

TURNING

Threads

August 2025



Ron Bartz demonstrated chatter tools. Ron makes his own chatter tools out of simple thin pieces of flexible metal. He also had a manufactured chatter tool with several interchangeable spirals.

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Ed Moulthorp considered the most famous woodturner. See page 8.



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**At Large Directors
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Ron Bartz**

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**Membership
Director
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**Newsletter Editor
Tom Leonard**

**Web Master
Dan Brandner**

We had a good turnout with 40 of 60 paid members attending the last meeting.

We did manage to make a few dollars at Paint the Town in Menomonie. A big "Thank You" to all the volunteers and to those who donated items for the club to sell and raise funds.

Ron Bartz gave us a good demo on making and using chatter tools. It will be an interesting technique for all of us to try.

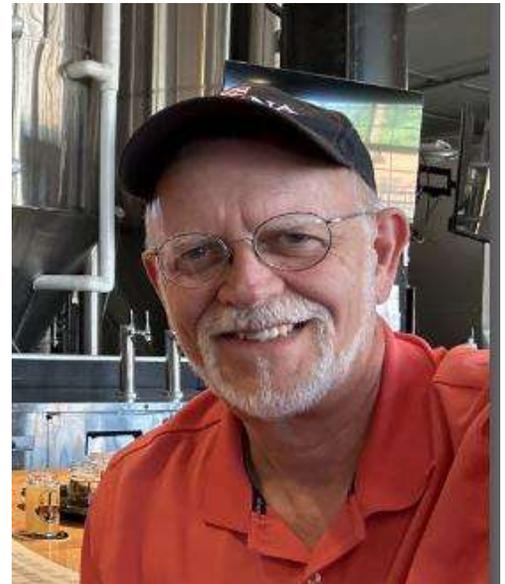
Mark Palma will be visiting the club in September and giving us a presentation on things he wish he had known earlier in his turning career.

A reminder, to let Dan know of anything you would like to see demonstrated in 2026. Dan already was given one idea, but there are probably many more, especially from beginning turners.

Pencil in the CVWG annual picnic and get-together on Saturday, Sept 6 at Bob's Colfax cabin. More detail to come next month.

It is time to start thinking about those Christmas presents to start making. Time always gets into a crunch come late November or early December.

See you in September.
BE SAFE but have fun turning.



Monthly Meetings

First Wednesday
of the month

Board Meeting at
6:00 pm

Social Hour at 6:00 pm

Meeting and
Demonstration

7:00 pm to 9:00 pm

Open House

Second Saturday
of the month

8:00 am to 12:00 pm

**Members and interested persons may contact the
Chippewa Valley Woodturners Guild by email at:
woodturnercvvg@gmail.com**

The Woodturners Wood Heist

By Tom Leonard

Part 2

Late Monday Afternoon

The sheriff arrived twenty minutes later with siren sounding and skidding the squad car by A.G.'s shed. The sheriff's name was Barton. He was tall with slick black hair, a face that would be described as handsome except for the pencil mustache that made him look like a villain in a bad movie. He was very neat and always wore an un-wrinkled uniform. People often wondered how he could pull that off sitting in a squad car. Regardless of this demeanor they seemed to be assets in getting elected, twice.

Barton came in the shed with a strut and looked at the four. He rubbed the back of his ear as he was known to do often when he was perplexed.

"So, A.G. you claim you are missing some pieces of wood. That's what you got me out here for?" He said sarcastically.

"I wasn't just wood. It was bowl blanks. Cherry burl blanks." A.G. emphasized.

The sheriff looked at the wood shelf. "There seem to be plenty wood here and you say two were stolen. Do I have that right?"

"Yeah. Two cherry burls, not just wood." A.G. was fast reaching the point of irritation. Barton wasn't known for his investigation prowess or even interest in investigations.

"How, just how do you know they were stolen? Maybe you old geezers just misplaced them?"

"Old geezers are we? We may be old but we ain't daft yet." Retorted Goody angrily.

"A.G. answered emphatically, No they were not misplaced."

"And just what would you say these pieces of wood were worth?"

A.G.'s frustration was rising. "Cherry burls. Sheriff. What does it matter how much they were worth. It was in the shed and someone came in and stole them."

"Okay, but there must be some value. I have to have it for my report." Barton asked with a slight chuckle.

"It's hard to put a value on plain wood. Even exotic woods or burls. The value is what it is turned into being."

"And what would the value be if it was turned?"

"Now even that is a hard question to answer. If it has very good color and lots of eyes, maybe a couple of hundred dollars. If it can be cored, probably five hundred or more."

"What has eyes got to do with it and why does coring make it more valuable?"

"You don't know anything about turning, do you?"

"No. Never had a reason, nor really cared for that matter."

"Well, listen and learn. The eyes of a burl are little small swirls like little knots. There can be a lot of them or not a lot. The more eyes the more value. Eyes can also be found in other tree types. A large wood blank of any type of wood can be turned out to make several bowls instead of one. The results are that there is a large bowl and two or more smaller bowls."

"Like a set?"

"Yeah, like a set."

"So, with that in mind, what would you put the value at?"

Exasperated, A.G. gave in. "Approximately two hundred each."

"Got any idea of who might have done this?"

"If I knew I wouldn't need you, sheriff. I'm still working on the why rather than the who."

The sheriff wandered off to the door. “No lock?”

“No. Haven’t had a reason till now I suppose.”

“Might want to consider a lock.”

“Locks can be picked and broken. Then what. You are left with a broken lock and maybe a mad robber who had to go to so much trouble to get in.”

“Well, A.G., somehow a couple of pieces of wood not worth much is hardly reason to get all upset. I’ll file it. It will probably be in the newspaper. That town rag is always looking for something exciting. Might get a reporter out. Big story like this might make front page. The sheriff laughed.

“See if he gets my vote at the next election,” Snid said angrily. “Not that he got it the last two times.”

A.G. Exasperatingly said. “Forget the turning. I think we all could use a beer or two.”

They got in their individual cars and met at Gino’s Pizza and ordered their usual and beer.

“So, what do we talk about tonight?” asked Snid.

“Never been a problem with you Snid. What do you suggest?”

“Well, the stolen burls. Who would steal two burls and nothing more? There must be a reason why just those items.”

“Any suggestions?”

“Well, how about a prank by a bunch of kids?”

“I think there would be evidence of a bunch of kids in or outside the shed. A kid prank would involve destruction from my impression of some unsupervised kids. No direction. Nothing to do but text on their cell phones. I can see that they would get bored after a while.”

“We ought to ask the sheriff if there are any gangs of kids around town.”

“Good idea.”

A.G. phoned the sheriff’s office and asked about gangs in the area. The answer was not that they

knew of.

“Well, that thought can be crossed out. How about a drifter who came into the barn and knew the value of the burls?”

“Yeah, a possibility. But more valuable stuff than the burls were in the barn.”

“How about someone who knew your routine and took advantage of you being gone.”

“I don’t have a routine.”

“Yes, you do A.G. You probably aren’t aware of it. You have bowling on Tuesday nights and you shoot billiards on Thursday night. That leaves Monday night for turning every two weeks.”

“Problem with that is E.G. said the burls were there on Friday. E.G., did you really see the burls on Friday?”

“Well, I didn’t notice an empty spot on the shelf.”

“So, it could have been taken on Thursday night E.G.”

“I suppose. I was sure they were there.”

They continue for over an hour about who stole the burls while eating pizza and drinking beer. After eating, they parted and each went home. A.G. went to the barn to check the wood blanks. All seemed to be there.

Tuesday Afternoon

The next day a reporter for the Scanden Times showed up at A.G.’s door wanting to know about the robbery. Sarah Pickner was a mousy looking brunette but her looks belied her attitude. A bit short and dressed in jeans and flowery shirt. Well, the Times was not a national paper so things were casual. The Times only came out three times a week, sometimes less.

“Mr. Ahlgren, I’d like to find out more about the robbery.” She asked while looking around the place with a look of mild distain.

“Call me A.G. Everybody does.”

“Mr. A.G. Can I see the scene of the crime.”

A.G. laughed. “That’s a bit dramatic calling it the scene of the crime.”

“Small town papers can sometimes use a little drama. Readers apparently love it.”

“Uh huh. This way.”

A.G. led her to the machine shed and showed her the so called scene of the crime, the space where the burls were.

“Do you have any idea who may have done this?”

“Not a clue. It is perplexing to say the least. Why just those two wood blanks and nothing else?”

“Was the door locked?”

“No. No lock. Never has been even when my father was alive.”

“Trusting farm community.”

“Something like that.”

“Exactly what was stolen?”

“Two Cherry Burl blanks.”

“What are Cherry Burl blanks?”

“Look around. There are four lathes. We use them to make pieces of wood into a variety of items such as bowls, and cups, and vases and much more. A Cherry Burl is just a type of wood from a Cherry tree. A burl is the result of an injury to a tree. You can see them on trees with bulges on the trunks.”

“Oh, yes, I always wondered about those bulges. So, what were they worth?”

“As a blank, for what one could be sold for would vary. Burls from all trees are usually a premium in price. As a turned piece, possible hundreds of dollars.”

“So, could you say that this was several hundreds of dollars of stolen property?”

A.G. looked down at the ground and rubbed his

neck and shook his head. “They have a possibility of being worth hundreds of dollars but not as blanks.”

“Yes, but you were robbed of hundreds of dollars of income.”

“We don’t sell anything we turn. We donate them to charity functions.” Trying to be matter of fact.

“Oh. Well, then the charities have been robbed of hundreds of dollars of donations.”

A.G. closed his eyes and shook his head gain.

“Miss Pickner, I realize that you are looking for a dramatic news item, so do what you want with it. Good day.”

Friday Morning

E.G. came by Friday excitedly with the latest Scanden Times.

“A.G., we made the newspaper.”

“Yeah, I know. A reporter was out here on Wednesday.”

“Look at the headlines. Made front page.”

It read: *Wood Heist in Scanden.*

“Wood heist, indeed. Figured that woman would make it more than it was.”

“You didn’t mention us. There is only your name.”

“She didn’t ask who else was here.”

“Well, you could have mentioned us.”

“I didn’t want my name in it.” A.G. being irritated by the article.

The other two members of the woodturning group showed up shortly after E.G.

“Hey, A.G., we made the papers.”

E.G. looked at Snid and answered with a bit of bitterness. “Snid, we did not make the papers. Only A.G. You’d think he would have mentioned our group and we would have been included.”

“Well, even that is something. How did you like that robbery called a heist.”

“Poor choice of words. That reporter was determined to make it more than it seemed.”

“Say, A.G., did you check the wood today?” Asked Goody.

“Why would I do that?”

“You were out last night, weren’t you?”

“Yeah, what about it?”

“Remember we figured the heist occurred on a Thursday night when you were away.”

“Yeah, so?”

“Maybe the phantom struck again last night.”

“Phantom. Snid, what have you been reading? Why would he come back a second time?”

“Let’s check anyway.”

“Okay. Okay.”

All four trotted off for the shed. Inside they headed for the wood shelves and began making an inventory. Nothing seemed to be missing.

“Something is missing, A.G.”

“What Snid?”

“My root blank is gone.”

“Thought you left it on your lathe.”

“I did.”

They looked around Snid’s lathe and didn’t see the root.

“Well, I’ll be.”

Sheriff Barton was not pleased at being called out again to A.G.’s place. He stood with his arms folded and had a disdainful look on his face as he listened to the latest wood robbery tale.

“Did I get that right. You are missing a root! A root! Not a burl but a root.! Why do you have a root?”

Snid was insulted. “Sheriff that’s not just a root. It is the material for a work of art. Didn’t you learn anything Monday. We take raw wood and make works of art out of them. It has a lot of value to me. I didn’t get a chance to create that work of art.” Snid was choking up.

A.G., E.G. and Goody couldn’t help but feel for Snid. “Bravo, Snid. Bravo.” Goody said with empathy.

A.G. went over to Snid and put his arm around him. “It was so passionate. It really let the sheriff know how much these seemingly worthless pieces of wood are valued, even those ignorant of our mysterious ways of how wood can be molded into masterpieces.”

“Yeah. That’s what I said.”

“Good grief.” The sheriff left shaking his head and mumbling ‘why me.’

“Good grief? Sheriff must be reading Snoopy comics.”

Friday Afternoon

A.G. sat in his house eating a sandwich and sipping on a cup of coffee. He was wondering what the odds were of the same person or persons returning and picking out a piece of wood that might be noticed. Then it hit him. Maybe that was the point. Steal something that would be noticed and reporting it would make it in the local paper. Hmm. If they got away with it twice, maybe a third time will be in the offing. Now how can I catch this thief?

A.G. got on the phone. “Bertha, is your daughter about?”

“Why do you want to know, A.G.”

Bertha Grimsley was a neighbor farmer and had to

move to town after selling the farm to the corporate bandits as she called them. Bertha was a large woman and wore long flowery dresses. She always seemed to be happy but that might have to do with the fact that she was the ear of the town. Her network of ladies provided her with up to date town activities and gossip. Bertha could be a bit cantankerous but A.G. was too, so they got along.

“I need her expertise in buying and installing a video camera. You probably read about the robbery in the paper?”

“Paper said it was a heist?”

“An overstatement. It happened again last night and I was thinking that this person or persons might get a bit over confident and try a third time.”

“Really. A juicy tidbit. Makes my day. I’ll tell her when she gets home from school if she ain’t absorbed with that Butler boy.”

“Don’t think much of him?”

“A teenage boy shouldn’t be allowed to have access to teenage girls. Too many hormones dripping. I ought to know. Boys were all over me in high school.”

A.G. chuckled. “Have her call me when she can.”

“Okay.”

It was four o’clock when she called. Annika was a typical blond Scandinavian. Tall and as beautiful as they come. She was smart and took her studies seriously. She dressed somewhat provocatively as most teenage girls do. Most of the boys sought her out, but Annika knew what they wanted and she kept in control at all times.

“Mama said something about getting and installing a video camera?” She said lazily.

“Yeah. I hear you are an electronics genius.”

“I never heard that. Who said that?”

“Well, some people you helped with various electronics.”

“They did. Well, I have helped a lot of people. Best place to get one is the hardware store. Meet me there.”

“I’ll be there in twenty minutes.”

Scanden was once just a thriving farm community but with the decrease in family farms and the rise of corporate farms, the town went downhill. The leaders of the town decided not to go down with the ship but sought to bring in industry and revitalize the town. It took ten years to accomplish it but the town was now a thriving 5,000 souls. With that, various stores that had closed came back to serve the new population.

Johnson’s Hardware was a full-service hardware with most of the items one would find in a Lowes or a Home Depot but fewer in quantity and variety. This is where A.G. met Annika. Annika knew exactly where to go.

“What kind did you have in mind Mr. A.G.?”

“I know nothing about cameras except and old Kodak I have.”

Annika gave him a quizzical look. “What was a Kodak?”

“A small box camera that had film that had to be processed.”

“Really. Could you review the picture first?”

“No. You never knew how the pictures would turn out.”

“No wonder old pictures turned out terrible.”

“Well, look at it this way, Annika. It was preparing the way for the digital age of cameras.”

“Oh.”

A.G. explained the situation.

“So, it will be outside. Do you have WiFi?”

“No,”

“No WiFi? Everyone has WiFi. Are you on the net?”

“No. Never had a need for one whatever it is.”

“Man, you are super behind the world. Okay then, we will have to get a WiFi router and a monitor to receive the video. Do you want continual recording?”

“Can it be set for a specific time and date?”

“Sure can. We’ll need a video recorder and a SD card. Should be enough for one night.”

The selections were taken to be checked out. A.G. wasn’t surprised at the amount which was \$750. He paid with a credit card. Annika looked surprised that A.G. had a credit card.

It did occur to A.G. that he was paying out \$750 to catch a minor theft. But it was still the reason why more than anything else.

Once back at the farm, Annika got to work setting up the camera and the WiFi. There was the question of what angle did A.G. want the camera to be at and where. They decided to put it just above eye level on an old small building.

Annika looked at it. “What was this used for?”

“It was an outhouse.”

“A what?”

“An outdoor toilet before plumbing.”

“You mean it didn’t flush?”

“Yes, it didn’t flush. It was a couple of holes that one did one’s thing in and covered it with lime.”

“How gross. Did you ever use it?”

“Yeah, I did when I helped work this farm. Never thought it was not normal. Life was different back then but maybe you don’t believe this but if you were born into that era, you would only consider an out-house as normal.”

“Was it heated in the winter?”

“Nope. Usually, people had buckets that they used indoors at night. In the daytime the contents were dumped in the out-house during the day.”

“How gross. Place smells. When was the last time it was used?” Annika turned up her nose.

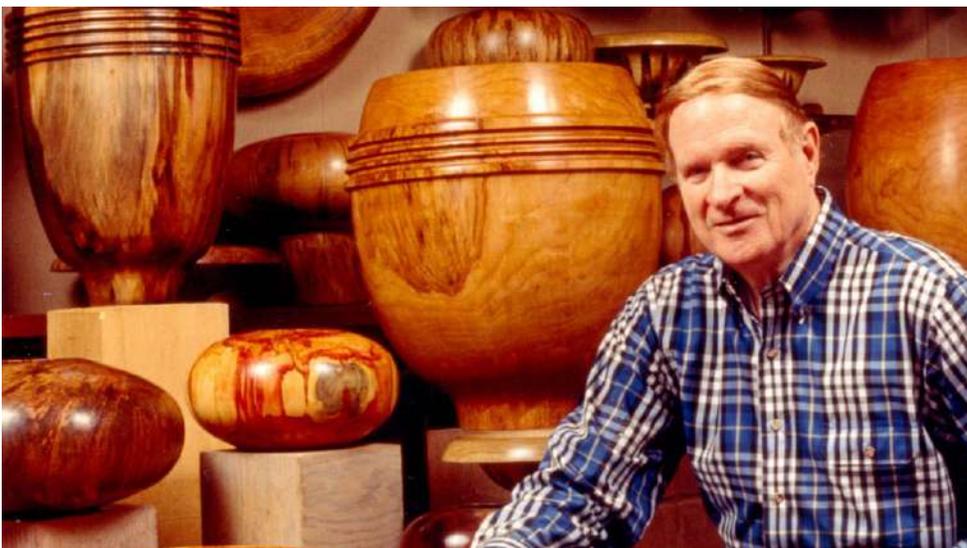
“A while back.”

“I’ll finish up and get back to civilization.”

A.G. laughed at that.

A.G. had the camera set for Tuesday and Thursday. On Tuesday just in case the person would decide to change their mind about the day. He didn’t tell any of his friends about the camera and hoped that Annika wouldn’t either.

To be continued...



Check out this web site for more on Ed Moulthrop

[Ed Moulthrop site](#)



Learn To Turn event at the U. S. Open Chainsaw Sculpture Championship kept 3 lathes very busy for many hours over 3 days.

Upper Left: Mark Palma

Upper Right: Barry Grill

Left: Tom Leonard



ON THE HUMOROUS SIDE



FUTURE DEMONSTRATIONS

Meetings are the first Wednesday of the month at 7 pm.
Open house is the second Saturday of the month from
8 am to 12 pm

Meeting Dates and Demonstrations

September 3 —Mark Palma —What I Wish I Would Have
Known About Turning 20 Years Ago

October 1 — Barry Grill — Two Piece Bird House

November 5— Bob Eberhardt—Make that Snowman

December 3—Dan Brandner—Learning the Skew

January 7—Not Yet Determined

February 4—Not Yet Determined

August Open House Date

Open house was on August 9th from 8:00 am to
12:00pm. If coming after 10:00 for Open Houses, please
inform us through the web site the night before at:
woodturnercvvg@gmail.com. Meetings and Open House
are held in the Eau Claire Insulation building at 1125
Starr Ave on the northeast side of Eau Claire, WI. Look
for the meeting sign. No sign—No meeting.

Next Month

Things I Wish I would Have Known
About Turning 20 Years Ago

Mark Palma



Chatter Tools

Ron Bartz

Ron is one of the members of the CVWG that has a knack for making what most of us would buy and sometimes pay a premium price for. In order to do this, DIY woodturners have to have a lot of background experience in many fields of knowledge. Whereas they would look at something to be done and say 'no problem' others would say 'oh I see it now.'

Ron emphasized chatter tools that he made out of various thin flexible blades such as a hacksaw and put in a short handle. Some of these handles could be wood or repurposed metal handles or it can even be a vice grips holding the thin metal strip.



Here are some highlights from his demonstration:

Chatter tools only work on end grain. Long grain is usually too soft.

The tighter and harder the grain, the better the chatter.

Cutters should not be sharp.

Tool rest should be at center or above.

Chatter can be colored with kid safe markers and finished with water-based poly.

Chatter can be more defined if surface is sanded before.

Change in the speed of the chatter tool will get different results.

Slower speed of the lathe will result in a finer pattern.

Commercial chatter tools have rounded gears which can vary in size and pattern.

Gear chatter tools need a slower lathe speed.

Chatter tools make nice inlays for box tops.

Chatter tools will chatter when used. No chatter – not working.

A good chatter produces a high-pitched ringing sound.

Chatter patterns are made with one pass but several passes do not destroy pattern.

The metal version of a chatter tool is called a knurling tool and can be used on wood.

Thanks to Ron for an interesting demonstration.

Tom Leonard

AUGUST DEMONSTRATION

Some examples of Ron's shop made chatter tools from fashioned handles to a vise grips. At bottom are a variety of different flexible metal strips for chatter tool use.



AUGUST DEMONSTRATION

Top : The results of using a shop made chatter tool.

Middle: Ron uses a kid safe color marker to color the chatter.

Bottom: Several different chatter patterns and color variations.



AUGUST DEMONSTRATION

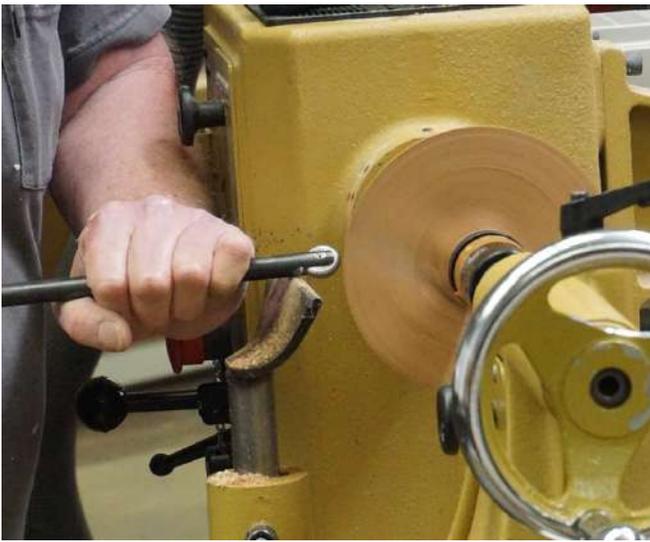
Top : Commercial gear chatter tool.

Bottom: A variety of gear sizes with variations in number of gears and sizes.



AUGUST DEMONSTRATION

Ron turns the chatter tool at an angle to get the chatter pattern . As can be seen, the chatter pattern is not as prominent on long grain.





Turning a Root

I found this in my yard. It was obviously a moth but I had not seen one this big. It was a Cecropia Silk Moth or Robin Moth. It had a wing span of nearly 6 inches. It has wide habitat range. Couldn't find much information on it. Thought it might be a night moth or rare in this area since I had not seen one. If one flew by me it would hard to miss. **TL**





This tree is noteworthy because all the trees in the picture is one tree not individual trees. All are from the same roots that have spread out. This forest in Utah is one of the few left of this tree and is unspoiled and though not officially protected there are a dedicated few who try to protect them. I only found one wood item made from this wood and it was a small wine bottle rack.

[Pando Tree Research](#)

[Pando Tree and History](#)

[Utah Pando Tree](#)



Scott Burkart



Scott needed a mallet and in true woodturner spirit, he made one.



Tom Leonard



Top: An irregular shaped Cottonwood Burl finished with a spray lacquer. Tom did this as a challenge to see if he could do something with an irregular shape.

Bottom: A Maple plate with chatoyance or shimmering grain. Plate was also finished with spray lacquer.

Photos for Show and Tell and Gallery provided by
Dan Brandner and Tom Leonard



**Rocky Mountain
Woodturning
Symposium**
September 19-21, 2025
Loveland, CO



**Segmented Woodturning
Symposium**
September 26-28, 2025
Crowne Plaza Hotel
Northbrook, IL

**Mid-Atlantic Woodturning
Symposium**

September 19-21, 2025
Lancaster, PA

**Ohio Valley Woodturners
Guild Symposium**

October 10-12, 2025
West Harrison, IN

2026 AAW International Woodturning Symposium

June 4-7, 2026

**Raleigh Convention and Performing Arts Center in Raleigh, North
Carolina**