

OUR AUGUST DEMONSTRATION – *CHEAP PIERCING* WITH *ED SIEGEL*

Members and guests of the Central New York Woodturners enjoyed a broad ranging demonstration on piecing wooden objects – especially focused on cheap piecing – at their August 2016 meeting. Piercing was defined by **Ed Siegel** in his demonstration as cutting a hole of any shape or making openings in a wood turned project. The means to making those piercings include drilling, turning, carving, and removing wood through mechanical rotary tools or hand tools.



Ed started off by showing a wide range of outstanding examples using some pierced pieces by artists such as **Michael Foster, Bill Ooms, Richard Morris, Jerry Harris, Steve Ainsworth, Paul Fennel, Steve Sherman**, and others.

Ed noted that this demo follows after the turning thin discussion

because in order to pierce you first need to be able to turn thin pieces from either dry or wet wood. Most often it is easier to turn wet wood very thin (1/8"), let it dry, and then begin your piercing techniques. The wet wood turning techniques often let you use light through the wood to estimate thickness and to keep the piece a uniform thickness. After the piece is pierced, the thickness will be evident so care must be taken to get the turned piece uniform. Sometimes drilling a piece before turning can give you reference points for thickness, such as when turning a bird house body.

Piercing can be done with a wide variety of files, saws, drills, rotary tool bits and hand carving tools. However, because of the speeds necessary to cleanly pierce the wood, most people turn to a power tools which can be very expensive. Hence, that is when Ed began to emphasize his reasons for investigating many tools before making a purchase. Some of the tools he described were:



Cheap Piercing, page 2

- ✓ **Dental Drills** are the highest speed tools (300,00 to 400,00 rpms) and also the most expensive because in addition to the drill components, a compressor, hose, filter, and regulator is needed. The total drill component package with ceramic bearings and a 45 degree surgical tool head and handle, could cost around \$500. (*e.g. NSK Presto at LangerCraftsWorks.com*) The compressor and those components are a substantial additional cost to deliver 1.5 CFM at 35 PSI.
- ✓ **A Rotary Tool** such as a **MicroMotor** (35,000 to 46,000 rpms) is a more cost effective package at around \$200 to \$300 for a self contained system with little vibration and using a wide selection of burr tool bits. It works more slowly than the dental drill and you need to be more careful not to burn the wood and to follow the grain closely.
- ✓ **Rotary Tools** such as a **Dremel Tool** (20,000 to 30,000 rpms) is a self contained handheld tool that can be widely purchased even in such discount stores as Harbor Freight. However, the cost of the tool can be an indication of its performance and durability.

Another example is the **Fordham** flexible shaft (18,000 rpms) with a foot pedal control. Although a Fordham can be inexpensive, it can be awkward using the flexible shaft when making delicate work on small objects.

Any tool is going to perform only as well as the rotary tool bits that you use with the machine. Ed talked through the different types of bits and emphasized their relative cost and performance for use on piercing thin walled woodturned projects. Examples included: purchasing an inexpensive tool bit set such as a 11 piece rotary tool bit set for Dremel type machines from Lowe's for \$11.99 or jewelry cutting bits from Harbor Freight.

Although there is a extreme variety in rotary tool bits, Ed prefers double fluted style bits such as the piercing drill bits found at TreelineUSA.com for \$18.50 or a grout removal cutting bits for a Dremel Tool from Lowe's because of the ease of use with thin woods and low cost.

Write up Submitted by **Chad Dawson**
Photos by **Heather Muckley & Barbara Raymond-LaPrease**

AUGUST SATURDAY WORKSHOP

The August Saturday workshop was held at **8 Acres**. Most of the group played with piercing equipment thanks to the leader, **Ed Siegel**. **Ed Rantanen** choose to turn and received guidance from everyone in attendance.

Bruce Swift worked with **Charlie LaPrease** to sharpen his tools. 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.

