

September 2009

Topics for this month are the Jimmy Clewes demonstration and training sessions, a man we met on our vacation this summer, and boiling wood. Jimmy Clewes will be here October 2 and 3 for two four-hour training sessions and a day-long demonstration. We have enough people to fill the two Friday hands-on sessions with a few people attending both sessions. So, if you want to attend one, please contact me. We will make you a spot by having one of the people signed up for both sessions only attend one. You will not need to bring a lathe (unless you want to use your own), only your tools. Detailed instructions will be handed out at our September meeting.

On our way to pick up madrone burl at Grants Pass, Oregon we stopped at a visitor's center on the beach at Port Orford, Oregon. Port Orford is along the southern portion of the Oregon coast. Two gentlemen were working at the visitor's center and I asked them if we could take some driftwood from the beach. This started a long conversation about wood working and turning. Turns out one of the guys, William, had ties to North Dakota. His mom graduated from St. Alexis School of Nursing in 1924 and she grew up near Sentinel Butte. He said he had a redwood slab he would like to get rid of, so we went to his business warehouse and he gave me the slab. We ended up going to his house and visiting for some time. I gave him an ornament and we have since corresponded a couple times by letter. He sent us some information on Germans from Russia heritage and we learned a lot about living by the ocean. Visiting him was the highlight of our trip.

The last thing I want to discuss is boiling wood to speed up the drying process and to stabilize it. Madrone is a very unstable wood and someone discovered that boiling will stabilize it. Louis Pittman and I were discussing the process and he mentioned he had read something about boiling rough-turned bowls. He forwarded a link to a web page that summarized an experiment. A production turner boiled rough-turned bowls in water and compared the drying time and degree of cracking with air-dried bowls. He found that boiling the bowls significantly decreased both the drying time and amount of cracking. The boiling does something to the wood cells that allows the wood to dry with much less deformation. He did not mention this, but I would be concerned about how the boiling might change the color of the wood. Boiling affects the color of madrone burl.

We can now look forward to having more time in the shop as the summer comes to a close. Hope you are well and look forward to seeing everyone at the September meeting.

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