

# Echoes from the "BAT" Cave



June 11, 2008

Volume 3, Issue 6

## Barry Gross Demo



Barry Gross using alchemy to make his marvelous pens.

## Symposium Pix



The Richmond Convention Center hosted the AAW Symposium.

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## Raffle



An embarrassment of riches – Silver Maple and Osage slabs, Apple, Hickory, Ash, Basswood chunks, Rock Maple boards, Cherry spindle turning blanks, Walnut slabs, Corian, Purple Heart and Padouk Pen Blanks, and a truckload of Birch branches and logs. In addition, Barry Gross donated a Acrylic Finishing Kit and an Abralon 1-minute finishing kit. Woodcraft donated Anchorseal and Craft Supplies USA donated \$30 gift certificates. Thanks!



# Barry Gross Pen Demo



Barry Gross . . .



. . . speaks to BAT . . .



. . . about his pens, pictured above with turning blanks



Barry stirs acrylic.



The stages of embedding a pen blank.



Ready to turn.



Taking small bites with gouge.

BAT was happy to welcome legendary turner Barry Gross to our June meeting. This medical equipment salesman spends his spare time writing, teaching, and turning. He's renowned for his pens which are turned from common stuff and materials as exotic as mammoth tusk and Oosik (walrus penis bone). He graciously shared his secrets of acrylic pen turning. The pens he showed were made by attaching various items – pictures, abalone, watch parts, beads and more to pen tubes, then encasing them in acrylic. After passing around some examples, he quickly got down to the business of making a pen. He showed the five steps of casting a pen in acrylic and had examples of each step. He demonstrated the final pouring to cover 2 pen blanks he had started earlier. (The acrylic hardens overnight so the whole process could not be shown during an evening demo.) He gave numerous tips about each step along the way. (The steps are outlined in detail in the instructions accompanying the casting kit he sells—more on this later.)



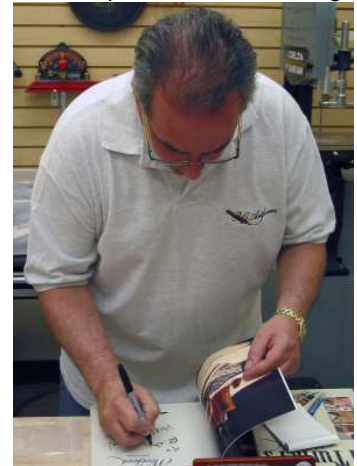
The skew produces fine shavings.



Sanding with sanding pads.

He then took a block of previously cast blanks, separated them with a saw, trimmed the ends of one and mounted it on an adjustable pen mandrel. A consummate teacher, he stressed the ABCs: (Anchor the

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Barry signing books.

# Maryland Turning Club Sweeps AAW Awards

Congratulations to Montgomery County Woodturners on winning first place in the AAW Newsletter competition and second place in the AAW Website competition. The awards were given at the AAW Symposium Banquet.

Check out their website at <http://montgomerycountywoodturners.org/>

It's good to have such talented neighbors. Congratulations!

## Announcements

August 13 – the enormously talented **Bill Grumbine** will Demo

September 10 – **Cliff Lounsberry** – (from Michigan) will be showing how he turned the 71/2' tall 4' diameter large turning displayed at the recent ACC show. He will also discuss the use of a router in decorating and finishing bowls and BAT will be raffling his hollowing system in a special raffle.

The **Baseball Bat Turning Demo**, **Pen Turning Demo** and **Pen Turning for the Troops** will reprise this year.

Chuck Aaron - spoke about the **Turnit Turnit** Mail list. Contact him to receive an invitation.

To to so, log on to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Turnit/>

If you wish to join press the join button and then include your name, phone number, email address and the name of the woodturning club where you are a member in good standing.

Turnit has been responsible for many excursions for wood and announces meetings of all woodturning Clubs in MD..

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## Barry Gross Pen Demo (Continued)

tool on the toolrest, apply the Bevel to the piece, lift the tool handle and Cut.) He said that the key to cutting acrylic is to take light bites with sharp tools. He starts with a speed of 1000 RPM, first using a roughing gouge to cut off the corners, then using a skew to shape the cylinder. He said he prefers a proportion of 1/3 at the top, 2/3 on the writing end. He tests for size using the writing end attachment and continues to cut or scrape with the skew until the size is perfected. Finally he sands the blank. Sanding is done with a color coded acrylic and Corian finishing kit. (The same product is used to polish helicopter windshields.) This sanding is done wet, lubricated with water with a towel placed on the lathe bed for protection. He runs through six grits from 600 to 12000, about 20 seconds each, then applies liquid scratch remover with fingers. The sanding is done at 1000 RPM; the scratch re-

mover is applied at higher speed. He also showed how to fix air bubbles in turnings using Medium CA glue. His excellent presentation ended with a discussion of some finer points of pen making such as the importance of having the clip line up with the nib on a pen that posts and why he uses Parker Ink Gel refills in his pens—they write smoothly. He buys his pen boxes from Penn State and gets box inserts from Berea and other sources. He sells kits for coating pen blanks with clear non-yellowing acrylic. Commercial grade fiberglass coloring can be used to tint the acrylic. The kits and other items are available at his website: [www.bgartforms.com](http://www.bgartforms.com) He told us about the upcoming DC Pen Show in Tyson's Corner, VA on August 7-10, where his pens will be displayed. This is a show for high rollers with pens selling for as much as \$500k. Barry's pens typically sell for mere hundreds. Details at <http://pencentral.com>

## Symposium Pictures



Sphere turned of corrugated paper. It's hollow!



Johannes Michelsen turns a hat.



Cindy Drozda turns on a Robust lathe.



Jon Magill and Bonnie Klein tag team ornamental turning.

What did you miss if you didn't attend the 2008 AAW Symposium in Richmond? You missed meeting and learning from accomplished turners from all over the world. You missed Jon Magill and Bonnie Klein telling the world about BAT's Dean Swaggert's Pimped-Out Rose Engine. You missed a warehouse full of vendors of turning goodies. You missed the instant gallery and auction where some items sold for tens of thousands of dollars. You missed a great opportunity to rub shoulders with fellow turners from all over the US. Pictures only give a taste of the symposium.



Jimmy Clewes turns without looking.



Famous turners Gerry Meekins, Keith Holt, and Ed Kelle watch. . .



. . . famous turners Mike Stafford, Richard Raffin, Benoit Averly, Kip Christensen, and Mark St. Ledger receive the first swan-necked Hunter Tools from Mike Hunter.

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## Baltimore Area Turners

Baltimore Area Turners meets every month on the second Wednesday of the month at the Greater Baltimore Woodcraft Store at 1125 Cromwell Bridge Road  
Towson, MD 21286

### Next meeting:

July 9, 2008 at 7:00 PM

Agenda: Show and Tell.