

## OUR JULY DEMONSTRATION – WEIGHT WATCHERS WITH BOB IRELAND

**M**embers and guests of the Central New York Woodturners enjoyed an interesting talk on turning thin at their July 2016 meeting. **Bob Ireland** used a variety of photos in a Powerpoint presentation to walk the attendees through the concepts he wanted to discuss. To talk about turning thin projects, he started by contrasting the meaning of words like thick versus thin and light versus heavy. The discussion was about how these contrasting words were a matter of



individual perspective based on personal preferences, societal norms and expectations, and generational and cultural differences. Various turned pieces were presented with different thickness of walls and different shapes. For example, vessel shapes that had an uplifting shaped base tended to give the visual impression of a lighter overall design.



The reasons and rational presented for learning to turn thinner pieces included the challenge of learning other techniques and refining skill development. Since thinner pieces are generally not as practical as more durable sized pieces, they are sometimes not very useful on a daily basis. The artistic impression of the pieces is often the desired outcome of such projects as pens, finials, goblets, and hats.



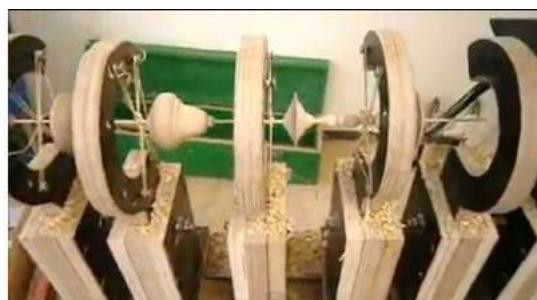
During his discussion, Bob presented a seven point outline for turning thin techniques that he referred to as **SSNAPS**:

**Sharp Tools** are necessary to be successful and safe when learning to turn thin pieces. For some turners, attempting to turn thin was the driving force in also learning how to sharpen their tools and keep them sharp.



**Supporting** the piece as the turning gets thinner and thinner is necessary and may require the use of steady rests. Steady rests can be purchased commercial or built by the turner from plans found in turning books or on line. When turning finials or other spindles either finger and hand support or string rests can be used.

**Nerves of Steel** or a sense of safe adventure is helpful because this type of turning requires practice and the acceptance of failure in the learning and practice.



**Attitude** influences how well your learning progresses as a good amount of patience

and calmness is required to have a positive perspective that, with practice, you can be successful in developing good turning thin techniques.

**Patience** with yourself and where you are on the learning curve toward competence and success influences your attitude and the development of *nerves of steel*.

**Practice, practice, practice** is required to achieve consistent use of various tools and their use with different types of thin turned projects. While learning to turn thin with one technique and tool has some carry over to another project, each tool and technique demands practice to achieve thin project outcomes. Use calipers to check the thickness and consistency of your work as you progress.



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**Safety** during thin turning means recognizing that thin materials are much more delicate and easily broken so that personal safety equipment like a face shield is a must. In fact, use all safety techniques and personal safety equipment appropriate to the project. Expect that you will



make mistakes and have pieces break, crack, or blow out as you push your skill to more and more delicate thin walled vessels or finials. Use supplemental lighting to better illuminate the fine detail in your work and to better see your tool technique. Start all your thin turnings away from the chuck and work your way down toward the chuck to keep vibrations to a minimum and to increase safe practice and successful outcomes.

Bob's suggestion during the demonstration and the following Saturday at the workshop was to turn as thin as you are comfortable and then safely turn a little farther to expand your experience and improve your skills.

Submitted by **Chad Dawson**  
Photos by **Heather Muckley**

## JULY SATURDAY WORKSHOP

The July Saturday workshop was held at **8 Acres**. The group was small so most turned with **Bob Ireland** and

**Robert Love** mentoring. Here are some photos of the morning.

**NOTE:** *Experienced turners are always needed at workshops to help others.  
The mentors do not pay for the workshop unless they take supplied materials.*

