



Welcome to my Timeless Turnings Newsletter!

Enjoy some information, entertainment, and, first and foremost, a glimpse into the whys and wherefores of my creative journey. Please join me...

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Spring (and the Market) Is In the Air!

I have been hard at it in the shop this winter, creating a strong inventory of new wood art pieces, preparing for the new season of the Lithia Artisans Market; but always allowing time for quality adventure along the way! For us, adventure feeds the creativity in our souls. Foraging, as always, is an important part of mine and Kathy's adventures. The farther we get into Spring, the more we forage. And the road goes on forever!

For me, Spring is a time of renewal and with it, a time for giving back. Foraging provides gifts from nature, be it wood, rocks, or flora (by way of photography, of course). Along the way, those gifts are accompanied by shared moments and precious memories gathered in an entirely different manner. Both are cherished, and both feed into the creative process in their own way. For this, I hold a tremendous amount of gratitude in my heart. One outcome of accepting those gifts from nature is sharing likewise with others.

I try to return the 'favor' of such good fortune by creating pieces to show my appreciation for wood gifted to me by strangers; pieces to support my community; pieces to surprise people that I have strong connections with; or contribute materially to causes that speak to my heart.

One such piece that I produced this year is a Beads of Courage box. Woodturners produce such containers for the program, which supports children and teens with serious illness. Containers are provided for them to store the beads they receive for each and every procedure they go through, helping them own their courage. It's a cause that I'm grateful for the skills to contribute to — one of the numerous upsides of being actively creative. It continues to amaze me just how many creative people there are all around us. In fact, all of us are creative; it's a matter of allowing yourself to take the risk of putting your creative self out there for the world to see and enjoy, and allows you to contribute, too. So this Spring and coming Summer season, treat yourself to an art market near you, and be inspired!



Wood Words: Properties/Characteristics

I've been asked to guest lecture for a Tree Biology class at Southern Oregon University next month. The prof would like me to address the reason(s) why I use certain types of wood in my creative work as compared to those that are used in more utilitarian ways. As a matter of technical/physical properties, there is a lot of overlap in those uses, but it primarily comes down to aesthetics.

In construction, key consideration is given to Modulus of Elasticity [(MOE) — timbers' stiffness], Modulus of Rupture [(MOR) — ultimate bending strength], Crushing Strength (compressive strength parallel to the grain), and Shear Strength (perpendicular to the grain), which is directly related to Specific Gravity, a critical indicator of a species' density, mechanical strength, and fastener holding capacity. When I had my design-build construction business (small as it may have been), I used these properties extensively when engineering truss systems, load-bearing beams, and cantilevers. My work was always verified by professionals at an Architectural & Engineering firm.

In my custom woodworking phase, I used these physical properties in a more intuitive manner since engineered safety was not typically a major factor in the design work. I used wood species that were aesthetically pleasing to my clients personal preferences, be it grain, color, or simply a favorite wood species of the forest.

In my creative artwork, I delve much more into the deeper aspects of wood properties and characteristics, where much more of the aforementioned overlap occurs. Specific gravity comes into play because of the density of various wood species, which can impact workability. But it's more complex than that. Enter, character of the grain — is it aligned in a well-behaved manner or is it interlocked and twisted, making it difficult to work with the hand tools (gouges, skewes, etc.) necessary for lathe work? Often, extremely dense but well-behaved wood is much easier to work than I might expect. Burls, which I LOVE to work with, have no grain per se, due to the manner in which they occur and grow. They break all the rules of wood properties and are always an extreme challenge from a standpoint of workability, yet the results are so spectacular that they are worth every moment of effort to coax the inherent beauty out of them. Aesthetics: grain (or lack thereof); natural coloration; perfect imperfections (character); functionality; textural qualities — the essence of wood art.

Final Words

Spring has sprung and foraging is in full swing once again. My major 'find' this spring came from a wood yard's leftovers pile: a full (OOF!) truckload of beautiful walnut figure & burl, all in two pieces. Thank you!



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. Until next time!