
American Association of Woodturners



June 1, 2009

To: Our Membership,

I believe the American Association of Woodturners is one of the finest organizations to which I have ever belonged. I have often said that the people in this organization are some of the most sharing and friendly people around. Further, that the AAW staff, countless volunteers, and the board of directors spend an enormous amount of time to make every aspect of the organization the best it can be. These people work tirelessly and without a lot of gratitude because they love the organization and its mission.

With these thoughts in mind, I find it troubling to see and read the accusations and twisted rumors being spread around over this past weekend. Yes, the AAW is trying to deal with some troubling issues, but in so doing, I believe that each person involved in the process has the best interest of the AAW in mind.

Let me try to answer some of the concerns and address some of the rumors the best I can.

First, the board of directors did not make a decision to remove the stylized graphic that is similar to a portion of the AAW logo from the cover of the *American Woodturner*, the Journal of the AAW. The new journal editor tried to apply a fresh look at the journal cover artwork and layout, just as the prior editor did upon assuming responsibility. The current and new editor felt the logo design on the cover was outdated and made the title look cluttered and wanted to try something different. Concerns about this action have been brought to the Publications Committee, who will in turn bring the matter to the full board at their June meeting. The board of directors will then review the circumstances and memberships input, and decide what is best for future journals.

Second, the notion that the AAW logo, or any portion thereof, is a phallic symbol or is pornographic, is not something to which the board agrees. The traditional AAW logo is proudly emblazoned on many of our products and in the journal, and will continue to be so displayed.

Third, times change and the new journal editor is taking a new approach with what in the recent past were called contributing editors, and is contemplating phasing out that category in the interest of encouraging articles from more and varied members. Those that have been contributing editors will still hopefully continue to provide the informative and interesting articles they have produced in the past.

Fourth, Alan Lacer, a long respected and dedicated member and servant of the AAW, has applied for the upcoming board of director's election slate. There is some concern that a perceived or actual conflict of interest might exist if he were to become a director and serve in that capacity while his wife is the AAW Executive Director. The Nominating Committee has asked the Ethics Committee (comprised of members independent from the board) to review this matter. Further, the Ethics Committee is seeking advice and counsel from an outside individual who is considered an authority in the area of ethics. The Ethics Committee advice will be the basis for a Nominating Committee decision.

Finally, I hope these explanations will serve to provide answers and some understanding of the issues we currently face in the AAW. We try our best to be professional, caring, and responsive about our responsibilities to the organization and its members - we appreciate your continued support and enthusiasm for woodturning.

Very Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bill".

Bill Haskell, President
American Association of Woodturners