

Pyrography decorates poplar ball

by Janice Levi

I am a fan of simplicity in the finial (which I think should complement the globe) while making the globe the feature of the overall ornament. This globe is made of poplar while the finials are African blackwood. I often choose the somewhat soft poplar if my plan is to use pyrography to enhance the globe. Following are a few of the steps:

Turn the globe approximately 2" (5cm) in diameter with a 1/2" (12mm) hole drilled all the way through.

Loosely dividing into thirds, the bottom finial will be about 4" (10cm) long with a 1/2" (12mm) tenon. I go further and divide the finial itself into thirds with the bottom two-thirds being fairly void of design while the top one-third flows out to allow the eye to be drawn into the globe.

The top finial is about 1" (2.5cm) in height and the turned elements will be similar in design to the elements in the lower finial.

This particular ornament is a study in black and white—no color. All the woodburned surfaces were accomplished by varying the temperature of the burner. The embellishment was applied before gluing the finials to the ornament.

I drew the design onto the globe in pencil. I do occasionally use patterns that are available online and in woodburning books but I usually prefer to draw straight onto the wood. I always work on raw wood sanded to 320 or 400 grit.



Using a ball writing tip, I outline the major elements. To give depth to the designs, I vary the temperature of the woodburner to simulate highlights and shadow.

With all the major elements burned, I use the same ball tip to stipple the background dark black.

After burning and assembly, I apply a spray finish (usually acrylic) to the entire ornament.

LEVI BLURB w ref to her finial design page in Oct 19 Journal



Chain finial makes quick ornaments

by John Lucas



I make a lot of ornaments. I donate many of them to our club to raise money for local charities. I've done a lot of hollowed spheres with finials and a lot of single-piece ornaments. I was looking for something that would be very quick to make but was a step above a simple solid ball, and would sell for a few dollars more. Finials are always slow to make, but what about using chain instead of wood? It worked great, they are very popular, and sell fast.

1. Roughing the blank — Start with a 6" (15cm) piece of wood about 1-1/2" to 2" (5cm) in diameter. If I'm going to do a lot of coloring I use woods that don't have a strong grain pattern, and light-colored woods like holly. I start between centers and turn it round, and then cut a tenon to fit the scroll chuck.

2. Turning the shape — Put it in the chuck and simply turn a shape. Since these are so fast to make and do not require hollowing, I play with the shapes a lot. You can really explore one shape and try to nail the perfect curve.

3. Drilling for chain — Leave the upper portion fairly thick but turn the bottom end to a point. Then I use the skew on its side to cut a starter hole for the drill. I bore about 1/2" (12mm) deep with a 7/64" bit, which fits my chain. Now I sand the piece to prepare it for texturing.



1. Roughing the blank



2. Turning the shape



3. Drilling for chain

PROJECT: Ornament with chain finial



4. Texturing tool



5. Mini spiral tool



6. Elf-type tool

4, 5, 6. Texturing tools

I think the ornaments look best with just one or two textured bands. I use the Sorby texturing tool, the mini Sorby with a spiraling cutter, the Henry Taylor Elf, and my shopmade chatter tool.

7. Coloring — I like to color the texture to make it stand out, and the colors are brighter when applied over a finish. Finishes applied on top dull the colors, and may cause the colors to run. So I apply a friction finish now, before coloring. I use Hut Pen Polish.

I like Tombow or Calligraphy brand markers, but Sharpies also work. Ideally you want archival inks so the colors won't fade.

8. Crisp lines — To get really crisp lines I prefer to use a paintbrush and calligraphy inks. This came from my early archery arrow-making days. The calligraphy ink comes already mixed to the right consistency. It's easy to make narrow or wide bands of color with crisp edges using this technique. Just dip the brush in the ink and gently touch

the turning while it's spinning at a slow speed. It's almost magical and it makes a nice colored ring.

9. Turning the finial

After texturing and painting it is time to finish turning the top of the ornament. I turn it down fairly small and then bring up the tailstock to just barely touch the drilled hole. This extra support lets me sand and polish aggressively. Then I gently cut off the ornament and polish the last bit on top.



7. Coloring



8. Crisp lines



9. Turning the finial

PROJECT: Ornament with chain finial



10. Wooden bangle

10. Wooden bangle

Crosses are popular at Christmas, but sometimes I make a wooden bangle, rather than store-bought jewelry, using the scrap left on the lathe. Start by drilling the chain hole. Then turn the shape you want, sand it and cut it off.

Now to apply polish, I mount the drill chuck in the headstock with a broken 7/64" bit as a mandrel. This is a very short drill, it won't bend under pressure. Mount the small top finial on the drill bit and apply friction polish. It takes a gentle touch to keep the bangle from stalling but it's doable. If the friction polish is too challenging try a CA finish.

11. Stiffening the chain

It can be very frustrating to get the chain in the hole. Reminds me of an old joke, the city man is driving down the road and sees a country man dragging a chain, so he asks, "Why are you dragging that chain?" The country man says, "Have you ever tried to push one of



11. Stiffening the chain

these things?" The solution is to make about 1/4" to 3/8" (6-10mm) of the chain rigid, using medium CA. Just start it on the chain and drag the drop on down. Then spray with CA accelerator and let dry.

Now you have a stiff chain that goes in the hole very easily, and if a ball of glue interferes, just squeeze it with pliers. Once you know it fits, apply a few drops of CA in the hole and push the chain in. Let it dry.

12. Add the bangle

Attach whatever bangle you want to the free end of the chain. You may need to buy some jump rings, or split rings, to attach a jewelry piece. For the top I use eye pins that are in the jewelry-making section of the craft shop. I cut them to length and drill the proper size hole using my Dremel. Then simply glue them in with medium CA.

That's all there is to it. These are so fun to make. I made ten of them yesterday while



12 . Add the bangle

preparing this article. As the day progressed I got faster, the last one took me only 15 minutes. So if I were selling them they would be quite profitable. I will be making many more to contribute to our tree. Hopefully you will also.

John Lucas lives in Gatlinburg, TN. John got room here for a more substantial blurb.

No-hollowing technique for hollow ball-and-finial

by Larry Hasiak

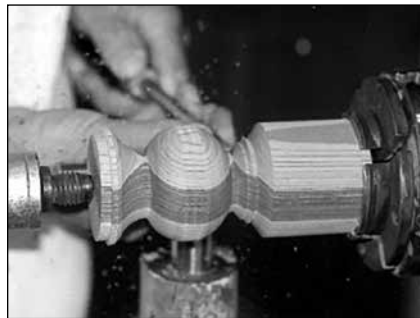
One distant Christmas past I made some one-piece solid-wood tree ornaments. They were so heavy they wouldn't stay on the slender tree branchlets. To make them lighter I found an easy way to hollow the balls. I turned the rough shape of a Christmas ball, cut it in half, hollowed the two halves, and glued them back together.

The blank

Start with a blank 2-1/2 to 3" (6-7cm) square by about 6" (15cm) long. You can use almost any kind of wood — I've been enjoying colorwood laid up in holiday color patterns.

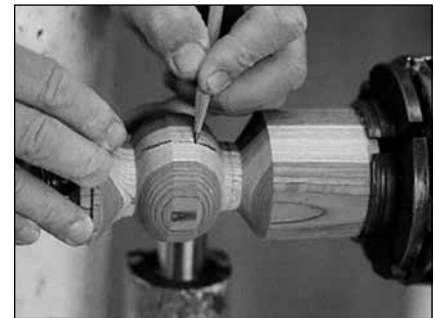
Mount the blank between centers, make a cylinder and cut a chucking tenon on one end. Now mount the blank in your scroll chuck, bringing up the tailstock for additional support.

Next, cut a tenon on the tailstock end, so that later you



1. Round the ball after making a second chucking tenon on the tailstock end.

can remount that portion of the parted blank for hollowing. The tailstock end will become the top of the ornament, so turn a rough ball



2. Reference line across the high point will help reassemble the ball later.

shape (1) closer to the tailstock than to the chuck.

Stop the lathe. Draw a line across the ball at the high point (2), to give you a reference for regluing later.



Part, hollow and glue — Colorwood ball was parted along the central burn line so the halves could be hollowed like two small bowls, then it was glued back together. Integral finial was turned last.



PROJECT: No-hollowing ball & finial



3. Part the ball using a narrow tool.

Part to hollow

Part the ball in two with a narrow parting tool (3). If the parting tool goes in at an angle, it will create two cones, which will fit together much easier than straight edges. Pull the tailstock out of the way and hollow the half of the ball still mounted on the lathe (4), leaving the walls about 1/8" (3mm) thick. You could use a round-nose steel or carbide scraper, or a small bowl gouge. Next mount the other half, which will become the top of the ball, and hollow it the same way.

Rejoin the halves

To glue the two halves together, put a bead of medium-thick instant (CA) glue on the edge of the ball in the headstock. Slowly turn the ball with one hand, so the glue does not drip off. Put the other half in place, lining up the marks drawn earlier. Hold the halves together while you bring up the tailstock and use it as a clamp.



4. Hollow half of the ball, as if it was a wee bowl. Then mount and hollow the other half.

Once the glue has set, you can remove the waste and rough out the finial (5), using a skew, spindle gouge or a scraper, steel or carbide. At the same time true up the hollow ball, being careful not to turn through the walls.

Emphasize the defect

You will now see a very disturbing cut-and-glue line in the middle of the ball. Here is where you use the old rule: "Don't try to hide a defect — emphasize it." Use a very sharp pointed tool to cut a couple of very shallow grooves on either side of the cut, and the cut itself. Next, hold a thin stainless steel wire on each groove until friction burns the wood (6). You will now have three dark rings around the ball and the cut line has disappeared.

Shape the finial

The finial is completed next. It might have lots of beads and coves or it may be very simple, as mine are. Finally, remove the excess wood at the top of the ball.



5. Turn the finial after regluing the half-balls back together.



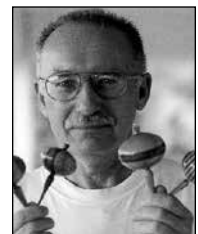
6. Disguise the join with lines burned by a steel wire.

Sand the ball very carefully, as it is now pretty fragile. At this point you may apply your favorite finish while the ornament is still on the lathe, or remove it for finishing.

The final step is to drill a very small hole and insert the smallest brass screw eye you can find.

Larry Hasiak lives in Tarpon Springs, FL and has served two terms on the AAW board of directors.

An earlier version of this article appears in *American Woodturner for Winter 2000*.





Fancy ornaments with glued-on sides

by Steve Mellott

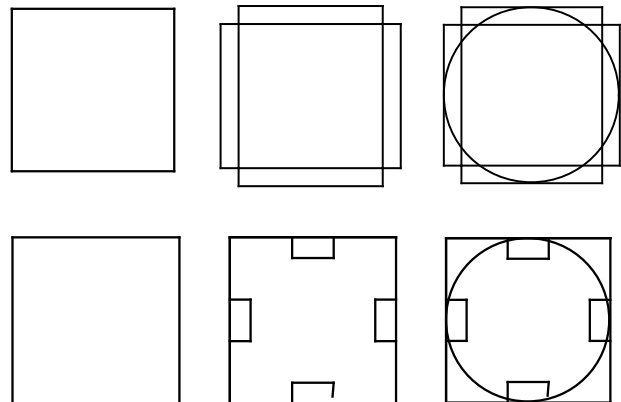
If you start with a square spindle, glue different-colored wood sides to it and then turn it round, the resulting object will show the different wood colors. The wood sides can be simple, as sketched at right, or they can be complex inlays.

Instead of gluing sides to the square spindle, you can recess shapes into it, bottom sketch. If you turn it round, this resulting object will also show the different wood colors.

A good size for the core spindle is 1-5/8" (4cm) square. If you have a jointer and planer, use them to square up the blank, and for safety sake be sure to make it at least 12" (30cm) long.

When you cut the blank into ornament bodies, give each an extra 2" (5cm) for the turning process. Mark the end centers as precisely as possible.

Make the laminated sides about 1/4" (6mm) thick, the same length as the ornament body, and nearly as wide. Use wood glue, not CA.



Mount the glued assembly between centers and turn round, without removing any unnecessary wood. Cut a tenon on the waste end of the blank, rechuck, bore 5/8" (2cm) for hollowing, and form the ball.

You can turn the top finial and bottom icicle from the same or contrasting wood. The blank should be 6" (15cm) long and 1" (2.5cm) square.

Mellott blurb



Hollow ball with glued finials

by Michael Gibson

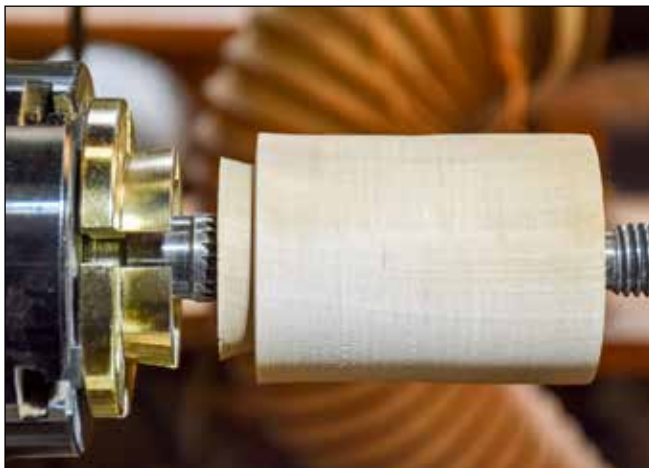
Making a holiday ornament is a good way to use up those odd blocks lying around from other projects. Hollow-ball ornaments with glued-on top and bottom finials are fairly simple and quick to make, once you have made a few.

For this project I selected a block of Bradford pear approximately 2-1/2" x 3-1/2" (6x9cm) to make an ornament around 2-1/4" (5.5cm) diameter. The wood needs to be dry but the exact size is not important — I have made ornaments anywhere from 1-1/4" to 3" (3-7.5cm) in diameter. Your ornament can be any shape you desire: sphere, donut, teardrop, oval, experiment.

Michael Gibson blurb



Gloss finish always looks good on ornaments.



1. Tenon the blank — Turn between centers until the block is round and make a chucking tenon on one end.



2. Rough ball — Use the spindle gouge to shape the sphere, but don't make the neck smaller than the chucking tenon.

PROJECT: Hollow ball & finial



4. Bore using a 1/2" (12mm) bit in the tailstock chuck. Slow the speed down, clear the chips frequently, and hold the chuck when withdrawing. Bore through the ball into the tenon, beyond the bottom of the globe.



3. Flat — Make a flat spot for the finial, much easier than trying to fit it to the curve of the globe. Cut a dimple to give the drill bit a start.



5. Hollowing tools — A simple steel scraper, top, can handle the hollowing. I like the new carbide-cup tools. After boring the starter hole, use the straight tool to open it up and make room for the bent tools.



6. Gauges — As you hollow, check the wall thickness with a thickness caliper or a simple gauge bent from coat-hanger wire.



7. Measure — With the caliper points touching the wood inside and out, the free end shows thickness. Make hardwood about 1/8" (3mm) thick; light-weight woods can be thicker.



8. Wire gauge — With one end bearing on the inside, the free end indicates thickness without scratching the outside.

9. Complete and part— Be sure to stop turning 1/8" (3mm) away from the bored hole. Sand and part off, leaving a flat where the top finial will sit.



PROJECT: Hollow ball & finial



10. Finial size — *The rule of thirds usually will generate a pleasing proportion, so make the bottom finial about twice the height of the ball, and the top finial about half the ball height. I like to start with a blank long enough for both finials.*



11. Finial blank — *Choose dry, straight-grain, knot-free wood, square enough to cover the flats on the ball. Stick with the rule of thirds to design the finial elements and details. Mark the mounting tenon and major divisions on the wood.*



12. Underhand grip — *Detail the finial with a spindle roughing gouge, 3/8" (10mm) spindle gouge, and a small curved skew, or equivalent carbide tools. With the blank in pin jaws, you can use an underhand grip to steady the thin spindle; if you are a novice, uncomfortable, or do not have the correct chuck jaws, use the tailstock for support.*



13. Tenon — *Measure the hole in the ball and turn a small plug tenon before parting off. There's enough wood left in the chuck for the top finial.*



14. Top finial — *Clean up the face and bore a small hole for a screw eye or hanging string.*



15. Angled edge — *Again keep in mind to follow the rule of thirds when turning the top finial. I like to angle back the edge that is closest to the ball, it seems to make the fit look better.*

PROJECT: Hollow ball & finial



16. Assembly — *There are many surface treatments you can apply to enhance the globe, including pyrography, paint and dye, or leave it plain. This one is dyed red, with two finials, one colored with black shoe dye, when finished it gives the impression of ebony. For assembly, use epoxy or regular wood glue, not super glue, because if it runs it can ruin your finished work.*



17. Stands — *The stands can be purchased online or you can make your own, using steel wire from the hardware store. My wire came coiled in a tight circle about 6" (15cm) in diameter, so I cut about two-thirds of the circle and bent the hanging loop in one end. For the base, turn a block, bore a hole at an angle the size of the wire and attach. You can alter the height for different length ornaments by gently pulling or pushing.*



Hollow ball with contrasting insert

by Thomas Irven

This hollow-ball ornament has a turned and colored medallion set into the holes that were bored for hollowing.

Starting between centers, turn a spherical shape with a chucking tenon on one end. Leave a mostly flat surface on the opposite end for drilling.

Chuck up the sphere by the newly created tenon and drill a 1-1/4" (3cm) hole, or whatever size you want for your inserts.

Hollow the form through the hole just drilled. Be careful not to drill through the back wall and don't try to make the walls too thin — 1/4" (6mm) is thin enough for this project. Use your measuring tools and check often.

Turn a small (1/16"-ish) flat around the drilled hole. Sand this flat and sand the sphere, and remove it from the chuck. If you have left a long enough tenon, it is easy to part the ornament body from it.

Now turn the sphere around and expand the chuck jaws into the drilled hole. Drill another hole the same size as the first hole. You can tweak the inside of the ornament at this point if you need or want to. Turn a narrow flat to match

the flat on the opposite side, and sand as needed.

Apply a finish to the outside of the ornament body and remove the sphere. It is best to apply a final finish and buff all the pieces before assembling the ornament.

Decorative Disk

Using a contrasting wood, turn two disks to fit into the holes created in the previous step. Start with a miniature bowl blank about 1-1/2" (4cm) square and 2" (5cm) tall. Grip the square blank in the scroll chuck and turn a 1-1/4" (3cm) tenon to fit the ornament body hole. Turn a small bead next to the tenon, sand this bead, and part off the disk. You will need two disks or medallions for each ornament.

Grip the tenon in the chuck jaws, complete the turning and sand the disk. Decorate with the Elf tool or a chatter tool. Stain or bleach and apply a finish. It is much easier to finish these disks before they are glued to the ornament.

A top and/or a bottom finial may be added to the ornament to suit yourself; you will need to at least add a hanger to the top of the ornament.



If you are going to add a bottom finial, drill an appropriate sized hole on the bottom of the ornament and glue in the finial. I'll leave the cranked finial shown here for another day.

Irven blurb

Hollow Form Ornament with Contrasting Discs
Thomas Irven - trirven@icloud.com - 713-705-2050 ↗