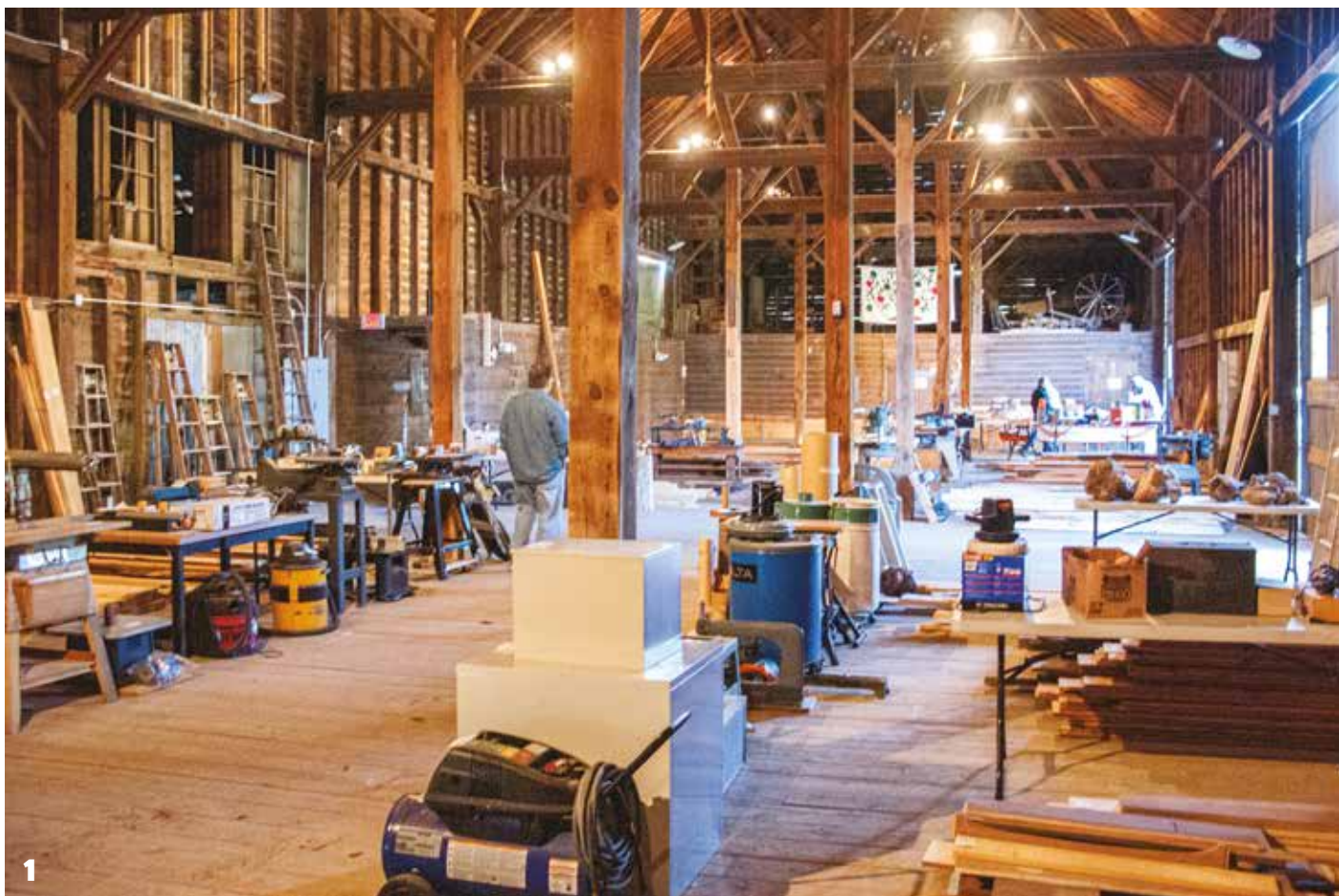


Kurt's clinic

Kurt Hertzog answers readers' questions



PHOTOGRAPHY BY KURT HERTZOG

Occasionally I see woodturning tools being offered in auctions. Any suggestions on what kind of prices are reasonable for buying at auction? Anything I should be cautious of?

The most important rule for any auction, unfortunately often ignored, is to not fall prey to the thrill of winning the bidding battle. Assess the value of the item(s) to you, a price you are willing to pay, and set that as the maximum you will bid. Stick to it. Too many people get bidding fever and wind up losing by winning. The thrill of achieving 'victory' blinds them to overpaying. Much like the gambler's problem of 'just one more time and I'll win it all'.

If the tools are of a quality name you would buy at retail and aren't excessively worn or damaged, 50% of retail is a typical used-tool price, regardless of where you might buy them. At auction, you can often do far better than that typical resale price – it depends on who else is bidding, how much they know about the item, or if they really want it. On occasion, you can cherry pick item(s) from a multi-piece lot someone else has won. If that winner is not interested in all the items, you can make an offer to buy the pieces you desire and they recover part of their purchase price and get rid of something in the lot they don't specifically need or want. But don't bank on selling and recovering monies by unloading unwanted items in multi-piece lots if you win. Bid on lots with items you want or need. If unwanted items are included, price them at zero or some minimum value. Set your maximum bid based on your desired items. You may wind up storing won but unwanted included items until they go to the bin. At least you haven't paid (much?) for them. Auctions are great fun and can be a money saver, provided you participate wisely and don't get swept away by the must-win fever.



1 Examine items of interest before you get involved with bidding. Whether online or in person, know what the tools, equipment, or materials are worth to you and set your maximum bid **2** Auctions are a lot of fun. Be cautious as it is easy to get wrapped up in the excitement of bidding and wind up paying too much to win your item(s)



3 Much of my shop time is spent taking photos. Setting up the strobes and camera appropriately, pre-focusing, turning to the correct explanation point, and capturing each image takes time

Do you participate in the various woodturning websites and online forums? Which ones do you use and why?

My career and hobbies have been integrally intertwined with development and use of computers since the late 1960s. Now as then, I spend far too much time in front of a computer on work, education and research, or for communications. Never playing games, although I do enjoy watching and learning from YouTube and Vimeo, so perhaps that is entertainment as well. Like most of the connected world, I have a presence on social media. I'm on Facebook (especially its myriad special interest groups), LinkedIn, Tumblr, Twitter, Pinterest, Flickr, Instagram, WOW (World of Woodturners), WoodCentral, and others. Far too many, but I do use nearly all for a variety of woodturning purposes. My social media use is for me to be seen and heard regarding my woodturning, demonstrating/teaching, photography, and writing. I'm not trying to blatantly advertise or pushing anything, just be able to be found by those who wish to. I see much and say little. Social media is great for

sparkling ideas and learning. The world is a big place with talent all over. Also, ideas know no specific topic. There are so many online resources that bring something unique to bear. The ones I use the most are YouTube (with a premium account to get rid of ads), the special interest groups I belong to and people I follow on Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram. My online participation is almost always as a watcher and learner. I'm more of the dormouse type. I listen, learn, search, and on occasion post something relatively innocuous. If you are interested in applying your online use to your woodturning, you'll have more than enough with just a few of those I've listed. The special groups on Facebook and the WOW site will usually take more time than you can spare. Be cautious as you get more involved with social media. As we become more isolated, socially interacting from the end of a wire, by choice or mandate, it is far too easy to spend a lot of time – some of the excess which could have been wisely used for other endeavours. Perhaps in the shop rather than in front of the computer.



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The World of Woodturners site (WOW) originated in November, 2007. At its start it was the only interactive site where woodturners could post photos and observations of their work and engage in discussion about their art. Most members think of themselves as a family. This art website has been a source of ideas and inspiration when their talents and skills. This is a place where the novice freely meets with the seasoned professional in an atmosphere of shared respect. The site is designed and everyone uses their own name. From this value has arisen some invisible art, some of which can be seen in the public gallery. Enjoy this snapshot of the work. Added to the site itself is a no-cost, by donating a membership invitation from an existing WOW family member or contacting site administration at



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4 One of my go-to woodturning sites is the World of Woodturners (WOW). Approaching its 20th anniversary, it is well run, focused on turning, and avoids carping about other issues 5 The WOW site has plenty to keep you engaged. It has a calendar, file cabinet of articles, a photo library (collective and individual member), and relevant discussions 6 My main shop grinder, and my lighter-weight travelling grinders, are equipped with large, solid toolrests, along with the Oneway Wolverine jig fittings 7 While I freehand all my scrapers and nearly all of my cutters, I use the Wolverine Grinding jig system for those special angled tools 8 My Ellsworth gouge jigs for the Wolverine Grinding system and my Tormek. They give me a repeatable, easily obtained, properly shaped and sharpened gouge.

I don't seem to be able to get sufficient shop time. When I do, it seems I do the same old stuff with little growth in my skills. Any suggestions?

You are facing the same issue as most of us. Life seems to get in the way of shop time. I get far less time at the lathe than I would like. Most of my lathe time is consumed by one of two things – either getting images for an article or review that is in process, or turning some item I'm committed to as a gift, donation, or class prep. Not usually conducive to expanding my horizons. On the occasion I get uncommitted time, I launch into something I've rarely or never done before. Most of those times, I expect to have some level of failure. Success right out of the box is usually not really stretching yourself far enough. I can offer a couple of suggestions if you are serious about getting shop time and growing your skills. Set aside a time slot, whether daily, weekly, or monthly, and put it on your calendar. It's a date and that time is spoken for. Get into the shop for that entire planned duration. Much like time at the gym, it is far too easy to break the habit, so don't let it happen. Once it is a ritual, broken only by emergency, you'll plan for it and enjoy it. I leave the phone somewhere else and avoid any interruptions. Keep an idea log for your turning. Whenever you get an idea, jot it down. I use OmniFocus on my phone. Use anything that suits you, even if it's just a scrap of paper. When you plan the topic for your shop sessions, use an idea from that list as a roadmap of what you wish to explore. Remember, just finishing up with

chips on the floor and some new technique, sharpening skill, or work mounting method, is a success. I always score the solitude and making of a floor full of chips a win.

I've been getting ribbed by my turning buddies for using jigs when I sharpen my tools. They call them my 'training wheels'. I can't freehand my tools like they do. Do you use jigs to sharpen your tools?

I hope your buddies are doing this ribbing lightheartedly. Freehand tool sharpening is a skill that usually comes with practice over time. Some folks get it quickly, some not so quickly, and some never become proficient. In the grand scheme, using an aid is a wise idea if it helps you sharpen your tools. Your end goal isn't to dazzle all with your prowess at sharpening, it is to perform your turning with sharp and effective tools. That said, don't be afraid to practise your freehand sharpening to develop your skills. Yes, I still use certain jigs after my years of turning. I freehand all my tools but still use my Vari-grind or Ellsworth jigs when sharpening my Ellsworth gouges. With little effort, I can repeatedly create an effective cutting edge on these tools. My grinder rests are all set for my standard tools, allowing me to easily freehand, but I do use the Oneway Wolverine system on a few speciality acute tools. I don't view these jigs as crutches. I view them as a tool to help me be a more effective sharpener for those couple of tools. ●