

Pen Turning News: Several local chapters of the IAP (International Association of Penturers or <http://www.Penturners.org>) are forming and meeting on a regular basis. These meetings offer an excellent opportunity to visit with others who share the passion or just the pastime of making pens on a wood lathe, or even using a metal lathe. I've been to a couple of the meetings and the time spent was well worth my effort to attend, even though I had to drive a couple of hours. Those who attend are great with which to visit, ask questions, share ideas and the food has been great. Check out the meetings in various parts of the country and make plans to attend one near you if at all possible. More information can be found at <http://www.penturners.org/forum/forumdisplay.php?f=73>

I was visiting the websites of Craft Supplies (<http://www.woodturnerscatalog.com>), Penn State Industries (<http://www.pennstateind.com>) and Berea Hardwoods (<http://www.bereahardwoods.com>) and noticed some new pens. At least they were new to me as I had not seen some of them...and I do keep abreast on new kits. So, if the need for some new kits is in your future, check out these websites or your favorite resellers of these three pen kit suppliers.

The Utah Woodturning Symposium and the 7th annual Penturners Rendezvous will be history by the time this goes to print. I was not able to attend the Utah symposium this year due to previous plans to attend the AAW Symposium in Albuquerque. My funds just stretch so far and the AAW Symposium will not be as close to me in the years to come. I'm excited! I will be attending the Friday evening penturning meeting. I will be helping out in the vendor's area with Ken Nelsen's booth, Kallenshaan Woods when I'm not attending a rotation. Barry Gross, <http://www.bgartforms.com/>, will be doing two different demos and I'm sure I will be attending them. Barry is an excellent pen maker and teacher. I've mentioned Barry's penmaking workbooks and his video in previous columns. Check out Barry's pen made from watch parts. It's amazing!

A Pen Story: I received an email from a lady who owns a few of my pens. She was interested in a pen as a (40th) birthday gift. The pen had to be a large pen, with a cap, and a be rollerball pen. The kit we choose was the Emperor from Craft Supplies. That part was easy. The pen also had to have a lower barrel made of blue and purple diamonds which I call a harlequin pattern.. The upper barrel was to be blue with the future owner's family crest engraved on it. The colors are family colors and were not my choice. **Figure 1** shows the pictures I was sent showing how the lower barrel should look and the crest for the upper barrel. How to solve this delima.

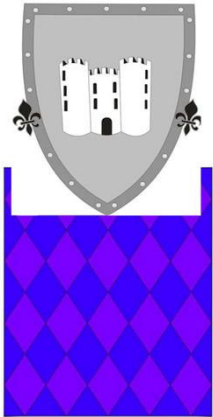


Figure 1

I quickly contacted Ken Nelsen of Kallenshaan Woods. Ken can make a laser engraver do some incredible things. I shared some of Ken's creations in a recent earlier column. Ken also does custom work. Give him an idea of what you want or need and Ken will figure out the solution. Here is what we worked out. I turned a piece of blue stabilized curly popular to the completed size for the Emperor's cap. I turned and finished the cap. I turned another piece of blue stabilized curly popular and a piece of purple stabilized curly popular for the diamonds which would make up the pen's barrel. I turned these to a little oversize. I sent the 3 pieces to Ken along with the pictures and Ken did his magic...after a few phone calls and emails to finalize the details.

The engraved cap Ken returned his handiwork in a few days. The package contained the engraved cap with and the crest was filled with silver Ruib-N-Buff and looked great. Also in the package was a plastic tube containing blue and

purple diamonds...slightly curved...that Ken had cut from the other two pen barrels. They were all exactly the same size. Without going into great detail, I glued the diamonds in layers around the kit's tube alternating the blue and purple. I flooded the harlequin blank with thin CA, turned and finished it. The completed pen is shown in **figure 2**.



Figure 2

Notice the left over blue and purple diamonds strewn around the pen. What a challenge...more for me than for Ken I suspect. The pen came out great. The purchaser and the recipient were both pleased...the pen was a great success.

Thanks Ken for your knowledgeable help. Have an idea for a special pen? Contact Ken at

<http://www.Kallenshaanwoods.com>

Let's Make a Pen: In an earlier article I outlined how to modify a popular click pen by making it with a single barrel. This month I will do much the same thing with a slimline kit. I will make a slimline with a one piece barrel, no center band, and it will twist by holding onto the nib and twisting the barrel. The design is not original with me. I think I first saw this done in a penturning book by Dick Sing. Several variations of this design have been done. I even realized the desk pen from last month could have been done this way. That will give readers something with which to experiment. Meld this article's pen with last month's pen and have some fun.

The first step will be to choose a kit and a blank. The kit I'm using is a slimline kit from Penn State Industries. The blank is monterillo. The blank was cut from a board I purchased sometime last year and just cut it into blanks. This will be my first pen from this wood. The first major task will be drilling the blank. How do I drill a hold in a long blank using the bits I have on hand? I would like for the bit to exit close to the center of the opposite end where the bit enters the blank. Using a long bit would be the obvious solution, if I had a long 7mm drill bit. More information on drilling the blank will follow later.

Next, the length of the blank must be determined. To calculate the length to which the blank must be cut, measure the two tubes plus the center band. Add these three lengths together and that will be the length to cut your blank. See **figure 3**.



Figure 3

For me, the total was 4.190 and I cut my blank to 4.250 since I like slimline pens just a little longer than standard length. Be sure to measure your tubes and center band since the lengths may vary from kit to kit. Do not rely on my measurements.

Now, how did I drill a blank whose length is longer than the standard drill bits? I first used a 1/4 inch bit that was just over 6 inches long. I drilled the blank using this longer 1/4 inch bit. I then chased that hole with a 7mm bit from both ends. It worked just fine. I had a 76mm hole completely through the blank. I'm confident that drilling the blank will not stop anyone from making this pen. Most penturners I know are quite resourceful.

Figure 3 shows the blank and the two brass tubes. I actually used a brass tube just a little longer than the one shown to take up the space left by the missing center band. The longer tube helped when turning and also strengthens the wooden barrel.

Pick the end of the blank that will be the clip end and glue in one of the kit's tubes and square that end. Use the other tube from the kit, or use a slightly longer tube, and insert it into the nib end and square this end of the blank. **DO NOT GLUE IN THE TUBE ON THE NIB END.** The blank is ready to mount on the mandrel and turn. **Figure 4** shows the blank on the mandrel ready to be turned.



Figure 4

Rough turn the blank to a cylinder. **BE SURE TO REMEMBER WHICH END OF THE BLANK IS THE CLIP END AND WHICH END IS THE NIB END. THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT.** HINT: I always place the nib end toward the headstock and the clip end toward the live center. Now turn the blank to the shape desired. Several shapes are possible. One thing I don't like to happen is for the upper portion of the pen to be so large in diameter that the clip is deformed when pressed into place or there is no space between the blank and the clip. Finish turning, sand and apply your finish of choice. **Figure 5** shows the finished blank on the lathe awaiting assembly.



Figure 5

Assembly is rather straight forward. Press in the nib followed by the transmission. Use your method of choice for pressing the transmission to the proper place so the refill propels and retracts properly. If a longer lower tube was used then the transmission may need to be pressed in just a little farther than normal. Place the finial in the clip ring and press it into place as usual. **Figure 6** shows the nib section assembled along with the barrel and clip.



Figure 6

Insert the transmission/refill assembly into the wooden barrel and press the barrel over the brass tube until the end of the barrel seats against the shoulder of the nib. Do not press the barrel too tightly against the nib's shoulder. Also, be sure the barrel is clear of any glue or other material that may make it bind against the brass tube. The pen is now ready to use. Grasp the nib and twist the wooden barrel to activate the transmission and move the writing tip in and out. **Figure 7** shows the finished and assembled pen.



Figure 7

This is an easy modification of the grandfather of pen kits...the slimline. Modifying slimlines can make them look so much more different than a standard slimline. The possibilities are endless. Use your imagination and devise your own slimline modification. By the way, the monterillo wood was easy to turn but not really an extraordinary piece of wood. It had open grain and reminded me of several varieties of mahogany I've used in the past. I think the remainder of these blanks may go into my stash of trading blanks, with the exception of one that will remain in my collection. I just did a search on monterillo and here is what I found. Monterillo is an extraordinarily rare wood. The texture is coarse and the grain is straight, hard and heavy. Monterillo works fairly well with machine tools but has a high blunting effect on cutting edges. It turns well. Monterillo is dark brown to tan with fine black stripes. Monterillo is also called tiger rosewood. The monterillo tree ranges from 60-90 feet in height; bole usually straight and unbuttressed; produces a bright flower that often grows on the trunk. The tree rarely produces enough mass for timber and grows in Central America, Panama, Ecuador, and Venezuela. There you have it. Rare, huh? I may just save a few more of the blanks that I originally thought.

Email your comments about this column or send your penturning questions to me at don@RedRiverPens.com I hope you have fun with this pen.

Do a good turn daily!
Don