

TURNING Threads

April 2026



Dan Brandner demonstrated how to turn duplicate small items such as chess pieces and cribbage pins.

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Hi All,

I hope everyone is getting to do some turning.

We had 27 attendees for April's meeting with 57 members now paid up for 2026 dues.

The Open house was attended by 11 and there will be an advance course on April 18th about the Band Saw and how to use it in woodturning.

The April demo was by me on manually duplicating small items. I did a cribbage peg and then a chess pawn. See the demo writeup in the newsletter for more details, and it was also added to the website as an article.

May 6th demo will be by Chip Troost on making a dibbler for the planting season.

We drew a raffle winner, and have started the next 3-month raffle for a 3/8" detail spindle gouge.

The president's challenge of turning matching eggs was won by Steve Hay. He made a bunch of eggs and earned a \$10 Kwik Trip fuel card.

Feed My People bowls can still be brought in to the May meeting. John Layde will pick be picking them up.

The President's challenge for the May meeting was to manually turn two duplicated items, such as a drawer knob, game piece, shaker peg, etc.

Looking forward to seeing all who can make it to our May 6th meeting.

Dan

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:
woodturnercvwg@gmail.com**

APRIL MEETING NOTES

Raffle

The raffle for the 1/2" bowl gouge was won by Dave Rutherford. He wasn't present, but we have it set aside for him with a handle blank until we see him again. The next raffle will be for 3 months, with the drawing at the Beginning of the meeting in July. It will be for a 3/8" Robust Detail Spindle Gouge. Tickets remain at \$5.00 apiece or 5 for \$20.

Steve Hay won the president's challenge making a bunch of Easter eggs. See his photos in Show & Tell. He won himself a \$10 Kwik Trip Fuel card.

Dues

We are up to 57 paid members for 2026, so a big THANK YOU to those who are up-to-date. See Sue Mohr, our treasurer for remaining payments.

Phil Holtan Demo

The demo by Phil Holtan was a big success on March 21st with 17 attendees. I hope everyone like his presentation.

Advanced Class - Band Saw

Bob Eberhardt will be talking and demonstrating how to make various cuts on the new bandsaw on April 18th at 9:00 am. We will be considering an advanced class in using the skew in the fall. Please let Dan Brandner know if you are interested.

Volume One

The CVWG had its first mention in Volume One, the listing for our Open House event on Saturday the 11th. No responses at this first one, but the more we have it in there will give the club more exposure. Thanks to Bob Wilcox for setting that up.

Tool Swap

We are also considering a Tool Swap on a Saturday in the fall. This can maybe be coordinated with an open house Saturday. If you have something you don't need or use, it might be a good time to find a home for it with another member.

Summer Picnic

I talked with Bob, and he is willing to host a summer picnic again this year. Pencil in August 29th as the day that best work for him at the cabin in Colfax.

Dan Brandner

Part 4 of the Ghost House

That night the three returned to the Ghost House. A.G. had locked the gate and Goody stopped in front of the gate. A.G. got out and unlocked and opened the gate. The night was partially cloudy with a half-moon. Goody looked toward the house and nervously commented, "All we need are bats flying out of the belfry."

"Goody. A belfry has a bell. There's no bell or belfry." E.G. correcting Goody.

"It just would have added to the creepiness of the place. Speaking of creepiness, there's a light in an upstairs room and there is a shadow."

"The show has begun, Goody. Should E.G. and I walk to the house?"

"No. I'll drive but I still won't go in."

The car parked in front of the front entrance to the house and A.G. and E.G. got out and walked up the steps. A.G. had also locked the front door.

A.G. and E.G. entered the house with the usual screams and moans but eerie light was added in with the sound of a hideous laughter. They both had the high bright flashlights and as they were inspecting the rooms, the sounds continued. Moans, screams and walling and very disturbing looking figures appearing from time to time and the sound of a piano playing a dirge.

"Very interesting." Commented A.G.

"That's an overstatement." Added E.G. "Anything you are particularly interested in, A.G.?"

"The entrance to the cellar." A.G. moved to the kitchen and inspected the doors that go in and out. He then went to one of the doors and opened it. It led into a short hallway and a blank wall. There were no other doors or other ways to go except back into the kitchen.

A.G. patted the wall and had to almost shout for E.G. to hear. There was a hollow sound "This is where the entrance to the cellar should be. Where

else would it be? Kitchen staff would use the stairwell to the cellar to retrieve what was needed. And I suspect that this other wall comes from another area of the house so the house staff could retrieve what was needed without going through the kitchen."

"And these are the walls you want to tear down?"

"Precisely."

As A.G. said that something different occurred. A voice. A disturbing voice shouting, "Get out before you are doomed. You are not wanted here. GO NOW!"

"My. My. Walls do have ears. I'm more convinced that this will be the key to the mystery of the Ghost House."

"Maybe Stephen Van Dorens is still alive after all."

Back outside, Goody got out of the car and said, "I hope you heard all that?"

"Yeah. It was very interesting." Commented A.G. "I'll see if I can get their Martins permission to tear out that wall."

They were about to leave when there was a short blast of a siren. A squad car came up the drive and squealed to a stop.

Barton got out and shined a bright light on the three.

"Barton, turn that light out."

"Oh, it's the gruesome four. And what are you four doing on private property?"

"Just having a conversation about the who we are going to support to replace you at election time. Thought this would be an excellent place to discuss our inefficient incompetent sheriff. But, before you start braying at the moon, we have permission to be here. Do you?"

“A.G. One of these days.”

“Can’t wait. However, maybe you would like to explore the Westchester House. I have the keys. E.G. and I were just in the house. It is really entertaining. I’m surprised it wasn’t opened as a commercial venture back in the thirties. Really a great show.”

Barton grimaced. “Not interested.”

“Afraid are you. I thought all law enforcement officers were fearless in solving the problems of the community.”

“Where do you get that rubbish. From some T.V. cop show?”

“Well, I have to admit that it is faked on T.V. But E.G. and I went in and found it amusing. You could definitely use some amusement, Barton. You are always in a foul mood.”

“Only around you four goof balls.” Barton turned and left with tires screaming.

“We really need to report Barton’s misuse of county equipment to the county board.”

They all laughed at that.

The next day, A.G. went to see the Martins.

“Did you go into that house last night?” Mr. Martin inquired

“Yes, I did. It was most instructive and answered a lot of my questions.”

“Instructive? How so?”

“First I need to ask you about the deed that was given to you.”

“What about it?”

“According to county records, you do not own the house.”

Both Martins got wide eyed. “What?”

“The last deed recording was for Stephen Van Dorens in 1926 and it has not been updated.”

Mr. Martin went and got out the deed and gave it to A.G.

“If you don’t mind, I’ll take this to the county clerk’s office to either verify or not.”

“Yes. Do that. To be honest with you. I hope you are right. We never wanted the house and if we don’t legally own it, it would be a relief to us.”

“Okay. I’ll let you know.”

A.G. went to the Register of Deeds office and presented the deed.

“What I need to know is this. Does this supersede the registered deed from 1926 in the name of Stephen Van Dorens?”

The clerk looked at it and then went to the records to pull the 1926 deed and made a comparison.

“Well, A.G. It is the county deed form. Seems like the person that the ownership of that property it was meant for, didn’t follow up with registering it. However, the deed you brought does not have the listed present owner, Stephen Van Dorens. Apparently, this new deed has the name of Matthew Van Dorens as the previous registered owner before being transferred to Eleanor deVere. If so, someone didn’t know it had been transferred to Stephen Van Dorens and the older deed was used for this unregistered deed.”

“Odd. I wonder what this Stephen Van Dorens relationship was to the rest of the family. Seems to have come here and registered as the new owner and then more or less vanished.”

“It is odd that a person by the name of Milton J. Filbert, Attorney at Law actually registered the deed in the name of Stephen.” Added the clerk.

“So, Stephen has never been seen by anyone except maybe the lawyer.”

“Apparently not.”

As A.G. was leaving the county building, his phone rang.

“A.G. this is Marg. I did some more checking the newspapers and found a reference to the Westchester House in June 1931. It reads, “The abandoned Westchester House which has been a mystery since it was built in 1898 has taken on a new mystery. Several community members who have passed the house on walks reported that there were loud screams coming from the house. The house is not known to be occupied. The sheriff’s department made an effort to investigate but with the gate locked, it was decided not to break in until some further evidence came forward to warrant breaking in.”

“Thanks. Marg. I hope to have an answer to the mystery of this house soon.”

“Keep me informed so I can update this history.”

“Will do.”

A.G. returned to the Martins and informed that as far as the county is concerned, the property is still owned by Stephen Van Dorens.

A.G.’s next stop was a local building contractor, Tate and Sons to tear out a wall.

“You want to hire us to do what?” Tate asked.

“Tear down a wall in the Westchester House.” arrive so he could let them in and lock the gate again. A.G. not knowin

“It’s haunted, isn’t it.”

“No. I and E.G. were there last night and were entertained by the moans and screams. But it wasn’t scary or even evidence of being haunted. A daytime tour did reveal moans and sounds, but I suspect when tearing down this wall, there will be plenty of sounds.”

“So, you say it is not haunted. What is making the noises that are heard?”

“I only have a theory, but I believe that the house is occupied by someone. Maybe a relative of the Van Dorens.”

“That’s a bit far-fetched. Are you going to be there?”

“Definitely. I’ll be by your side all the time that wall is being brought down.”

“Okay. Double my usual rate. When you want this done?”

“Deal. Tomorrow at noon.”

A.G. called the Martins and invited them to the Westchester House the next day at noon.

“What’s going to happen at noon?” Mr. Martin asked.

“A wall is going to be torn out and hopefully the mystery of the Westchester will be solved.”

“How is tearing out a wall going to solve the mystery?”

“What the wall is hiding is of interest.”

“Okay. We’ll be there.”

A.G. also called E.G. and Goody to tell them of the plan to solve the Ghost House mystery. He also called Snid and gave him a run down of his and E.G. and Goody’s activities at the house and invited him to come or at least observe from the gate. He said he would think about it.

Word must have gotten out and when A.G. and the contractor arrived at the house the next day, there were several people gathered at the gate. A.G. had it locked and waited for the invitees to arrive so he could let them in and lock the gate again. A.G. not knowing who was in the cellar didn’t want a crowd to be in danger or scare off the resident. Amongst the curious was Sheriff Barton and he demanded to be admitted.

“A.G. what ever you are doing has to be illegal and I am going to take you in for it.”

“Just what am I doing illegal. Odd that you would really care to investigate. But, oh, I am forgetting that you have a personal vendetta against me and my friends. As to whether we are doing something illegal, the supposed owners have given their permission to solve the mystery of their deeded property. However, you may be of some help.”

“Wait a minute. Then I should be in charge. Not you.”

“Okay. Why don’t you get a couple of deputies here for crowd control so I can leave the gate open. I don’t want anyone except the invited near the house for safety reasons.”

Barton somewhat relented and called for two deputies to come up to the Westchester House for crowd control. Then said sarcastically to A.G., “How else may I be of service to this community affair?”

“Glad you asked. I need someone to be with Goody in the back of the house by the cellar door to stop anyone coming out.”

Barton gave A.G. an angry look. “Expect trouble. Suppose they have a weapon?”

“That is a gun hanging on your hip with bullets I presume. This is what police work is all about in case you didn’t get the memo.”

“Yeah, I got a loaded gun. Regardless of what you think I’m not a *Barney Fife*.”

“Excellent. But I would rather you kept it holstered just in case it is not needed.”

The rest of the invited guests arrived and were admitted. Snid was there but observing from a distance. The deputies arrived and the gates were opened for the curious to observe from afar. One particular persistent person demanded access for the press. It was none other than reporter Sarah Pickner from the Scanden Times, who labelled the robbery at the woodturners a heist.

“A.G., I demand to be able to record this event for the public needs to know.”

“Sarah, you’ll get all you need in time. But the fewer the people the better the outcome of this situation.” A.G. did give her a general background of what was happening and she was satisfied with that for the moment.

However, there was an unexpected surprise. A.G. couldn’t get the door open. When he tried there was that hideous laughter like it was mocking him and daring for him to come in.

“Hm. I had not expected that. Why were we able to get in before?” A.G. wondered.

Goody and Barton came around from the back of the house to the front of the house. “What’s the delay, A.G.” Goody asked.

“The door is locked. We could tear it down but it would ruin a very beautiful door.” A.G. addressed Goody and E.G. “We never did go completely around the house to see if there was another entrance. Can’t imagine why there wouldn’t be.”

The threesome went around the house in the opposite way they did previously. There was another door and it was locked but not as ornate. As they were examining it, something came flying out of an upstairs window nearly hitting the threesome.

A.G. calmly looked at the object and then commented, “I have to admit their determination is admirable.”

“A.G., we could have been killed by that thing!” Said an excited Goody.

“Maybe, maybe not. I doubt they want to kill or hurt anyone. They have certainly had their chances when we were inside. Let’s get back to the front door and figure out how to open it.”

Once in front, Barton wanted to know what happened and A.G. told him about the object being thrown out the window.

“This door needs to be torn down. But first, Tate do you have an endoscope?”

“Yeah, I have one. What have you got in mind?”

“Drill a hole big enough for the endoscope and below the door knob.”

Tate drilled a hole and was about to insert the endoscope when he asked, “What are you looking for?”

“Whatever is holding the door.”

Tate inserted the endoscope and directed it upward and A.G. and Tate looking at the monitor and what was inside. Then suddenly the screen went black and the endoscope was yanked inside the house banging Tate against the door. He dropped the monitor and the endoscope came out damaged.

Tate looked at the damaged endoscope and angrily, “Got anymore bright ideas?”

A.G. leaned on the porch railing and tried one more time to reason with the person inside. “Whoever you are communicate with me. Tell me why it has been important to keep people away from this house?”

The response was a loud wail and a screech. A.G. responded in a loud voice. “I hate to do this. Got an axe?”

“Yeah, right here.”

A.G. took the axe and started chopping the door. It was met with all the sounds that had been previously heard plus things being thrown out of windows. It didn't stop A.G. He finally broke through and saw the door had a board across it blocking the door. “Saw it off Tate.”

The invitees and the curious were jolted by the loud noises and the items coming out the windows. Outside by the cellar door the sheriff was drifting away from the house. Goody assured him it was just noise and no ghosts.

Tate was hesitant but sawed the board with a cir-

cular saw and the door opened.

A.G. shouted. “This didn't have to happen.” And he went in with Tate and his crew who were went in but reluctant to follow.

A.G. took them to the spot where he thought the stairs to the cellar were located and told Tate to knock down the wall. The noises didn't abate but they kept at it until the wall finally was down enough to reveal the stairs.

A.G. looked at the stairwell and was surprised that there were wires impeding anyone going down. He did get a vision of a person shouting, “Go away. This house belongs to me. It's mine. It's mine. Go away.”

“Talk to me whoever you are. Are you Stephen Van Dorens?”

“Go away. It's mine. You got no right to be in here.”

A.G. squeezed through the hole in the wall and began pushing wires aside. The person got more frantic but A.G. wanted an answer and kept trying to get down the stairs. About halfway, he saw what appeared to be a small person running back and forth shouting. Finally, the person opened the outside cellar door and flew out.

Goody was shocked by the emergence of the little man and grab him but he was strong and fought Goody. Goody shouted for Barton to help but he kept backing away. “Barton, help me.” Barton was backing away and then ran to the front of the house, got in the squad car and drove out through the gate.

A.G. finally made it to through the wires to the cellar door and helped Goody subdue the little man.

“A.G., Barton ran away. Help.”

A.G. made it out and helped subdue the little man though he kept shouting the same thing.

“Stephen. Calm down. We just want to talk to you and why this house has been made into a Ghost House. Stephen, listen to me. I know you are the

owner. No one is trying to take it away from you.”

He finally calmed down. He sat on the steps and began crying. “It’s okay. I believe you are a Stephen Van Dorens. Maybe a grandson?”

“I failed. I failed. I tried really hard but I failed to keep them safe from the world.”

“Who were you keeping safe?”

He pointed in the doorway. There were several deformed people staring out the door.

“My people. We’re all freaks.”

“Tell me about your grandfather, Stephen.”

He sobbed some more and then began talking about his grandfather. “My grandfather was a midget like my father and myself. My great grandfather Matthew Van Dorens was ashamed of his son. He was a freak and the Van Dorens couldn’t abide by freaks. Especially if he was to carry on the Van Dorens name. My Grandfather was taken to the circus and introduced him to the Freak Show. There were other midgets and he decided he would be more comfortable amongst his own.

“That lasted only a few years when the circus went under and the performers and freaks were on their own. He appealed to his father and knowing about the Westchester House decided to make it available to our peculiar group of individuals. His father had a lawyer put the house in his son’s name and created a trust fund for us to draw on.

“Freaks don’t often live long and many began to die off, but word was gotten to circuses that a home was available for the out of work and retired circus performers. So, there have been many in and out of the house. My father wanted the house to be a safe place for us freaks. When my father died, it became my responsibility to keep us safe. And I have failed.”

“Question I have is whether the trust fund still provides funds for you and your people’s support? And how has it been orchestrated to bring in food and other supplies for the maintenance of this

group?”

“I watched you go to the back gate and I suspected you had figured that out. I would go out at night and leave a note each week on the back gate. Someone would come and get the note and bring what was needed and leave it by the back gate. I sometimes would ask for the lawyer and he would come to listen to our needs and arrange things like when one of us died or needed a doctor. My father really dedicated himself to our protection.” He pointed at a girl who looked normal and said that was his daughter. “Happens now and then to get someone normal. We are her family and she thinks she is the abnormal. I am training her to take over when I’m gone.”

“My second question is why the creation of the illusion that this was a Haunted House?”

“That was my grandfather’s idea. We used to have the run of the house and it drew too much curiosity. So, if anyone approached the house a ghost routine as they called it was performed. I suppose it got around about the house. Later, I suppose for something to do that seemed to fit our freaky personalities, the house was rigged to make noises and screams to assure no one would come near the house.

“I got really concerned when those two people came in and talked about cleaning up the place and turn it into what they called a Bed and Breakfast. Whatever that was. Listening to them, they were not very enthusiastic about the house and expressed many times that they didn’t want the house. So, we started the noises and when they fled, I thought that would be the end of it. Then you showed up.”

The Martins had come around the house to see what the commotion was and to ask why the sheriff left hurriedly.

“Stephen, meet the people who were fixing up the house. They are your relatives.” Eleanor and Martin, meet Stephen Van Dorens.”

Stephen proffered a hand and said hello. Eleanor said hello and explained to Stephen why they were there. “Stephen, we were told I was the last of the Van Dorens line and that is why I was deeded the property. However, A.G. found out that the last registered owner of the house was your grandfather and therefore the house belongs to you through your father and grandfather. And I am not ashamed of you or your friends. I would like to help in some way. We are the last of the Van Dorens line. Perhaps, Westchester House can officially be made as a home for circus performers. That way you and the others can live like a person should and not in the shadows.”

Stephen was stunned. “I don’t know what to say. I was hoping we could someday live like normal people. Maybe this day will turn out to be the best day for circus people.”

Epilogue

Soon after the making of the Westchester House for Retired Circus Performers was put into effect. The lawyer handling the trust fund was notified and the trust fund was put into the maintenance

of the Westchester House as a partial retirement home and half way house for the still active circus performers who were between jobs.

A fundraising effort was made by the town to restore the Westchester House and to upgrade it with the amenities of modern life. Soon townspeople were visiting the group asking how they could help and providing transportation into town.

Sheriff Barton who ran away from the Westchester House admitted that he had Achondroplasia, fear of dwarfism. The condition often originates from negative childhood experiences or cultural portrayals of little people in media (like villains or objects of ridicule) and can trigger severe anxiety, rapid heartbeat, trembling, sweating, and panic attacks. Barton, not to lose face puffed up and said it wouldn’t stop him from doing his job and he would be watching those four elderly fuddy-duddys.

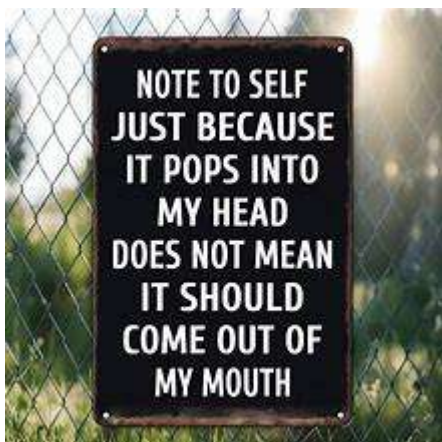
Next Up: The Devil Key and the Purloined Portrait

A.G.’s past is revealed and the investigations take them to Madison.

Dave Rutherford was the raffle winner of the 1/2 bowl gouge.



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

- 2026 May 6 - Chip Troost - Turning a Dibbler for planting season
- 2026 Jun 3 - Bob Eberhardt - Technique and style for bowl rims
- 2026 Jul 1 - John Layde - Turning Gizmos
- 2026 Aug 5 - Joe Nycz—Turning a Pepper Mill
- 2026 Sep 2 - Bob Eberhardt - Rolling pin with bearing
- 2026 Oct 7 - Dan Brandner - Fancy spindle turned icicle ornament
- 2026 Nov 4 - Bob Eberhardt - Lamp base with long drilled hole
- 2026 Dec 2 - Dan Brandner - Turning tiny things

May Open House Date

May 10 from 8:00 am to 12:00pm. If coming after 10:00, 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 Chip Troost Turning a Dibbler



The other side of woodturning : Prep work.

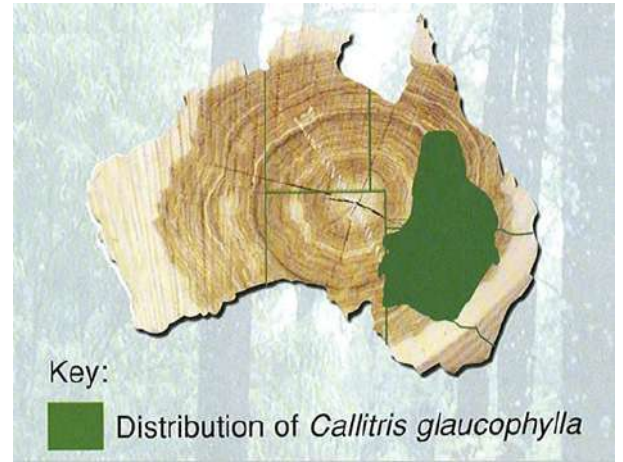


Kate Mullins labors over chipping off the bark of some Cherry burls before band sawing during Open House.

Mike O'Meara cutting a Walnut blank on the band saw during Open House.



FOCUS ON AUSTRALIAN CYPRESS



[Australian Cypress Tree](#)

[Guide to the Australian Cypress Tree](#)

Presentation for Eau Claire Woodturners, March 21, 2026

Phil Holtan

For this club meeting, after a short introduction to ale bowls, I will turn one of my Loon Ale Bowls, with baby. I'll use two orientations or centers for the turning of the loon mother.

I like turning birds, because they are aerodynamic end to end, which works well with woodturning. I'll start by turning the lengthwise body of the bird between centers, with a roundish thicker body. Then I'll use a homemade chuck to hold the blank at right angles and hollow the bowl and establish the top edge for the right look. I will then paint just the outside with milk paint and then, after marking carefully and using wedges to get my height right, use my spindle sander to make the white spots, just barely touching the wood.

For the baby, I will turn a small bowl, first the outside with a base to hold in my chuck, then the bowl and extra wood around the outside to cut out the tail and head. I will demonstrate some ways I find helpful to bandsaw the extra wood, then carve out the head shape using hand and power cutters and spindle and inflatable sanding drums.

I also have some used tools for sale, especially some large, heavy half-round bowl scrapers at half the new price. I look forward to seeing your club again.



“Skol the Bowl” Demonstration by Phil Holtan philholtan.com philholtan@msn.com 701-261-6044

Introduction: Skol means “turned wooden bowl” in Norwegian (with some Americanizing of letters) and also means a toast. We’ve learned to use the ale bowl to build community. Pour some beer in the bowl and pass it around a circle of people, with each taking their turn to share a blessing or tribute, anything, then saying “**Skol**” and taking a sip. At a birthday party, we each shared a story or memory with my sister. It’s like a talking stick as the one with the bowl gets to talk... and no one

else. The handle on the bowl makes it work great for handing from person to person. Keep adding beer, passing the bowl around again and even shy Norwegians will share their deepest feelings.

A bit of historical context may be helpful

In rural parts of old Norway, ale was brewed to mark two kinds of events, annual events like harvest-time and Christmas, and those marking special personal events, like weddings and funerals.

The ale bowl represented the farm and the land in ritual processions like wedding or funerals and was carved from wood from the land, filled with ale brewed from farm water and barley.

The ale bowl belonged to the farm, and usually stayed when the land was sold.

It led the wedding processions from groom’s house to bride’s house to the church to the couple’s home.

The bride was expected to throw the ale bowl over her house. If the bowl didn’t make it, she could expect bad luck. When empty, guests threw gift coins into the bowl.

After a death, neighbors and friends came to the home with gifts of food or ale. They stood in a ring around the casket and sang three hymns, with ale passed between each. Then they carried the casket outside, drank a final toast and placed the ale bowl upon it.

One tradition is that you can determine your future by gripping and flipping the ale bowl- first taking the bowl between your teeth and flipping it back over your head onto the ground. If the bowl lands upright, it is a good omen. If not, change the subject.

Many northern European countries have their own communal drinking bowls- skol in Norway, wassail in England, quaich (quaig) in Scotland, lagom “enough” bowl in Sweden. Also, loving cup for newlywed couples.

Here are three excellent videos- YouTube by Phil Odden, carver and historian of ale bowls. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hjjJOS3lwQk>

Turning ale bowls: I turn the bowls I make and sell from a variety of woods: apple, cherry, maple, butternut, anything with interesting and closed grain, definitely not ash or red oak. Rinse the bowl with water after use but don’t use the dishwasher or leave it sitting in water or full of water. Renew the finish with mineral or vegetable oil.

To me, the best ale bowls have substantial handles to make them easy to pass, but any bowl with a narrow, easy-to-drink-from rim can be used, and it should have a moisture and food safe finish. I like Mahoney’s Walnut oil and a final finish with a beeswax mixture to penetrate and seal the wood. I prefer to twice-turn and thereby relieve the stress on my ale bowls, because with ale in them, they will be stressed. I wish I had a finish that had more shine to it. I’m trying Odees, expensive but may work better.

Shaped edge ale bowls- That would include the Skol and Quaich above, as well as Turkopps, a

traditional Norwegian product that means tour cup, often with a leather cord tied into the handle. I also include the bird-shaped pouring bowls below, and some more experimental pieces that merge into the two-ended category, but generally with only one end.

Two-ended ale bowl Bowls: Two-headed horsehead “Kjenge” ale bowl (West Norway along the sea)- the challenge is to turn as much of the project as possible before finishing with carving or sanding. I used **German ring-turning ideas** to turn the horse head profiles, a ¼ inch bandsaw blade to cut away excess wood and carving tools or a spindle sander to shape the rest of the shape.

Another has a Swedish Dala Horse profile in spalted birch, with more sanding than carving. See the3 image below of the two headed horsehead bowl on the lathe, with the heads just trimmed in the bandsaw and awaiting more carving.

Viking ship ale bowl: In order to get a more boat-like, tapered shape, I use a **Stephen Hogbin** idea to turn, cut away and reglue to turn the Viking ship ale bowls. Notice the glued seam in the close up of the Viking ship. Carve the dragon head and tail. I’m not pleased with this dragon head. It comes from the Urnes dragon-style designs and isn’t that clear or engaging, or scary.

Two-Axis Ale Bowls are the most complicated and even difficult to picture the process. I learned from the Canadian turner Michael Hosaluk how to do two turnings at right angles. It’s a technique often used for kitchen ladles and spoons but I love it for the possibilities here.

Finally, I’ll turn a **Loon Skol, a flying bird ale bowl**-I like turning birds, because they are aerodynamic end to end, which works well with woodturning. Start by turning the lengthwise body of the bird between centers, with a roundish thicker body. Since these birds look best if their head and tail axis is in line with the top of the bowl/body, if my wood piece is too thin, I can turn only a half body of wood. Use a homemade chuck to hold the blank at right angles. I’ve taken an old chuck and set it up with just 2 Titan Nova jaws with wooden extensions to make it more useful. I have made some ungainly ducks with a humpback not found in nature. I learned I needed to keep the body below the center axis. I especially like how the loon turned out, with the axis very high in the bowl. I paint the outside with milk pain and then use my spindle sander to make the white spots, just touching the wood.

Thanks for exploring the world of ale bowls with me. philholtan@msn.com 701-261-6044



Manually Duplicating Small Pieces by Dan Brandner

April '26 Demo

Duplicating small pieces manually is really about having a good way to mark and measure elements repeatedly. Pair that with good technique and a good eye.

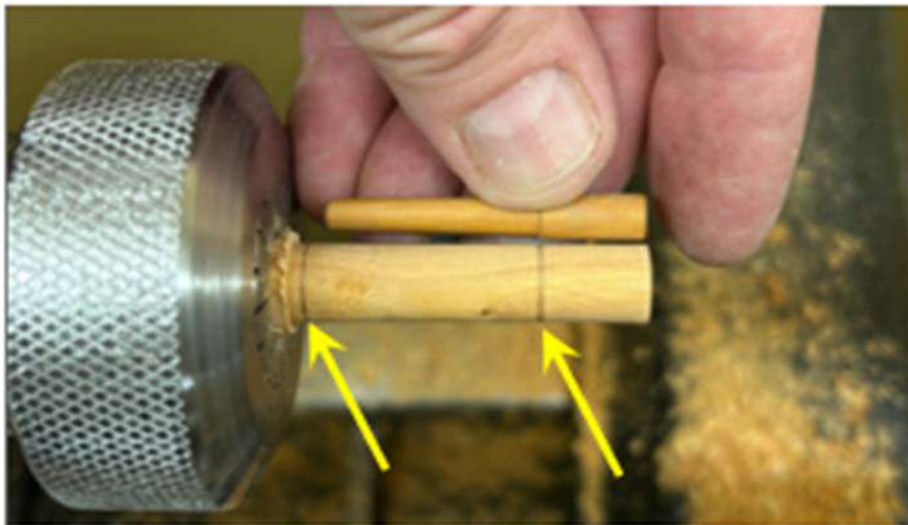
I was recently asked to make a cribbage board for an older couple who wanted larger pegs and larger holes to help with their eyesight. The board would be made on my CNC machine, but I thought I would turn the pegs. I made them a sample block to see if these sizes were OK. A normal board has $1/8$ " holes, and I figured $1/4$ " were too big so I settled on $3/16$ " peg holes.



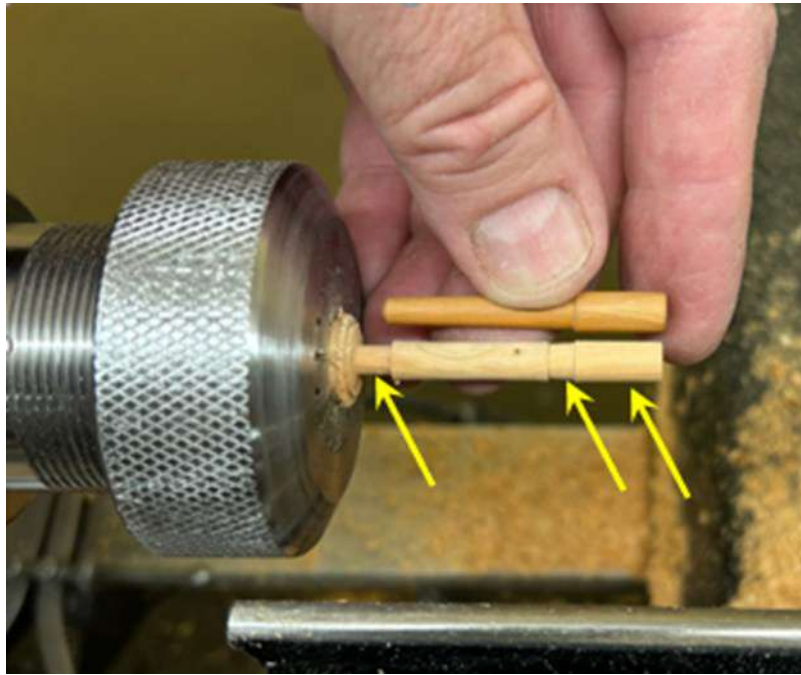
Cribbage Peg Sample Block with $3/16$ " holes.

I made the first peg, guessing at the height, how deep to be in the hole and with a simple design. These samples were $1-11/16$ " inches long, with a straight handle $1/2$ " long, and a tapered shaft going from $13/64$ " to $11/64$ " and about $3/16$ " [$12/64$ "] in the middle. I planned a hole depth of $3/8$ ".

I made these light-colored pegs from buckthorn, a good use for this small diameter hard wood. I started between centers, turning it round with a spindle roughing gouge, and then put a $1/2$ " tenon on one end so I could mount it into a collet chuck. Alternatively, you could hold it in a small set of jaws or use Alan Lacer's method of manually shaving off the corners of your stock to a slight taper and tapping it with a mallet right into the MT2 taper of the headstock.



The first step is to turn your spindle fully round, then mark off the shoulder of the peg's handle as well as the full peg length. I also used the skew to pare a nice and square end to the top of the peg



For sanding, I used a 4-sided sanding block I had made by gluing sandpaper to a nice and square block of wood. I had originally made this 12" long sanding block to finish sand a French rolling pin. Having used the skew, I only touched it with the 320 and 400.



Finally, taper the shaft from the upper shoulder below the handle to the tip by planing with a skew. Adjust as needed to specified measurements with the final step being sanding.

For a small piece like this, I finished it with Aussie Oil before parting off. When parting off, try to get that length/height as accurate as possible, adjusting with hand sanding if needed. It is very important when duplicating small playing pieces like these cribbage pegs or chess pawns that, at the very least, the heights are the same. The eye has a way of drawing attention to any difference in height.

It doesn't hurt to use an electronic caliper to measure down to 0.01" or 1/128" of an inch. Will they be EXACT duplicates? Probably not, but well within seasonal size changes for wood, and they will be hand turned.

I'll be making pegs of different colored woods, and may make the handles a little more elaborate too.

Now, let's make a chess piece. This was a request by Grayson Schwartz on how to manually make small duplicate pieces.

Notice, I've remarked the length for parting off.

Manually Duplicating Chess Pawns

As I played more with my skew for practice, I started duplicating a chess set that I got back when Bobby Fischer was dominating over Spassky in 1972. This is a rather small set as far as pieces go. A traditional “Staunton” set, designed by Nathaniel Cooke in 1849, and popularized by English chess master Howard Staunton has defined height and shape standards. The Staunton set has become the standard for chess play and international competitions.

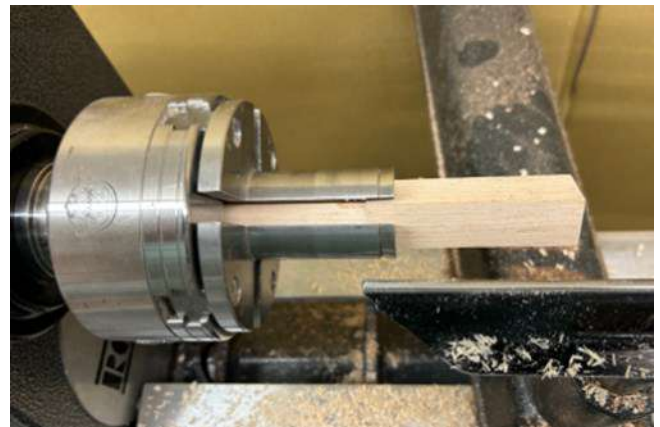
Making a pawn follows the same steps as I have done with the cribbage peg, with just a few more things to measure. It will still rely on good technique and a good eye. Because of all the things to measure, I made a simple template out of an old plastic card. [It’s plastic, so don’t measure the spinning spindle as you will melt it.] On this template, I marked out 4 different spindle sizes, for the elements on the pawn, as well as the length markings for placement on the spindle. I call it my Mini Pawn “Storyboard”.



For dimensions, I have a 1-1/4” height for my pawn, with a 5/8” base, a 7/16” collar, a 3/8” ball on top and a 1/4” neck under the collar.

For the pawn I chose a maple blank cut from a 1” maple board. Cut square, I can hold it in a small set of jaws in my chuck. This has the advantage of being able to make a pawn, then, loosen, and slide the stock forward to make another one.

The first step is to turn it round with a spindle roughing gouge to about the largest diameter element on the pawn.



Next, I turn the diameter down to the largest part of the pawn, its base. Again, leave diameters a little generous for refining and sanding.



Once the spindle is all down to $5/8$ " and I've pared a clean end on the right of the spindle (bottom of pawn), I can mark the elements on it with the storyboard.

The 3 notches on the storyboard indicate:
where the ball begins on top
where the bottom of the collar is
where the notch on the base is.



APRIL DEMONSTRATION

Next, I used the parting tools to reduce the diameter on the different elements. Specifically, the ball diameter, and neck diameter.

I used two different sized parting tools below the collar.

You might want to allow for using the skew to pare a nice surface on the bottom side of the collar



After this, I turn the notch into the base, start my gradual slope up to the neck. Placing one decorative shoulder into that slope. Shape the collar, straight underneath and a slope straight up to the ball, then turn most of the ball on top.

Use either the skew or a spindle gouge for this.

In between, I'll hold another pawn up to the spindle to make sure I'm staying on track.

I have the base to the right, so if you want to drill it out to add some weights, you can do that as a first step. As a final step you'd add felt to the bottom in that case.



Finally, I will sand and finish this with Aussie oil before parting off. You want the speed of the turning spindle to help with the finish.



And at last I will part off with either a skew or spindle gouge very carefully, to minimize the amount of sanding on the top of the ball. Then finish what you had to sand with your Aussie oil rag, rubbing it in hard with your hand until it heats up to set the finish.

The first pawn will be the easy one. Making the others match will take practice. Remember they are handmade, so don't have to be 100% identical, but as close as you can make them. Also remember, that their height is critical as the eye can pick out that difference more easily. Making them all the same height will go a long way in making an attractive set.

When I get around to making a set, I will probably make many extra pieces from which I can then select the most similar ones for the set. The extra practice will make the later pieces much better than the earlier ones.

So far, I've made some pawns, a rook, a bishop, a Queen and a King, to see how difficult it would actually be. Not too bad, it seems, to make the first ones anyway. I still need to work on a knight, and I'll be using some wood carving techniques for that.

Grayson, I hope that give you some idea about how to go about manually turning similar small pieces.





Dan demonstrated how to turn a small chess piece such as the Pawn piece.



APRIL DEMONSTRATION



Finished chess pieces and a box to store them in.





In addition to chess pieces, Dan demonstrated how to turn cribbage pegs.



Chip Troost



Chip turned two bowls at home, A Birch and a crotch Birch. Chip also made two eggs made of cedar for the President's Challenge of turning eggs.





Joe Nycz

Joe turned a half dozen eggs for the President's Challenge . Each egg was made of a different wood.



Joe Nycz

Joe turned lidded canisters made of Mesquite wood.



Joe Nycz

Joe made an acorn shaped canister made of Mesquite wood and a canister of Cherry wood.

Joe also made a Cherry, Walnut and Maple segmented cutting board.





Steve Hay

Steve made a dozen eggs in an egg carton for the President's Challenge. Steve's entries were the winners of the challenge and received a \$10 Kwik Trip gas card.



Steve Hay

Closer look at the winning eggs turned by Steve. The woods included Amur Maple, Red Cedar and an unknown wood. With embedded copper wire.





Dan Brandner

Dan made two Cherry eggs for the President's Challenge and also had a shallow bowl made of Walnut.



Dan Brandner



Closer views of the Walnut wood bowl made by Dan.



**Photos for Show and Tell and Gallery provided by
Chris Burns and Hannah Palmer**



[Alaska Symposium](#)

May 2-3, 2026
Anchorage, Alaska



[Ottawa TurnFest](#)

May 23-24, 2026
Nepean, Ontario, Canada



[Turn-On! Chicago](#)

July 30 - Aug. 2, 2026
Northbrook, IL



[SWAT](#)

August 28 - 30, 2026
Waco, TX