



# Wood Write News

Wasatch Penturners Club Newsletter

VOLUME 2 NUMBER 1

SEPTEMBER 2010

## Let's make a Desk pen!



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I was browsing the catalogs and came across a "desk pen" from Craft Supplies. You can find this kit on the "Pen Making" in the "ballpoints" section on page 3 of the Craft Supplies website ([www.woodturnerscatalog.com](http://www.woodturnerscatalog.com)). But why, I asked, should I pay \$6.50 for what is basically a slimline kit and a pen funnel (holder)? I can use one of my slimline kits in chrome (under \$2) and I can make the funnel from a piece of acrylic or wood cutoffs. So, after a couple of hours in the shop the set is finished, photos are taken and I'm back at the computer writing about it. If larger pens are to your liking I am confident the cigar kit could be used to do the same desk set, with a little thought, of course. See **Figure 1** for the completed set. Here are the step by step details of how I made this set. My way is not the only way to make this modification. In fact, several of you may even have a better way.

I choose mesquite for this project. Not only is it one of my favorite woods, I have an unending supply here in North Texas. I also choose mesquite because I found a blank that had already been rough turned round and had a tenon on one end. I suppose it

was going to be a box at one time but it suddenly grew up to become the base for a desk pen set. I also found a pen blank about 8 inches long or so. Mesquite it will be. See **Figure 2** for the blanks used to make this desk set.

The techniques I used for making the pen have been discussed in several previous articles. The pen bottom is basic slimline pen making and the top part is a closed end barrel made much like the calligraphy dip pen outlined in an article last year. Also, two other articles of mine discussed closed end pens and any of those techniques could be used to hold the upper barrel.

**The base:** The base is probably the easiest part of this project. I held the blank on the tenon and began to turn. Although the base in the CSUSA desk kit was flat, I decided to make mine rounded on top...just to practice on making the curve. I'm not sure if I like it but sitting on my desk the shape is growing more



**Figure 1**

favorable. Shape the base to whatever shape you like. Sand and finish it and part it off. Hand sand the bottom and



**Figure 2**

Continued on Page 3

# Make Your Own Skew-Chi-Gouge

By Dick Stucki  
Wood Write News Editor

Many members have an interest in making their own tools to use in their pen turning as well as in all other turning they do.

Joe Wagner invited the club to his newly built shop for the regular meeting last month and he demonstrated making your own Skew-Chi-Gouge.

Starting with a length of 1/4 inch tool steel rod, and a blank of wood he went through the steps of making the tool handle with a copper feral . Then Joe finished the wood handle (as seen above left), before inserting the rod into the wood handle.

Joe showed those in attend-

ance that this is a project well within the skills of most wood turners.

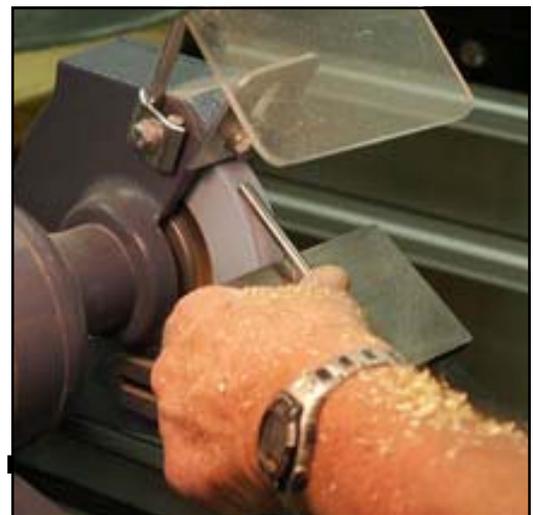
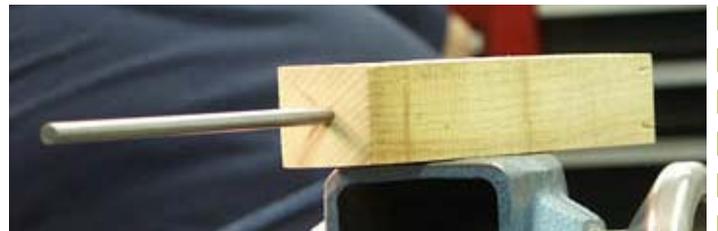
Joe went on to demonstrate the shaping of the tip on a grinder. The tip is shaped to have a skew-like bottom shape but with a flat ground top resembling a skew used flat. Thus the name Skew-g-Gouge.

This is one of the most useful tools you will ever have or use. It works very well and cuts as smooth as butter.

Joe also demonstrated how to make a stick pen using a regular Bic pen from drilling out the blank with a long aircraft drill bit to the final shaping of the pen. A quick and easy gift to make in your shop.



The rod blank can be held with a pen mandrel chuck end



*“Foster friendship and develop skills through our common interest in pen turning. Join the club or bring a friend.”*

Club members filled the shop and watched carefully as Joe created a useful tool from raw materials. On right, Joe grinds the tip of the newly made Skew-chi-Gouge.

# Desk Pen Cont. From Page 1



**Figure 3**

finish it or use a jam chuck to hold it for sanding and finishing. I added a couple of beads just above the bottom. **See Figure 3** for the finished base just prior to being parted off of the blank.

**The pen:** The pen is not as simple to make as the base nor is it as simple as making a slimline. Well, half of the pen is simple. The bottom half is basic slimline. I cut the blanks as usual. The bottom is standard length for the slimline kit used. The upper barrel's blank was cut 7 inches long. They were both cut from one blank. I often cut blanks longer than normal just for projects like this. The lower blank was drilled through as would be normally done and so was the upper barrel's blank, except the hole in the upper barrel only went in as far as needed to receive the tube. This type of hole is called a blind hole. The tubes were glued in using two part epoxy which is my glue of choice for tubes.

I decided not to use the kits center band so I could make the pen a little fatter than normal. Actually, I'm not the best at turning

small diameter spindles so I make these desk pens with a larger diameter. If you are good at turning small diameter spindles the I say use the center band (or not) and make the pen small. They look really nice that way. **Caution: Be aware of where the tube ends in the upper barrel and do not start the small diameter spindle turning until you are far enough away from the end to be past the tube.** Turning into the tube will require starting the pen over again... well, at least the upper barrel portion.

Ask me how I know. I have experience though. Experience is that which you get just after you need it! I've turned into the brass tube or into a blind hole on more than one occasion. Some very pleasing shapes can be done by those good at smaller diameter spindle turning.

Square the ends of the lower section. Place it on the mandrel and turn as normal. Leave the end opposite the nib end larger than you really want it to be. We will place both barrels on the mandrel later and finish sizing the pen, especially at the junction of the two barrels. This will insure they are both spot on the same diameter. We will also save sanding and finishing until later.

We are now ready to turn the upper barrel. The blank is cut to 7 inches in length. The finished length on the upper barrel of the pen for this project was 5.75 inches long. It could be made longer if desired. I used a closed end pen mandrel for 7mm pens. These are available from Arizona Silhouette.

They are really nice if one makes several closed end pens. One drawback is that each closed end pen mandrel is tube size specific. So, to make closed end pens using several different size tubes one would need a mandrel for each size. There are several ways to hold



**Figure 4**

the blank for making closed end pens.

The upper barrel's end is squared and the blank was secured on the mandrel. **Figure 4** shows the two blanks and the closed end pen mandrel. I now

*“The pen is not as simple to make as the base nor is it as simple as making a slimline.”*

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We are all about Penturning and fine pens of all types.

*“Each member has a story in them to tell or share. What is your story?”*

## Wasatch Penturners Club Officers

President :	Harold Lee	<a href="mailto:leejpg@msn.com">leejpg@msn.com</a>	801-562-2063
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## Stories Wanted For Club Newsletter

One of the best tools to build a club is a good club newsletter. But good newsletters don't just happen.

We need your help. If you have a good story idea or pictures to share, please contact Dick Stucki, editor of the Wood Write News. Just email him at: [Dick-](mailto:Dickstucki@comcast.net)

[stucki@comcast.net](mailto:stucki@comcast.net) and share your ideas.

If you have expertise in one area let us know. If your shop would be good for a photo tour, call Dick at 801-485-3154.

We would also like to have

your input and ideas. If we need to include some special features, please make the suggestion to us so we can see if it can be done.

Each member has a story in them to tell or share. What is your story?

## Important Links



- Wasatch Penturners Club <http://www.wasatchpenturners.org>
- Utah Association of Woodturners <http://www.utahwoodturners.org>
- Timp Woodturners Association <http://timpwoodturners.org>
- American Association of Woodturners <http://woodturners.org>
- Craft Supplies USA <http://www.woodturnerscatalog.com>
- Woodcraft <http://www.woodcraft.com>

# Desk Pen Cont. From Page 3



**Figure 5**

turned the upper barrel to the desired shape using the tail stock for support. Once the final length is determined and the basic shape of the upper barrel is set the end of the blank is parted off. The upper barrel of this desk pen came in at 5.75 inches. I also left the end that will meet the lower barrel at the center a little larger than what it will finally be. **Figure 5** shows the two barrels at this stage of the project.

The next step is to place the two blanks on a standard mandrel for final turning and shaping. Place a slimline bushing on the mandrel followed by the lower barrel. Slip on the upper barrel and adjust the mandrel. Bring up the tail stock and gently tighten the tailstock just enough to hold the blanks for turning. Too much tail stock pressure will bow the pen, especially the upper barrel. Turn them to the shape you want. Now the junction where the center band would be can be made and both barrels will be exactly the same diameter for a perfect fit. Notice the little doodad on the end of the pen's upper barrel. I also do a little magic. Later you will see that it has disappeared! Sand and finish the pen. I used Shellawax friction polish on this pen. **Figure 6** shows both blanks on the same mandrel before and after the turning and finishing was done.

Remove them from the mandrel and place the upper barrel back on the mandrel. Use blue painter's tape and secure the barrel to the mandrel. Remove the waste from the end of the pen. Be very careful or you will develop your magician's skill also. **Figure 7** shows the barrel taped to the mandrel just before I removed the waste and did my magic trick to make the doodad disappear. Once the waste is removed the end of the pen can be lightly sanded and the finish can be applied to the end. The pen is now ready to be assembled.

Now where did I put those pen funnels? I know I

have some somewhere. Amazing...I found them. They are all gold...no chrome ones. I thought I had some chrome ones? The solution for me was to turn a funnel. I used a short piece of black acrylic and turned it round. I made a 1/2 inch in diameter to hold with my Beall collet chuck. The tenon is about 3/4 inches long. I used a small detail gouge to make the hole. I checked the size and shape of the hole often using a pen to make sure it was the diameter and depth required. After the funnel was shaped it was sanded and polished.

**Figure 8** shows a before and after picture of the funnel. Placement of the funnel on the base was determined and a hole was drilled using the drill press. The funnel was glued into place with a small amount of CA glue. The pen was assembled and the project was finished.



**Figure 6**

I made the desk pen for \$1.70 since the wood was free. This is a great and inexpensive project for a buck seventy! Don from Penturners Group.



**Figure 7**



**Figure 8**



**The Wood Write News** is published by The Wasatch Penturners on the months the club does not meet (January, March, May, July, September and November) for its members.

The Articles are intended to assist club members in their quest to make better turned pens and related items.

Articles and photographs may be submitted to the editor, Dick Stucki at [Dick-stucki@comcast.net](mailto:Dick-stucki@comcast.net) or he can be contacted at 801-485-3154.

Club newsletters are posted on the club website: [www.wasatchpenturners.org](http://www.wasatchpenturners.org)

Webmaster for the club website is Ian Parrish. please send him pictures, articles, videos, and any other pen-turning related content for him to post on the site. Ian is even willing to reward folks with free pen blanks for website content. Contact Ian at:

[hummerski@yahoo.com](mailto:hummerski@yahoo.com)

The purpose of the Wasatch Penturners Club is to help members improve their turning skills, promote safety, and foster enjoyment of pen-turning, and to associate with, and learn from, other penturners.

Club meetings are held on the first Thursday of August,

October, December, February, April, and June at 7:00 p.m. at the Woodcraft store at 9891 S. 500 W. in Sandy, Utah. Visitors are welcome to attend all Club meetings except the December Christmas party will cost \$4.00 to help cover the costs of food. Of course, we encourage all interested in pen-turning to join the Club to be able to enjoy everything the Club has to offer. The dues are \$24.00 per year, the year beginning July 1 and ending June 30.

Each meeting has a "Show & Tell" segment where members are encouraged to show off their work, and share information.

## Presidents Message

From Harold Lee  
Club President

We went on a field trip to Joe Wagner's shop for our Wasatch Penturners Meeting in August. Joe showed us how to make a skew-chigouge and a stick pen. It looks almost effortless when he does it. Joe makes many of his own turning tools. I think he's made about every kind of thing that can be turned. He and his wife, Heidi, even provided refreshments for us. You'll read more about the meeting elsewhere in the Newsletter. Thanks, Joe! It was great!

Our Wasatch Penturners Club has now been going for just over one year. At the end of June 2010 we

had 29 members and 11 others who had attended meetings during the year. Our second year started in July, and we already have 17 who have signed up as members this year. The purpose of the Wasatch Penturners Club is to help members improve their turning skills, promote safety, and foster enjoyment of pen-turning, and to associate with, and learn from, other penturners. We are certainly succeeding in our purpose. We've accomplished much during the last year:

- . Rodney Bertone, Dick Stucki, and Mark Elmer presented demonstrations.
- . Ian Parrish, our webmaster, established the Club website [www.wasatchpenturners.org](http://www.wasatchpenturners.org).
- . Dick Stucki, our newsletter editor, has been publishing the Club newsletter bimonth-

ly.

- . We donated some door prizes for the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Penturners Rendezvous this last May and manned a Club table at the Rendezvous.
  - . We actively supported Woodcraft's "Turn Pens for Troops" effort last year.
  - . Last May we co-sponsored with Woodcraft the Operation Shoebox pen-turning event to turn and donate pens for our armed service people.
  - . We participated in a bulk purchase of Wallstreet II pens (\$3.99 each + tax).
  - . We've given away ALOT of wood and other stuff.
- So you see that our first year has been a very successful year. I'd like to thank our capable and hard-working officers and staff and the members for all you have done to make our Club so successful. Harold

**"We encourage all interested in pen-turning to join the club."**



## Showcase Idea File



*The Idea File is intended to share photos that can give you new ideas and shapes to incorporate into your turning. Try something new and Enjoy!*



## Next Meeting October 7th

Our next meeting will be on October 7 at 7:00 p.m., at the Woodcraft store in Sandy. It will be our second Tips and Tricks meeting, and we will also talk about our favorite woods to turn. So we need everyone to come with some penturning tips and tricks and also be prepared to talk about their 5 favorite woods (and why).

Penturners are always looking for ideas to make their pens a little different from others, or just want to make a unique pen that will stand out, or they want it to be a custom one-of-a-kind pen or gift.

You will get some great ideas for your own shop so don't miss this meeting.



**Your pen can be something great. . . So be creative!**

# Penturners Frequently Asked Questions

By Dick Stucki  
Wood Write News Editor

**Part 6 in an ongoing series for penturners. This information has been gleaned from forums and will be presented in each newsletter covering various questions of interest to penturners.**

## Why make pens? (By Bob Roberts)

It happens sometimes.

I somehow mention that I make pens, and the astonished reaction follows. “You MAKE your own pens? WHY? You can buy a perfectly fine pen for a DOLLAR! WHY on EARTH would you MAKE them?”

I suppose this is a reasonable and valid question, especially in today's mass produced, “one-size-fits-all” world. But it is a question that has no quick and simple answer. Perhaps, being more precise, it is a question that has far too many answers. I find myself somewhat at a loss for words as I try to explain deeply held beliefs and feelings.

Why does a painter paint?  
Why does a builder build?  
Why do I make pens?

The first and foremost reason I make pens is the joy of fashioning something I find beautiful and of worth. To watch the materials I have carefully selected be slowly transformed from their native state into a finished design of my choosing brings to me a great and overwhelming satisfaction, one that often defies description. Though perhaps on a different scale, I believe it is the same passion, the same joy of creation, known by the artist when he lays aside his brushes and views the finished painting, the architect and carpenter when they step back and gaze at the finished building, the author when she sees her published work. This joy of creation, of having formed something one loves, is a heady and intoxicating emotion indeed.

I am, among other things, a writer. A pen is a major tool of this craft. As do many craftsmen, I derive considerable pleasure from the use of a well-made tool. An exquisitely hand crafted pen, one who's size, weight, balance, and other characteristics have been chosen to fit MY hand, MY unique style of penmanship, is a joy to use. To have MADE that tool intensifies the pleasure.

As with all hand made products, no two pens are ever alike, just as no other person is like me, nor I like any other person. This uniqueness brings about a character, a style that cannot be duplicated. Because of my intimate involvement in its creation, there is a part of me in each pen. I sometimes sit for minutes on end, lost in admiration of the small object d'art that I hold in my hand. The form, the finish, the materials, all combine in ways that are beautiful to my eyes. Again, this beauty is partly a result of choices I made, of the skill with which I shaped and combined things. That I am in part responsible for that beauty is very satisfying.

One last reason, perhaps the biggest reason, truth be known, is the reaction my pens bring from those I show and present them to. I never tire of the wide-eyed looks of appreciation, or hearing the astonished and delighted exclamations of, “Wow! YOU made this? It's BEAUTIFUL!” Those words resonate deeply into my being, a tonic to my heart and a balm to my soul. They render inconsequential the hours and effort I have expended in the production of the object of admiration. They leave me eager to race back to my shop, burning with the desire to produce an even BETTER masterpiece. The appreciation of one's efforts be they artistic, literary, or whatever else, is something we all find fulfilling. That is why I make pens.

## Common Abbreviations

Every groups uses abbreviations, here are some of the common ones penturners use:

Berea = Berea Hardwoods

CSU = Crafts Supplies USA

PSI = Penn State Industries

WC = Woodcraft

BB = Bill Baumbeck a.k.a. Arizona Silhouette

HUT = HUT Products

EG = El Grande a pen kit by Berea Hardwoods

EG-SL = El Grande Streamlined a pen kit by Berea Hardwoods

G'man = Gentleman's pen (a pen kit from CSU)

G'jr or jrG – Jr. Gentleman's pen (a pen kit from CSU)

BLO – Boiled Linseed Oil

BOW – Bethlehem Olive Wood

CA – Cyanoacrylate glue a.k.a. super glue

PU – polyurethane glue

TiAu – titanium gold, a durable pen plating

And there are tons more, of course