



**BOWLING YOU OVER:** Don Thur of Utterson (second from right) presents Queen Sonja of Norway with a handcrafted bowl he made for her and King Harald V during their visit last week to the Muskoka Airport. District of Muskoka chair Gord Adams looks on.

## Utterson artist makes a royal presentation to King and Queen

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An Utterson artist has had an opportunity to display a piece of his work on the international stage, without having to travel abroad.

Don Thur, who owns Knots and Burls to Bowls, presented one of his creations to King Harald V and Queen Sonja of Norway during their visit to the Muskoka Airport in Gravenhurst on May 8. The event was held to celebrate the common heritage shared between Norway and Canada when they fought against Germany in the Second World War.

Thur presented the royal couple with a bowl created from a yellow birch log recovered in October 2001 in Hunter's Bay in Huntsville. He estimates that the wood from which the bowl came had to be more than 240

years old, adding that the tree could have been harvested in 1910.

He said the idea for the piece came from a discussion Thur said that he had with District of Muskoka chair Gord Adams and Bracebridge Mayor Scott Northmore.

"In the last few years, I have created a number of pieces that have been presented to dignitaries, such as [former lieutenant governor] Hilary Weston. They said to me that it would be nice to have a piece, but that there was no money to buy one [for the couple]. So I offered to create and donate one for the king and queen."

Thur said the piece is a one-of-a-kind creation. He adds that while some of his work has been presented to other dignitaries before, it was the first time that he made the official

presentation. "I was not aware that it is customary to have the creator there at the ceremony. And both the king and queen seemed to be very pleased with the piece."

Thur began wood-turning in 1995 and by 2000, opened Knots and Burls to Bowls with his wife, Mary.

No living trees are harvested for Thur's art. Some of the material is recovered from local waters, near the sites of former sawmills and log drives. Some of these salvaged timbers date back hundreds of years, well before the pioneer industry that harvested them for milling.