

Jared Bruckner

Collegedale, Tennessee
423-400-3062
bruckner@southern.edu

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In September 2008, after 40 years of being a university professor, I retired ... because I was tired of all the reading and study required to keep current in my chosen field of Computer Science and wanted to work with my hands for a change. I talked a friend into letting me help him build a garage/workshop, and he invited me to attend an AAW chapter meeting in Dalton GA. I was hooked.

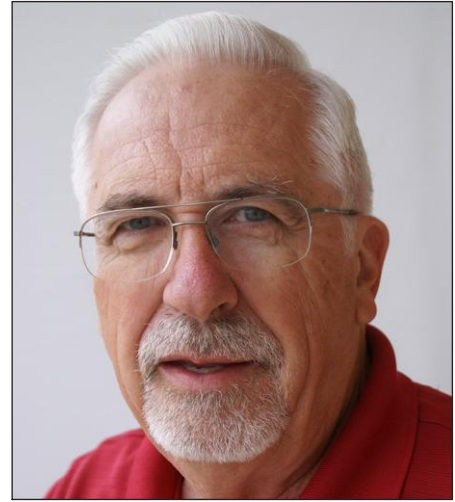
Soon I had a mini-lathe, cranking out pens, but then I wanted to turn bowls, leading to the purchase of a full-sized lathe. Before I knew it, I was a member of four AAW chapters, three local in Georgia and Tennessee and one in Florida, where I spent six weeks every winter. My first instructor was Rick Urbin, the president of the Dalton chapter. Workshops with Rudy Lopez, Richard Raffan, and David Ellsworth and attendance at many woodturning symposiums furthered my training.

Also came the addiction of collecting wood from local sources, dubbed "wood collector" by my wife for the 6 or 7 cords of tarp-covered wood piles that litter the back of our house. This wood collecting led to my hand injury. On Father's Day 2012, as I was using my table saw to cut squares from 1/4 logs, I reached with my left hand for a cutoff lying next to the still-running blade, while reaching for another piece of wood with my right hand. The cutoff touched the spinning blade and pulled my left hand into it, badly cutting all but my left little finger. After three surgeries, I have an almost normal looking thumb, a shortened index finger, a very short middle finger, and a ring

finger fused at the top joint. At first I was not able to turn at all and then made an unsuccessful attempt to turn with one hand. When I was able to turn with my left hand, I found that some of the ways that I previously had held tools did not work, particularly any form of underhand hold. I just found other methods to hold tools.

The experience heightened my awareness of the importance of hand safety. I occasionally use the table saw, but I bought a new large bandsaw for cutting squares and am very careful about where I hold the wood and how I push, constantly thinking where my hands would go if something slipped. I also modified my chucks so, in case my hand gets too close, at least there are no sharp corners to dig the flesh off.

I recall six phases of my seven years of woodturning: pens, bowls, presidents' challenges, threaded objects, turned coin puzzles, and maze coin puzzles. I enjoy the presidents' challenges because they provide reasons to try new things. After reading "Shop Made Threading Jig" (*American Woodturner*, April 2013) by Mike Peace, I made my own threading jig and started making threaded boxes, etc. Then I found the book *All Screwed Up* by John Buckley (Linden Publishing, 2006) that propelled me into making



turned puzzles and eventually turned coin puzzles, where a coin is visible and the puzzle is how to get the coin out without damaging the piece. Now I concentrate on my own design of a coin puzzle where one must maneuver a pin through a maze to get the coin out. I may be stuck on these for some time to come.

Always a teacher, I enjoy giving demonstrations. I have demonstrated turning a Christmas ornament, making threaded boxes, and making maze coin puzzles at my local AAW chapters.

