



Welcome to my Timeless Turnings Newsletter!

Enjoy some entertainment, education, and — most of all — a glimpse into the whys and wherefores of my creative woodturning journey. Join me...

Inside...

Turning Back in Time

(Im)Perfection

Final Words

Turning Back in Time

For those who know me — and those getting to know me — my National Park Service career was very obviously the highlight of my life. I found a cause that I was passionate about, work that I deeply believed in, and lifelong learning that I was immersed in daily. I couldn't have asked for, nor been more fortunate to have such a fulfilling career choice.

When I retired at the end of 2018, I focused on transitioning from my NPS mindset to a creative journey in woodturning, for which I had been preparing for 30+ years. Once my new scaled-down shop was set up, I dove headlong into woodturning, honing my skills and subconsciously developing a creative process. My shop became my studio (in art world parlance) in a nearly imperceptible way. I prepared for my first show in Ocean Shores, WA with determination, but also with a heavy dose of trepidation.

You see, when a person enters the art world, there is a feeling of baring your soul for all to see. It may sound a bit melodramatic, but I've yet to talk to an artist who hasn't had that same experience, or one very similar. Once I made the leap, however, my second life's passion has been on an upward trajectory. Most fortunate, yet again. Community shows, a couple of galleries, and the wonderful Art Splash Studio Tours breathed life-affirming confidence to carry my journey to southern Oregon.

And now here we are, no longer 'Turning Back In Time.' I am in full stride in my second life's passion. I am so grateful for the path that's been opened for me. It gives me a renewed sense of purpose, and continuation of the aforementioned lifelong learning. I don't know exactly where my artistic woodturning journey will lead, but I intend to follow it to the very limits of what it has to offer.



Sidebar...

When I send out the Newsletter, I always ask readers for feedback. Every month, I can count on several supportive comments; once in a while, I receive some constructive criticism, which I always welcome. Last issue, however, one reader wrote that “readers don’t give a s**t about your emotional delights.” If that is, indeed, true, please let me know so I can continue to grow in my artistic journey.

(Im)Perfection

“Chasing perfection may be a worthy aim, but it can actually get in the way of being creative. Art is deeply human, full of those little imperfections and unique touches that make it special. These aren’t just errors; they’re essential parts that add character and richness to a piece. They show the artist’s touch, the choices they made, and how naturally the art came to life, all of which tell us there’s a personal story behind every work of art.” —RedDotBlog, J. Horejs, Zanadu Gallery

My primary objective is to preserve features (character) that carry the story of the original tree forward in its new life. Whether I’m in the Art On First gallery talking with patrons or in my booth at the weekend Lithia Artisans Market, they continually tell me how much they appreciate those qualities in my art. Natural edges; natural surfaces; knots; figure — all reveal the inner beauty and strength of the magnificent timber’s first life. I strive to give it a second life — and sometimes a third or fourth life, if being ‘upcycled’ (I call it rescued).

Yet, I can’t help myself: with every piece I turn, I strive for that perfect curve, perfect form, perfect proportions. Even if I actually hit the mark on those qualities, am I doing justice to my creative process? I know it’s not so, just as I know there is no such thing as perfection, save in the eye of the appreciative beholder.



Final Words

Skipping the last two months’ issues, it gives me a chance to evaluate whether I want to transition to a quarterly newsletter or possibly discontinue it. I’ve been struggling with not being very inspired the past three months; not writers’ block, per se, but not much in the world to be inspired about. It’s different when I’m working in the studio/shop — I quickly lose myself in the creative process, allowing me to block out everything else. I’ll simply have to see what the future holds. Many thanks to all of you for your support and for accompanying me on life’s creative journey.

Please visit my website at <https://www.tmbaker-woodturner.me> — look for new functional art from Timeless Turnings, which always ship FREE. You can also find archived newsletters if you wish to catch up on any you missed or want to revisit old favorites.