



Jon Siegel's Amazing Workshop

PHOTO BY TONY IMMORLICA



BY CLAUDE DUPUIS

Jon Siegel in his Wilmot shop

One thing that amazes me about the Guild is the enormously diverse group that we have. There are woodworkers from every profession in life. The thing that makes us unique is that we all have a common goal—Learn more about woodworking and improve our skills. The thing that keeps the Guild active and growing is the volunteers. Without them the Guild would not exist. Many woodworkers of various skill levels volunteer their time and welcome others into their home and shops to share their knowledge. A good, recent example of this was the recent Granite State Woodturners' (GSWT) meeting at Jon Siegel's shop. The Guild is fortunate to have such skilled individuals that are willing to share.

Jon resides in Wilmot, NH. It's a quaint little town with lots of space between neighbors with a combination of woods, fields and farm houses. I'll admit Jon is out there a ways in the woods. Not that that's a bad thing. It's why we live in NH. The shop is in the basement of his house and it's really two shops in one. A wood shop and a metal shop. The access is at walkout level making it easy to get things in and out. The ceilings are, I think, 9' to 10' high which makes it a comfortable place to work. Jon has a passion for vintage 100 year old machines and today's meeting was about those machines that he has restored and uses.

Jon is one of the founding members of the Guild, a past president and has been on the steering committee for 22 years. Jon is many times the voice of reason in complicated and controversial discussions regarding the Guild bylaws, Rules and

Policies. He was also the subgroup President of the GSWT for 5 years. Jon was a long time member of the NH Furniture Masters Association, has taught students in their Studio Based Learning Program and the Prison Outreach Program. Jon loves to play pool and by the way he makes his own pool sticks which is not an easy task (don't believe me—try it sometime).

Jon, besides having a passion for restoring vintage tools is well accomplished in the use of these tools. Jon owns his own business called Big Tree Tools, LLC which he and his wife Patrice started in 1996. Jon has lathes of every description so that he can produce the high quality turnings that his customers demand. A good example of that is his recent commission, selected among several submitted to the joint NH Historical Commission to design and build the *Mike Whalley Memorial Bench*—a 7' long bench that resides adjacent to one of the speaking podiums in the State Capital Building in Representatives Hall in Concord. See *The Journal*, Summer 2011—Vol 3 No 3.

Jon has been turning wood for 45 years. Turnings for furniture and architectural applications are his specialty. Jon enjoys teaching and demonstrating wood turning. Another passion, Jon will be focusing his upcoming efforts on the further development of sharpening equipment for woodturners.

The Meeting

Jon started the meeting with a little history about the inventions and progressive improvements with metal and



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1900 Putnam extension-bed patternmaker's lathe (wood lathe), 50" swing inboard thru the gap

woodturning machines. Many inventions were made right here in New England like the morse taper invented in Boston 150 years ago. Jon's idol, Henry Mosley, in 1792 invented thread cutting screws and screw cutting tools. Jon had a good inventory of books about vintage tools of all types—a 1918 *Hendey Metal Turning Lathe with Change Gear Devices* by Oscar E. Perrigo; *Lathe Design, Construction, Operation with Practical Examples of Lathe Work* by Oscar E. Perrigo M.E. 1917; *English & American Tool Builders* by Joseph Wickham Roe; *The Progressive Machinist* by William Rogers; *Studies in the History of Machine Tools* by Roberts Woodbury—to name a few. The group toured the shop with Jon leading the way. One of the biggest wood turning lathes I have ever seen, a monster, the Putnam extension bed lathe will accommodate work up to 12' in length and 4' in diameter. WOW!

The Metal Turning Lathe

Today's demonstration was of a metal turning lathe that Jon restored—a 1918 Hendey. Hanging on his every word, Jon showed the group how to install the cutter head into the tool rest, how to make adjustments and a general operation of the machine. The demo was to take a metal rod and tread it to fit a nut. Jon discussed different types of steel, their hardness and which were best for this type of turning. After some careful measuring and adjustments to the cutter, Jon got a perfect fit to the nut.

The Metal Planner

Jon then turned our attention to another beautifully restored machine—an 1885 L&M metal planer. I for one had never seen one. Jon proceeded to describe the setup along with a demonstration. Once setup and dialed in, the planer with a similar cutter bit to the one used on the lathe removes a thin narrow shaving one pass at a time. The action is automated in that the table on which the metal blank is clamped to moves

1918 HENDEY METAL LATHE

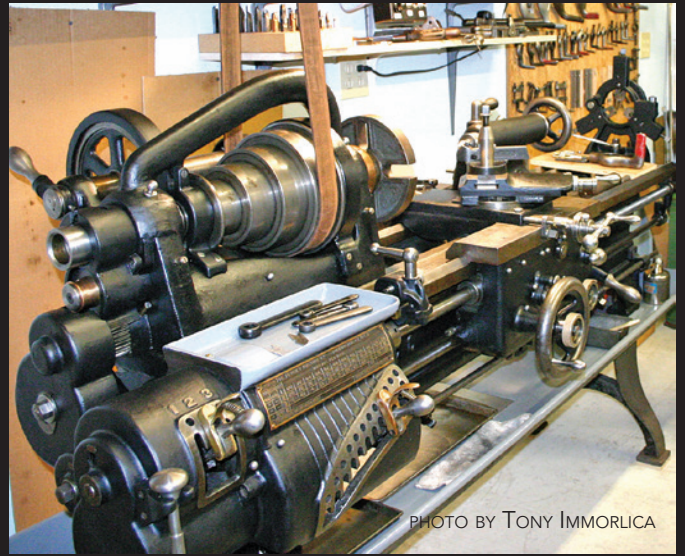


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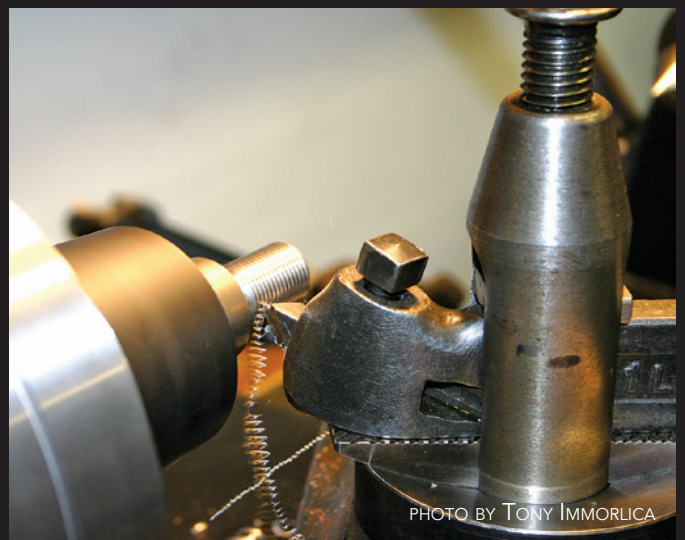
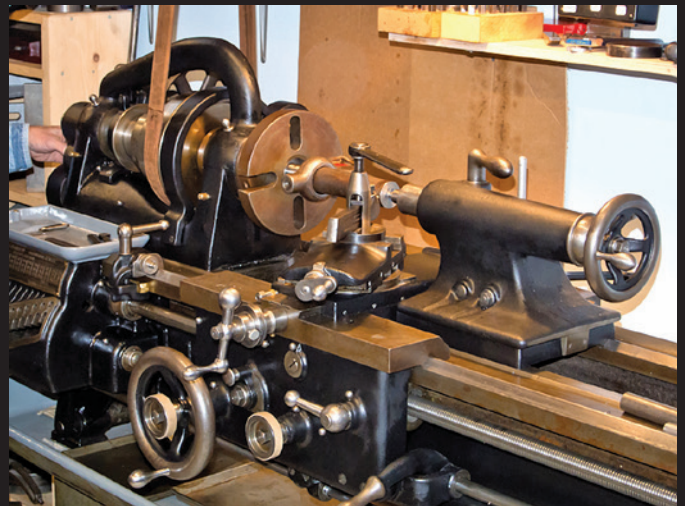


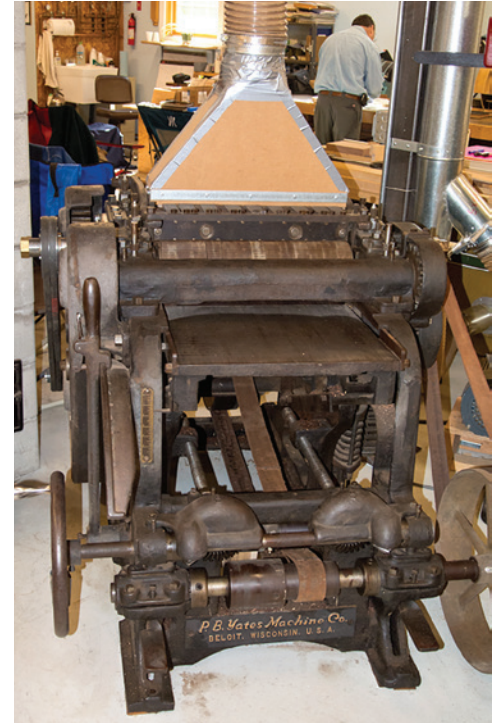
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back and forth advancing just the right amount for each forward pass. The belt and pulley assembly which seemed to move effortlessly with little to no vibration or noise was amazing to watch. The drive pulley would move in and out while switching the drive belt from forward to reverse.

Jon also had many other restored machines some of which I had never seen the likes of. Thank you Jon for being here to share your knowledge, experience and passion for vintage machines, woodturning and metal work. It's people like you along with many other volunteers who make the Guild what it is today. ■



1880 S.A.Woods 16" jointer



1925 P.B.Yates 20" thickness planer

1885 L&M METAL PLANER, 20' x 48"



1885 S.A.Woods 36" band saw