

# American Association of Woodturners

## Message from Stan Wellborn

### **Working Without a Rule Book**

At a regional symposium a couple of years ago, I watched a wonderful demo by Mark Gardner, a talented young turner in North Carolina. At one point, he performed a chucking technique that was inventive - and unorthodox. Someone in the audience joked, "You know you really can't do that."

Mark just grinned at us and said, "Show me the rule book."

Since then, I've often thought how nice it is to enjoy a pursuit like woodturning in which there are no firm do's and don'ts. To be sure, we have to observe basic safety measures, learn how to ride the bevel, keep a sharp edge, and other basics. But beyond the fundamentals, the field is open to anything you want to try - so long as you get the result you want.

Today's turners certainly aren't afraid to venture into the new and unfamiliar. One guy produces stunning pieces by turning fragile twigs embedded in blocks of ice. At my local club last month, I saw a veteran turner produce a beautiful platter using nothing but a 1½-inch scraper. In my own shop, I'm doing a lot of hollowing with the lathe running in reverse. And every issue of *American Woodturner* contains some novel way of doing tried-and-true lathework.

What does any of this have to do with AAW operations? It's true that the AAW Board has a detailed handbook of procedures and protocols that govern our actions - everything from budgeting to bylaws, and from ethics to elections. With that foundation in place, the AAW is free to try out new ideas and "think outside the bowl."

At our national symposium earlier this summer in Saint Paul, AAW members suggested a variety of great new ideas to me and other Board members and staff. We continue to get both critical and constructive proposals by phone and e-mail. I'm eager to try to put some of these ideas into action, because introducing dynamic and positive change is what keeps any organization fresh and innovative.

The AAW Board and our Executive Director are determined to try new approaches to expand the organization's membership to broader demographic and geographic areas - especially to international prospects, retiring baby-boomers, and younger audiences. We welcome all your ideas and will give them serious consideration.

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And, you don't need to worry about any rule books.

Happy Turning!

--Stan Wellborn, AAW Board Member