

# ECHOES FROM THE “BAT” CAVE

## BALTIMORE AREA TURNERS

### The Sensational Skew—Jim Echter

Sept-Oct 2020  
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Jim Echter was our presenter for the September BAT meeting. Jim is a production woodturner living in Rochester NY. He has over 40 years of experience in woodturning and teaching. He has written several articles for the AAW and was a demonstrator at the AAW Symposium in Raleigh in 2019.

Jim researched the history of a traditional 1 to 3 year woodturning apprenticeship. The apprentice starts with spindle turning and doesn't do any cross grain turning until the very end of the apprenticeship. Much different than how most of us learned to turn.

His presentation on mastering the skew chisel was based on techniques used to train apprentices in use of the skew.

#### Setup:

Jim recommends beginners start with a skew angle of 70 degrees and a bevel angle between 25 and 30 degrees. A 25 degree bevel is good for domestic woods and a 35 degree angle is best for exotic hardwoods.



If the skew is ground so the length of the bevel is between 1 1/2 to 2 times the thickness of the skew the bevel angle will be in the proper range.

It is important to hone all four sides of the skew (the bevels and short/long point sides). You want sharp points at the ends on the short and long point sides.

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# Jim Echter (continued)

## Types of Skew:

There are four basic types of skew.

**Round Skews** typically range in size between 1/4 to 3/8 inches in diameter. They can easily be made from an inexpensive HSS drill blank. They are good for turning small finials.

**Oval Skews** were intended to make some cuts easier. They make the peeling cut more difficult because the oval shape makes it difficult to hold the skew flat on the tool rest. Jim recommends honing a small flat on the bottom so the long point ends in a sharp point.

**Rectangular Skews** are the traditional shape for skews. The bottom (long point) side is often rounded or softened to allow for easier rolling of beads. You can use a belt sander or grinder to round the bottom of a rectangular skew.

**Square Skews** are also known as beading and parting tools. These can be shop made from square shanked screw drivers. Grind them straight across (90 degree skew angle) with a 30 degree bevel.

Shown below are some shop made tools (middle and bottom) I made from old screwdrivers after seeing Jim's demonstration. On the top is my future 3/8 inch beading and parting tool. The tool on the bottom has a skew angle that allows me to cut a perfect dovetail tenon for my chuck. The small handle allows me to cut the dovetail with the tailstock in place. In the middle is a 1/4 inch parting tool that works as well as any I've ever used. It's important to hone the sides as well as the bevel to create absolutely sharp points.



# Jim Echter (continued)

## Cuts:

Jim demonstrated the Planing, Peeling, Paring (or Shoulder), and Vee cuts. He also showed how to cut a shallow cove and a pommel. The pommel cut was accomplished with a series of vee cuts at 45 degrees.

I was particularly impressed with the technique of cutting beads using the short point only of the skew. Using the under the rest grip (with index finger of left hand under tool rest) start the cut with the short point of the skew. Rotate the tool as you lift the handle. The curl raised by the point (below center) is actually supporting the cut. End the cut with the tool edge vertical and you hand in the “handshake position”.



You can find the full details of all techniques and what was covered in the demonstration in Jim's article [“The Sensational Skew, Simplified”](https://tcturning.com/tips-articles-videos/the-sensational-skew-simplified) that appeared in the April 2019 edition of “The American Woodturner”. The article is available on Jim's website (<https://tcturning.com> ). It is under the “Tips, Articles & Videos” section.

Thanks to Jim Echter, for a sensation demonstration! Feel free to contact Jim with any questions. He can be reached through his website, True Creations Woodturning ( <https://tcturning.com/contact/> ). He is also hosting an Open Studio on Saturday November 21st for anyone interested in a live question / answer session with Jim.

# Wave Bowls - John Beaver



John Beaver was the October presenter for a joint meeting with BAT and the Mid-Maryland Woodturners (MMWTC). John demonstrated his techniques for his “Wave Bowls”.

Two of John’s wave bowls are pictured to the right, there are many more examples on his website, [www.johnbeaver.net](http://www.johnbeaver.net).



## Types of Wave Bowl:

John makes two types of wave bowls; basic and complex. The basic wave bowl starts as a squared block of dried wood. An arch is cut in the block using a band saw and veneers of contrasting wood are glued into a blank before turning the bowl.

The complex wave bowl has a wave section that protrudes from the shape of the bowl. It’s made by first turning a bowl and finishing it inside and out. The bowl is left on the chuck and the wave form is cut on the bandsaw using a special jig to hold the bowl secure. Do not attempt this type of cut without the jig. Plans for the jig are for sale on John’s website. A similar commercial product, “The Bandsaw Wizard” can also be used.

For the newsletter, I will recap the process of creating the basic wave bowl since it can be done without any special tools (other than a bandsaw). The details of creating the complex bowl can be found online.

## Layout and Preparation:

John starts by orienting the blank to sketch the shape of the bowl, including tenon, on an end grain side. He prefers to orient the growth rings so the arch of the rings opens towards the base.

He strikes a line horizontally across the bowl sketch, a distance roughly 1/3 of the bowl height below the rim. He then draws a vertical centerline on the axis of the tenon and extends the line across a second block placed below the tenon. The second block is to support the compass as it strikes an arch equally distributed across the 1/3 line. This line will be where the cut is made using the bandsaw to insert the contrasting veneer.



Before cutting the blank, sketch the rim of the bowl on the top of the blank. Locate the position for two alignment dowels on either side of the center point, in material that will be removed when turning the bowl. Drill to a depth so the dowels will just go through the veneer layer.

Now cut the blank along the arched layout line with the bandsaw. The cut must be made smoothly. John uses a 1/4 inch 10 to 14 tpi blade.

## Bending the Veneer:

John uses 1/8 inch thick veneers. Be careful to orient the grain of the veneer in the same direction as the blank, to allow the completed piece to move in the same direction with changes in humidity. He uses a drum sander to ensure the veneer is uniform in thickness. Because the veneer will be steamed and pre-formed while wet, he often makes a bending form of waste wood with the same arch struck on the bowl blank. This way the veneer will not introduce moisture into the dried blank.

He uses a microwave to steam the wood. You will need to experiment with timings as it will vary with the type of wood, its thickness, and the power of your microwave.

Place the wood into a “cacoen” of paper towels to trap the steam. You want to use enough water so the paper towels have not dried out by the time you take the wood from the microwave.

Microwave about 1 1/2 minute. You will have just 45 seconds to position and clamp the





## John Beaver (continued)

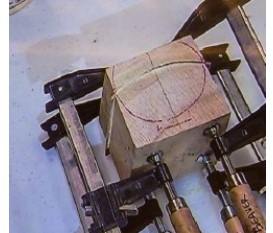
wood. Be ready with your clamps and bending form and be careful, the wood will be hot. If it will not bend easily, wrap in the paper towels, add more water and microwave another 15 seconds.

Being careful so the grain is oriented as you will want it in the final piece, clamp the wood into the bending form and leave for 3 to 4 hours. Loosen the clamps slightly to allow a little air to circulate and help dry the veneer. Leave it to dry for another 2 to 3 hours.

### Glue up:

Orient the blank so the dowel holes will align properly and clamp the veneer in place. Re-drill the holes so the dowels will pass through the veneer.

John uses Titebond II or III for his glue up. Allow the glued up blank to dry for 24 hours before turning.



### Turning:

Once dried, turn the completed blank to its final form. The result will be something that looks like the following. Most of John's bowls are a calabash form with a closed rim and round bottom. The wave pattern seems to flow nicely around these forms. I'm looking forward to seeing many variations of this form at upcoming BAT meetings.



# The President's Turn



Hello Everyone – I hope you are all staying well and observing safe practices, both in general and in your shop. It has been a Fall like no other in my memory, but at least the weather has been kind to us.

BAT continues to exist on Zoom. Based on a recent survey conducted by AAW, that appears to be the case for nearly 100% of chapters throughout the nation. While it isn't ideal by any means, at least we are still able to gather up in a different format and share our hobby. We have several quality programs coming up as you will see in Ed Cohen's "What's On Tap" column elsewhere in this newsletter.

We have had some wonderful demos, and I encourage you to tune in for ones coming up over the months to come. As Ed Cohen mentions in his "What's on Tap?" column, November will be dedicated to all Show & Tell. Please get those wonderful pieces out that you have been working on, and share them with the club.

Also, we'll be asking for 2021 membership renewals shortly. Our Webmaster, Dave Maitt, has made an easy to use, online membership form, plus the ability to pay via PayPal, on our website. Please go to <https://baltimoreareaturners.org/new/joining-bat/> to use this easy option.

Thanks everyone. Please stay well, and turn safely.

Ron Ford  
BAT President

## What's on Tap?

Our last club meeting for 2020 will be at 7:00 PM on Wednesday, November 11. Due to Covid-19, once again it will be a ZOOM meeting. First and foremost, we will announce the results of the election for board members to serve from January of 2021 to December of 2022.

We also have our second Show & Tell of 2020. Rather than provide pictures of your special pieces, you will have the opportunity to show them on-screen, right from your computer. This has worked very well as "trial runs" at our last two club meetings and I am hoping that you will participate. Show & Tell is great source of inspirational, motivational and educational material directly from your own club members at all levels of experience.

Our annual December Holiday party has been canceled due to Covid-19 and we plan on donating the funds budgeted to the party to the Maryland Food Bank.

I have scheduled Craig Timmerman for our January meeting. He will show us how to turn a torus vase. A torus form is much like a donut and you will learn new, valuable turning techniques from his video.

Ed Cohen, Program Director

[polodoc@erols.com](mailto:polodoc@erols.com)

**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.**

# October Drop In Call



The topic for the October BAT drop in call was wood sources. Thanks to Alan MacAnespie for gathering the list below from the discussion.

## **Local Sources:**

Groff and Groff Lumberyard (<https://www.groffslumber.com/>) *New Scotland, PA*  
Frank Thomas Lumber Mill (<http://www.thomassawmill.com/>) *Fallston, MD*  
Hearne Hardwoods (<https://www.hearnehardwoods.com/>) *Oxford, PA*  
Colonial Hardwoods - <http://www.colonialhardwoods.com/>) *Newington, VA*  
Dunlop Lumber – [www.dunlapwoodcrafts.com](http://www.dunlapwoodcrafts.com) *Chantilly, VA*  
Freestate Lumber - <http://freestatetimbers.com/>) *Timonium, MD*  
Exotic Lumber - <https://www.exoticlumber.com/>) *Annapolis, MD*  
Frederick Lumber Company (<https://www.fredericklumber.com/>) *Frederick, MD*  
Timberline Farms Sawmill (<https://hcwg.org/timberline-farms-sawmill/>) *Sykesville, MD*  
Davey Tree company: (<https://www.davey.com/>) *Baltimore, MD*  
Mark Supik (<https://www.marksupikco.com/>) *Baltimore, MD*  
Shaun Preston (Camp Small Baltimore City) - 410-370-5654/443-934-4128 (<http://treebaltimore.org/programs/camp-small/#.WNqd-45JnuQ>) *Baltimore, MD*  
Maryland Select Hardwoods (<https://maryland-select.com/index.html>) *La Plata, MD*

## **Online Resources**

Woodturning blanks 4 u (<http://www.woodturningblanks4u.com/>)  
Bell Forest products (<https://www.bellforestproducts.com/>)  
Got Wood? (<https://www.turningblanks.net/>)  
West Penn Hardwoods (<https://wphardwoods.com/>)  
Woodfinder (<https://www.woodfinder.com/>)  
Certainly Wood Veneer (<https://certainlywood.com/>)  
Penn State Industries (<https://www.pennstateind.com/>)  
Woodbarter (<https://woodbarter.com/>)  
Woodturningz (<https://www.woodturningz.com/>)  
Book - Wood for Woodturners by Mark Baker (<https://www.amazon.com/Wood-Woodturners-Revised-Mark-Baker/dp/1784941263>)

# November Drop In Call



The topic of the November drop in call was “Go To Finishes” and was hosted by Bruce Lamb. It drew the largest number of participants for a drop in call so far, and we shared quite a few ideas.

Bruce Lamb - Waterlox. Far more solids in the mix (25% as opposed to 5 - 10% in most oil finishes). He suggested the use of Stop Loss bags to prevent the deterioration of many oil finishes due to them being exposed to air.

Ron Ford - Brush on lacquer applied in multiple coats. Ron showed a sample of a piece with ten coats. Wet sand with water and 320 grit Wet or Dry sandpaper after every other coat. Finish by using Turtlewax red auto body Rubbing Compound, then white auto body Polishing Compound, and finish with Scratch Doctor to bring out a brilliant shine. All of these are available at auto body stores. This method was brought to us by our late friend Joe Kramer.

Wayne Kuhn - Tung oil and/or Danish Oil, buffed on the Beall Buffing System. Another favorite is friction polish. You can make your own mixing 1/3 each of denatured alcohol, boiled linseed oil, and shellac. Polish at 1000 - 1200 rpms.

Ed Cohen - Uses thin CA (super glue) on a piece of paper towel to polish pens. Multiple coats can be applied in quick succession, and lead to a very high gloss. Ed also suggested using polyurethane on dark woods and water-based acrylic finish on light woods.

Jim Oliver - uses good quality cotton rounds (available in drug stores) to apply finishes. He also noted that sunlight, with its' high concentration of ultraviolet rays, accelerates the curing of oil finishes.

Steve Kelban - similar to Jim's note, Steve uses gauze pads, also available at drug stores, to apply first coats of many finishes. He also recommended watching YouTube videos from Kim Tippin where she uses two part Total Boat fast Set Hardener for a super high gloss finish.

Joe Heinlein has a number of favorites including Cutting Board Oil, Mahoney's Walnut Oil and wax, and Mylands Friction Polish. He is trying Osmo oil finish but is not sure if it gets a thumbs-up or thumbs-down as of yet.

Andy Arconti showed a beautiful cherry bowl he had sanded to 1000 grit, the coated with Howard's Feed and Wax. It is a mixture of beeswax and orange oil.

Tom Szarek used pure beeswax, given to him by a beekeeper friend. He rubs the solid material against the piece while it is spinning, then polishes it.



# BAT Mentoring



Please know that free mentoring is available to all paid members. This is a great opportunity to get some one on one expert advice on any questions, problems or other issues you may have in relation to your turnings. So if you're frustrated, unhappy or just not completely satisfied with your turnings this your chance to get help. Our experienced mentors can help you with all aspects of wood turning. Whether it's basic bowl turning, hollow forms, spindle work, sharpening, sanding, embellishments, etc.

No question or problem is too small. In just one free, 3-4 hour session you could take your work to an entirely new level. The sessions are also relatively anonymous. Only I, the mentor and you will know. So please at the next meeting take this wonderful opportunity to fill out a mentoring request form.

This your chance to possibly bring something to the next show and tell in May or an upcoming meeting. We are truly looking forward to some different members to show their work. This is not a competition or a judging. We welcome every one of our members to bring something. No matter what.

Thank you,

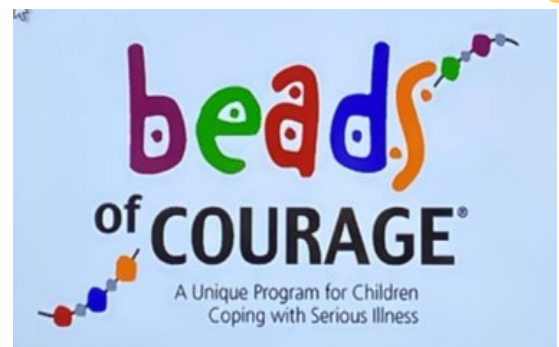
Chuck Cohen

Mentoring

## Beads of Courage

BAT's 2020 service project is for the club to contribute to the Bead's of Courage program.

Beads of Courage (BOC) is an arts-in-medicine program that partners with national and international hospitals. The BOC program supports and strengthens children and teens coping with serious illness their families. For more information on BOC, please visit <https://www.beadsofcourage.org/the-beads-of-courage-program/>.



Through Ron Ford, we have a local connection to the program at John's Hopkins and Dr. Kenneth Cooke. Dr. Cooke is the Director of Pediatric Blood and Marrow Transplantation Program at the Johns Hopkins Kimmel Cancer Center and the Bloomberg Children's Center.

We hope everyone can contribute to this project by making one or more BOC bowls. The bowls are used to hold beads, which are given to the children as a visual history of their treatment and celebration of their courage.

### Beads of Courage Bowl Guidelines:

- Minimum 5" tall (can be taller)
- Minimum 6" wide (can be wider)
- Wide base to prevent tipping
- Easy to grasp lidded knob that a small child can grip
- No paint
- Suggested finishes are stain, hard wax, and/or varnish
- If you choose to embed a BOC bead, they measure 13/16" in diameter. (See Ron Ford for a kit that includes a bead and small card so the recipient knows who made their bowl.)

# 2020 President's Challenge

**First Challenge:** for 2020 is to turn a Beads of Courage bowl. (See BOC Guidelines in the newsletter.)

**Second Challenge:** Turn a plate or a platter.

**Third Challenge:** Turn a gavel or a carvers mallet.

**Fourth Challenge:** Create a piece that incorporates wood and one other material (fabric, leather, metal, resin, etc.) as an integrated component.

**Fifth Challenge:** Turn something with a natural edge.

**Sixth Challenge:** Turn a holiday ornament (any holiday)

## 2020 President's Challenge Results

Name	BOC Bowl	Plate/Platter	Gavel/Mallet	Multi-Material	Natural Edge	Holiday Ornament
Andrew Arconti	X					
Clark Bixler	X	X	X		X	
Chuck Cohen	X					
Ed Cohen	X	X	X	X		
James Crane	X	X	X			
Jim Fisher	X	X	X	X		
Ron Ford	X	X	X	X	X	
Joe Harber	X					
Louis Harris	X	X	X	X	X	X
Joe Heinlein		X	X	X		
Phil Horak	X		X	X	X	
Don Keefer	X					
Steve Kelban	X	X	X	X	X	
Wayne Kuhn	X					
Bruce Lamb	X	X	X	X	X	X
Alan MacAnespie			X			
Dave Maidt	X	X	X	X	X	X
Jim Oliver	X	X	X	X		
Bob Sobczak	X	X	X	X	X	X
Tom Szarek	X					
Jon Withrow		X				

# Baltimore Area Turners Meetings

Nov - Show and Tell

Dec - No Meeting - Happy Holidays!

Jan - Craig Timmerman - Torus Vase

## BAT Club Discounts

Mark Supik & Company - \$20 discount on instructional classes for members of BAT  
( [www.marksupikco.com/workshops](http://www.marksupikco.com/workshops) ) 410-732-8414 [mark@marksupikco.com](mailto:mark@marksupikco.com)

Hartville Tools - 15% discount for club members plus free shipping. ( [www.hartvilletool.com](http://www.hartvilletool.com) ) 800-345-2396

Penn State Industries - 10% discount for club members. ([www.pennstateind.com](http://www.pennstateind.com))

Klingspor Woodworking Shop – 10% discount on all non-powered merchandise in catalog

Exotic Lumber (Annapolis and Frederick) – 10% discount

Freestate Lumber (Timonium) – 10% discount

Lyle Jamieson Woodturning - 10% discount due to club demo ([lylejamieson.com](http://lylejamieson.com))

## New BAT Website

Our Webmaster, Dave Mardt, has been working hard on a brand new BAT website, and it is up and running! New look and feel, and incorporates many new features we will be able to take advantage of now and in the future. The website address remains the same at <https://baltimoreareaturners.org>

One area that needs your attention is the Gallery. Dave has created a wonderful space for everyone to share their work. Please send pictures to [bat@diadav.com](mailto:bat@diadav.com) and they will be posted.

Thanks again to Dave for this terrific upgrade!!

- BAT Board

## New BAT Facebook

BAT has a new Facebook page. Close to 30 members have joined, but only a small handful are contributing content or posting information. This is a great way to stay in touch during these unusual times, and everyone is encouraged to take advantage of it.

Please remember that this is a private page available to BAT members only, and that you must have a current Facebook account to join.

To join, click on the following link and click on "**Accept**" at the top of the page:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/355364505441249/?ref=share>

Please log on today and start sharing pictures, projects, etc.

- BAT Board

## 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](http://woodturner.org)

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 guests are always welcome.