & Ed Steffenger  
[videocoordinator@bayareawoodturners.org](mailto:videocoordinator@bayareawoodturners.org)

Woodmeister  
Tony Wolcott  
[woodmeister@bayareawoodturners.org](mailto:woodmeister@bayareawoodturners.org)

Educational Coordinator  
Jan Blumer  
[educationalcoordinator@bayareawoodturners.org](mailto:educationalcoordinator@bayareawoodturners.org)

Pro Demonstrator Liaison  
John Cobb  
[Cobbemail@gmail.com](mailto:Cobbemail@gmail.com)

Staff Photographer  
Rick Dietrich

Social Coordinator  
TBA



# Michael Kehs

## Carving

May 8th

8:30-12:30



Michael Kehs will demonstrate his intricate carving techniques on a hollow form. Please join us on zoom.

### About the artist:

Michael Kehs, from Bucks County, PA, has exhibited in several US shows. For example, this includes the Challenge V: International Lathe Turned Objects Show and the National Speleological Society's Fine Art Salon. Additionally, as an accomplished wood turner, he has won multiple awards. Likewise, he has made specialty crafts for important people and events.

His work has been renowned throughout the country. In fact, one major accomplishment was that he turned an ornament for the Clinton White House during the "Year of the Craft." Michael Kehs has won awards in many art shows and craft shows locally and nationally. Furthermore, this includes several Best of Show awards. He has also judged several wood carving shows. In addition, he has written for the American Woodturner, the journal of the American Association of Woodturners. Michael Kehs' involvement in the woodturning sphere has earned him a place among the most talented in the country. Michael Kehs is a self-taught expert craftsman who has been turning and carving wood for 27 years. He has been active in both local and national turning and carving clubs. However, he also owns a studio in Pennsylvania where he demonstrates and teaches wood carving and turning. Michael Kehs has a true passion and expertise in woodworking. As a result, he has helped students of all ages and skill levels develop a niche and excel in the hobby of woodwork. To this day, he continues to inspire his beginner and advanced classes to create beautifully unique works of art.



# BAWA's Beads of Courage Program

In December of last year, BAWA introduced our Beads of Courage box making program, and by the end of next week, we will have donated about thirty-five boxes to three different hospitals! This level of participation is more than we could have hoped for and speaks to the great generosity of our members, that's you! Thank you!

Our donations have been met with appreciation for, not only the donations, but also for the high level of craftsmanship you put into them. Here's one example of a thank you email we received for your work:

*"On behalf of Beads of Courage, Inc., I would like to thank you for your generous donation of Wooden Bowls/Boxes to support our mission in providing innovative arts-in-medicine, supportive care programs for more than 60,000 children coping with cancer and other serious illness. It is our passion to help them RECORD, TELL and OWN their story of COURAGE and your donation will go to help them mark and remember a milestone in their treatment journey.*

*Since March 2005, we have been working diligently to transform the treatment experience for children coping with serious illness through our arts-in-medicine programs. Through Beads of Courage, children are able to tell their story using colorful beads as meaningful symbols of courage that commemorate milestones they have achieved along their unique treatment path. We believe wooden bowls/boxes provide beautiful handmade homes for hard earned beads.*

*Beads of Courage, Inc. has established our innovative programs in over 260 children's hospitals in the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Japan and the United Kingdom. We believe our growth is evidence of the need for the type of support Beads of Courage provides for children coping with serious illness. This would not be possible without our generous supporters like you.*

*Thank you again for your interest, support and genuine concern for children coping with serious illness, their families, and the health care providers who care for them. Please visit our website ([www.beadsofcourage.org](http://www.beadsofcourage.org)) to learn more about our programs and how you can get involved in helping children with serious illness RECORD, TELL and OWN their stories of COURAGE.*

*Most Sincerely,  
Jean Gribbon, PhD, RN"*

We look forward to seeing your creations at Show and Tell at our next meeting! As you may know, this is an on-going program for our club, so it's not too late to get involved. For information on how to proceed, you'll find a document on the front page of our website, [www.BayAreaWoodturners.ORG](http://www.BayAreaWoodturners.ORG), outlining our program, and there are also some videos created by our own Jim Rodgers and Dave Bentley on how to build and decorate a Beads of Courage Box. You'll find them in the video section. Also, if you have questions or would like a free of charge, Beads of Courage logo bead to include in your turning, you can contact, Larry Batti, at [larrybattiwoodturning@gmail.com](mailto:larrybattiwoodturning@gmail.com).



Jean Gribbon-Executive Director-  
Beads of Courage, Inc.

Thanks again for your generosity!



*Continued on following page*

# Beads of Courage



Peter Travis



John Hile



Larry Batti



Carl Mercer



John Lawson



Hugh Bevan-Thomas

*Continued on following page*

## Beads of Courage



Jim Rodgers



John Langen



Peter Nakatani



Peter Travis

## Rockler Helps BAWA Members

BAWA members receive a 10% discount when purchasing directly at the Concord Rockler Store at:

<http://www.rockler.com/retail/stores/ca/concord-store>.

Mention your BAWA membership when checking out, to receive your discount. Rockler also donates part of the proceeds back to the club which help support our Holiday Party raffle.



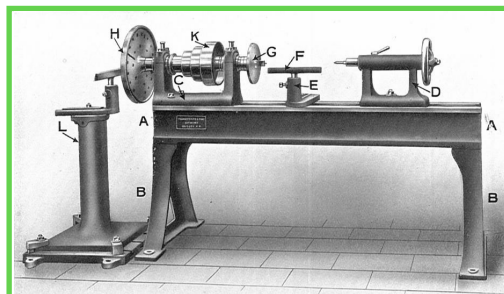
## BAWA Classified Ads



We want members and others with items to sell or trade, services to render or if you're just looking to find a specific item from fellow BAWA members.

Please send ads to Louie Silva at:

[newslettereditor@bayareawoodturners.org](mailto:newslettereditor@bayareawoodturners.org)





# President's Letter

*April 2021*

This month's Presidents Challenge will be stacked boxes.

In preparing for this I have made several sets of stacks boxes. What I've learned is the following.

1. Practice helps.
2. I am using fewer tools each time and more efficiently.
3. Techniques become more efficient and precise with time.
4. There are more ways to solve a problem than I could imagine.

In talking with David Bentley about a difficulty of lidded stacked boxes, Dave made a suggestion that was completely out of my thought process; It seemed to break the rules. However, it worked.

I guess the point is, it is never too late to start learning something or viewing things differently. Improving my techniques is what gets me into the shop. I love finding new ways to do things. SO...

The Presidents Challenge this month is stacked boxes. You may make a set of two or more boxes, they must fit inside each other, and they may be lidded or not.

If you want more information on how I would do it, view our latest YouTube video posted on the BAWA website on stacked boxes.

Have fun, try new ideas, and be prepared to share your work.

JimR

<https://smile.amazon.com/>

**Attention BAWA members who shop on Amazon.com**

BAWA is always looking for ways to generate funds to improve our Club. BAWA recently registered with Amazon's program to support charitable organizations, AmazonSmile. It is an easy, no cost way for our Club to benefit from your Amazon.com shopping expenditures.

AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support your favorite charitable organization; **BAWA!** When you shop at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com), you'll find the exact same products, prices, and Amazon Prime benefits as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate .5% of the purchase price to BAWA.

Here's how it works:

To shop at AmazonSmile simply go to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) from the web browser on your computer or mobile device. On your first visit to AmazonSmile, you need to designate BAWA to receive donations before you begin shopping. We are one of the almost one million charitable organizations registered with Amazon Smile. From then on when you enter Amazon through <https://smile.amazon.com/> every eligible purchase you make will result in a donation to BAWA.

You may want to bookmark the AmazonSmile URL to your desktop or mobile device to insure that you don't end up at the standard Amazon portal, thus bypassing benefit to BAWA.

If you haven't already done so, please consider registering with AmazonSmile and designating BAWA as your beneficiary. And encourage your friends and family to do likewise! We look forward to updating membership monthly on donations from this unique program.



# Jason Clark-Saturn Bowl

Jason Clark, a software engineer from the Chicago area, Zoomed in to demonstrate his Saturn Bowl.

Inspired by Hans Weissflog's Saturn box, Jason's Saturn Bowl, made of a single piece of wood, has movable rings. He showed us pictures of variations on the Saturn Bowl, including his very first attempt. He recommended using a wood with a prominent grain, such as Zebra wood. He also has used Walnut and Padouk, which have a stark contrast between heartwood and sapwood..



His demo began with a reminder about safety on the lathe. He mentioned that he 'removed his watch, his wedding ring, and his hair.' He mounted a dry 6 1/2" diameter 2 1/2" thick blank of zebra wood between centers and trued up one face. He marked out and cut a tenon and shoulders. Using his 'desert island tool,' a 1/2" bowl gouge, he cut away most of the waste around the bottom of the bowl and the wing. He used a bevel rubbing cut to flatten the bottom of the wing and, after checking with a straight edge, he adjusted it by shear scraping with the gouge. He made sure that the intersection of the bowl and the wing was a sharp right angle before flipping the bowl.

Once it was securely chucked, he cut away the wing in 3-4 stages. He cut 1" at a time from the outer edge, making sure to get the desired wall thickness (about 1/8") and flatness in the wing. It's important to support the thin wing to avoid vibrations, which would be transmitted into the cut. He kept the tailstock in place, took light cuts and supported the wing with his fingers when necessary. The wing complete, he sized the diameter of the bowl with a PVC pipe jamb chuck and made sure it intersected the wing at a right angle, then shaped it. He removed the tailstock, flattened the top and hollowed the bowl with a bowl gouge and a scraper, leaving a wall thickness the same as the ring thickness. This would be the time to sand the inside of the bowl and the top of the ring and bowl.

Mounting the top of the bowl in a wooden jamb chuck, he refined the shape of the bottom and removed the tenon. This would be the time to sand the bottom of the ring.

He used a custom made 1/16" parting tool (ground down to 1/64" for the last 1/4") to make a 45 degree cut into the intersection of the bowl and the ring. He only made one insertion. This was done at 6-800 RPM. He repeated the cut on the other side of the wing which let the wing spin freely on the bowl. Then he shaped and sanded the bottom of the bowl.

To offset the opening at the top, he mounted the bottom of the bowl into a PVC Clean-out Adapter used as a jamb chuck. He clamped the adapter at an angle and, spinning at 1200, cut a wedge off the top of the bowl. This gives the appearance of the wings at an angle to the bowl.

Finally, to cut more rings into the wing, he used a clever technique to simultaneously mount it off-center, stabilize the wing, and allow the cuts to be precisely aligned. He mounted a 4" long piece of 1 1/4 poplar (or other cheap wood) between centers, turned a cylinder, cut tenons on both ends, and cut into 2 parts – about 1/3 and 2/3. He hollowed out both parts into a straight sided bowl (Dog bowl) shape and jammed the ring between the two hollowed cylinders. The sides should line up precisely giving guidelines from which to make the 45 degree parting cuts. When cutting multiple rings, he said he usually cuts the small rings first, leaving more options for placement of the larger rings. Each ring will require its own set of cylinders.

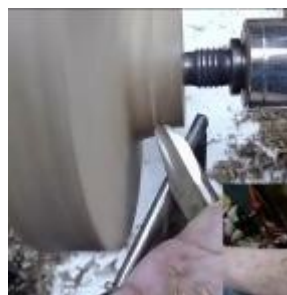
Jason's demonstration was excellent. He gave a very clear presentation, full of details. He used multiple cameras simultaneously to optimize the viewing of any particular technique. He remained on-line for quite a while answering questions. He has made a recording of the demo available to BAWA members until 4/14/21. Also, he has a book of the process available on his website. <https://jtcturning.com/>



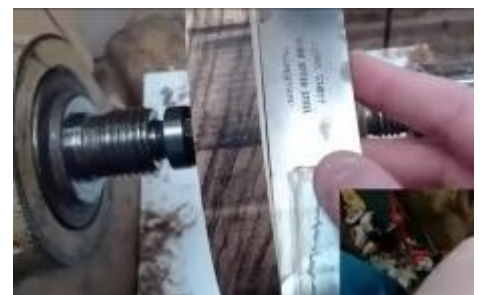
Truing face of zebra wood blank



Tenon & base marked out



Cutting tenon



Checking flatness of wing

*Continued on following page*





Thinning wing



Sharp right angle



Hollowing with bowl gouge



Jam chuck almost fits



Shaping bottom



Adapted parting tool



Ready for off-axis cut



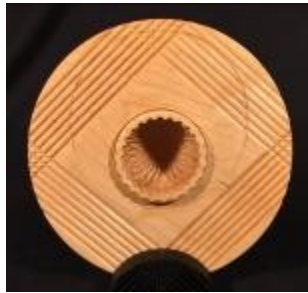
Completed Saturn bowl



Wing jig hollowed



Wing held in wing jig



Variation



Variations

## Taking Measure

COVID-19 has disrupted the entire world, and it is affecting all of us, in every aspect of our lives. Self-quarantine, Social distancing. It can be overwhelming and stressful. Until this crisis passes, we must continue to create, learn, and share.

That said, now may be the perfect time to isolate yourself in your workshop-- turning, planning and prepping for projects, reviewing favorite woodturning magazines, watching videos, and more.

Remember, safety is always a top priority. Take measure: observe precautions, act wisely, and keep yourself safe. Together we are stronger, together we are the woodturning community.



## Tree Article #44 The Thirst for Wood

By Tony Wolcott

Like any dealer, he was watching for the card

That is so high and wild

He'll never need to deal another

He was just some Joseph looking for a manger

He was just some Joseph looking for a manger

-Leonard Cohen from "The Stranger"

In the never-ending search for more wonderful wood, it is the quest, the journey we are all on. In the end, we will not find the perfect wood, the piece that jumps onto the lathe with an incredible figure, color, and luster. We will keep searching and bringing home pretenders and close to perfect. The lyrics remind me of the endless wood search, searching for the piece so high and wild, there will be no need to find another.

I love my wife very much; she is the light of my days. However, often in the afternoon, she will come across a speck on the kitchen floor. "And what do we have here? This is a wood chip!

"No, dust mite collection. If it is a wood chip, you planted it there. I have been framed. Nothing more to say.

"The pile begins to enlarge as if the wood reproduces itself. We soon forget what kind of wood or where it came from. We neglect that the wood is there, occupying prime real estate—a pile of procrastination.

I have decided to focus my search-- only the finest and purest of wood in honor of all the woodpiles. Below is my list of desirable cellulose, the wood species which I will not refuse if offered. This is an effort to limit me from piling on the collection I have. I will purge two pieces from the pile for every piece I bring home, a reduction effort. My refusal to attend the local WHOA chapter, Wood Hoarders of the Apocalypse, still remains.

In conclusion, the search continues; no chain saw sound will go unnoticed. The next superb wood is just around the corner. Wood is always greener on the other side of the fence. Keep on the lookout.



*Continued on following page*

Below are ten photos, each given a letter. Your assignment is to match each photograph with the ten trees numbered below

**Desirable Woods Out There Somewhere**

1. Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*) - the tree does grow large
2. Osage orange (*Maclura pomifera*)
3. Sassafras (*Sassafras albinum*)
4. Mango (*Mangifera indica*)
5. Black oak (*Quercus kelloggii*)
6. Red oak (*Quercus rubra*)
7. Garry oak (*Quercus garryana*)
8. Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*)
9. California nutmeg (*Torreya californica*)
10. Chinese pistache (*Pistacia chinensis*)



A.



B.



C.



D.



E.



F.



G.



H.



I.



J.

Answers located on page 13

We are a group gathering at the tailgate with chainsaws and fancy tools for lifting 500-pound wood chunks. The casual conversation belies the eagerness to grab onto the wood. This is the beginning of the quest; we are all complicit. There is no lack of supply. We just want a share of the bounty.

# Virtual Show & Tell March

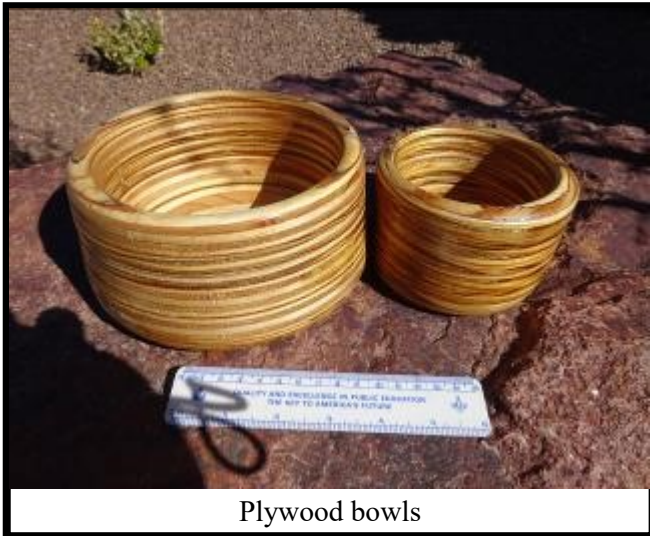
*Dave Fleisig*



Urn from a board



*Gary Bingham*



Plywood bowls

*Kim Wolfe*



Platter

*Jay Holland*



Carved bowl



Chalice & Plate



Carved bowl

*Continued on following page*

# Virtual Show & Tell March

*Bob Bean*



*Peter Travis*



## Answers from page 11

- A. Chestnut
- B. Black oak
- C. Chinese pistache
- D. Mango
- E. California nutmeg
- F. Red oak
- G. Sassafras
- H. Osage orange
- I. Tree of Heaven
- J.. Garry oak

## Cutting Bowl Blanks from a Tree

Dale Larson

Photos by Randy Rhine, unless otherwise noted.



**Comparing grain patterns.** Both bowls were turned from flat-sawn blanks, centered on the tree's pith. Left: Bowl rim facing the trunk's center, resulting in a roughly symmetrical, or butterfly, pattern. Right: Bowl rim facing outward, as with natural-edge bowls, resulting in oval rings in the bottom. These patterns correspond to the bottom and top blanks, respectively, drawn on the log in Photo 1.

Right photo: Dale Larson

There are many ways to cut bowl blanks out of a tree, but the methodical approach that I take efficiently uses the tree and produces stable, aesthetically pleasing bowl blanks. If you have a chainsaw and are willing to put it to work, I will explain how to evaluate a tree to determine where the best bowl blanks lie in wait. On the other hand, if you buy bowl blanks, my approach will improve your

skill at evaluating the opportunities within the stock available for purchase. The goal is to predict what your finished bowl will look like before a gouge even touches the surface of the blank.

### Timing is everything

When I get green wood, it becomes my top priority until I get the subsequent blanks rough-turned. Unprocessed green timber never improves with

time. The longer the log sits, the more cracks it will develop, fungus will move in and cause discoloration and loss of luster, and insects will tunnel into the wood. For the log I processed for this article, I cut the blanks on a Thursday and rough-turned them the next day, and this was during a relatively cool and humid part of the year.

I use an emulsified wax solution (Sealtite 60) during warm weather to coat the endgrain as soon as I make the cut. I will also spray water on the blanks and cover them with a tarp until I can rough-turn them. In my experience, a cherry bowl blank cut in July will show visible cracks within an hour. If the blank checks, I will have wasted my time in locating the wood and cutting it up.

### Prioritizing the cuts

I almost always start by cutting up the most valuable—meaning highly figured—part of the tree. If the tree has burls, that is where I focus my initial efforts. I cut the crotch pieces next, followed by the lowest part of the trunk where it transitions to the stump. I then work my way up the trunk, leaving the limbs for last. Limbs are full of stress and typically have both the poorest figure and the poorest turning quality. My theory is that if the chainsaw gives up before I do, the best wood from the tree should already be in the back of the pickup.

### Dissecting the tree

The yellow poplar in the accompanying photos lies in my driveway, and knowing I have ample time to finish the task, I decide to cut the straight-grain blanks first. Measuring the tree's diameter, I decide to make 14" (36cm) bowl blanks. I slice a few inches from the butt of the log to remove any checking and to help clarify the grain pattern. I then cut the

## Chainsaw Safety

While the steps in this article rely on a chainsaw, detailed guidelines for the safe use of this both helpful and dangerous tool are beyond the scope of this article. Several articles related to chainsaw safety have been published in *American Woodturner*; for one, see "Play It Safe," by A.J. Hamler in the Fall 2008 issue (vol 23, no 3, page 56). The price of using a chainsaw without appropriate precautions can be high, even deadly, either for the saw operator or observers who are too close to the action. When I am using a chainsaw, no one is allowed to be close to me or to hold the piece of wood I am cutting.



first round 15" (38cm) long, which will provide leeway to bandsaw the blank to its final 14" diameter.

A stable section for a utility vessel requires leaving the pith out of any blank. Checking originates from the pith, so excluding this area eliminates a reliable source of stress in the wood. With that in mind, there are three basic orientations for blanks from straight-grain wood (*Photo 1*). I have roughly marked the grain lines to illustrate how they are oriented in each blank. The blank on the bottom will yield my favorite grain pattern. It is flat sawn with the center of the bowl aligned with the bottom of the curve of the growth rings. This blank will yield a pleasing, symmetrical grain pattern mirrored in each side of the bowl—a pattern I call butterfly grain.

Quarter-sawn blanks lie on both sides of the pith. For the species of timber that I use, I rarely make quarter-sawn bowls because, to my eye, the resulting grain pattern is not as appealing—the grain lines run straight through the bottom of the bowl and show little or no curl, eyes, or any of the other variants that make wood visually appealing. The exception is when I can acquire a species with strong medullary rays such as our local Oregon white oak (Garry oak). The grain in quarter-sawn oak can far outshine its flat-sawn relatives.

The top blank in *Photo 1* can be used to make a natural-edge vessel, or the outer edge can be removed for a smooth rimmed bowl. The grain orientation running through this blank will produce an approximately round or oval grain pattern in the bottom of the finished bowl. I usually evaluate the blank and consider whether the outer (bark) edge will yield a balanced shape, and if so I will keep the outside intact for a natural-edge bowl. Here I decide against a natural-edge form.

Yet another orientation is possible, an arrangement I call slash-sawn, although the grain orientation approximates

## Bowl blank orientations



1 The three outlined blanks will all yield stable forms, and the top and bottom blanks should have pleasing grain patterns.



2 The blanks in the top log utilize more of the log, but likely will distort beyond use in drying and show little figure, even if they can be saved.

## Cutting straight-grain blanks



3 The log is cut with the guidelines oriented vertically and the log solidly braced off the ground. While the log is in this stable position, the author partially completes all the cuts before completing the dissection, working from the outside to the inside cuts.



A secondary benefit of a rip chain is that when it is dull, it has half as many teeth to sharpen as a standard chain.

rift-sawn dimensioned lumber (*Photo 2*). The slash-sawn blanks will distort significantly while drying, sometimes to the point of being unworkable, and the finished bowl will simply not be as attractive as the flat-sawn bowl. It is true that more of the log will be lost in taking the one flat-sawn blank instead of two slash-sawn blanks. Turner and teacher Lane Philips' mantra is, "Don't trade volume for beauty," and I too encourage taking the best blanks out of the tree, not the most blanks.

I balance the round on wood blocks to prepare it for cutting, ensuring the

round is stable and will not roll during the cuts (*Photo 3*). I orient the cut lines vertically, as cutting straight down is easier and more accurate than attempting an angled cut. Because most of my cuts are with the grain, I use a rip, or skip-tooth, chain on my chainsaws. These chains also work for cross-cutting and are less prone to clogging from the long curls generated by the rip cut. A secondary benefit of a rip chain is that when it is dull, it has half as many teeth to sharpen as a standard chain.

I make all the parallel cuts, stopping each cut short of exiting the log (*Photo 4*). ▶

Before I make the first center cut, I mark the location of the pith on the far end of the round. This guides my cut to keep it running parallel through the block with the pith line. Having the

grain oriented straight through the blank is important to the appearance of the finished bowl. The prettiest bowl pattern has the grain parallel to the bottom of the bowl. If I have to choose

between making the cut parallel to the pith line and the bark line, I generally cut parallel to the bark line to preserve the desired grain orientation.

The quarter-sawn blank rests on my cutting bench, a 22" (56cm-) high jig that minimizes my stooping and saves wear-and-tear on my back (Photo 5). I cut outside the checks around the pith; I will get two quarter-sawn blanks out of the slab. I did not cut through the slab because the support blocks underneath the blank are in the wrong location. A through-cut in this situation could pinch my bar.

The three basic straight-grain blanks sit on the workbench, bandsaw ready (Photo 6). The flat top and bottom offer two stable surfaces for the bandsaw table. Trying to cut a round or irregular-bottom bowl blank on the bandsaw can lead to an unsupported and dangerous cut.

## Extracting the blanks



The center section of the log, next to the pith area, yields quartersawn blanks. Depending on the size of the blank and your bandsaw, it may be possible to take the log section straight to the bandsaw for sectioning.



With carefully planned and executed chainsaw cuts, the blanks are ready for the bandsaw table, where the bowl blanks are cut round from the square chainsawed blanks. From left: a flat-sawn, natural-edge-oriented blank (but in this case, with the bark eliminated), a quarter-sawn blank, and a flat-sawn blank.

## Cutting crotch section blanks



As with the straight-grain log, the crotch section is cut apart vertically. Transferring the location of the pith to the top of the log on both ends, as well as drawing the vertical line to the pith, guides the central cut.



The top two blanks promise the most figure, while the bottom blank will likely be fairly plain. The author decides to sacrifice the bottom blank to optimize the dimensions and location of the upper two forms.



## Cutting the crotch

I cut a 15" (38cm-) round from the tree that includes the crotch section (Photo 7). In the area between the two limbs' pith lines will lie an expanse of interlocked feather grain, or crotch figure, and I have attempted to cross-cut the log below this region. A straight line connects the pith of the limb to the pith of the tree. As with the previous round, I orient this line vertically for cutting. I mark the pith at the end of the round and transfer the mark to the top of the log where I will use the location to guide my cut (Photo 8). I also mark any checking to be avoided around each pith, of which there is little in this log. Photo 9 shows the approximate orientation of the three blanks I could extract. If this were expensive or rare wood, I would separate the bottom bowl blank first, but because that blank would be flat-sawn and straight-grain, I decide to forego extracting it.

I make the center cut first, stopping short of cutting completely through



the log (Photo 10). Then I slice off each side before returning to finish the center cut. I always saw from the upper end of a crotch section where the most prized feather figure lies. The feather will taper off towards the bottom of the cut, so if my cut wanders a little, there is less likelihood of losing the best figure.

Figure 1 shows how the feather-figure bowls are oriented in the tree's crotch. The side view in this illustration shows the location of the pith, which I intend to bisect with my cut. The bowl bottoms are oriented towards the center of the tree, placing the feather pattern in the bottom of the finished bowl.

With the crotch section halved, I mark out the best patterns with my calipers and highlight the pith lines with red chalk (Photo 11). Cutting the blanks along the pith lines yields two bowl and two spindle blanks. The feather figure lies above the pith line of the limb and to the right side of the trunk pith line (Photo 12). This crotch did not have a big feather area. Harder to see in the photos is that the weight of the limb has compressed the wood at the junction with the trunk to create fiddleback figure, which I have shaded with a marker.

These blanks are now ready to be bandsawed and rough-turned. I will make my final adjustments to the forms for grain alignment as I rough out the blanks between centers, an approach I learned from John Jordan. Turning between centers gives me an opportunity to make final adjustments to the bowl blank and possibly correct mistakes made during chainsawing.

### Final thoughts

There are many advantages to working green wood, including salvaging local timber that may not be commercially available. Cutting one's own blanks offers the chance

## Finding feathers in wood

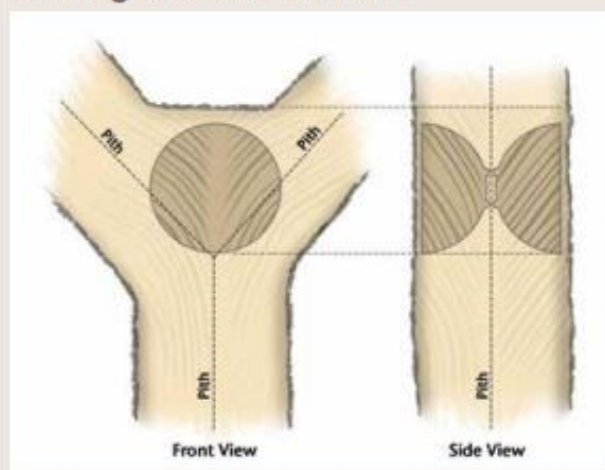


Figure 1. The feather pattern occurs between the pith lines and the crown of the crotch. The figure is typically strongest at the top and tapers off towards the bottom where the pith lines meet.

Illustration: Robin Springett

## Maximizing the crotch section blanks



11 Because of the stability of quartersawn timber, the two spindle blanks opposite the limbs are worth coating with wax and setting aside to dry.



12 Although this particular log has little feather figure, the amount of fiddleback figure below the limb is a pleasant surprise.

to optimize blank size and grain patterns. Turning green wood also generates less dust and requires less physical effort than seasoned wood. Finally, when I rough out green blanks, I get to see colors in the fresh wood that no one else will see. Fresh madrone can be bright red, almost fluorescent, and black walnut can show shades of deep purple and green. Unfortunately, these bright colors fade as the wood dries. With experience processing my own trees, I rarely buy a bowl blank. I find I am

no longer willing to give up control of this part of the creative process.

For those who would like to dive deeper into this subject, I recommend two books: *Reading the Wood* by Michael Elkan and *Turning Green Wood* by Michael O'Donnell. ■

*Dale Larson has been turning bowls for forty years. He is a founding member and past president of the Cascade Woodturners in Portland, Oregon. Dale served on the AAW Board from 2009 to 2014, as both symposium chair and president.*