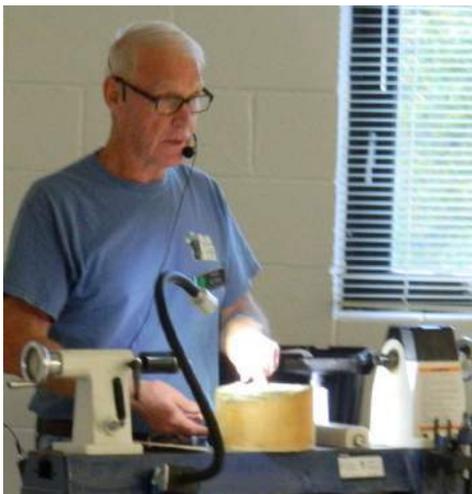


**SEPTEMBER 2017 DEMONSTRATION  
NATURAL EDGED BOWLS WITH MIKE GRIDLEY**

Turning green wood can create long ribbons of shavings that stream through the workshop – something you will not see very often with dry wood. **Mike Gridley** explained how to turn green wood and create a natural (bark) edged bowl for the September 2017 meeting of the Central New York Woodturners.



To start, he cuts a block of wood with his chain saw and then splits it length wise as a half cylindrical piece of wood. He noted that one should handle the bark carefully so that it was of good quality for creating the natural edge bowl. The best time of year to get the maximum holding conditions for bark is to cut the wood in the middle of winter when the bark is the tightest on the tree.



Mike uses cardboard circles to mark the edges and center of the wood piece on both the flat side and the bark side. The piece can best be rounded using a band saw; however, a chain saw could be used to approximate a round piece and reduce the amount of wood needed to be turned.

Securely mounting the piece between centers to start turning can be done in several ways. The method used by Mike is to drill into the center of the bark side and use a mallet or hammer to drive in a 2-



prong spur drive (with the grain) or use a 4-prong spur drive. Alternately, Mike said he sometimes uses a 4" Forstner drill bit on the bark

side and then puts a 4" face plate securely in that location. With the spur drive in the piece, he put the piece onto the headstock and began to look at the best place to put the tailstock near the center of the flat surface. He checked to see if the high and low sides were about even as they rotated. His reference point was the tool rest which he had placed to help see if the piece was spinning true or wobbling. The goal was to



**Remember,  
the *Monthly Challenge*  
for October  
is making  
an natural  
edged bowl.**

*What will  
you make?*

SEPTEMBER 2017 DEMONSTRATION, page 2

create a symmetrical rim on the piece without getting the mass too out of balance and make it unsafe to turn.



Mike put the tool rest at a 45 degree angle to the bowl blank and began cutting with a 1/2" bowl gouge from the tail stock toward the headstock. He turned the bottom of the bowl shape up to the bark. He then cut the upper portion of the bowl through the bark by cutting toward the tailstock – this helped keep the bark in place. He cautioned that the tail stock should be checked periodically to ensure that it is pushing tight against the spur



drive. If a catch does occur, the prongs of the spur drive will start to spin and may need to be hammered deeper into the piece again.

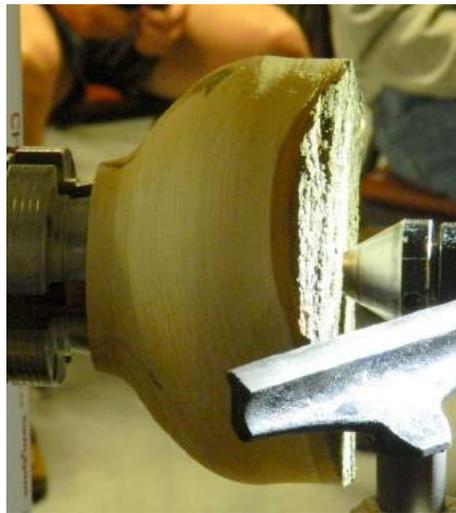
Several other tips were offered while Mike turned:

- Sharpen your tools throughout the turning process to cleanly cut the bark

and keep it attached to the rim.

- If the bark becomes loose, glue using CA type glue and carefully controlling where the glue is placed so it does not discolor the wood.
- Sharpen scrapers with a good burr edge to help shape the contour of the bowl, but do not use them on the bark edge.
- Only cut down into the bark with a very sharp bowl gouge.

When the outside shape of the bowl was achieved, Mike began to shape the foot of the bowl and the tenon. He used a bedan and parting tool to shape the inside tenon that was only slightly larger than the outside diameter of his chuck jaws to get maximum holding power.



The piece was then turned around and put on the chuck with the tail stock pulled up for support. Mike did not cut inside the bowl long before he had to move the tailstock out of the way for better tool access. Mike directed his cuts into the rim with a sharp bowl gouge to cleanly cut the rim to the thickness of about 5/16". The rim was cut to a final thickness each time Mike went deeper into the bowl. As he noted, the green wood was distorting as the turning went deeper and it was not possible

A Great Article on Locating Forms in Burl and Root Blanks is by Bill Johnston in AAW's Journal, American Woodturner, September 1994, pp. 28-29

**SEPTEMBER 2017 DEMONSTRATION, page 3**

to go back to the outer rim once the bowl was turned to its full depth. The bottom of the bowl was cut with the bowl gouge and then a round scraper to get a smooth



surface.

Mike explained that sanding the bowl can be done at this green stage with sandpaper or mesh sandpaper like Abranet. Alternately, the bowl could be slowly dried and then remounted on the lathe at a later time, although the bowl will not be round and will require slower speeds to sand the surface



evenly. Hand sanding or sanding with drill mounted sanding disks could be done while the piece was held by the chuck and the lathe was turned off. The dried piece could be put on the lathe bowl side out using the tenon in the foot – however, it will need to be turned back to round, if it had distorted into an oval shape. The bottom of the bowl could be sanded or the tenon returned to round by putting the open end of the bowl over a closed chuck with some padding (or using a jam chuck with padding) and the tail stock pulled up to keep it in place.

**TURN FOR TROOPS—2017**

The *Turn for Troops* National *Turn-a-Thon* sponsored by Woodcraft is in its 14th year. Thru this event, volunteers turn pens which are then sent to military personnel serving overseas and those in rehabilitation centers. Most of the pens are produced at Woodcraft stores, but they also supply pen kits and wood blanks to participating AAW Clubs.

Members of the Central New York Woodturners have sent 505 pens in our three years of participation..

For 2017, we have 250 pen kits. Most of the kits were distributed to members at the September meeting, but project coordinator **Larry Prunotto** has more if you were not at the

meeting. Completed pens need to be returned to Larry, by the **November 14<sup>th</sup>** General Meeting.

If you want to participate and Larry is out of kits, you may do so by supplying your own pen kits. If you are considering this, please contact **Larry Prunotto**, [larry0128@outlook.com](mailto:larry0128@outlook.com) or 315 652-3605, so he can provide required packaging for the completed pens. All pens must also be provided to Larry by the **November 14<sup>th</sup>** General Meeting.

This is a project that supports the very deserving members of our armed forces abroad who are making sacrifices and endure unpleasant and dangerous conditions to protect our nation, our freedom, and the world.

