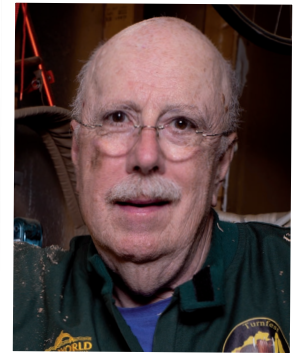


Guest editor's letter

Kurt Hertzog



The times are changing

As you read this, many turners, including me, are preparing for the AAW Symposium in Louisville, Kentucky. With the world's re-emergence, events such as turning symposia are again possible. That said, many current turning events are scaled back, and some are gone forever. Even before the lockdowns, the economic viability of large face-to-face events was being questioned.

The economics of in-person events has been dramatically altered with the ability to hold virtual events at a fraction of the cost. Even before the world lived through various extremes of lockdowns, technology delivered a huge body blow for every conference, class, and trade show. Obviously, someone must pay for all the overheads to put on an event. Attendees must travel, lodge, and eat, as well as pay for some portion of the event overheads too. With virtual events, vendors, demonstrators, event operators, and attendees can stay at home and participate for a fraction of the cost. It's unknown if vendors do as well from a sales volume while they certainly have lower expenses. Much like the working from home

movement has turned office space rental, parking garages, dress clothiers, and eateries adjacent to office complexes into shadows of their former selves.

Does the virtual event scene replicate the in-person symposia? Depending on how far you have travelled on your woodturning learning journey, your needs at any woodturning gathering vary. Many are actively arranging their rotation schedules to see a specialist in a specific topic while others are tracking down their long-lost turning buddies. From learning, shopping, exploring the host city, making new friends, renewing old acquaintances, enjoying the available local cuisine, marvelling at the depth and diversity in the instant gallery, and more can fill your three days of the traditional symposia. While economics and shutdowns have put a dent in the symposia model of old, I believe there will always be a place for them. Sure, virtual events are more convenient and affordable. I do believe technology continues to keep people separated at the end of their own wire. It's sad for socialisation but unstoppable technology advances.

For all turners, new and old, I highly recommend that you find a way to attend an in-person event, even if you only make it to one. I started attending the AAW Symposium in Charlotte in 2000 and the Utah Woodturning Symposium in 2001. I've attended each of them every year that they have been held since then. Unfortunately, the UWS discontinued operations in 2018 after 29 years. To my knowledge, it was the longest-running turning symposium until its demise and was the model for the many turning symposia that followed. In addition to the years of AAW and UWS symposia, I've been fortunate enough to attend Turnfest in Australia too. Along with the many regional symposia I've attended, I wouldn't change any of them for watching the events on a computer or TV screen – much like attending a professional sporting event. You can watch it in the rec room but it can never feel the same as sitting in the stadium. Here's hoping the 'real', in-person events continue in some fashion even if reduced. I encourage you to get to at least one if not more. **Kurt**



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