



Brandon Woodworkers Club Newsletter April 2026



Let's Get Started

This month's meeting started at 7 PM with the Pledge of Allegiance led by Tom Bolen, followed by the invocation from Dave Merrill. After the invocation, Tom Bolen reminded everyone to sign in and get a "sign-in" raffle ticket from Ken Coleman.

Club Business

- As always, a special thanks to Rockler for allowing us to use their facility.
- We always want to add new pictures to the website. Don't be shy, send your pics.
- **Shop tours:** We need volunteers! It is a great time of the year. Please consider hosting club members to come out to see where your magic happens. Tours are typically a couple of hours in the morning on Saturdays.
- We have added the membership directory to the website. We will discuss access and additional features as we go. For now it is simply names and email addresses.
- Our tool loan program is now in operation, and we have brought in the tools we presently own.
- We've updated the club membership and email list. If you're not getting emails, let Ken Coleman know.
- If you need a membership card or name tag, let Ken know.
- Stephanie and Caleb showed the updates to the club website. The addition of the videos of the presentation and Show and Tell, and the current year's newsletters are the big ones.

Presentation



Jim McCullagh recently won 1st Place and Best of Show at the Florida State Fair for his segmented bowl (Figs 1 & 2). What makes these wins more amazing is that he's only been doing segmented bowls for a little more than a year. Tonight, he'll share his knowledge, talent, tips and tricks on turning lamps and segmented bowls into prize-winning heirlooms.



Figure 1 1st Place and Best of Show ribbons.



Figure 2 Best of Show ribbon.

Jim kicked off his presentation by thanking everyone in the audience and the club. He really enjoys seeing and chatting with other woodworkers regularly, checking out what they're creating, and picking up ideas and tips from the members. He was grateful to Tom and many others who've made it all possible, and he's picked up a few things in his short time with the club.

Turning Lamps

Growing up, his father was a woodworker, and his father-in-law was too, so he's always had a lot of influence from them. His father-in-law taught him how to use a lathe, which has become his favorite; he's enjoyed doing it a lot. Jim does a variety of things, but segmented lamps are his forte (Fig 3). He started making these for his nieces and nephews when they got married, giving them a lamp for their wedding. He had a lot of fun doing that over the years, but he needed to catch up on a few because he missed some weddings and others weren't in their best moods, so they didn't get one for a while. That was Tommy's case, so Tommy and Myrtle – as of June 6, 2013 when Jim made it – Tommy hadn't received it yet, but Jim gets to have it here tonight.



Figure 3 Tommy and Myrtle's wedding lamp.



The fun thing about doing segmented lamps is you just glue up different woods together (Fig 4, blank on the left), then when you cut it and make some designs in it everything starts popping out. This has got a line of purple heart in it, Brazilian rosewood, maple, some yellow heart at the bottom (Fig 4, finished lamp on the right).

Jim starts out with a solid core, such as a 2x2 piece of solid oak. From there he glues up different colored strips of wood to add to the core. He'll also add individual pieces of different colored woods to the core (Figs 5 & 6). As he adds strips to the core, he runs them through the planer to make sure they are flat, so as you add sections there are no gaps when you turn it. He paused to emphasize the importance of sharp blades and properly aligned and gauged tools. Make sure your pieces are dust free before gluing them together. He uses Titebond 3 and plenty of it in a glue-up, and lots of clamps, particularly on the corners.

Figure 4 Blank on the left, finished on the right.



Figure 5 The core (left hand), with single pieces of wood glued to it.



Figure 6 The core with a strip of two different woods.

Jim has a large, heavy Jet lathe. When he turns lamps, he puts the headstock on the skinny end (the core) and a live center on the tailstock (base of the lamp). Jim usually chamfers the blank's sharp edges with a router to make it a tad easier turning at the lathe.

A few years ago, Jim made a lamp for a friend who was getting married – her last name was Cherry – so he found a piece of cherry and made this lamp (Figs 7 & 8). He did something different in this build he'd never done before. He drilled a three-inch horizontal hole (when holding it vertically) and inserted a piece of maple. It took some effort to get the fit perfect but you can't argue with the result. The cherry and the maple dowel popped, and the tip of the wing in the curved ash base*is really cool.

*Note: When turning a separate base, you'll encounter end grain. It's tough, particularly in hard woods. Jim has gone exclusively to carbide-tipped tools. Even then, the finish is a bit rough, so he starts with 150 grit sandpaper and works his way through the grits to 400 and then steel wool.



Figure 7 Blank and finished cherry lamp with maple dowel.



Figure 8 Finished cherry lamp.

The last part of making a lamp is drilling the base for an electrical cord. Jim drills a one-inch hole in the bottom to string the cord up through the lamp. Then he drills a hole in the edge of the base near the bottom (Fig 9). It protects the cord and it's not routed in underneath. The bottom is recessed in about a sixteenth of an inch to allow the lamp to sit flat on a surface. To drill the smaller hole, he puts the lamp on a drill press and tilts it a bit and drills the hole at a slight angle until it hits the one-inch center hole. Once the cord is fed through, he can feel the bottom of the lamp. To drill the hole in the stem of the lamp, Jim sets it in the drill press and drills a 3/8" hole as deep as he can from the top, flips it over and does the same from the bottom, and then connects them with a hand drill and an 18" 3/8" bit. On large lamps, he'll rip it in half, route a groove through most of it, glue it back together, and drill the final inch or two on either end. That method leaves you with a seam.



Figure 9 Hole for electrical cord.

Finally, Jim finishes his lamps with Odie's oil and buffed to a matte finish. Sometimes, he likes a glossy finish and will use a polyurethane.

Turning a segmented bowl is different from turning a solid or laminated bowl blank. Turning a segmented bowl involves gluing pre-cut wood segments into rings (Fig 11), stacking them, and turning the blank on a lathe using light, shear-scraping cuts to create a smooth profile. Essential steps include securing the blank to a faceplate, rounding the outside, hollowing the inside, and thorough sanding. There are two benefits turning a segmented bowl over turning a bowl from a solid blank. First, there's less waste because the blank will already be hollow, and roughly the dimensions of the final bowl. Second, when turning, you're nearly always cutting with the grain of the wood, rather than across it – the exception being the disk at the bottom.



Steps to Get You Started

- **Calculate your angles:** For a standard ring, divide 360° by the number of segments, then divide that by 2 to find your cut angle (e.g., 12 segments = 15° cuts). Jim does his calculations based on a 12-inch diameter (Fig 12) and draws it out on graph paper (Figs 13 & 14). He used two colors per ring with ring thickness decreasing from the bottom to the top. The base is a solid piece of teak.



5

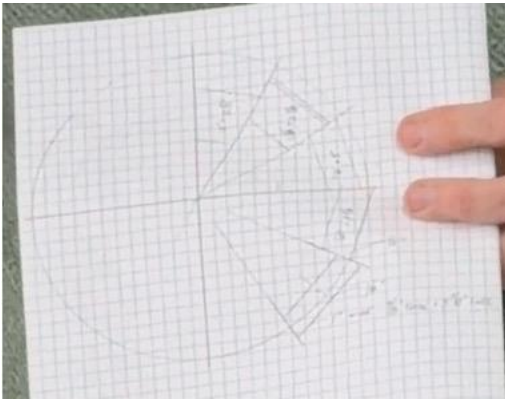


Figure 13 Segment angles on graph paper.

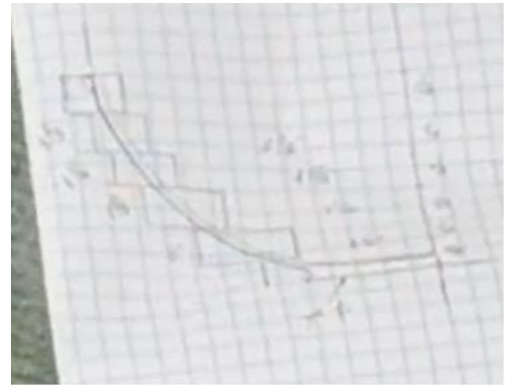


Figure 14 Segment angles on graph paper.

- **Determine segment length:** Use an online segmented turning calculator to find the exact dimensions for each ring's diameter. Sites like Blocklayer (<https://www.blocklayer.com>) and Woodturner's Resource (<https://www.woodturnersresource.com>) provide extensive data and pictures you can print out. All you have to do is set the angles on your equipment and cut them out.
- **Select your wood:** Choose contrasting hardwoods like maple and walnut to make the segmented pattern pop. Plane them all at the same time to the same thickness.

Cutting the Segments

- **Miter your cuts:** Use a table saw with a miter gauge or a dedicated angle sled (Fig 15) for maximum precision.
- **Use a stop block:** Clamp a stop block to your saw fence to ensure every segment in a ring is the exact same length. You can also put a piece of tape on the sled so there is no chance of the cutoff getting caught between the blade and the stop block.
- **Dry fit first:** Arrange the segments in a circle to check for gaps before applying any glue. Jim dry fits it and clamps it with a hose clamp (Fig 16) or a band clamp. That gives him a chance to fine-tune the segments before glue-up. Once everything is good, it's time for the glue-up.



Figure 15 Dedicated angle sled.



Figure 16 Hose clamp around a test fit.

Assembly and Glue-Up

- **Glue the rings:** Jim lays out a strip of painter's tape straight on a flat surface. He lays each piece in a line touching one another on the tape then applies a bit of glue to each joint. At that point, he starts at one end and rolls the pieces that are stuck to the tape into a circle. He applies a hose or band clamp over it (Fig 17) until it's dry. He lets it dry on wax paper on a flat surface and taps down any piece that's too high. He'll glue a couple of rings together at a time, put them on a round stand (Fig 18) and clamp them down tight all around. Even the smallest of gaps will appear once you turn it, and you'll see the glue and the gap. When all the rings have been glued together, he'll add the base.



Figure 17 Segments taped and clamped.



Figure 18 Rings clamped to a round stand.

- **Flatten the faces:** Once dry, sand the top and bottom faces of each ring perfectly flat using a drum sander, a disc sander or a flat board with sandpaper.
- **Stack the blanks:** Once all the rings are dry, he stacks them, staggers the joints, and turns them looking for the best combination of fit and color. When that's decided, he tapes them together (Fig 19) and puts registration marks on the lighter colored rings on the inside to make sure they match up when they're glued together.



Figure 19 Looking for the best combination.

Turning the Bowl

- **Rough turn the exterior:** On the headstock end of the lathe, mount the blank to a face plate (Fig 20) (probably the safest way) with a glue block (waste block) between them to protect the base and use a bowl gouge to round off the corners at a safe speed (approx. 500–750 RPM for a 12-inch blank). On the tailstock end, Jim places a round piece of plywood between the open end of the bowl and the tailstock (Fig 21) to apply pressure and stabilize the bowl. Other options to mount the blank are expanding jaws (Fig 22) or a steady rest (Fig 23); Jim's DIY version (Fig 24). Use a large bowl gouge to turn the rough, stacked rings into a cylinder, removing all flat spots.



Figure 20 Mount blank to a face plate.



Figure 21 Tailstock end with plywood between bowl and tailstock center.



Figure 22 Expanding jaws.



Figure 23 Commercial steady rest.

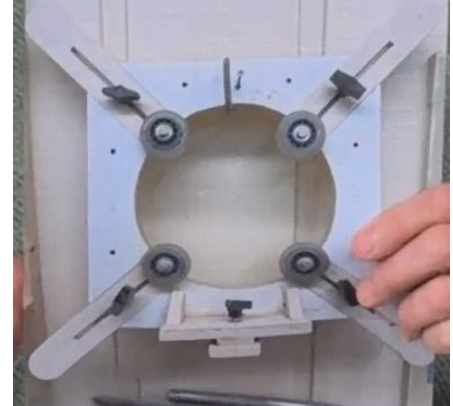


Figure 24 Jim's DIY steady rest.

- **Hollow the interior:** Work from the rim toward the center using light cuts to avoid "bone-jarring" hits on the segment flats.
- **Refine the shape:** Use a scraper, skew, or sandpaper for final smoothing to minimize tear-out between the different wood species.
- **Sanding and Finishing:** Sand the bowl thoroughly inside and out, starting at lower grits (e.g., 100) and moving to higher grits for a smooth finish, followed by applying a food-safe finish, such as beeswax or "salad bowl finish".

- **Removing the Base:** There are two ways to remove the base. You can saw it off or you can turn the bowl around on the lathe, often using a recessed mortise or custom jaws, to turn away the initial waste block and form the final foot. Either of these may require some touch-up sanding and finish.

Turning lamps and bowls – whether crafting from wood on a lathe or repurposing household items – offers the joy of transforming raw materials into functional, artistic pieces. It combines creative design with practical skill, allowing makers to create unique home decor, such as segmented wooden lamps or custom-turned bowls.

Newcomers/Visitors

The club welcomed Don Presnell, who also brought some items for Show and Tell.

Show and Tell

Alright, let's get to everyone's favorite portion of the meeting.

Tom Bolen and Rick Borden

Tom and Rick teamed up to make a custom wall unit. It started with the owner's concept drawing, done in five sections: base cabinet with double doors; center drawer cabinet; base cabinet; double doors; shelving with glass doors in the top and both sides. The sides were connected with an arch. Rick installed cell phone-controlled LED lighting in the glass cabinets and the arch.



Jeff Futch

In the past month, Jeff made two black limba dining tables, one for a previous client and one for his niece (last photo). Both are finished with Rubio Monocoat. The first table measures 11 ½' long and 50" wide and is made of two 21-inch-wide slabs and an eight-inch center section – 38 dominos are holding it together. He'll need chairs to go with it. For the table legs, the client chose a flowy line design, one on each end and two in the middle. The legs are designed to have a hollow part in the center when placed back-to-back, so the client had Jeff build an insert to go between them (see photo of Jeff holding the curved prototype insert). Each leg looks like a tree trunk with three branches growing up. With the table top so wide, Jeff used a half-inch plate, three inches wide, and inset it into the bottom of the table top. He used threaded inserts to attach it and left the screws finger tight in the slotted bolt holes to allow for wood movement. The second table, the one for his niece, is 60 inches long and 34 inches wide.



Cliff Price

Cliff made a knock-down pine workbench from pine, red oak, and poplar. It has a laminated pine top with a 1'x4' pine tool tray in the back that can be flipped over and used as an extended work surface. It is secured in place using blocking to hold it to the legs, which are also laminated pine 2x4 with dovetailed shallow laps with brackets and braces to hold that into the trestles. Stretchers made from 2x12 southern yellow pine with through tenons running through mortises in the trestles are secured in place with tapered oak dowels. It's got lots of dog holes and face and tail vises. It can all be taken apart with a wooden mallet. He hasn't finished it; he's vacillating between boiled linseed oil and Danish oil.



Ward Gannon

Ward got tasked with making rabbits for Easter, which he made from a lot of birch, some walnut and oak with a stain and modge podge (thanks to his wife) finish. She glued on a napkin and then created a gold boundary around it just on the laminated birch. Some were left clean for next Easter. The walnut bunny was from an old walnut countertop that he also used to make a desk drawer.





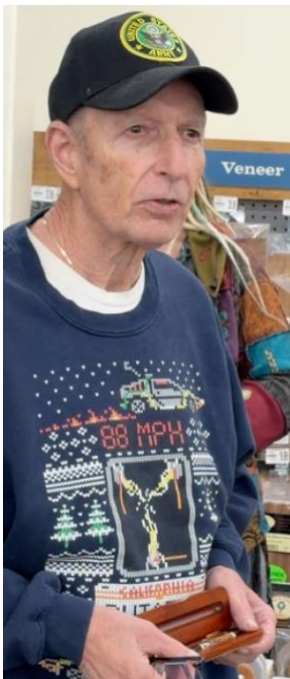
Richard Nannis

Richard has made a lot of important pieces, but he thinks this is probably the most important. He got hold of two other veterans who reclaim wood throughout the entire world, old wood. They wound up reclaiming the first building liberated in the Battle of Normandy. The building



was 232 years old and the beams were Elmwood. Richard was able to get some small pieces of this Elmwood. He had to subject it to a resin process where he infused resin into the wood because the wood was not in good shape. Then he fashioned this particular pen. If you look at it, you'll see that the wood is a little bit different from the wood you're used to seeing. It's finished in CA glue. Currently, the

wood is up for auction for the benefit of Tunnel to Towers.



Don Presnell

Don makes ring boxes, along with napkin holders and honey starters. The ring box is made from purpleheart and walnut with a beeswax and linseed oil finish. He started with a walnut center with $\frac{1}{4}$ " thick walnut sides and a purpleheart top and bottom. He glued it all together then cut the top off on a band saw and added a small walnut block under the lid to fit nicely in the box. The napkin holder has a walnut base with $\frac{1}{4}$ " thick mahogany sides. The walls are, in order, walnut, mahogany, cherry, mahogany, and walnut. Don sells his wares on Instagram, small craft fairs, and word of mouth.



Jim Ethington

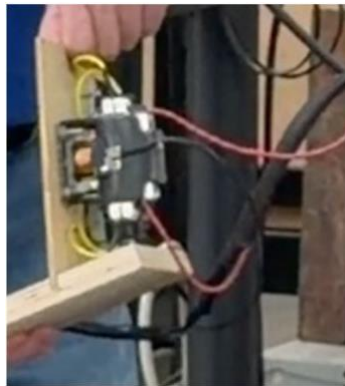
Jim brought in two items. Jim is building a guitar for his grandson who is currently here from Australia. Jim brought in the curved piece because it's a mistake. There are several cracks in it from the bending process. Jim said it's a good way to ruin \$200. Back to the drawing board. The other piece, with the circle, is the top of his guitar. It is made from Bearclaw sitka spruce*. You join them together so you have the same grain on both sides (bookmatching) and very thin. Jim and his grandson will route out the circular areas for three different inlays. They're not glued in right now, they're just stuck in. It must be a really accurate cut. On the back, they'll put the braces on and then they'll scalp cut them down and make them work so that they vibrate nicely. And then Jim will cut the circle, which will be four inches.

***Note:** per AI, Bearclaw Sitka Spruce is a premium, figured tonewood featuring unique, rippling, or "claw-like" grain patterns, highly prized for acoustic guitar tops due to its visual aesthetic and high stiffness-to-weight ratio.



Caleb Nixon

A couple months ago, Caleb was injured when his band saw had a momentary drop in power and an immediate power surge that pulled the wood and Caleb's hand into the blade. Caleb required several stitches. Hearing Caleb's story, Tom, whose work career was in electrical sales, made a momentary start/stop button as a motor control safety feature made from a relay switch and two push buttons. The switch senses a loss of power and opens the circuit, interrupting power to the machine. To reestablish power to the machine, you must manually press the Start button to close the circuit and get power, so there is no chance of a sudden power surge turning the machine on unexpectedly. It cost him \$31 for the parts from Amazon. Tom has a diagram of the parts and offered to help any club member who'd like to make one. Caleb made a box from birch to house the controls. As a thank you, Caleb made Tom a pen from zebrawood he'd gotten from Tom and finished it with CA glue.



Fred Langes

Fred made a mini drum sander to sand down splines that were too thick for the box he was building. It's made from 2x4 PVC pipe and pieces of Formica. A hand drill is attached to the spindle to turn the drum sander. Fred saw a You Tube video where you can mount a handheld router to it, so he built it with that in mind. The router can be adjusted up or down and locked in place.



Rick Ward

Rick turned a 12-inch – the largest he can make on his lathe – salad bowl from aromatic red cedar (salvaged from a hurricane). The bowl kind of designed itself. Rick left some bark on the edge. Some say you can't do that because the bark won't stay on – so far it has. It's got some nice sapwood in with the heartwood. He tried an experiment with finishing it. Normally he put on four coats of spar varnish, but the spar varnish takes 24 hours to dry between coats. This time he used three coats of shellac, which dries in minutes, to start it and put a coat or two of spar varnish over it. It's so much faster. If it's going to be a salad bowl, like this one, he puts a peel and stick pad on the bottom so it doesn't scratch a surface.



John O'Neal

John got a call from his daughter asking if he could make something for her to hold things on her shelves, so he built a shelf box from ash and with no finish. Before John moved here, he had a home in Michigan with an ash forest in their backyard. The forest was devastated by the Emerald Ash borer. John managed to salvage 2700 board feet of five-quarter ash and brought it with him to Florida. To build the box, he took some five-quarter and resawed it in half and planed it down to a little more than a quarter inch thick. He then cut the boards into 1 ¼" slats and glued those together and planed those down to a quarter inch. He used a Rockler box joint jig to put the sides together. He put some pads on the bottom for it to slide easily. He brought her two and, needless to say, his daughter was very happy and asked if he could make 20 more. No good deed goes unpunished!



Harry Carter

Harry turned a segmented bowl from maple, purpleheart, padauk, walnut, Peruvian walnut, and a mystery wood he thinks is cumaru (Brazilian teak). Each ring contains 12 pieces, 2 pieces of each type of wood. He finished it with Mylands.



Ron Sandoval

Turned pill boxes from sapele with an oil and beeswax finish. These are every day carry items you can use it for toothpicks, an emergency \$20 bill, or whatever will fit that you may need every day or occasionally. It's made from one piece of wood. You split it at one end so the grain looks continuous. He sells them for ~\$8 to get people in.



Bruce Woody

Bruce turned a bunch of pens. The Monarch Elite pens from Bethlehem olivewood (far right) were for a confirmation class; the baseball pens from acrylic (third through seventh from the left) were for his grandson, who is a minor league manager for Baltimore; and, spalted oak (second from left), and buckeye burl (far left). The wood pens were stabilized and all were finished with CA glue. Bruce also brought in two pieces of wood, one raw, the other stabilized, which is basically plasticized and weighs more. Also, Bruce got a gallon of cactus juice and he won't use it all – it's only good for six months – so if anyone would like some, see him.



Robert Babbitt

Harry Carter, who did a segmented bowl for this month's Show and Tell, is always making different projects, one of which is the miniature goblet and captured ring from maple. That got Robert to thinking of making miniature skewers. Robert had turned a miniature goblet with a three-quarter inch skew; a smaller skew would make it easier to deal with the level of detail to turn a miniature goblet. The smaller skewers Robert made have cherry handles.



Carol Hitchcock

Carol hand-carved two basswood rabbits with a two-inch long hog-out knife and a one-inch detail knife. Each has a tail in the back and a heart carved in the front. They were finished with linseed oil.



Jim McCullagh

Jim turned a lamp from purpleheart, Brazilian rosewood, maple, yellowheart and the ubiquitous mystery wood (above his index finger in the picture). He made it for his nephew in New Hampshire. Jim would like to know the type of wood before he sends it to his nephew. Bueller? Bueller?



Ken Boyd

Ken Boyd, purveyor of the highly prized Kenwood, more commonly known as birch, turned, band sawed and engraved a raft of products. Ken's friend asked if Ken would make his wife a band saw heart box, so Ken made one from birch and walnut with a hint of cherry for the drawer pulls. The pulls are engraved with the names of Lori and Chuck. The drawers are flocked in blue and it's all finished with Deft. When Ken's grandkids come over, they always want a glass of iced tea, so Ken made them bamboo straws with their names engraved on them. He boiled the straws four times to make them food safe. The last time Ken went to pick up the birch, the owners gave him five or six propeller hubs and asked what Ken could do with them. If anyone would like a hub, let Ken know. Ken checked ChatGPT for ideas but ended up making a bowl from one of the hubs. His grandkids wanted to make a spoon, so he supervised them using gouges to carve the spoons, of course from birch. The spoons were finished with mineral oil and beeswax.





Holly Bentley

Holly got into the club around 2003 with the help of her friend, long-time club member Art Falcone. They built this live edge cherry shelf around 2005-2006. After all these years, the bottom shelf needs to be replaced and the whole piece wobbles, so it needs to be steadied. She's looking for suggestions on how to fix these problems. She considers it a classical piece and would like to restore it.



Club Pictures



Reminders



Thank You



Beaucoup thanks to Rockler. Your support means the world to us. You're rock stars!!

We're so grateful to our amazing refreshments team of Sherry, Diane, and Joe! May your dough always rise and your drinks always fizz.



And the Winners Are

\$10 Rockler Gift Certificate for attendees (sign-in tickets) – John O'Neal

\$10 Rockler Gift Certificate for Show and Tell – Ward Gannon

\$15 Rockler Gift Certificate for Show and Tell – Richard Nannis

\$25 Rockler Gift Certificate for Show and Tell – Rick Borden

50/50 (for the big moolah) - \$67 Darryl Kehoe

Meeting times

The BWC meets the 2nd Tuesday of the month at Rockler Woodworking & Hardware, 169 Brandon Town Center Dr, Brandon, FL 33511, 813-793-6030. May's meeting will be the 12th from 6-8 PM.

Newsletter by John Bacca

AV and web support by Caleb Nixon

Club Officers

Tom Bolen, President

John Bacca, Vice President

Ken Coleman, Treasurer

Holly Bentley, Secretary