



# Redwood Empire Woodturners

[www.redwoodempirewoodturners.com](http://www.redwoodempirewoodturners.com)

## Newsletter

A Chapter of the  
American Association of Woodturners

### January 2012

#### Next Meeting

**Thursday, January 12, 7:00 PM**  
**LDS Church Gym**

**1337 South Dora Street, Ukiah** (see map below)

Pete Passof will demonstrate making salt and pepper shakers. We will have discussions on activities for 2012. A President's Challenge will be announced. Regular activities will include show & tell, and the raffle.

Refreshments for this meeting: Dave Peck



1337 South Dora St

#### President's Message

Welcome to the New Year! I hope you and your families are healthy, happy and ready to take on the next year. I like to use the first few days of the New Year to think about the things that worked last year and also the things that didn't work. Then, I start making a mental list of the things I **really** want to get done this year. Finally, comes the real list. What do I have to do to make it happen?

You may not be comfortable with this kind of organization, but my list has 2 columns. One of things I want to get done while the other column lists things I must get done. This is where the discipline comes into the picture. Work only on the "musts". The "wants" will have to wait. This accomplishes two things for me. First, it makes me think hard about the items I put in the "must do" column. I am committing myself to getting these things done first. Secondly the list keeps me focused. It helps me resist all the things that daily pull us away from what we planned to do.

Why do I bring this up? At the start of the New Year we all plan to get around to doing some turning. Then time goes by and it's summer, and then fall and then another year is gone. If you really want to do some turning this year, see if you can get it on your "must do" list. Then, do it, have fun and bring your turning to the next meeting. See you there!

Larry

See financial statement on page 5

## Board

President - Larry Price 707-462-1155  
Vice President - Pete Passof 707-462-8588  
Treasurer - Mack Brown 707-591-1742  
Newsletter - Dave Peck 707-485-7458  
Librarian - Dean Miller 707-245-4438  
Raffle – John Brugo 707-485-8226

## Mentors

Call the person on this list and set up an appointment to learn about the specialty listed. You will decide where to meet, what's needed, etc. It's free.

Volunteer	Phone	Specialty
Larry Price	462-1155	Tree to rough blank
George Waterstraat	279-1270	Sharpening, Intro to the lathe Hollow Forms
Dave Peck	485-7458	Spindle turning, Boxes, Inlay, Sharpening
Noble Waidelich	272-4419	Face Turning
Pete Passof	462-8588	Segmented Turning

### Mentoring Update

Last year we tried holding monthly mentoring sessions. For a variety of reasons that program has been discontinued. We are now back to regular mentoring only. How does that work? It's easy. The person who is interested in learning something new checks the mentoring list to see if someone is mentoring the specialty that you want. If someone is then you just call him and discuss what you are looking for. At a mutually agreeable time and place you will meet and do some "hands on" turning. It's free! But it's up to you to make the call.

Do you have a strong suit where you could help others with a particular turning technique? If you do call Larry Price or Dave Peck and volunteer as a mentor.

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### For Sale:

Two small metal lathes. Price is right. Need tender loving care. One with motor and one without. Contact George Waterstraat for more info. 707-245-4730

## Last Meeting

The Christmas Party was quite successful with a high percentage of the membership present. The presence of spouses, etc. added to the spirit and we all had a good time taking in the food, and conversation. Thanks to Judy Price for all her efforts getting this set up.



Photos  
by Jeff  
Judson

## Calendar

Date	Event/Activity
Jan. 12, 7 pm	<b>Regular meeting</b> - Pete Passof will demonstrate making salt and pepper shakers.
Jan. 26, 12 pm	Board Meeting at Pete Passof's house. All members are invited to attend. Bring your own lunch.
Feb. 9, 7 pm	Regular Meeting - Details to follow.
Jun. 8-10,	AAW Symposium in San Jose, CA More detail coming soon.

## “Woodturning Fundamentals” A New, AAW, Electronic Newsletter!

**Looking for a source of BASIC information on woodturning?** The AAW has started a **new electronic newsletter** called Woodturning Fundamentals. It will be in addition to the regular printed AAW Journal and come out in the months that the American Woodturner Journal is not published.

The first issue will be sent out in January 2012. To sign up current AAW members simply need to go on line to: <http://www.woodturner.org/community/fundamentals/> click the current member button and enter your name, member #, and email address.

Non-members need to join the AAW and then sign up. If you are not an AAW member take a look at the benefits available to members: <http://www.woodturner.org/org/mbrship/>

**Also**, I'm really blown away by the fact that **all back issues of the AAW Journal** (along with an index) are available to all members. Just search the index and go to the articles on the subject you want. It's better than (well at least as good as) having a whole library of books.

Dave Peck

## Is Abalone Dust Hazardous?

While at the Broiler the other night I heard members talking about the dangers of cutting Abalone shell. The consensus was that it was a pretty risky business, as the resulting dust was very toxic. I was sitting down the table a ways so I didn't chime in. My thoughts then would have been based on my discussions with my wife on the topic earlier this year. I will relate those below as well as the results of a little more online research I did today. I found one particularly interesting and I thought well researched article on the subject. The article was a 10 page pdf file so I have pulled out what seemed to me the most important paragraphs and you will find them pasted below along with the web address of for the full article plus one for a biography of the author.

My wife and I have been collecting Abalone shell for awhile and she wants to cut some tile-like pieces from shells to inlay in a wood vanity top for our new bathroom. While researching the best way to cut it (the scroll saw with a fine tooth metal cutting blade works quite well once the shells have been reduced to large fragments-might rent a wet tile saw to do that ) I came across several websites that suggested that the dust was quite dangerous. I told my wife what I had read and she found that pretty surprising. She is a professor of Marine Biology at Sonoma State so when it comes to anything that lives in our coastal waters she is pretty well informed. She could think of no reason why the dust of a shelled animal like Abalone should be particularly toxic. She thinks that the dust should not be breathed for the same reasons as other types of dust: you don't want to put foreign stuff in your lungs whether it be wood dust, abalone shell dust or toxic fumes from a chemical. The article excerpts that follow confirm that opinion. The excerpts from an online article by Chuck “The Duke of Pearl” Erikson. The Duke (<http://www.dukeofpearl.com/>) has been working shell of many types (including abalone) for use in the decoration of stringed instruments as well as other uses since 1968. The full 10 page article can be found at: <http://www.portercalls.com/images/sounds/DOPCUT%20SHELLANDDIEarticle.pdf>

I know there is a lot of text here. Not to much for an electronic newsletter perhaps. Anyway, I hope the members might find it useful.

Michael Toivonen

Extracts from the article continue on next page.

From page 1

Craftsmen have been using mother of pearl, abalone and other pearlescent marine shells for many thousands of years. Along with other fine and exotic materials shell has come to be associated with the very best of the stringed instruments in which ornament plays a role. During the current and resurgent “Golden Age of Luthiery”, guitar and banjo inlays and trim of lustrous shell have been especially prominent, and these materials and the techniques to work them have expanded beyond what anyone could have imagined only a decade or two ago! But shell’s ubiquitous presence has also raised concerns, sometimes bordering on the hysterical, about possible health risks for those who spend much time handling or working with it.

My own intimate involvement with shell goes back to the mid 1960’s, initially as a banjo builder and a few years later as a manufacturer of shell products to the industry (Erika Banjos, later Erika Shell), a profession which continues to this day (<http://www.dukeofpearl.com>). The full article can be found at: <http://www.portercalls.com/images/sounds/DOPCUT%20SHELLANDDIEarticle.pdf>

During the first couple of years as a shell supplier almost no precautions were taken to avoid exposure to the dust (other than an industrial vacuum), but eventually, in a dim reptilian sort of way, it occurred to me that there might be health issues to beware of, especially in breathing the ever-present dust which permanently clouded the air and so finely coated my entire shop. So, not considering inlay work to be a cause quite worth dying for, I began to investigate the chemistry of shell, references about shell in the medical literature, and any scientific research involving shell as a material, as well as chasing down rumors and stories of craftspeople who had supposedly become sick or even died from working it.

Shell dust isn’t listed as a hazardous substance with any governmental or industrial agency, including N.I.O.S.H., O.S.H.A., and the Center for Occupational Hazards, Inc., who sponsored an “Art Hazards ” dealing with art and craft substances.

From page 5

I’ve been doing inlays and commercially processing shell for the musical instrument industry since 1967 and have spent countless hours tracking down stories such as this, but not a single one has ever produced hard evidence that shell was a causative or major contributing agent in any of the rumored sicknesses or deaths. I’ve probably inhaled, ingested, and been exposed to shell dust as much as anyone on the planet, and it’s always been a major health concern that I not be doing long-term damage to any body parts (although short-term damage is just something that goes with the profession!).

In 1977 I was able to get extensive testing done by one private and one government lab on all types of shells, including different parts of each shell such as the parasitic encrustations on the shell’s exterior, the outer “bark” layer or conchiolin (a hardened protein), the inner nacreous layer, and the soft black non-pearly “flow lines” in abalone. The results showed NO evidence of poisonous or toxic substances in other than trace amounts, if that, including: cyanide, bismuth, arsenic, radioactive isotopes, silicon (in its free SiO<sub>2</sub> state, a form associated with silicosis or “miner’s disease”), lead, mercury or any other heavy metals, in spite of the fact that each of the above have been claimed as being released during the working of shell. Among other things, the lab results showed that shell contains: 82-86% calcium carbonate (CaCO<sub>3</sub>); 10-14% conchiolin (C<sub>32</sub>H<sub>48</sub>N<sub>2</sub>O<sub>11</sub>), an insoluble scleroprotein of the keratin type that forms the outer layer of shells and which also binds the crystalline nacre (which is calcium carbonate in the form of aragonite); and 2-4% water. In order of decreasing presence, shell is composed of mostly calcium, with strontium (not the radioactive SR90), aluminum, magnesium, iron, manganese, sodium, and silicon.

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This is not to say that shell dust can’t be dangerous, because it definitely is. But it’s important to correctly identify the real risks. The dust acts as a strong desiccant (absorbing moisture from skin and mucous membranes), and is hard to wash off completely. When viewed under magnification, the dust particles formed during cutting and grinding of

shell show glassy razor-sharp points and edges which can easily cause lesions of the little air sacs (alveoli) in the lungs, and result in a scar tissue condition known as fibrosis, with the scars also being susceptible to infections; the dust isn't dissolved by water or body fluids, so can eventually accumulate to dangerous levels. It can also contribute to nose bleeds, corneal scratching, damage to nasal cilia (the tiny hairs which help filter and propel mucous and particles outward and away from the lungs), initiate (rare) protein allergies, and transport infective materials which are always present on raw shells (remnants of rotted organic matter).

From page 9

Given a clean bill of health, adequate safeguards for shell dust would then be nothing more than to employ one or more of the following: a close-fitting dust mask (which does interfere with being able to blow dust away from the cut while sawing), an open-air work space, a nearby fan, a vacuum fitted with a fine mesh screen next to the cutting board, and a change of heavily soiled clothing and a good scrubbing of any dust covered skin. Since fumes and chemically active agents aren't a significant factor except when processing large quantities of raw shell there's no need for the average craftsperson to use elaborate masks and air compressor feed systems. Keep it simple and comfortable, and enjoy many healthy years working with shell!

Some of this information was contained in a prior Association of Stringed Instrument Artisans (A.S.I.A.) article, "Is Shell Dust Hazardous", in Guitarmaker #16 (June, 1992).

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**Financial Statement:**

As of December 29, 2011

1/1/2011	Starting balance	\$2008.04
Expense	Total checks	- 1832.63
Expense	Total Maintenance fees	-36.00
	Total Deposits	+1377.00_
12/29/11	Ending balance	<u>\$1516.41</u>

This information is from the account summary from the Bank as of the 29<sup>th</sup> of December 2011.

Judy Price