

A Tribute to Bill Tarleton – Nov 3, 1936 – Nov 4, 2012

by Allan Schwindt #8209 L

I first met Bill in about 2002 or 2003 at a NW Regional meeting of IWCS in the Salem Oregon area. He had driven up from his home in Lafayette CA, in the SF Bay Area, to attend our meeting and meet some of the IWCS members as he had just recently joined the ranks. I was immediately impressed with his input to the meeting and the volumes of photographs and information on his woodworking activities. It was quite apparent that Bill was a most capable person when it came to creating beautiful and useful things from wood. As one might expect, we hit it off from the beginning and we became fast friends in the weeks and months that followed.

I would soon learn that Bill was widely known in northern California as the man who could remove an urban tree—or an entire grove of urban trees if needs be. Many cities in his area would call him to remove various trees which had become a problem to sidewalks, streets, or other structures in their area. Consequently, he developed his own methods of handling the logs and converting them into usable lumber. Many of these innovations were well designed and well built making the sawing process a workable one-man operation.

Judi and I often became the recipients of some of the lumber produced from these trees. I can recall getting wood I had never encountered before, such as; ironbark (*Eucalyptus* sp.), carob (*Ceratonia siliqua*) and black acacia (*Acacia melanoxylon*).

In 2005 the NW Chapter of IWCS held a “Woodfest” here at our place in SW Washington—near Mt. St. Helens—and Bill had brought his pickup and trailer with equipment to demonstrate his method of quarter sawing logs. Several local persons and timber companies had donated logs. These included; bigleaf maple (*Acer macrophyllum*), western ash (*Fraxinus* sp.) and madrone (*Arbutus*

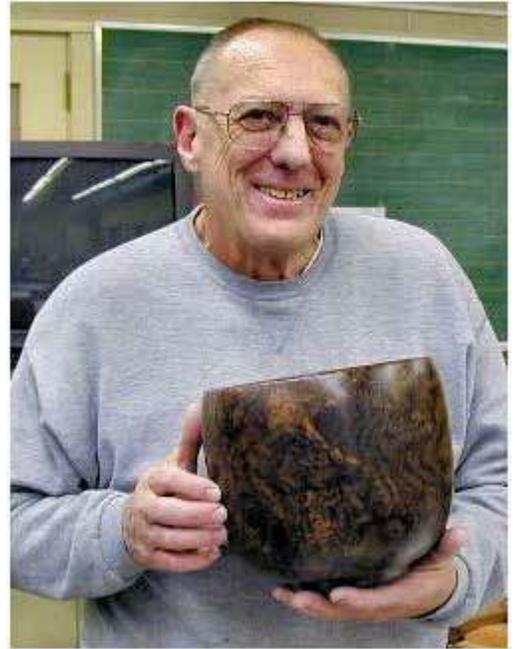
menziesii). From these, Bill produced some beautiful lumber which the members were able to take home for their many projects. We were all impressed with the many ingenious ways in which he had made all his own equipment for handling logs as large as 30” in diameter. This was a memorable event and all were impressed with the many demonstrations presented.

Bill was not only interested in creating beautiful things from wood, but also he had a real interest in “wood science.” Soon after joining IWCS he became the SW Region Trustee where he served for several years.

Bill was, without a doubt, “*a man of vision who could get things done and done well.*”

I’ll list here some of his more notable abilities:

- o He was a great organizer and was probably the main driving force in *The Diablo Woodworkers* in the bay area. (See www.diablowoodworkers.com to see some of their many projects.
- o A few years ago the group had Roy Underhill, (the Hippy Woodright) from Williamsburg VA and the TV Show “*The Woodright’s Shop*” travel out to California to present a seminar on building and operating a “*Foot Powered Lathe.*” Members of the group built one of the lathes prior to Underhill’s arrival for him to use in his program. The lathe was then sold at auction and the funds, along with ticket sales more than paid for Underhill’s trip.



- o As mentioned earlier he was a Master Craftsman with wood, but he also made many things in metal to assist in his woodworking.
- o Bill was an avid fisherman and we enjoyed the fruits of his efforts, including salmon and halibut.
- o He was also an excellent cook and we noted that he often used many of his turned bowls or platters to serve some of his delicacies.
- o Bill was also a gardener and he produced a lot of fruits and vegetables in his back yard garden.

We will all miss Bill and remember his contribution to the world in many forms.

