

The Fifth Annual Penturners Rendezvous

by Kurt Hertzog • process photos by Jake Debski, Bill Jackman, and/or Kurt Hertzog

The Fifth Annual Penturners Rendezvous was held at the Hampton Inn in Provo, Utah, on Wednesday, June 20, 2007. What started as an informal get-together some years back has grown to an annual event.

STARTING AS A LARK

The Penturners Rendezvous idea was sparked by a passing comment among a few members of the Yahoo Penturners Group back in 2003. That penturning internet group was approaching 1000 members at the time, yet only a few members had seen each other face to face. Everyone else was a virtual friend known only through their postings on the Yahoo group. A discussion began about having a "get-together" somewhere. It was unlikely that many people would be willing to spend their time and money traveling to an event that might last only one evening, so it was decided to have a meeting at one of the regularly held, large woodturning events. Many of the members would already be traveling to these events, so an additional day there would be a reasonable expense. The need for a name for the event sparked a mini-contest and "Penturners Rendezvous" won.

THE FIRST YEAR

Early in 2003, Scott Greaves, Kurt Hertzog, and Rich Kleinhenz planned the first Penturners Rendezvous. The Utah Woodturning Symposium was chosen as the woodturning event to tag along with. It was chosen because it was the next major woodturning event on the calendar and all three organizers were planning to attend.

The Utah Woodturning Symposium, held at Brigham Young University in Provo, always runs on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday in June between school semesters. Craft Supplies Super Wednesday is held the day before the symposium starts. The plan was to hold the Penturners Rendezvous on Wednesday evening, after Super Wednesday wound down and before the Thursday start of the Symposium. The first Rendezvous was held in the Hospitality Suite at the Holiday Inn in Provo that Wednesday evening.

THE SUCCESSFUL START

The first Rendezvous was a smashing success. The number of people who attended far outstripped the capacity of the very large suite. Pizza and soda were donated for the event, along with the loan of turning equipment. A lathe was placed in the corner for people to use for informal demos.



The event has vendors, demos, and plenty of time for socializing with penmakers from around the world.



Chris Hendley follows Kurt Hertzog's demo on sharpening with a demo on using metals as part of penturning.



Angelo Iafrate, President of the AAW, chats with Joe Herrmann, editor of *Woodturning Design* magazine.



Dick Sing, author of many penturning and other books, mingles with the attendees.

The suite was arranged for small groups to gather, and for attendees to meet each other and compare their work. Most of the attendees were hardcore penturners with a valise of pens brought for show-and-tell. While no attendance numbers were taken, there were so many people that many never even got through the doors of the suite! The centerpiece of the Rendezvous was the pen display.

THE PEN DISPLAY

One of the core ideas of the event was to have a pen display composed of works from any member of the Yahoo Penturners group, especially those who were unable to attend. Kurt Hertzog was responsible for building the display cases and organizing and executing the pen display.

Long before the event, three categories were set up

to allow any penmaker from anywhere in the world to participate. People could choose a category, submit their work, and be part of the event. In order to make it interesting, a prize pool was arranged wherein attendees of the event could vote for their favorite choices.

This pen display now consists of five display cases with about 60 pens. It is displayed at the Penturners Rendezvous, the instant gallery at the Utah Woodturning Symposium, and the instant gallery at the AAW Symposium. At the conclusion of the AAW Symposium, the display is dismantled and the pens are returned to their owners.

THE EVENT GROWS

The initial organizers decided to continue the event after that very successful first year. The second year was even



Kip Christensen, co-author of *Turning Pens and Pencils* and chair of the Utah Woodturning Symposium, looks over the pen display.



Rich Kleinhenz presents the prize certificate drawn at the Rendezvous to the winner of one of the two lathes.

larger, and was moved to the ballroom at the Holiday Inn. By the third year, it had even outgrown the ballroom!

It maintained its format of a 7 P.M. Wednesday evening start and a 9 P.M. door prize drawing. Between 7 and 9, there are formal demonstrations, vendors, the pen display, and plenty of mingling. From the beginning, all of the big hitters in the penturning world have attended the event. Dick Sing, Kip Christensen, Rex Burningham, John Swanson, and others attend, autographing books, donating to the prize pool, and mingling with the crowd. In 2006, the event moved to the Hampton Inn, taking up three connected reconfigurable meeting rooms.

THE FIFTH

This year, the event was the most successful ever. Success hasn't been measured by raw attendance totals but by attendee feedback. People who have attended in the past have become regulars. What started as a way to meet virtual friends has become a party of real friends who meet each other every year in Provo on Wednesday night.

With support from virtually all of the penturning-related companies, the event has been able to cap off the evening with a great door prize drawing at which everyone wins. This year was no exception; everyone who attended received olive wood pen blanks just for walking through the door. There were enough prizes to go around, with winnings ranging from *Woodturning Design* subscriptions to mini lathes. This year, there were two mini lathes in the prize pool, which included delivery to the winner's home.

It has been a great run of events with more to come. More information on the Fifth Annual Penturners Rendezvous, along with past years, can be found at www.penmakersguild.com.



Kurt Hertzog

Kurt Hertzog has been the co-organizer of the Penturners Rendezvous since its inception. He enjoys the entire continuum of woodturning, and his interests range from making his own turning tools to photographing his finished turnings.

Turning for the last ten years, Kurt has intentionally kept his turnings diverse in an effort to continue to explore the medium. A frequent demonstrator and instructor of various facets of turning, his woodworking interests also include flat work. He is the current webmaster for two AAW chapters, a council member of the Pen Makers Guild, past president of the WNYWoodturners 2, and a past chairman of the Rochester Woodworkers Society. Kurt will be a demonstrator at the AAW Symposium in Richmond in June 2008.

You can see examples of Kurt's work at www.kurthertzog.com, www.penmakersguild.com, or in the member galleries section at www.wnywoodturners.com.

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