Ron’s Pearls:
There are exceptions to every rule except this one. Six types of chisels are needed to make up a basic turning set (Spindle Gouges, Roughing Gouges, Bowl Gouges, Skews, Scrapers & Parting Tools). Sharp Lathe Tools are more fun. Speed formula: diameter in inches X speed in RPM's should equal 6,000 to 9,000 (10” X 800 RPM= 8,000). Rub the bevel on all cutting tools; not on scraping tools. ABC= Anchor the tool, Rub the Bevel, Pick up the Cut. Have safety gear on hand and use it; full face shield, dust mask. Always rotate the workpiece by hand before turning the lathe on to check for interference. Start at slow RPM to check for balance, and then speed up. Speed can be our friend. If you are afraid, slow down and take a breath. “Life’s too short to turn ugly wood.” John Jordan. Carpe Lignum, Torne Lignum – Seize the wood. Turn the wood. Variable speed lathes are better. Learn to hone. Have a plan before you start. Be Flexible. Turn green wood often. Green wood is like lettuce, cut what you can use or it will spoil. Learn to use your tools well and keep them sharp. Sharp tools are safer. Sharp tools produce better results. Invest in a good sharpening system and learn to use it well. Then teach others. Don’t skip grits. Never jump more than 50%, i.e. 100 grit to 150 grit to 220 grit to 320 grit. Your family will love whatever you make. Listen to your spouse; they usually have a better eye for design. Never point out your mistakes to others. Spindle turning often requires more skill and imagination than bowl turning. “Never scrape when you can cut.” Mike Mahoney. If you must scrape, raise a fresh burr. Get and learn to use a ¼” wide parting tool. Learn to make lots of “Fun Stuff” like tops, pens, stoppers, light pulls and small lidded boxes. It will make you a better turner and your family will think you are a genius especially at Christmas time. Make Christmas gifts for your family every year and start in June. Invest in education like classes, seminars and symposiums. Spend the money for personal one-on-one instruction with a professional turner. If you are not failing every now and then, you are not learning. You learn the most when you teach others. Buy good quality M2 High Speed Steel tools. Avoid high carbon tools; they are a waste of time. Learn to turn right and left handed. You can use a bowl gouge on spindle work, but usually not the other way around. Sandpaper is cheap; throw it away often and use fresh stuff. Sign and date your work pieces along with the kind of wood. Buy the best chuck you can afford, and then buy lots of jaws for it. Then buy another chuck. Make your own tool handles. Try someone else’s tools. They might know something you don’t. Join an AAW chapter then go to the meetings. Read turning magazines. Buy educational DVD’s ;-)