

An Opinionated Survey of Hollowing Tools-Part V Specialty Toolrests and Steady Rests for Hollowing

by Lyn J. Mangiameli

Specialized Primary Tool Rests

For most free hand hollowing with scraping tools, the standard tool rests work fine, but cutting tools often benefit from a specialized tool rest. Deep hollowing, in particular, often is made easier and safer when a specialized primary tool rest is paired with a secondary rear toolrest and matching handle. Secondary tool rests were discussed as part of the previous section on torsionally restrained systems, as they are so often integral to those tools, so what follows is restricted to primary tool rests that have specific application to the use of hollowing tools.

Unrestrained Primary Toolrests

John Lea Tandem Tool Rest: [Available from Craft Supplies and direct from Lea] This tool rest uses dual 3/4 inch alloy steel bars, welded side by side, to provide a wide but low friction, surface that helps a turner maintain their tool at a consistent vertical height while hollowing. Lea believes this is especially helpful to the beginner, for when set to the appropriate height, shaft contact with both bars will help maintain the generally preferred 9 o'clock orientation of the cutting tip to the interior of the turning. The Tool rest comes in two sizes; typically 12" long with a 1" tool post and 6" long with a 5/8" tool post for mini-lathes, but John is willing to make up custom configurations to fit other lathes and needs. I also would suggest the addition of a tool post support collar (locking ring) that can hold your tool post at a consistent height, even when you unlock the post in the banjo. This allows the rest to be easily positioned to differing angles, and to swivel out of the way or be removed temporarily when clearing shavings and chips from a hollow form without affecting height. You can purchase these collars very cheaply from a supplier like ENCO.

Pivot Pin Tool Rests

Tool rests using constraining pins have been around for quite a while, but until recently have received little commercial attention. These rests can be based on either curved or straight tool support bars, but for hollowing only the straight bar versions are convenient. What they all have in common is that the bar has holes drilled to fit a vertical rod ("pin"), or, less frequently, vertical rods are welded to the ends of the bar. The pins on a tool rest of this sort allow a hollowing tool to be levered and/or guided against the pin as the tool is presented to the wood. To quote Hugh

O'Neill, "While the main advantage is that of powered leverage, allowing deep cuts for rapid waste removal, the pivot pin also gives a high degree of positional stability so the tendency to jump, vibrate or dig in is much reduced." I find that the ability to leverage the tool against the pin is particularly advantageous when working with tools that are capable of cutting from the side, such as most of the ring (e.g. Hamlet Big Brother and Termite), guarded cup (e.g. Munro and Vermec), or J and elliptical guarded blade cutting tools (e.g. Proforme and Exocet). You can apply a degree of sideways pressure, by levering against a pin, that would be difficult to achieve through only finger and hand strength alone, a feature that makes a pin rest particularly useful for those with arthritis or weakness in the fingers and hands. However, it is the "positional stability" that I find most advantageous, as a pin provides a consistent stop against and around which one can control fine movements of the hollowing tool. The more one can reduce the forces and directions one must control, the more capable one is of precision movements.

Some existing tool rests can be modified to accept a quarter inch diameter, 1 to 1.5 inch long section of drill rod (or hardened steel if you have it available, just make sure it is not brittle), by simply drilling a matching hole, or series of holes (about 2 inches apart) in the top of your tool rest. The only requirements specific to the support tool rest is that it be wide enough to accept and support a 1/4 inch diameter hole, and the metal be soft enough to be drilled. Once one or more holes have been drilled, slip in the short section of rod, and you now have a pin to place your tool against. Commercial models suitable for hollowing tools are described below:

Poolewood Deep Hollowing Tool Rest: [Available from the Poolewood web site in the UK] Poolewood currently offers a pin rest which uses a straight tool support bar with a slightly flat top. The Poolewood tool support bar comes in two sizes, a 12 inch length with twelve pin holes, and a ten inch length with six pin holes. The shorter length is likely preferable for hollowing tool use. Removable pins allow you to find the best position for the tools you are using and the cuts you wish to make. It comes with two pins that allow you to achieve optimal pivot placement for both outside to center and center to periphery cuts. This appears to be a very sturdy and functional pin rest.

Mortimer "Duel Pin tool rest": [Available from the Poolewood web site in the UK] This tool rest has a pin welded to each end of a short round tool support bar in a "goal post" style. The Stuart Mortimer Duel Pin Tool Rest (it is repeatedly spelled "duel" on their web site)

was developed specifically for use with hollowing tools. As described at the Poolewood web site, the "duel pins will prevent tools slipping into the mouth of the work and with proper use of the pins extra pressure can be applied to help eliminate tool rest and tool chatter, therefore allowing you deeper tooling through a restricted opening or aperture. The two upright pins will also allow you to pivot and slide your tools in a firm clean flowing tactile action within the work where usual cutting is impossible." Like the other European tool rests discussed here, I have not had an opportunity to use this rest, but to my eyes, this rest has too short a tool support bar for more general use, or to avoid frequent repositioning when working with narrow necked hollow forms. The pins look roughly welded to the outside, and it does not appear to be as well suited for use as a gate (discussed later) as the copy and pictures on the web site would suggest.

Hegner HDB Deep Hollowing Rest: [Available from the Hegner web site in the UK] Like the Mortimer, this tool rest was designed specifically for use with hollowing tools. As described on the Hegner web site, this rest "has a strong supporting body with a telescopic extendable bar that can be positioned to give support to the tool up to 10 inches inside the work. A [goal post style] 'Swiveling Fork' can be located in the end of the bar to give a positive seat for the tool when it is out of sight. An alternative 'Fulcrum Pin / Stop' is also available for the end of the bar so that the turning tool is not captive and may still be manipulated along the length of the bar without the danger of it running off the end." It also has the unique (though questionable) feature of allowing for a "supplementary handrest bar" to be attached at 90° to the tool support bar. Supposedly, this provides "an extended anchorage/support structure for the forward hand or forearm outside and away from the turning work." While I am skeptical of the supplementary hand rest bar, this tool rest looks well made and well thought out. The interchangeable gate and pin adds to its adaptability and usefulness, and the adjustable length of its tool support bar allows one to balance extension against rigidity.

BestWoodTools (fixed position) Pin Rest: [Available from the BestWoodTools web site and from Craft Supplies and Packard Woodworks] BestWoodTools [BWT] has a pin rest available in either a 6 inch or 9 inch length. They are part of the BWT modular fixed length tool support bar/interchangeable post series. It uses a hardened 1/4 inch diameter round pin that is located 1/2 inch in

from the end of the 3/4 inch diameter tool support bar. Just in case you lose a pin, BWT thoughtfully supplies a spare. Removal of the pin allows use almost as if the tool rest were a standard tool support bar. I say almost, because there is a small dip where the hole for the pin is drilled. Since this is all the way out on one end, that hole interferes very little during normal use, but allows easy insertion of the pin when you wish for its benefits.

BestWoodTools Adjustable Pin Rest: [Available from the BestWoodTools web site and from Craft Supplies and Packard Woodworks] Much like the fixed pin rest described above, BWT also provides a bar for their adjustable bowl rest system. It is a 9 inch bar with one pin hole 1/2 inch from the end position on one side of the bar, and another pin hole 2 inches in from the same end, but on the opposite side of the bar (i.e., 180 degrees opposed, but on the same end). These are blind holes so the pin stays firmly in place and the surface opposite the hole remains smooth. This is the way the bar will normally be offered. This standard configuration comes with 4 pins (of two different heights), and the bar. If you don't already have an adjustable support block (mount) from their adjustable bowl system, or if you wish not to interchange bars, then the bar, 4 pins and the support block can be purchased. You will also need one of their posts which fits your banjo. Again, I would suggest the addition of a tool post support collar (locking ring) to hold your tool post at a consistent height, even when you unlock the post in the banjo. As discussed earlier, this allows the rest to be easily positioned to differing angles, and to swivel out of the way or be removed temporarily when clearing shavings and chips from a hollow form. You can obtain such collars from BWT, scavenge it from an existing Phil Irons Tool Gate, or purchase one very cheaply from a supplier like ENCO. In the Gated tool rest section below, I will discuss a modification that can be made to this BestWoodTool tool rest to use it as a gated system.

Gated Tool Rests

Gated tool rests are relatively recent on the woodturning scene. By my definition, a gated system constrains the tool laterally on both sides and against downward movement (the latter, as any tool support bar does). Also, the entire gate pivots about a central attachment point located beneath the gate, as opposed to a tool pivoting against the side of a pin. The former moves the pivot point to directly on the cross sectional (horizontal) centerline of the shaft.

To my way of thinking, the best

gates are U shaped and simultaneously contact the tool shaft on both sides, and over a relatively wide flat low friction surface. Because the U shaped gate can provide such tight constraint of the shaft, the gate is best matched to tools of a single diameter, though often one can get by with using slightly smaller diameter shafts in the same gate (say a 1/2 inch shaft in a gate meant for a 5/8 inch shaft). This means that one would need multiple sizes of U shaped gates to handle optimally the usual shaft diameters of 3/4, 5/8 and 1/2 (not to mention the sometimes necessary 1-1/8 inch, 7/8, and 3/8 inch shafts). To avoid the necessity of multiple gates (and having to change them with each different tool used) two other styles of gates are found: the V shaped gate and the "goal post" gate, the latter having its two vertical pins or sides at least as wide as the largest shaft anticipated. However, these two gate styles have disadvantages that will be discussed in their individual reviews.

A good gate greatly assists in delicate tool control, allows for leverage of the shaft against a sidewall (helpful when using the side of cutting tools), limits catches and prevents kickback from a tool which drifts out of position in the form, and can be positioned such that it will protect you from bumping tool shafts against the mouth of a fragile hollow form. The down side is that it often has to be repositioned to allow for the necessary tool approach angles, and is yet another item to purchase. For me these are inconsequential disadvantages compared to the many advantages. So, on to the specific gated tool rests.

Hollowing Tool Rest: [Available from Craft Supplies] This is the name given by Craft Supplies to a gated style tool rest they sell. It is a rectangular block of steel with a large V-shaped notch. The block swivels on a one inch steel post that fits in correspondingly sized banjos. The V shape will accommodate a wide range of shaft sizes, from 1/4 inch up to around 1 inch. What this has going for it is that the single point design allows for some horizontal stabilization of the tools, letting you lever the cutting point of some hollowing tools sideways into the wood. The downside of this tool is that such sideways levering can result in the tool wanting to climb up the walls of the V shape, which is particularly troublesome for larger shafts that are more shallowly seated in the V. Also, the tool gate's solid metal surfaces can be hard on tool shafts, though this can be improved somewhat by layering the inside of the V with UHMW tape (but at the cost that wall climbing is made even easier). Still, for small diameter shafts, this can be a useful rest.

Woodcut Phil Irons Tool Gate: [Available direct from Woodcut and from Craft Supplies] This has long been one of my favorite tool rests for hollowing, which I have used regularly with almost all the cutting tools, and some-

times with Stewart-like tools. The tool rest is composed of a flat bar of zinc plated steel (approximately 1/2 x 1 x 6-1/2 inches) attached perpendicular to a threaded post that fits in your banjo (multiple posts of various sizes are available). It comes with a nice locking ring that goes on the post to allow removal and return to the exact same height. This ring can also be moved over to other tool posts of the same diameter. The flat rectangular tool support bar extends 4-1/2 inches from the center of the tool post on one side, and 2 inches to the other. It has three equally spaced holes drilled in the long side, and one in the short side, where different sizes of gates can be fitted. In the earlier models (which includes the one I have) these gates had a clevis pin shaft that fit through the hole and is secured with an included clip pin, allowing them to pivot freely. Leave the clip pin off and you can quickly interchange the gates as you shift between tools of different shaft diameter. When I obtained mine, Woodcut had not yet made available a gate for shafts larger than 3/4 inch so I made my own larger 1-1/8 inch U shaped holder from aluminum lined with UHMW tape, and then later one from Delrin rod (available from ENCO), both of which have been very effective when used to constrain the Woodcut long handle. Woodcut has recently replaced their high density plastic tool gates with 5/8 and 1-1/8th inch capacity metal ones that are more of a yoke shape (i.e., a Y shape with the upper arms rounded rather than straight). The older plastic gates do not mar tool shafts, are quiet, absorb some shock, and have held up to very rough use. I have yet to try out the current gates to learn how they behave. Overall, this is a very versatile tool rest system which can be expanded to meet specific needs (say 1/4 inch shafts) by just making up some additional sizes of gates from Delrin rods and off-the-shelf Clevis pins. The wide flat support bar, with the gates removed, can serve as a nice extended reach rest for flat scrapers. Another nice feature of this rest is that for bowls or semi-enclosed forms, the bar can be extended several inches into the form to reduce tool overhang. Being shorter, it won't extend quite as far as the BWT adjustable pin rest, but still a very helpful distance. I don't believe you can achieve full performance from Proforme, Exocet, Munro and Big Brother like tools without a tool rest of this sort

T&J Tools Deep Hollowing Extended Tool Rest: [Available direct from the T&J website in the UK] I'm not sure if the T&J Deep Hollowing Tool Rest or the Woodcut Phil Irons Tool Gate came first, but they clearly are strongly related, with the Phil Irons name being associated with both. The T&J tools version, made by Tom Osborne, is the slightly less sophisticated of the

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Specialty Toolrests and Other Accessories for Hollowing Continued from Page 7

pair. It is composed of a flat bar of 1/2 inch thick steel, 1 inch across and 7 inches long. The bar is bolted to a tool post (several sizes are available to fit your lathe) at one end and has two smaller 12 mm holes at the other end into which nylon gates can be fitted. The bar is nicely radiused on each end, and does not extend out past the tool gate. This is a nice detail that makes it less likely that a corner of the rest will ever accidentally contact the turning and mar the surface. The gates are made of black nylon rod with an integral stud (no Clevis pins like the Woodcut and my home made versions). There is a shallow groove of either 1/2 or 3/4 of an inch in two of them, the third being left with a flat upper surface. These grooves are much shallower, and the gates much shorter overall, than the early Woodcut version or those I make up for myself. I prefer taller sides, that help insure the tool cannot climb out of the groove, though this comes at the cost that some tools whose cutting heads are larger than the shaft size will be more difficult to remove when one is working in close to a very small mouthed vessel. A neat trick, though I question how often one will disassemble their tool rest to utilize it, is that this tool post has a hole drilled at both ends. One hole is threaded to take the bolt that secures the tool rest bar, but the other end can be fitted directly with one of the nylon tool gates. Thus, all one has to do is insert the tool post up-side-down, fit the gate, and one has a nice single point gate that can be used to start the hollowing process, or can be used to fit into narrow areas when working with the exterior of turnings (say to locate a parting tool close in between chuck jaws and the bottom of a turning).

Kelton Hollowing Gate: [Available from a wide range of Kelton suppliers including Craft Supplies, Lee Valley and Woodcraft] This is another gated system, and has recently undergone some minor improvements in design. It originally used a single size metal saddle that would accommodate a tool shaft up to 7/8 inch in diameter. This gate has high shoulders, with a large round hardened roll pin fitted transversely at the bottom. The round roll pin makes for minimal friction along the bottom of a tool shaft, which is helpful when dealing with large diameter heavy shafts. Alas, the 7/8 inch distance between the shoulders restricts it from being used with the heaviest shafts which are often in the 1 to 1.25 inch range. The single size saddle makes this tool rest far less than optimal for use with any tool shaft smaller than 3/4 inches in diameter. To rectify the limitations of this gate, Kelton has recently come out with three smooth, rounded, low friction Delrin gates. The gates are shaped to achieve a more compact footprint than the early

version of Woodcut Phil Irons gates, by squaring off the back (this gives the tool just slightly greater reach than a purely round design). They also have the advantage, compared to the Kelton steel gate, in that they can even rub against most wood with little consequence. These gates are presently available in three sizes (1/2, 5/8 and 3/4) which match the sizes of the full sized Kelton Hollowers. A nice feature of these Delrin gates is that channel depth is cut such that regardless of size, the centerline of the tool will remain at the same height if the tool post height is left unchanged (which is easily accomplished by use of a shaft collar like I have described earlier). The gates are fitted and pivot at the end of an adjustable sliding hexagonal steel arm of 3/4 inch cross section. All of the gates, whether Delrin or Steel can easily be interchanged, as each uses a sturdy pivot stud of the same size, which fits into a hole at the end of the arm. The 7-1/4 inch arm is housed in the round bore of a rugged, thick walled steel hollow "T" through which the arm can slide over an range of approximately 5 inches. Positions are locked in place with a single set screw, which by bearing on one flat of the hexagonal bar insures proper rotational alignment. Though initially offered only with a 1 inch post diameter, five larger sizes are now available. Unfortunately, the post is welded to the "T" which prevents post changes (which might allow one to adapt a single Kelton Gate to other current or future lathes). The overall assembly is a very rugged, easily positioned unit that readily adapts to a wide variety of hollowers (both with the existing range of gates, and by making it easy to create custom Delrin gates to fit specialty tools).

BestWoodTools Pin Rest Modified for Delrin Gates: [Shop modified or possible special order from BestWoodTools] On my pin rest support bar, BWT responded to my request and added a similar pair of 5/16 inch through holes on the opposite end, which allows me to fit plastic tool gates like those that came with my Phil Irons Tool Gate. Since mine was delivered, at least one other turner has obtained this configuration, so the extra two holes may be available as a special order option. This is a configuration I regularly use, and am really impressed with. This custom system from BWT offers some advantages over the Phil Irons Tool Gate which was my previous favorite, but is now largely matched in function by the latest version of the Kelton Gate. The BWT rest lets me choose from any of the Iron's tool gates, similar gates I have made from aluminum and Delrin, and the BWT vertical pins. Also, the BWT tool support bar is 3 inches longer than the Irons and also a little longer than the Kelton (but not quite as thick). The

added length allows me to achieve greater extension into the mouth of open but deep forms, while the adjustability feature allows me to shorten the arm length, and/or reposition the pins or gates, simply and quickly. Tools pivot smoothly, almost effortlessly along the bars and in the gates. The pin is preferable for use with scrapers and gouges, the gates for use with hollowing tools. Using either, I do not have to worry as much about minor catches or sudden changes in wood density, and can use my hands to maneuver tools more precisely because I do not have to use them to control the tool in as many directions, nor with as much strength. This results in smoother cuts and more delicate use of the tools.

Comments on Other Pin Rests Discussed Earlier Used as Gated Tool Rests

As mentioned earlier, any pin rest which uses drilled holes (such as the BWT Adjustable Pin Rest, the Hegner Deep Hollowing Tool rest, and the Mortimer Duel Pin Tool Rest), can be modified easily into a gated tool rest. The goal post style will usually swivel until both posts are in contact with the sides of the tool, and can create a "camming" action that obstructs the in and out movement of the tool. The Hegner comes with a gate as well as a pin for mounting on its tool support bar. The overall design of the Hegner rest looks good in photos. However, the one size fits all gate (what they call a swivel fork) appears of a rectangular "goal post" design and I suspect it will fall victim to the camming effect. This might be rectified by substituting a user manufactured U shaped gate, or padding the walls of the existing gate out with a slick plastic. The Mortimer is another of the pin rest designs that claims gated function as well. With the support bar twisted to ride almost parallel to the tool shaft, it should provide adequate ability to lever the tool sideways. However, the gate is so extremely wide it almost surely will fall prey to cam locking, and even if it didn't, there is so much width that it offers few advantages with respect to fine tool control or restricted motion to protect narrow mouths. However, given the Phil Iron's, BWT and Kelton options, which work so well, I can noy really generate much enthusiasm for these others.

Captive Tool Rests

Two of the tool rests that are part of complete restrained hollowing systems also can work very well with free hand hollowing tools. These are the Donald Derry Captive Tool Rest: [Available direct from Donald Derry via his Web site] and the Captured Tool Post from The Spin Doctor [available direct from the Keith Clark website]. Though these tool rests are normally

available only as part of complete integrated hollowing systems, both can be obtained individually by special request. They both can be used with a variety of hollowing tools in addition to the systems they are usually associated with, and by limiting vertical movement of the hollowing tools, they prove particularly helpful in managing the weight of long, heavy boring bars (which can sometimes lift at the tool end, if withdrawn sufficiently that balance is lost). The Derry version can easily be modified to accept larger diameter tools (that is, something over intended 1/2 inch) by a simple substitution of longer bolts and spacers. The distal bolt, when fitted with a smooth spacer, also very effectively serves as a pivot pin. Remove the upper bar and the lower bar along offers a nice wide base to support flat scrapers (much like a box rest). Easy adjustment for different diameter tools is integrated into the Clark Captured Tool Post, though this design does not lend itself to pin or gated use. As I have described each of these rest in Part 4 of this survey and will soon be providing detailed individual reviews of each tool system, I won't repeat information on them here, other to affirm again that these tool rests can be very effectively adapted to use with a variety of other hollowing tools.

What I Use

I find a pin or gated tool rest system almost essential to obtain optimal performance from most of the free hand hollowing tools I prefer to use, and to reduce strain on the fingers and hands. I caution novices not to consider it a substitute for technique and would urge them not to use such tool rests for anything but hollowing tools (you can get yourself in a world of trouble using a gouge with a pin or gated tool rest unless you already have good gouge control). But for hollowing the interiors of a variety of forms, including bowls and boxes, I think a pin or gated rest can greatly raise the level of performance of many hollowing tools, and will allow you to attempt more difficult hollowing projects. For those with arthritis, peripheral neuropathy, or damaged hands, a pin or gated rest may well allow you to return to a level of comfort and function in your turning which you may have thought had passed. A pin or gated tool rest is not a panacea, but I find it has made a significant difference in all of these areas for me.

The BestWoodTools adjustable modular tool rest system is so well thought out, so well machined, so wide ranging in its capabilities, and with components so easily interchangeable, that recommending their adjustable pin rest is easy, especially if you already have some other part of their modular tool rest system. I particularly like the BWT's

[Continued on Next Page.]

compact mount (that I have further smoothed all the edges on) and that it has a longer arm than most others. Yes, you have to custom drill the arm to add gates, and you have to make up your own Delrin gates, but the latter is a simple task if you have a drill press. [Why Delrin? Because it is a durable, low wear, low friction, reasonably priced, readily available plastic that can be easily machined with both wood and metal working tools found in the typical home shop]. Most, though, who prefer woodturning to tool modification, are going to choose a complete commercial version, and two excellent alternatives exist. The Woodcut Phil Iron's Tool Gate is not as rugged as the Kelton, and lacks arm length adjustment, but it allows for screw interchangeable tool posts, includes a tool post collar to maintain height, and makes available a large gate that will handle a 1 inch diameter tool bar. The Kelton Hollowing Gate has a lot going for it in terms of being adjustable in length and being very ruggedly built. It is now available with a greater range of post and gate sizes, and the new Delrin gates have a very functional and less potentially damaging [to both tools and wood] design. Frankly, I use all them all, almost interchangeably, and find any of these three gated systems to be essential for almost all free hand turning I do, regardless of the specific type and size of hollowing tool I am using. The only exception is for square shafted tools, for which I use the Donald Derry tool gate, even if I am not concerned about torsional restraint.

Although steady rests were originally developed to deal with long spindles (to control whip flex along their length), the ones below represent designs well suited for hollow forms, though most are also adequate for spindle work. Steady rests are almost a necessity when engaging in deep hollowing of long or large diameter thin-walled forms. Even on smaller forms, hollowing tools can generate substantial forces (sideways, as well as during a catch), and a steady rest not only will assist in stabilizing side walls of the form, but help prevent the hollow form from being levered off its mount by the hollowing tool. One point to keep in mind is that some laser guided hollowing systems locate their laser mounting bar directly at the 12 o'clock position over the work piece. This is exactly where many steady rests place their upper wheel. If you have such a laser guidance system, or are thinking about obtaining one, you may want to select a steady rest that has movable arms (such as the Serious Lathe), or from a manufacturer who offers a choice of arm location (e.g., Keith Clark and John Nichols).

DeVries style: Derived from an easily scalable design first presented by Herman DeVries, these are actually shop made steady rests, using three cross-arms of either wood or steel (the lower serving as the mounting base), 3/

4 or 1 inch threaded rods as posts, and rollerblade or scooter wheels attached to the middle and upper cross-arms. Photos and instructions can be found at Herm's web site:

<http://www.hdv.net> These are very effective and relatively inexpensive steady rests for hollowing, and my version, using all bolt together metal parts available from Home Depot, has served me very well.

John Nichols: [Available direct from John Nichols] These have long been some of the very best commercially available steady rests for large faceplate work, and have a loyal following. John's standard version uses three length-adjustable arms (though additional arms can be provided on a custom basis) mounted 120 degrees apart to a wide flat ring of steel. Internal capacity, with the arms fully withdrawn, ranges from 10 inches up to 22 inches. A semi-soft plastic roller is fitted to the end of each arm. These steady rests, like most of the other commercial offerings described here, are sturdy and well manufactured items that likely will outlast even a very young owner.

Serious Lathe Steady Rest: [Available direct from Serious Lathe] Availability of these is somewhat questionable (the company has been up for sale for quite some time), but are still shown on the Serious Lathe Web site. A solid competitor to the Nichols, the Serious Lathe Steady rest is a slightly more refined, but essentially similar design. Usually provided with either three or four arms, the arms can be locked into position anywhere around the ring. Locking is solid, but adjustment is slightly awkward as positioning must be manually maintained until locked in place. More of those ubiquitous, but effective roller blade wheels are fitted at the end of the arms. Usual internal capacities were 12, 14 and 18 inches in diameter. The mount, while very stable, results in more loss of capacity (i.e., it takes up more space above the bed), than some of the alternatives, especially the Clark.

Woodfast Deluxe Center Steady: [Available from Craft Supplies] These are large steadies that were designed at Craft Supplies specifically to have the size capabilities required for larger hollow forms. Another design using three adjustable arms attached to a ring. These are intended for use on a Woodfast lathe, though they can be adaptable to other lathes if they have a 2.5 inch bed gap. Two models are available, one offering 14 inch capacity, and the other an 18 inch capacity. A wooden shop made version of similar design is well described in an article by Dominic Greco that can be found at WoodCentral web site:

<http://www.woodcentral.com>

Clark Steady Rest: [Available direct from Keith Clark at his "The OK Spin Doctor" web site] If the John Nichols Steady Rest can be character-

ized as the Hummer H1 of steady rests, and the Serious Lathe the Mercedes G500 luxury SUV, then the Clark is surely the Porsche Turbo. This is a beautifully designed and executed steady rest which I believe presently represents the state of the art in steady rests. Available in custom, single size, configurations suitable for lathes with anything from 8 inch to 48 inch swing, the most interesting (and for me desirable) model is called the Multi-Steady. These Multi-Steadys come configured with tubes to place three round steel arms at the appropriate points for either two or three different swings, and have interchangeable attachment and alignment plates to accommodate any size bed. Thus a single steady can be easily interchanged between lathes of say 16 (e.g., DVR or Stubby), 20 (e.g., Powermatic or General) and 24 inch (e.g., Oneway or Nichols) swing. Mine, is capable of adjusting for projects anywhere from 1/2 inch to 23 inches in diameter (you need to substitute smaller roller skate wheels to attain the maximal capacity). The main body of the steady uses dual rings, a wide center band surrounded by an outer stabilizing ring, both of which make up the upper 7/8 of the steady rest (the bottom 1/8 is a flat section which mates to the bed and results in almost no loss from the full swing of the lathe. The machining and welding are good, the Ferrari red powder coat paint (you can specify other colors) and stainless steel arms are attractive and durable, and the performance is as good as one can get all at a price that is comparable to its

competitors. I will offer a detailed discussion of this outstanding steady rest as part of future full review on the Clark Hollowing System.

Sierra Mold Corporation Custom Steady Rests: Available direct from the Sierra Mold web site]. This is manufactured by the same folks who make the well regarded VacuuMaster spindle mount vacuum adapter and related accessories. It is a very expensive (approximately \$750) custom made steady rest which is notable for its very thick, large ring being made of aluminum (which surely makes it lighter than the 70 pound Clark steady). The arms, like with the Clark Steady Rest, pass through the body of the steady rest ring, which ensures for consistent and stable alignment. It uses small planetary wheels (they look like roller skate wheels) for contact with the wood. Good photos of this steady in use can be found at Bill Grumbine's Web site:

<http://www.enter.net/~ultradad/urn.html>. I haven't used this steady rest, but my greatest concern about it based on photos, is that the mounting base, while appearing very sturdy, is tall and causes one to lose several inches of potential swing. Perhaps a minimal problem on very large lathes, but a serious drawback for lathes of modest 16 or 20 inch swing.

Editor's Note: This concludes Lyn's lengthy review of turning tools designed for hollowing. You can find an updated list of web sites for suppliers on page 10.

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Hollowing Tool Suppliers Web Sites

Behemoth Tools:

<http://behemothtools.tripod.com/>

BestWoodTools:

<http://www.store.yahoo.com/bestwoodtools/index.html>

Big Tree Tools:

<http://www.bigtreetools.com/>

Carroll's Woodcraft Supplies:

<http://www.cws.au.com/>

C.I Fall:

<http://www.cifall.se/>

Clark Woodturning Tool Manufacturing:

<http://www.theokspindocor.com/index.html>

Craft Supplies USA:

<http://www.woodturnerscatalog.com>

David Ellsworth:

<http://www.ellsworthstudios.com/david/toolsetc.html>

Donald Derry:

<http://www.donalderry.com/>

Don Pencil:

<http://www.donpencil.com>

Farris Tools:

<http://www.sharptoolsusa.com/>

Hegner:

<http://www.hegner.co.uk/system/index.html>

Highland Hardware:

<http://www.tools-for-woodworking.com/>

Jacques Couombe:

www.jacquescouombe.com/index.html

John Lea:

<http://home.sprintmail.com/~h2/tools/>

<http://www.woodturningtools.net/>

John Jordan:

<http://johnjordanwoodturning.com>

John Nichols:

<http://www.nicholslathe.com/>

Lee Valley & Veritas:

<http://www.leevalley.com>

Martel:

<http://www.public.netc.net/martel/>

Oland:

<http://www.olandcraft.com/tools.htm>

Packard Woodworks:

<http://www.packardwoodworks.com/>

Poolewood:

<http://www.poolewood.co.uk/>

Rich Johnson's Woodturning Center:

<http://home.pacbell.net/latheart/frame.htm>

Sea Horse Custom Fabrication:

<http://members.aol.com/seahorsecustfab/index.html>

Serious Lathe:

http://versasteel.com/serious_lathe/

Sierra Mold Corporation:

<http://www.sierramold.com>

T&J Tools:

<http://www.t-jtools.co.uk/index.htm>

The Cutting Edge:

<http://www.cuttingedgetools.com/>

The Toolpost:

<http://www.toolpost.co.uk/>

The Wood-Tradesman (Steve Houston):

<http://www.thewoodtradesman.com>

Turningways:

<http://turningways.com/>

Woodcraft:

<http://shop.woodcraft.com>

Woodcut:

<http://woodcut-tools.com>

Woodworker's Supply:

<http://woodworker.com/>

Canadian 2004 West Coast Woodturning Competition

by Fred Holder

The Greater Vancouver Woodturners Guild is to be commended for putting together a very successful symposium in September of this year (I understand there were 200 participants and something like 90 pieces in the instant gallery) and then following up a few weeks later with a great woodturning competition. I had seen notices of the competition and had given it little thought, until I received a telephone call from Andrew Forrest asking if I would consider being a judge again. Apparently he has e-mailed me about a month earlier at an old e-mail address and the message never arrived. I gracefully accepted after checking my schedule.

This event was held in the Agriplex Building at the Cloverdale Fairgrounds in conjunction with the Annual Cloverdale Wood and Wood Working Show on October 15 through the 17th. Judging took place at 9:00 am on the morning of the 15th.

This competition was open to woodturners worldwide; however, I think the entries came from Canada and the United States. All turners were encouraged to participate regardless of their experience. There were four categories, so that one could find a group that was suitable for their experience and/or skill level. There was a total cash prize pool of \$4000 Canadian. The categories were:

1. Open (highest level): Open to experienced woodturners. The piece must show excellence in turning skills, style, form and artistic merit. There were 29 entries in this category. Ross Pilgrim received first place for his very well made rolling pin. Don Derry received second place for his colored hollow form and Art Liestman came in third with his puzzle piece missing most of the pieces. Molly Winton received an Honorable Mention.

2. Intermediate: Open to woodturners venturing into form, finish and function and who consistently produce work to their own satisfaction. There were 11 entries in this category.

David Wagner received first place for his very well made finial box. Margaret Eisenman received second place for her entry and Rich Schmid received third place for his bowl.

3. Novice: Open to enthusiasts just beginning to hone their skills and are new to design. There were 28 entries in this category. Gary Miller received first place for his covered bowl. Dave Rawson received second place and Gregg Parsons received third place. An Honorable Mention went to Steve Likness.

4. High School: Applicants must be registered in high school on the days of the competition. There were four different High School entries this year. Mitchel Tong received first place for his well made rattle. Jordan Questroo received second place and Marco Dpomingues received third place. Amy Wong was given an Honorable Mention. It would have been nice to see more entries in this category, but I'm still pleased to see some interest in woodturning from high school.

Finally, not selected by the judges but by people who viewed the exhibit and voted on the pieces that they liked the best. Malcom Tibbetts received the People's choice award by a 2 to 1 margin with his "Mobius Sonata," a piano keyboard piece that I failed to photograph.

Judging of these pieces was done by three of us: Lewis Kennett, long time potter in the lower mainland of British Columbia; Rusty Harrison, a woodturner from Hornby Island, Canada; and myself from Washington State, United States. This was the smoothest judging that I have been involved in since my first judging of this event in 2001. In each category, we each picked pieces we liked and put them on the table, then narrowed it down to three pieces. The first place winner was very apparent in each division and agreement was reached quickly by all the three judges.

It was pleasant to participate in this competition again, as a judge not as a competitor and I hope they can continue this competition in the years to come.



Andrew Forest made this winning piece for the Open Category. All three judges were very taken with the workmanship of this piece.



David Wagner received first place for his very well made finial box in the Intermediate Category.

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