

Vice-President's Message -- Arizona Woodturners Association -- February 2015

I have a confession to make. I've spent the better part of 10 years lying to myself and lying to members of the club. Of course I didn't realize that I was lying until very recently.

I've been slowly building a collection of wood for the better part of 10 years. My best purchase happened mostly by accident. I browse Craigslist fairly often looking for wood and for bargains. A few years ago I happened onto a listing for Maple burl that linked to an eBay auction. The auction listing was for a Big Leaf Maple burl that was located in Glendale. The seller wasn't willing to ship it as it had the size listed at 36 X 36 X 36 and the weight was estimated at 1000 pounds.

Initially, I doubted the measurements and weight estimate. In my experience people have a very difficult time judging size. If I got an email telling me that someone had a tree in their yard and they estimated the size at 12" diameter 40% of the time it would be 5-8" diameter. 40% of the time it would be 17-20" diameter and just 20% of the time it would be in the range of the stated diameter. Still, I was planning to bid on the auction. I talked it over with my wife and set what I thought would be a reasonable maximum bid amount.

As the auction started to draw to a close I studied the pictures attached to the auction in greater detail. Eventually I realized that the burl in question was sitting on a standard shipping pallet. Standard pallets are 40" x 48" and this one burl filled the majority of the pallet. My maximum bid on the auction instantly tripled but in the end it was unnecessary. The auction closed at just over \$100. I spent \$25 renting a trailer with a ramp and another \$25 on a cable come-along. I also paid the seller's teenage son \$20 to help me load it into the trailer.

My final cost for the burl was less than \$200 and the final measurement ended up right at 40" X 40" X 40" and the final weight was 900 pounds. Four years later I still have about 500 pounds left and the roughly 200 pounds I chose to sell have more than doubled my initial investment. That burl along with the rest of my burl collection (and a portion of my non-burl collection) will be headed to Chicago with me.

Now that we're in the early stages of our move and I've started to move some of my wood collection to temporary storage I can finally reveal the truth. There IS such a thing as too much wood.

Jason
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Lifetime Club Member

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