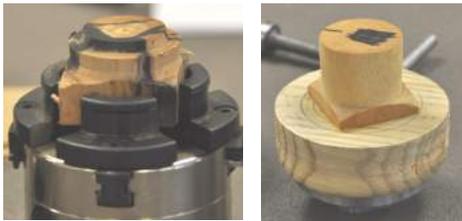


**APRIL 2017 DEMONSTRATION
MINIATURE FRUIT BOWLS WITH DAWN PETRIE GEORGE**

Members and guests of the Central New York Woodturners assembled on Wednesday, April 12th for their monthly meeting and demonstration by **Dawn Petrie George** who visited us from her Florida home via family in Utica.

Making doll house furniture was what hooked Dawn into making miniature projects on the lathe. Before she knew it, she was trying to make miniatures of fruit and bowls and scouring the yard looking for likely vines and twigs to add a natural look to her creations.

Dawn began her demonstration talk by explaining a variety of ways to directly hold small pieces of wood while working on the lathe -- collet chucks, Jacobs drill chuck, and home made jam chucks were on the top of her list.



Her suggestions included gluing wood blocks to scraps of wood that could be held in a chuck or double-side

taped to a scrap of wood in a chuck. She has no preference for glue and uses super glue, wood glue, and hot glue because the pieces are small and easy to safely fasten using almost any type of glue. She does prefer the Peachtree double-sided tape.

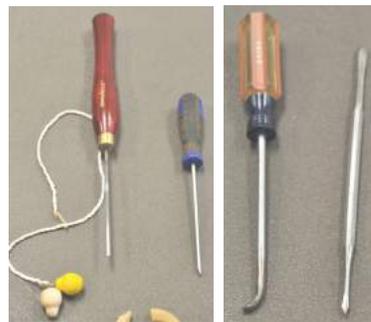
Selection of wood for turning mostly focused on hardwoods with tight grain for strength, good surfaces for sanding, and the ability to hold detail



in the turned piece. The more interesting discussion was about finding small twigs and pieces of vine that could be used for fruit stems and grape vine clustering in your yard or around the neighborhood.



Finding small wood turning tools for making miniatures was easy for Dawn once she realized she needed to make some of her tools from small Allen wrenches (scraper) and screw drivers (parting tool). Commercially available



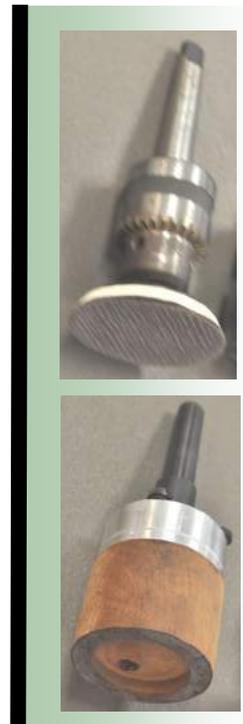
tools included a 1/8" small bowl gouge and detail spindle gouges, especially with aggressive grinding (45 degree

angle). Dawn prefers very high speeds for turning miniature pieces to achieve a cleaner cut.

Gluing very tiny pieces of the miniatures together is a special challenge. Dawn recommends using special glues that may hold a small item quickly like gel super glue or CA glue with an accelerant sprayed onto it to quickly attach a small piece and reduce holding time. Another tip was to use pieces of string to attach a small item and make it easier to spray paint the item. Finishing mostly was discussed as coloring using spray paint, acrylic paints, aniline dyes, and protecting the color with Krylon type color fixatives.



The usual safety practices for turning were described such as no loose clothing or hanging objects near the lathe. Dawn suggested that these very tiny items do not require a full face shield – safety glasses were considered adequate protection.

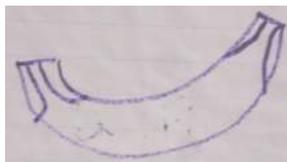


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Fruit Bowl – It was suggested that it was probably a good idea to make the bowl first as a guide to what size your fruit would need to be to stay in proportion to the bowl. The suggested size was about the size of a half dollar or poker chip. Do not use a tail stock since the wood piece is small and the first task is to round out the piece and hollow out the bowl opening. Second, shape the outside of the bowl leaving the foot or base of the bowl attached. Create the design with all detail as planned and then sand the bowl. Next part the bowl off the rest of the block after placing a plastic bowl under the piece to catch it as it falls off. Finally, make a jam chuck to hold the bowl so that the bottom of the bowl can be finished.



Bananas – The first fruit described was made from a 1.5" ring hollowed and turned from a block of wood. The ring is only about 1/8" in cross section and is parted off from the wood block as a separate solid ring. The ring is then cut into three segments on a band saw and each piece is shaped to have flat sides and a pointed top and bottom. The shaping can be done with a Dremel tool, sanding disk, or carving tools. The wood can be colored yellow, stained yellow, or yellow heart wood could be used for a good color scheme. The final piece is then touched on each end with a brown permanent marker to resemble banana ends.

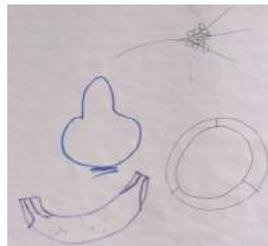


Pear – a small piece of wood was turned round to the diameter wanted for the base of a pear. The upper portion of the pear was turned to a smaller diameter and the whole pieces was sanded while it



was still attached at the base. A small drill hole was put into the top of the piece so that a small twig could be glued in place to resemble a stem. The piece was carefully parted off and caught in a plastic bowl. The base was sanded with an indentation and then the bottom center was touched with a marker to resemble the bottom of a pear.

Grapes – Dawn put a short piece of an 1/8" hardwood dowel into a Jacobs drill chuck (no tail stock) and turned a bead on the end of the dowel. She sanded the grape, marked in purple with a marker, and parted it off into a bowl to catch it. She turned several grapes from the same dowel piece. The grapes were then held with a tweezers and glued with CA glue and accelerant to small natural stems and built up one near another until she had a bunch of grapes. This process may require a magnifying glass to see the tiny grapes and stems.



Demo and write up by **Chad Dawson**
Photos by **Heather Muckley & Barbara Raymond-LaPrease**



Bonnie Klein wrote the earliest article about turning miniatures in AAW's journal, *American Woodturner*. As an AAW member, you can access any of the articles on this topic as well as many, many others. AAW Explore makes it easy to find relevant articles on any topic!