

### After the Obsession

By Bill Fowkes

At every CAW meeting, I wonder if this is what it's like at those gamblers and alcoholics anonymous meetings. I feel like I should say, "Hi. My name is Bill; I'm a wood turner."

I'm fairly new to turning. I started a few years ago when I took a class in bowl turning at a Woodcraft store. Two pushers...I mean instructors...named Bill Hardy and Bob Pezold taught me, and it's been downhill ever since.

Now I cruise my neighborhood looking for freshly cut trees. When I hear the sound of a chain saw, I get in the car and drive toward the noise. When I get here, I walk up to the guy cutting the wood and say, "Hi. I see you're cutting down a tree, can I have some of the wood?"

My wife calls me at work and says, "They just cut down a tree at the corner of Park and Cedar." I used to jump in the car as soon as I could and go check it out. Now I ask her, "What kind of wood?" Beggars can't be choosers.

After taking the bowl turning class, I joined the Capitol Area Woodturners. Since joining CAW..... I bought a used lathe from John Kerr, tools from C.A. Savoy, the Woodcraft Store and the Wood Turners Catalog, wood from Alan Becker, Frank Stepanski, the Woodcraft Store and the Wood Turners Catalog, various and sundry items from Ebay and I think I've entered the first ring of Hell.

Much like B.C. and A.D. or the Dark Ages and the Renaissance, my life has been bifurcated into two time periods. Sorry, I forgot I was talking to woodturners. My life has been "parted-off" into two time periods.

B.T. – or Before Turning and A.T.O. or...After The Obsession.

B.T. I played baseball. I'm a catcher. Actually catching and wood turning have a lot in common.

- Catchers are used to pain.
- They look at things through a face shield.
- Because you can't throw everyone out at 2<sup>nd</sup> base, catchers are used to...bitter disappointment.
- And....to a non-catcher....they can't see the attraction.

B.T. I played baseball. A.T.O. I turn.

B.T. I had a two door 1955 Chevy Belair. A.T.O. I turn.

B.T. after we put the kids to bed, my wife and I would occasionally go to our bedroom and....well...I still keep some of my old hobbies.

Speaking of wives, I found out after being married awhile, that along with a wife, a lover, a friend and a partner, I got...a wardrobe consultant.

B.T. when we would go someplace where I had to get dressed up, I would put on my clothes, my wife would look at me and she would ask me one question.

"Is that what you're wearing?"

To which I learned the correct answer was, "No?"

A.T.O. when we go someplace where I have to get dressed up, I put on my clothes, my wife looks at me and she still asks me one question.

"Is that wood in your hair?"

Same answer...."No?"

Actually my wife is a big supporter of my wood turning. I turn in my garage and its unheated. One day she looked at me and said, "We could build a shed and heat it so you could have heat in the winter when you turn." I looked at this woman with love in my eyes and said, "Really Honey?" She said, "Sure. In fact, we could build **two** sheds with all the wood you have in the garage."

She's much smarter than me.

I rent videos from CAW. We'll be lying in bed and I'll say, "Hey Honey. Do you mind if I watch a video?" And she would say, "Not another bowl turning movie!"

Up until we saw one called "From Tree to Table" by Mike McCormick. My wife thinks he's cute. Now every so often she'll say, "If you want to work on your technique, that Tree to Table video was a good one."

When I first started turning I thought I would name my pieces. Get kind of artsy. One of the first things I turned was an Ambrosia Maple natural edge bowl. I learned a valuable lesson turning that bowl. I learned that just because a lathe has no cutting surface doesn't mean it can't hurt you!

My knuckle got too close to either the edge or the chuck. My little girl was just beginning to read and I couldn't name it what I wanted which was, "Ow! Ow! Ow! Shit!"

Now my friends tell me about freshly cut trees, my wife brings wood home in her trunk and my children think C.A. Savoy is the most wonderful man in the world because he made them each a finely balanced, textured, colored, wooden top at a wood workers show. When he gave them the tops he said, "Oh girls, your daddy can do this when he gets home."

Three feet of wooden dowel later, after my 6 year old said, "Daddy....maybe you should take a breath," I said, "Girls....Mr. Savoy makes better tops than your dad."

Thanks C.A.

I still have so much to learn and so much to turn.



