

Bell Wood Turners Club History

During year 2000 two local woodworkers in Bell, Fl became interested in wood turning. After years of building various non-turned items for local customers, Gary Taylor bought a Delta 16-42 lathe and convinced his friend Van Johnson to buy one also. Wanting to learn more about turning, they attended the Georgia Association of Woodturners Symposium in Helen, Ga. held in September of 2000. Gary placed a notice in the local paper to determine if others were interested in starting a club. Twenty-five to thirty people interested in woodturning met at a local restaurant.

Bell Wood Turners Club was formed in February 2001. The first meeting was held in Gary's shop with Ron Browning from the Hands On Woodturners Club giving the first demo. Shortly afterwards they became members of the American Association of Woodturners (AAW). After about six months, Gary's shop proved too small for the group, so meetings moved to the Community Center in Bell. Meetings have been held there on the second Thursday of each month since then.

Club members supported and helped run the Florida Woodturning Symposium for five years by providing lathes for demos and people to help with the daily activities. The Club has always had a high percentage of club members attending the Florida Woodturning Symposium at Lake Yale each year.

The Club holds a Demo-Sale day each year during July at the Community Center in Bell. Members have a chance to show their work and offer it for sale. They also provide demos for the people attending the show to see how wood turning is done. The Club has a Bow Lathe built by members to demonstrate how woodturning was done before electric power was available. A member of the Club has to stand on one foot, work a pedal arrangement to power the lathe while holding the turning tool to shape the piece being turned. This type lathe is not for you if you can't walk and chew gum at the same time.

During the early years of the Club members participated in a group project to make a section of a totem pole. It was installed on a pole at the Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts at Gatlinberg, Tennessee. Members of the Club have attended classes there and at John C. Campbell Folk School near Brasstown, North Carolina.

The Club has a booth each year at the Bell Christmas Parade with turned items for sale. Members were represented at the Trenton Down Home Days during the early years when it was held at the City Park. Members provide demos for groups interested in learning more about woodturning. In the interest of teaching others about woodturning, Gary has presented demos to groups such as the local womans club. He also did a demo for the Oak Hammock Retirement Community in Gainesville, Fl.

Starting in late 2009, members participated in a group collaborative challenge project to be displayed at the 2010 AAW National Symposium in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Several members turned small

wooden replicas of hot air balloons. The balloons were hung on a framework of turned wooden spindles. The pieces were transported to the Symposium by a club member and assembled with the help of other club members attending the event. The project won first place in the Fantasy Division.

In the interest of teaching the next generation the art of woodturning, the club gave classes for the local 4-H kids. Classes were scheduled for twice a month on Saturdays during 2010. In 2011 we will hold all day classes for one week for kids interested in woodturning. Members of the club bring lathes and provide supplies for the sessions. During these classes, the kids learn to turn projects such as tops, honey dippers, mallets, small boxes, pens, weed pots and small bowls. The instructors usually enjoy the process of teaching the kids as much as the kids enjoy learning. This project was greatly helped by grants from the American Association of Woodturners for both years. The grants enabled the Club to buy lathes, turning tools and supplies for the kids. We thank them for their support.

The future of the Club looks bright. We have several local turners that have become great demonstrators. We also bring in expert turners from other clubs in Florida and turners of national fame for all day sessions. Anyone wanting to learn woodturning will find a friendly helping hand at the Bell Woodturners Club.

Cvw
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