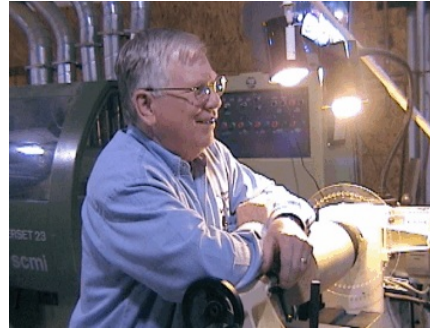


Surface Decoration Techniques

featuring Wes Jones

transcribed by Ken Calkin

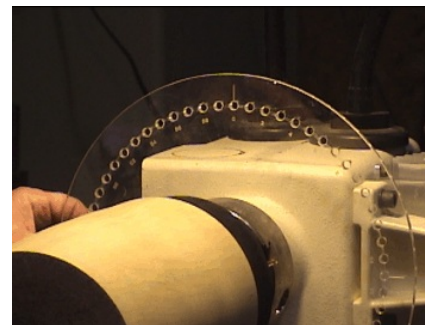
Our demonstrator for January, 2008, was Wes Jones. Wes lives in Lawrenceville, Georgia and has been a woodturner for over 30 years. He teaches woodturning courses at the John C. Campbell Folk School in Brasstown, North Carolina and at the Dogwood Institute in Alpharetta, Georgia as well as giving private woodturning instruction at his studio.



Wes is a member of the American Association of Woodturners and is very active in three of the AAW chapter woodturning clubs in Georgia. He is the past President of the Georgia Association of Woodturners in Atlanta and is a past Vice-President of the Peach State Woodturners in Oxford, Georgia. He is currently the Treasurer for the Chattahoochee Woodturners in Gainesville, GA.

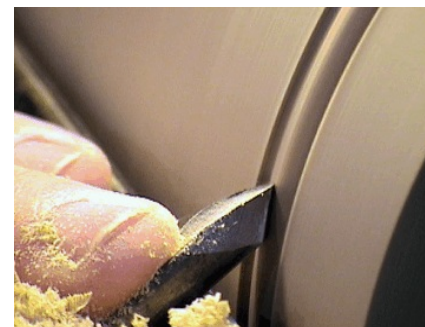


Wes' demonstration for the evening was "Surface Decoration Techniques". Amongst the techniques he demonstrated were: turning beads, burning lines, texturing, carving, pyrography, coloring, and sgraffito. His suggestions for each of these methods are described below. Regardless of the technique used, he recommended using an index disk to assure that repetitive patterns around a piece can be evenly spaced. The index disk he illustrated was made from $\frac{1}{4}$ inch plexiglass with equally spaced holes. It incorporated a lock he made to hold the disk in place which also permitted him to scribe a mark on the work piece. A local source of index disks is at 770-954-0478.



Turning an incised bead

Using a spindle gauge, start in the middle at the top of bead and roll a cut to the right following the bevel of the tool. Then repeat the process to the left. Do this in several passes until the desired size for the bead is reached.



With a point tool or pyramid tool, you do the opposite,

starting at the side and turning to the top. This tool can be used on a piece that would be hard to reach with a spindle gouge.

There are also beading tools available for sale or which can be made by grinding the bottom edge of a gouge flat. These are scraping tools and can be used when there are a lot of beads to make that you want to be all equally spaced. Press the tool into the wood like a scraper. He recommends stopping the cut just before reaching the end to avoid tear out on the top of the bead.

Burning lines

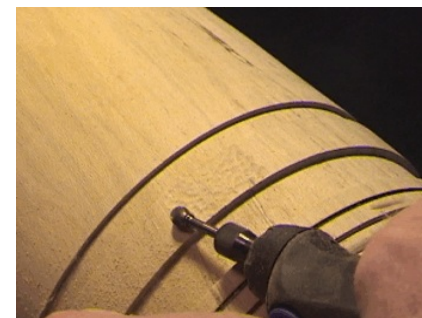
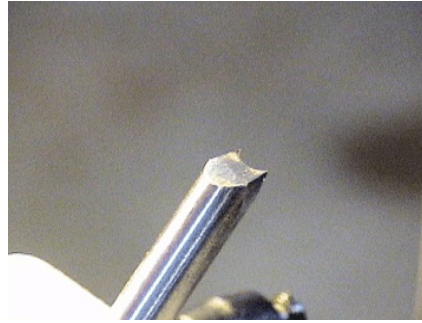
Use a piece of wire with handles on both ends. The right length and handles are very important. The wire should wrap $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{1}{3}$ around the piece. Use a starting groove to assure that the wire doesn't wander. Make a groove with a point or parting tool and place the wire in the groove with the lathe going at high speed. Be sure that the burn is deep enough that it reaches the bottom of the groove and won't sand off.

Texturing

Use a circumference tape or the index disk to accurately divide up the piece if you plan to use a pattern and make either a ridge or a groove to set off the pattern. Squares can be made in the ridge by using a rotary chisel, fit into a flexshaft machine or Dremmel, and cutting through perpendicular to the ridge. This tool can also be used for carving or cutting out a pattern.

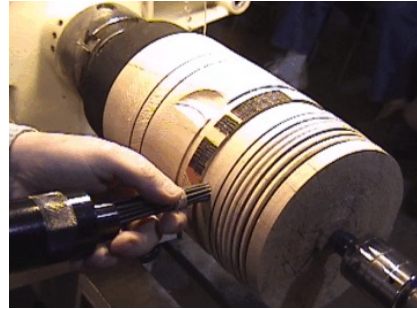
A Dremmel tool can also be used to create texture with a beading bit. Large areas require some time, so get comfortable and have good lighting. Wes usually highlights the texture with a little color. He uses an alcohol based marker called PrismaColor, which comes in many different hues. The ridge is important to keep the color from bleeding. Burned grooves can also be used to set off the pattern and color.

The Sorbey texturing tool looks like a cowboy spur. With the lath turning, press the tool against the wood. You can vary the angle and the pressure to get different effects. By defining the edges either by beads or by



burning, the resulting pattern can be set off nicely. Then if you like, you can further emphasize it with color.

Other tools that can be used to create random texture include: a small electric engraver and a welders needle scaler attached to an air hammer. . Take out the tip out of the engraver and reverse it to texture the surface. The air hammer scaler has many steel needles that can be rounded and used to texture a large area fairly quickly.

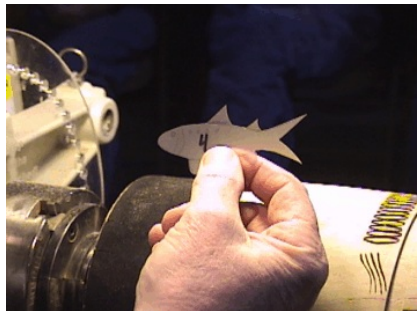


Wood burning, or pyrography

Two companies that make burners are Burnmaster and RazorTip. Different burning tips are available. Press the hot tip into the wood and repeat the pattern. If making a repeat pattern, it should be laid out with lines to keep the pattern even and precise. Various tips can be used to make different patterns such as loops, ovals, basket weave, etc.



To make your own tips, buy nichrome wire and end terminals from an electronics store and create the shapes you want.



For more precise drawing, a tip called a scalpel tip can be used to follow a pattern or draw freehand. If a repetitive pattern is desired, a template can be made from mylar plastic and traced onto the wood. For light colored wood, a pencil works, for dark wood, a watercolor pencil in white or yellow works well to draw the pattern. Follow along the outline with the scalpel tip at a speed that marks but is not too slow. To color the figures, Wes uses PrismColor pens to create bright colors. The burn keeps the colors from bleeding outside the pattern. Stains, paints, or oils can all be used to color. In using any dye or paint, make sure it is colorfast and will stay bright over time.



Metal leaf in gold, silver or copper could also be used to fill a pattern. Lay down a layer of glue and then place the thin sheet of metal on the glue.

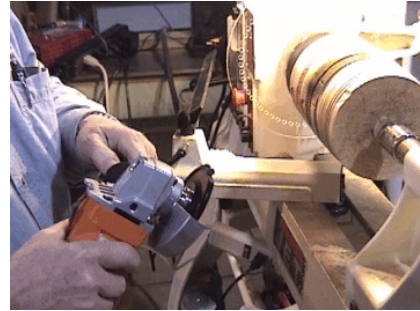
Carving

There are various power tools available for carving on wood. They normally come with blades but Wes recommends that Flexcut blades be purchased as they



stay sharp longer. With a carving tool, you can carve patterns or do freehand carving. The carvings can also be colored with the pens.

The ArborTek tool can also be used to carve deeply into the piece. The large ArborTek head can be placed on an air powered angle grinder base and be used to remove a lot of wood from your work. This tool can be used to carve all the way through to create a spiral effect in the work as some do.



Sgraffito

Paint the wood with several coats of black gesso (available from art supply stores). Carving tools are then used to carve through the black surface to the light wood underneath. You can either carve geometric patterns or freehand figures.

