It has been a busy couple of weekends. On July 13th Paula and I spent the day setting up the First State Woodturners (FSW), woodturning display at the Delaware State Fair. The First State Woodturners are a Chapter of the American Association of Woodturners (AAW). The Chapter has been putting up a display of turned items at the DE State Fair as an advertisement to people that there is a turning club in the area. The Chapter gets a couple new members each year as a result. Figure 1 shows the display early on during the setup day, so the shelves and walls are empty. Made the tall Pagoda Box out of Black Cherry (*Prunus serotina*) in the middle just for the fair display, with the idea of getting people’s attention. The Pagoda tower works as a lot of people stop and admire the display. Sunday was another busy day spent doing lighthouse keeper duty at the Turkey Point Lighthouse, we had a lot of visitors who hiked the mile out to the lighthouse.

The next weekend was spent at the Delaware State Fair putting on a turning demonstration with a couple of fellow First State Woodturners chapter members. We demonstrated making Spinning Tops for the kids passing thru the building. Over 70 kids took home a new toy top. Each of us made tops before the demonstration as we can only make about 30 during the day. The women running several of the areas like Fabric, Photos, and Arts & Crafts all came over and got a top or two for their grandkids. According to the State Fair administrator, they got a lot of very positive comments about the demonstration. We have an invitation to next year’s fair with the request to demonstrate both weekend days next year.

Figure 2 shows four of the five demonstrators. At the lathe is Tom Sloan, in the yellow shirt is Steve Childers, behind him is Bruce Whitaker, to Bruce’s right is Eric L. Krum and behind the camera is John Kain. The
picture was taken at the end of the day when we were just about out of Spinning Tops. The Delaware State Fair got over 40,000 items submitted for judging this year. The items in Figure 2 behind the turners are just a small portion of the Arts & Craft items submitted for judging.

![Figure 2 - First State Woodturners Turning Demonstration at the 2019 Delaware State Fair, USA](image)

The following Saturday, Tom, Steve and Eric did a turning demonstration at the Maryland, Harford County Farm Fair. We turned Spinning Tops for the kids and as you can see from the below pictures, the kids really enjoyed playing with their new toys. The kids especially liked being able to pick out the shape of their top and with the lighter colored woods they get to pick out the colors to apply to the outside of the top. Purple and green were the two favorite colors. The kids love giving their new Spinning Top a test spin in the Scarlet Oak (*Quercus cocinea*) test ring shown in Figure 3.
One young man grabbed a top and did not say thank you to anyone before walking away with his new toy. Based on his action we decided to tell the kids, there was a price to pay for the top they picked out. They had to say thank you to the person who made the top. One girl had to cross the building to say thanks to Steve Childers as he was talking to someone at the Chapters turning display. Her father came back to me to say thank you as it made the top extra special to his daughter as she got to meet the person who made it. The kids made the day in the heat well worth it, as it was 98 degrees outside. On the positive side, the building we were turning in is the shortest route to where you catch a bus to the parking lots, so we got a lot of people who stopped by and watched us make wood chips.
While the Farm Fair was in Maryland the First State Woodturners (FSW) meet in Delaware but have members from Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware. During each of the turning demonstrations, IWCS tri-folds were handed out to the people observing. You can just see the IWCS tri-fold dispenser on the table on the left side of Figure 4. Quite a few people took a tri-fold home with them. In addition to the tri-fold dispenser, there is a wood sample display of the hardest, heaviest and lightest woods on display.

At least 30 of the kids got to say what shape of Spinning Top they wanted and what colors they wanted. Figure 5 shows a young man and father waiting for a Spinning Top made to their specifications. Luckily the Farm Fair items submitted for judging were covered in a heavy plastic sheet as the saw dust from the lathe went all over the displays. Paula Krum designed and made the FSW hats most of the demonstrators are wearing as well as the IWCS hat Gary Green and others wear.
For the last two years Paula and I have presented wood to the Farm Fair 4-H wood project winners. Two of last year’s winners used the donated wood to make this year’s entry. Below is a Black Cherry wooden cat bed made by a young lady who was really excited to get the wood last year.
The Display Table in Figure 7 was made from Scarlet Oak donated to a 4-H project winner by Eric & Paula Krum in 2018.
Figure 7 – Display Table, Scarlet Oak

Makes me feel a lot better about donating wood to the Farm Fair when the wood is used to make entries for the following year. I am looking forward to seeing next year’s winning project entries, hopefully made from this year's donated wood.

I spent last weekend at the Festival of Wood in Milford, Pennsylvania, co-hosting an International Wood Collectors Society (IWCS) booth with Mark Peet, the Northeast USA Regional Trustee. This is our fourth year at the festival teaching people about the many different species of wood in the world. My favorite item is having people pick up a small piece of Black Ironwood (Krugiodendron ferreum) which is the heaviest wood in the world. Then they have to pick up the much larger piece of Balsa (Ochroma pyramidale), the lightest commercial wood in the world, the surprise on most people’s face when they pick up the Balsa is fun to watch. Even more rewarding is the number of people who come back with other people and have them pick the two pieces up. In Figure 8 the young lady is just about to pick up the Black Ironwood. Each of the standard wood samples next to her has a story worth knowing and that people enjoy learning about.
The below pictures are from early Saturday morning before the festival opened to the public. The IWCS display consists of a couple of wood sample racks, a wood turned item display (wine stoppers), and a select set of wood samples to talk over with visitors. Each year the Festival hands out a sheet with a list of questions that children must go to each of the booths and ask a question. A previous year's question was, ‘What is the Pennsylvania State Flower’. So this year was, ‘What wood was used to make ship bearings?’ Luckily Mark brought along a large piece of Lignum Vitae (*Guaiacum officinale*) (italicized) to use in talking to the young boys & girls visiting the booth. Took me a couple of times of being asked the question before coming up with a standard story about the species that held their attention.

We gave away over 50 International Wood Collector Society tri-folds, so who knows we may get some new members?
Mark Peet is setting up the wood species sample displays. Paula Krum made the IWCS logo on the back of Mark's shirt. Mark’s daughter is kind enough each year to rent me her bedroom to sleep in. Each year she gets a wood item I make for my rent. This year was a wood keepsake box made out of about 10 different species of wood that has a hidden compartment inside that looks like a book. The ‘book’ she received is the sixth from the right. Primary wood used in the exterior is Santos Mahogany (Myroxylon balsamum), which is not a true Mahogany but has a Mahogany-like appearance. It is typically much denser, harder, and stronger than true Mahogany—and also much more difficult to work.
It was a big surprise last weekend as last year Mark’s daughter was a couple inches shorter than me, this year I had to look up to see her face. It does not help that I am rather short.

The IWCS booth is located in one of the educational tents and we are not supposed to sell anything. In past years there have been people who have gotten mad at me for not selling them a wine stopper. Last year this women even started yelling at me because I would not sell her a stopper, so this year one of the wine stopper racks had some for sale, sold three. This year, only had one guy who really wanted a couple of the stoppers that were for display only. He came back 3 times and tried to talk me out of 2 of the display stoppers. Unfortunately they were species where the wine stopper was the only piece of that species in my collection. Many of my wine stoppers were actually turned from wood blanks originally meant for wooden eggs. Most of the stoppers in the display are made from wood that is very, very, rare in the USA and I specifically make a stopper because of this and the fact that the species is colorful. I have found that most people do not care if it is a rare species of wood, they only care that they like how the stopper looks. Wood wine stoppers made from local woods sell for $35-$40 in the shops here in Maryland. The wood the stoppers in the display are made of woods that cost a lot more than any local wood. It hurts to consider selling them for the same or less as a local wood, especially now that I am retired and cannot afford new species unless I get money from sales. I suspect the only people who would pay for what they are worth, would be another wood nut like myself or as my son calls me, another ‘wood snob’.
Unfortunately this year during the festival my sample of Bull-Oak (Allocasuarina luehmannii), which is the hardest wood in the world, disappeared along with a sample of Verawood (Bulnesia arborea). This was not the first time the Bull-oak was borrowed. Three years ago a mother brought it back a couple hours later and apologized for her son. This is the first time wood has disappeared and not returned in the 5 years doing shows for the IWCS. Still, it is worth the time and effort to educate people about the wonders of wood. That is unless you are consuming a Blueberry Italian Ice. The shaved ice booth was just outside the Educational Tent we were in, and it had a long line all day. Late on Saturday the line got down to just four people, so I went and purchased a blueberry flavored ice. I was talking to people while consuming the really cold ice on a very hot day and was just about done when two women came over to our booth. I started to talk and one of the women burst out laughing and said she just could not take anyone seriously who had purple lips. Yes, the cold refreshment was worth the embarrassment.
I am up to 290 Wine Stoppers, each a different species of wood. Mark and I had to scrounge up a second table this year to display them all. Have another 500 + stopper blanks cut and am hoping to get another 100 finished products turned by next year’s festival. Turning the stoppers is easy, paying for the metal components is another story. I was thinking of going to Penn State Industries (PSI), the company who sells the metal/silicon stopper components and see if they will sponsor the display if we put up an ad for them?

The next turning demonstration and IWCS display Art Lee, Mark Peet and I will be hosting will be at is the Hearne Hardwood’s Open House in Oxford, PA, October 4th & 5th. If you are in the area stop by.