



# Timeless Turnings

TMBaker. Woodturner

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## Welcome to my Timeless Turnings Newsletter!

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

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### Turning In the Now

As I mentioned previously, I really have no idea where my woodturning journey will lead me, but I know I'm enjoying the ride. Where I am right now suits me just fine. As with all things in life, I need to back up a tad to trace the source of my excitement.

Back in the summer of 2018 during my last year with the National Park Service, I had the opportunity to

tend to Oregon Caves National Monument and Preserve, filling in temporarily as the Park Superintendent. While at the Caves — and between extreme fires — we explored the Rogue/Applegate Valley on weekends. We had heard about Ashland, touted as a wonderful cultural area. We finally decided to see what the fuss was all about and made the trip over one Saturday.



What we found was a charming historic town that featured a Shakesperean Theatre. Our big surprise was running into a small sea of artist's canopies along the Calle next to Lithia Creek, just outside a beautiful park. We both remarked how awesome it would be to be a showing artist in this wonderful, high-quality market. Little did we know that seven years later I would, indeed, be one of the juried artists showing at the weekly Lithia Artisans Market! Dreams really do come true.

My woodturning journey continues deep in Southern Oregon, living in a town called Talent, ten minutes north of Ashland. I belong to the Southern Oregon Woodturners, the Siskiyou Woodcraft Guild, and volunteer for the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. I'm in Art On First Gallery and busier than I ever imagined with creating inventory and fulfilling commissions. You just can't make this stuff up!

### Sidebar II...

I truly appreciate the feedback I received to last quarter's sidebar. It seemed to be an overwhelming affirmation that putting myself out there — emotions, warts, and all — is more than just okay. Whether it's on the page, at the Market, in the Gallery, or simply on the street, what you see and hear is what you get, as the adage goes.

## Wood Words: Spalting

"Wood Words" is back! I'm going to discuss "spalting" this month. For one, I've always found it to be a fascinating process of nature; secondly, little draws more attention from patrons and browsers alike at the weekend Market. So what is it?

In broadly romantic terms, spalting is a beautiful illustration of the life cycle that occurs daily in the forest.

Spalting occurs in trees that have been invaded by fungus (mycelium, which is the root-like growth structure that produces mushrooms, which are the fruiting body of the fungus).



A basic definition of spalting is coloration, pigmentation, and zone lines that is found in wood having been invaded by fungus. Fungus has one purpose in life: to break down wood fibers to

return nutrients to the soil which, in turn, feeds the next generation of forest flora (trees/vegetation) — hence the 'circle of life.'

One of the more fascinating aspects of this process involves the zone lines. When two species of fungi invade the same tree, they form zone lines, which are typically the black lines that produce such interesting natural artwork. The two (or more) species will never cross a zone line into another fungi's territory!



For a more in-depth scientific discussion of spalting, please reference Dr. Seri Robinson's work at Oregon State University (coincidentally). Even more coincidentally, she is an alum of Northern Michigan University and her post-graduate studies at Michigan Tech University.

## Final Words

I have decided to continue the newsletter on a quarterly basis for the foreseeable future — or until I run out of things that would be of interest to you. Many thanks to all of you for your support and for accompanying me on life's creative journey.

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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.