

Saturday Program Meeting Boring bars & bowls – Lyman Frugia

This was Lyman's second meeting and he started this one where the first one ended – using a boring bar to turn deep vessels and bowls. We had really nice weather and a good turnout.



Lyman made his own boring bar from 1" square tubing. It's basically a large frame with a long bar on one side. A replaceable cutting tip (usually like a round nose scraper) is mounted on the end of the bar. A special steady rest keeps the bar from twisting and keeps it level while it's cutting. The result is a very stable cutting tool that you only have to guide when using.



To turn deep vessels like vases, mount your blank on a faceplate and bring the tailstock up to support the workpiece. Then turn the outside of the blank to the desired shape. I install a wheeled steady



rest to support the vase while hollowing out the inside. You can start the hole with a drill bit or just start using the boring bar. Go slow and easy to keep the tool from chattering and follow the outside profile, going deeper each time. Measure the thickness

of the sidewalls with a caliper and the depth with a depth gauge. Lyman uses a



homemade gauge consisting of a crosshead with a hole, a dowel and a screw to tighten the crosshead to the dowel. Commercial versions are also available from woodworking catalogs.



Lyman also makes his own 'deep vessel sander' by taking a long piece of ½" dowel, cutting a kerf in the end, and gluing several pieces of sandcloth in the kerf with epoxy. When the sandpaper wears out, he just cuts the end off the stick and starts over again.

Lyman also uses his boring bar to turn



bowls – especially natural edge bowls. Lyman follows the same steps on bowls that he uses for vases. He usually drills a hole in the center of the blank as a depth indicator. He turns the interior of the bowl until he gets the bottom of the bowl even with



the bottom of the hole. Lyman uses the thin version of super glue around the edge of his natural edged bowls to keep the softer sap wood and bark firmly attached to the bowl during the turning process. The boring bar is a good alternative to a bowl gouge because

you can maintain really good control over the cutting tool with very little effort.

Lyman offered some additional turning tips:

- Lyman makes most of his vases and bowls with thick walls. It gives the items a good weight, makes the walls stable and the items won't break if they are dropped.
- He finishes his turnings with several light coats of Mohawk spray lacquer.
- The bottom of your turnings should be slightly rounded, otherwise they look like they are glued to any surface that they sit on.
- Covering the ends with melted wax can seal fresh 'green' wood and keep it from cracking.
- If you're turning 'green' wood, you can cover it tightly with a plastic bag to keep it from drying too fast.
- If your lathe allows it, set your belt tension a little loose – that way it will slip if you get a catch instead of breaking something.
- Be sure to wear a dust mask when turning, especially if you are turning spalted wood – it can be very hazardous.

Lyman always has a display gallery of his latest work for us to see. This gallery



included bowls, vases and pepper mills. He also had a large selection of bowl blanks, mostly mesquite, and he offered every

attendee a free blank. There was one stipulation: you had to bring the finished bowl for show & tell by the January meeting. I believe that almost everyone left with a blank so we can expect to see a lot of bowls at our next two meetings!

Lyman, thanks for a very good meeting and for the bowl blanks!