

ECHOES FROM THE "BAT" CAVE

BALTIMORE AREA TURNERS

Pen Turning Demo - Tom Szarek / Louis Harris

February 2019
Volume 14, Number 2

Our very own Tom Szarek and Louis Harris demonstrated pen turning for the February meeting.

Tom and Louis are coordinating a club service project of *Turning for the Troops*.



They have set a club goal of 1,000 pens to be donated to our service men and women through Woodcraft.

Please see them for details on how you can participate.



The pen kit:
Louis demonstrated turning a slimline pen kit as pictured on the left.



From top down, by row are: the pen blanks, the pen tubes, the twist mechanism, the ink tube, and finally the nib, center band, end cap and clip.

Prepare the blanks:

The pen blanks are any piece of 3/4 inch square stock. The blanks are rough cut to about 2 1/4 inches in length. Use a 7mm drill bit to drill through the center of the blanks to allow the brass pen tubes to be glued in place.

The pen tubes are 2 1/16 inches long. Sand the tubes lightly with 80 grit sandpaper for better glue adhesion. Apply CA glue to the tube and slide it into the blank. Use the point of a pencil to slide the tube into the blank so it is at least 1/16 inch inside the blank on each side. Spray accelerator on the ends and allow to dry. This will allow the wood to be trimmed flush and square to the tube.

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Pen Turning (continued)

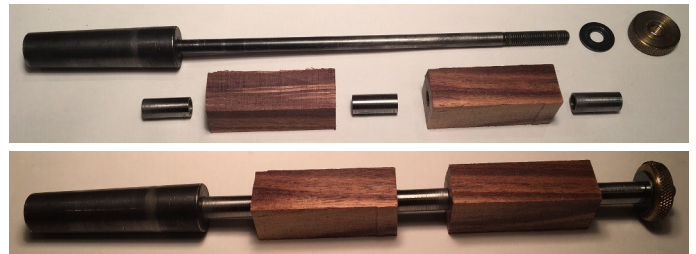


The next step in preparing the blanks is to trim the excess wood from both ends of each blank with a barrel trimmer.

Pictured to the left is a barrel trimmer and two blanks with their ends trimmed. The trimming leaves the ends of the blank square and flush to the end of the tube. This step is very important to ensure a good fit in the final assembly of the pen.

Mounting the blanks:

A pen mandrel is used to mount the blanks on the lathe. Shown top right is a mandrel, pen bushings, and the blanks. The pen bushings are specific to the pen kit being made. They are the same diameter of the nib, center band and end cap. The bushings serve as guide for the finished diameter of blanks. Bottom right is the mandrel ready to be mounted on the lathe.



Time to turn:

Place the taper of the mandrel into the headstock and support the opposite end with a cone center. Turn the blanks to your desired profile using spindle turning techniques. Remember, you want the diameter of the blanks to match that of the pen bushings.



One interesting thing Louis mentioned was that the slim line kit doesn't need to be assembled using the center band. This allows turning a cigar shaped pen by mounting the blanks on the mandrel without the center bushing. Remember that the profile of the top half of the pen must allow the clip to lay flat.

Sand and Finish:

Sand the blank starting at 120 grit and progress up to

600 grit. Louis suggests wiping or brushing off the piece between grits to remove any pieces of abrasive left behind.

He finished his pen using Mylands friction polish. Apply it sparingly and then with the lathe turning at high speed, buff the finish with a small cloth or paper towel. The heat from the buffing dries the finish. It may take multiple applications to get the result you want.



Pen Turning (continued)

Assemble the pieces:

When removing your blanks from the lathe, make sure you keep them oriented the way you intended during assembly. It's easy to get them turned end to end, or press a part into the wrong end of a finished blank.



For assembly, the nib, twist mechanism, and end cap (with clip) are pressed into the brass pen tube. There are pen presses made specifically for this, but you can also use a clamp, a vise, or the tailstock ram of the lathe. Just make sure not to damage the pen with the clamp.

Press the nib into the writing end of the pen blank first. Notice the twist mechanism (right) has a brass ring at one end with an indented ring on the chrome area. The brass end of the



mechanism is what goes into opposite end of the blank from the nib. It's best to press the mechanism in slowly and test the action of the twist mechanism by inserting the ink tube. Stop when the mechanism extends and retracts the proper amount. Do not press the twist mechanism into the tube any further than the indented ring.

Now that the writing end of the pen is complete, all that's left is to press the end cap and clip onto the remaining blank. Now slide the two halves together by hand and your pen is complete!

Acrylic Pen Blanks:

Following Tom and Louis, Wayne Kuhn demonstrated turning a pen using an acrylic pen blank. The sanding of the acrylic blanks must be done carefully. Wayne has a great tip for ensuring his sandpaper stays fresh. He prepares "packets" of small pre-cut pieces of sand paper. The pieces are big enough for one or two uses and then he discards them.



Please see Wayne for any questions on working with Acrylic blanks.

The Baltimore Area Turners has taken on an ambitious project for this year. Led by Lou Harris and myself, we intend to make 1,000 pens to contribute to the Turning for the Troops. This is a huge number to complete, but Woodcraft, Inc., has committed to match us pen for pen; we finish 500 pens, and they will give us 500 sets of pen parts for free.



I am sure that we all have a relative or friend or neighbor who has a person who is serving or who was wounded while in the military. Some of our members also served in the military and remember to send care packages to a soldier overseas. By completing and sending pens, we can bring as little joy to a soldier far from home or in the hospital.

This Turning for the Troops project will be beneficial for our club as well as honor soldiers for their service. We already have commitments for approximately one third of the pens needed. We hope that additional members will step forward to help us meet our goal.

Will you be willing to complete five or ten or twenty pens? See me at the next meeting if you are interested.

Tom Szarek,
Librarian

2019 President's Challenge

The first President's challenge for 2019 is to turn 10 pens for our *Turning for the Troops* service project.

Thanks to Ron Ford for his fine example of what this looks like.



BAT Demonstration at the ACC Show

For the eighth year in a row, the Baltimore Area Turners were invited to demonstrate woodturning at the American Crafts Council show at the Baltimore Convention Center. The ACC show is a premier juried arts and craft show held every year in multiple locations across the nation.



Stephen Jones explains woodturning

We had 9 club members help at the booth this year, talking, turning, setting up the booth, and packing it away.

The club thanks Tom and Lorrie Szarek, Dave and Diane Maidt, Roland Shepard, Clark Bixler, Pete Johnson, Wayne Kuhn, and Stephen Jones.



Wayne Kuhn turns for the crowd

The President's Turn



Hello fellow BAT Members – I'm pleased to see that our club is off to a good start in 2019. I'd like to thank all of you who have renewed your annual dues, with a special thanks to those who have stepped up to Century Club level. I am pleased to report that BAT is on much firmer financial footing than we were at the end of 2018. If you have not yet paid your dues, please do so as soon as possible.

Turning for the Troops is an important club initiative that is being headed up by Lou Harris and Tom Szarek. We have a good head start on an aggressive goal of 1,000 pens, but we need everyone to participate to meet our objective. Thanks to the efforts of Lou and Tom, and a generous discount from our friends at Woodcraft, we have supplies and kits available at greatly reduced prices. Please contact Tom (tjmole@hotmail.com) or Lou Harris (louharris@verizon.net), or see them at BAT meetings for more details.

A word on meeting decorum, please. We plan a program for each meeting that is intended to give attendees information and skills by local and professional turners. A great deal of planning and preparation goes into these demos, and it is very distracting when side conversations around the room disrupt the program being presented. If you must have an unrelated conversation, please take it out into the hallway so the presentation can proceed as planned. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated!

Looking forward to seeing everyone at future meetings and events.

Ron Ford

What's on Tap for March?

Turning a bowl from a board – sounds impossible doesn't it? Actually, it is fun and quite easy and, in our upcoming meeting, Joe Kramer will show us how. Joe showed us the basics a few years ago and he will review the steps for those who missed his first demonstration and will also show us some new variations that he has added since then.



As he will explain, making *a bowl from a board* requires no special equipment or turning skills. In many respects, it is easier than beginning with a solid bowl blank. If you want to learn more beforehand, he demonstrated the technique at the Mid-Maryland Woodturners Club a year ago which was taped and available on YouTube at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iOptCPuY2Lo&t=2734s>.

I hope to see you in March.

Ed Cohen

Program Director

Interested in sharing a tool, technique or project with the club? Demonstrate your project-in-progress at an upcoming BAT meeting. Contact program director Ed Cohen for details.

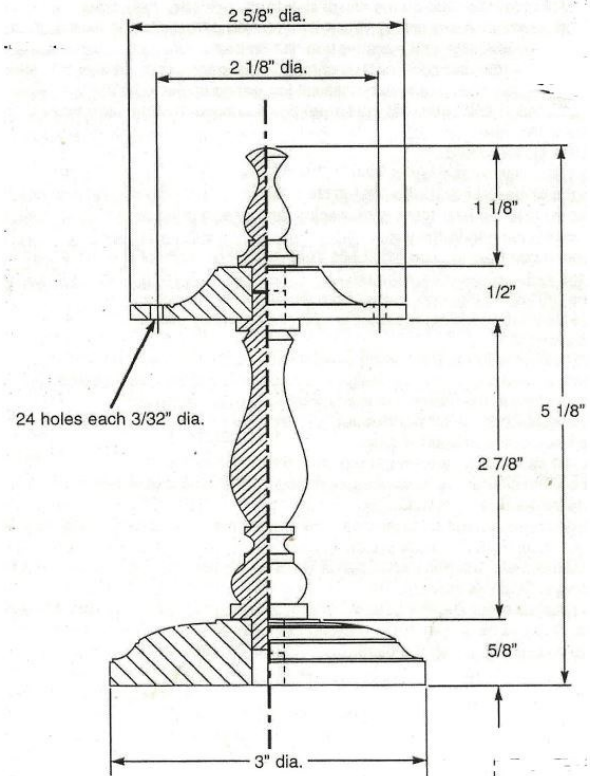
Items of Interest:

There is a great article in the February issue of *American Woodturner*, "Turning an Earring Stand", by Kip Christensen.

I noticed some of the dimensions were missing from the article. With a little searching around I was able to find the original kit the design was based on. The author turns his stands from one single piece of wood.



Earring stands, Kip Christensen. Earrings by Beth Arbuckle, Sally Ault, Bonnie Klein, Kip Christensen.



Want to build your woodturning skills?

The American Association of Woodturners (AAW) strives to deliver the publications and services that our members need to grow, connect, explore, and thrive in the areas of woodturning that are important to them. With nearly 16,000+ members and 360+ chapters internationally, AAW's many resources, including our award-winning *American Woodturner* journal, help our members to learn, create, and connect.



By signing up for a complimentary Guest membership, you can have limited access to a sampling of AAW resources for a full **60 days**. You'll be able to explore what the AAW has to offer, kick our tires, and hopefully decide to become a full-fledged, paid AAW member to benefit from everything the AAW has to offer.

Visit us at woodturner.org

Baltimore Area Turners Meetings

March 13 - Joe Kramer will give an updated demo on turning Bowls from a Board.

April 10 - Chuck Cohen will demonstrate how to make easy resin insets in bowls.

The club meets every month on the second Wednesday of the month at 7:00 pm Our meetings are held at the Boumi Temple located at:

5050 King Avenue
Baltimore MD 21237-3325

Drive around to the parking lot at the back of the building and enter thru the set of glass doors. If the door feels like it's locked, it's not, just give it a tug!

BAT Classifieds

Stay tuned for updates in the March newsletter...

If you have items for the classifieds, please send them to me at scott.bleakney@yahoo.com

- Thanks

BAT is a local chapter of the American Association of Woodturners (AAW) which serves the Baltimore metropolitan area. A wide range of skills and interests are represented by our members. Work ranges from small utilitarian project to galley art and includes pen making, bowls and platters, hollow forms, small projects, furniture spindles and architectural work. We are fortunate to include professional turners and published authors among our members. Membership is open to anyone with an interest in woodturning, and