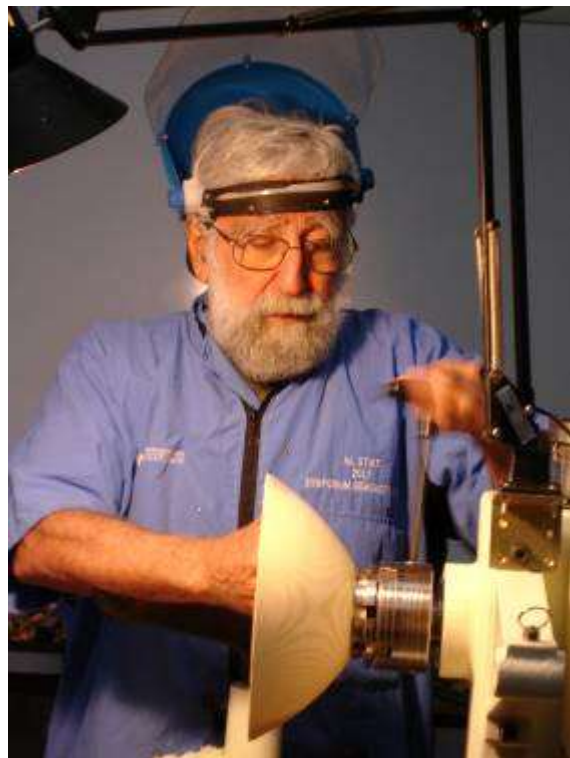


AWSA Congress – 22nd to 25th September 2017 – George, Western Cape.

Trevor Pope

Turners from around South Africa travelled to the congress at the old forestry college at Saasveld, George for the long weekend. The weather was cold, as another cold front rolled in. It didn't matter that snow dusted the tops of the Swartberg mountains, as the action was all indoors in the exhibition hall and the seminar rooms. There was a full program and sometimes it was difficult to choose which option to attend. This year the program was spread out over three days, with generous breaks to allow delegates to visit the exhibition hall. A parallel track of short demos also took place in the hall. This repeated each day, aimed mostly at members of the public who attended. Strand Hardware had a large display of turning tools and offered generous show discounts. Circumference displayed their Blackline PCD insert tools, as well as a range of resins and colourants for making epoxy pen blanks. Torkcraft also had a range of products on display.

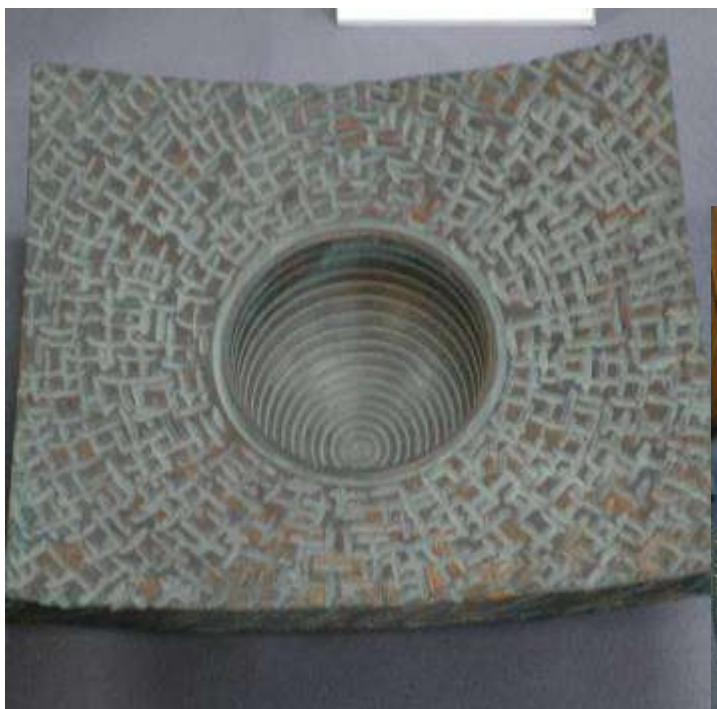


Alan Stirt was the featured guest turner. Al has been turning for 40 years and is well respected internationally. He has travelled and taught widely. If you have looked through the book *500 Wooden Bowls* by Lark books, you will have seen some of his work.

Al is an accomplished demonstrator, taking time to explain his techniques. He moved swiftly through the mundane parts, by making the shavings fly, and dwelling on the important details where necessary. For examples of his work and the tools he used, see <http://www.alstirt.com/>

Several members of the WWA were in attendance. John Speedy's Ball in a Box demo was featured. The pictures below show just a few of the highlights of the gallery and demos that I attended.

◀ This piece by Al Stirt on display was a topic of a demo where he explained how to make it.



The sgraffito platter (right) is similar to the one in ► *500 Wooden Bowls* – it was nice to see it on display.

This bowl was created from scratch from a wooden blank, by Al Stirt in an hour-and-half demo, where he showed how to use milk paint to create these effects.

The milk paint he used is not the same as the so-called milk paints sold locally, which are mostly washed-out colours made with acrylic bases. The paints he uses are from the *Old Fashioned Milk Paint Company* in Massachusetts (<http://www.milkpaint.com/>). Milk paints are sold in powder form and are mixed before use. Something similar may be available locally from <https://milkpaint.co.za/>



At Smit gave a very informative talk on threading using the Simon Hope threading jig which attaches to the tool-post of the lathe. (<http://hopewoodturning.co.uk/index.html>)



◀ This striking bowl from Gert Ferreira is from Red-river Gum burl with turquoise inlays.

If you wanted to try out the Black Line PCD ► insert tools, staff members from Circumference were ready to show you how to start with them.

Well done to Roy and Dee Marcus, Carey and Alex Johnson and the AWSA organising committee. The conference was well supported by the Nelson Mandela University – George campus and the staff in the Wood Technology department. The campus is green and open with the Outeniqua mountains in the North, an ideal venue for such a conference.

