

BENCHTALK

Northeastern Wisconsin Woodworkers Guild

Volume 44: Issue # 7, July 2026



July Program: Annual Guild Picnic on August 1, 2026

This year, in lieu of our regular July Guild meeting and program, our July meeting will be our Annual Picnic, to be held on Saturday, August 1 at the Pavilion in Green Isle Park in Allouez, starting at 11:00 am. The address is 900 Greene Ave, Bldg. A, Allouez, WI 54301. Guild members are welcome to bring their spouses/significant others and children. **Please email Barry Bender at 2barryand2ellen@gmail.com by July 27th to confirm if you are coming and how many additional guests you are bringing with you.** A big Thank You in advance to Barry for bringing the groceries and drinks and cooking as well. The Guild supplies most everything for the meal, but **each attending member is asked to bring a dish to pass**. Also, we could use your help setting up tables and chairs in the Pavilion. Since we will be inside, the picnic will be held rain or shine. Please plan to attend if you can!

Note: We will not be holding our regular Guild meeting at NWTC on July 15th. We will resume our regular Guild meetings at NWTC on August 19th at 7:00 pm.



Exterior of Pavilion at Green Isle Park



Interior of Pavilion at Green Isle Park

Review of June 17th Program

Our program on June 17th featured NEWWG President Greg Levenhagen, who gave us a very interesting presentation on Technology that Helps Woodworking. This was an extension of the discussion Greg kicked off at our May 20th meeting, when he discussed the ever-increasing use of AI and technology in our everyday lives. At the June meeting, Greg expanded on his AI intro and had

several slides describing how technology can help us in our woodworking pursuits. Greg's comments will be summarized here, but Greg also plans to make his slides available to the group.

At the start of a project, there are AI-assisted tools that can be used in project design. AI-assisted tools can generate design concepts almost instantly for any style or size projects and can be used to explore design variations quickly without you having to redraw project plans. AI tools can help select materials, make suggestions on joinery options, and make recommendations on appropriate finishes. There are also tools that can make custom cut lists for a project, saving the craftsperson time and minimizing waste. Some of the design and modeling tools/apps available include SketchUp for Web, Onshape Free, Tinkercad, and Shaper Studio. Cut lists can be created by Cut List Optimizer, optiCutter, and KM Tools Linear Board Foot Calculator.

While perhaps more applicable to carpentry than woodworking, most recent iPhone Pros and some Android phones can make LIDAR scans of rooms. LIDAR stands for Light Detection and Ranging. It works by using pulsed lasers and measuring how long it takes for laser light to bounce off an object and return to the sensor. It then builds a 3D digital model or "point cloud." Some apps that use LIDAR for room design and layout include Floorplanner, HomeByMe, and Homestyler.

Augmented Reality glasses work by overlaying digital information (maps, notifications, inter-active objects) onto your real-world view. Popular now in gaming applications, they are likely years away from being practical for use by woodworkers. But as their prices keep falling and capabilities keep expanding, they may one day have a place in our workshops.

There are growing applications for 3D printing to create custom jigs and tools for woodworking. 3D printing works by first designing (with CAD software) or acquiring a digital model, running this model through a "slicer" program to translate the model into thousands of flat, horizontal layers and creating the G-code the printer needs, then the printer builds the object layer-by-layer, from the bottom up, most commonly by melting a plastic filament. It was noted that you don't even need a 3D printer, as there are vendors who will 3D print your design for you.

Technology more common in woodworking are modern CNC Routers and Laser Cutters/Engravers. These tools enable precision cutting and exact replication of multiple copies. Prices are generally proportional to the size of workpiece the tool can handle, as well as special features. On CNC routers these added features can include 3D carving, dust extraction, and high-speed router spindles. Besides size, laser cutter features can include fume extraction, different types and power ratings of lasers, and rotary attachments to enable engraving cylindrical objects. One recent innovation in the CNC routing arena is the Shaper Origin, a handheld router with CNC accuracy and no workpiece size limit, as you take the machine to the workpiece. Depending on how far you venture into any of these technologies, the price tag can quickly climb into thousands of dollars. Software/apps available for these technologies to layout joinery or templates include Blocklayer, Boxes.py, MakerCase, Easel, and Kiri:Moto.

There are a multitude of woodworking apps for mobile phones, and specialized calculators that can work in fractions and calculate board feet of lumber. Less known are inventory apps that can not only keep track of your lumber inventory but can also inventory your tools and even where you usually store them! Likewise, is AI-assisted research, for example, if you are interested in buying a particular tool but have a budget limit, you can set a Google Alert to monitor the internet for that tool and notify you when there is a sale price and where to buy it.

On the horizon is Computer Vision, a subset of AI, which can be trained to scan objects and identify anomalies or defects, essentially replicating human vision. But despite this almost overwhelming wave of technology coming into woodworking, Greg emphasized that properly applied, technology will remove frustration but will not replace craftsmanship.

Greg concluded his presentation with a real-time demo using ChatGPT, first for a hypothetical purchase of a drum sander, then for images of an “old world” Santa carrying a Christmas tree, and then modifying the Santa inquiry to show multiple views of how to carve the Santa. In all searches ChatGPT quickly returned results conforming to the Context, Constraints, and Format we specified. OpenAI’s Chat GPT, Google’s Gemini, and Microsoft’s Copilot are all powerful AI alternatives to using Google for searches. They can even find info normally secured behind “paywalls” (meaning you must have a paid account to access them), because this information sometimes “leaks” out and is captured and stored by Archive.org, which then provides free public access. Given the staggering amount of data being generated and stored, the need for more data centers becomes understandable.

Membership Report June 2026

Currently we have 190 members.

Please welcome our newest member who joined at Woodcraft’s Family Day event!

- Shelly Dobson from Appleton

Woodcraft Family Day:

- Thanks to the ten Guild members who volunteered to help at Woodcraft’s Annual Family Day on June 27. Guild volunteers helped hand out the kid’s activity kits to build a small wood planter box. The weather was beautiful and many people turned out to see and talk woodworking, get a free lunch, and watch the kids build a project. Thanks for volunteering!

Membership benefits

- Please remember one of the benefits to your membership is a 10% discount on most items at the Woodcraft store in Appleton. You must show your NEWWG name tag as proof of your membership. Woodcraft moved to their new HUGE store location at 1810 North Casaloma Drive in Appleton. The new location is about one mile north of their old location. Please stop by and check out their new digs at 1810 Casaloma Drive.
- You also can get a 10% discount on high quality figured hardwoods at **Kloes Specialty Hardwoods** at E10885 Eulrich Road in Clintonville. Please call 920-883-1745 to confirm store hours and preview the wood inventory at <https://www.kloesspecialtyhardwoods.com> Thanks to Bob Kloes for this new benefit!
- **Another membership benefit is our extensive guild library** of books, magazines and DVDs on a wide range of woodworking topics. Browse and borrow at one meeting and return it at a future meeting. Video recordings (DVDs) of most past meetings are available too!

Eric Hansen - Phone: 952-567-4625
Email: ericjonhansen@gmail.com
W6994 Angel Hill Drive, Greenville, WI 54942

Get Paid to Share Your Experience! Lead a class at Woodcraft!

The classroom in the new Woodcraft in Appleton is open for business! Woodcraft is looking for guild members to teach small group classes on a wide variety of subjects.

You would be well paid for developing the class content and leading your class. Class length is flexible but could be 3 hours per session. Some equipment is in the classroom for your use plus you can bring other items you may need. Most classes include 4-6 adults. Dates and times are available to fit your schedule.

You can choose your topic, but typical topics might be:

- Hand tool woodworking
- Building small boxes
- Traditional bowl turning
- Face frame cabinet making
- Frameless European cabinetry
- Inlays - basic lines and circles
- Inlays - bands and templates
- Chip carving for beginners
- Finishing - new & restoring
- Making cribbage boards
- CNC sign making

The Guild is facilitating the connections with Woodcraft. If you are interested in sharing your knowledge with others and earning some money, please contact Eric Hansen at 952-567-4625 or ericjonhansen@gmail.com. Or let's talk at a meeting soon!

Audit Committee

Thank you to Joshua Jones for volunteering to be part of an Audit Committee the Guild needs to conduct an audit of our financial records. We still need two more members, who are not members of the Board, to fill out this committee. Please consider volunteering and joining with Joshua to conduct this audit to ensure our financial records are complete and accurate.

Door Prize Coordinator

The guild is looking for a member to coordinate our door prize giveaway. This would be a great opportunity for one or two new members to collaborate on.

If you volunteer for this position, you will have a \$100 per month budget from the Guild to purchase items to be used as door prizes at each meeting. If you are willing to help, please talk to any Board member or call or email Eric Hansen at 952-567-4625 or ericjonhansen@gmail.com . Thanks!

Treasurer's Report

Balance as of 06/30/2026- \$29,006.30

Financial Activity (thru 06/30/2026)

Income:

- \$620.00 – registration guild show
- \$8.88- Interest
- \$20.00 water sale

Total \$648.88

Expenses:

Check #

Description

- | | | |
|--------------|------|-----------------------------|
| • \$1,146.44 | 1354 | Eric Hansen- reimbursements |
| • \$26.33 | 1355 | Roger McCambridge – reimbur |
| • \$28.34 | 1356 | Dave Kaus-reimbur |

Total \$1,201.11

Respectfully Submitted,

Craig Effertz – Treasurer

CP Center Opportunity

Katie Tilleman works at the CP Center in Adult Day Services. Katie is looking for someone to come into one of her Friday afternoon life skills classes and talk to them about wood, tools, woodworking, etc., or perhaps lead a small project the class could work on together. It's a very inquisitive group of people that enjoy learning and hands on opportunities. If you could help, please contact Katie at the CP Center 920-337-1122.

NEWWG Board Meeting Minutes June 1, 2026 - 7:00 pm - via Teams

The June 1 Board meeting was canceled. Next month there will be a report on the July Board meeting, which was held on June 29. Recall we now publish Board meeting minutes one month after the meeting to give Board members time to review the minutes prior to publishing in the newsletter.

Upcoming Programs

Future Programs: Meetings at NWTC, in Room EE201, Great Lakes Energy Ed. Center. Use parking lot G, entrance door E2. See map included with this newsletter.

Bench Talk is the newsletter of the Northeast Wisconsin Wood Workers Guild, published prior to regularly scheduled monthly meetings. For more information on activities, meetings, membership, etc. check out the Guild website at: www.newwg.org.

NORTHEASTERN WISCONSIN WOODWORKERS GUILD

MEETINGS: (Guests and prospective members always welcome)

3rd Wednesday of each month, Time: 7:00 p.m.

Visit our web site at: www.newwg.org

How to Get Involved: For inquiries regarding joining the NE Wisconsin Woodworkers Guild, Contact: Eric J. Hansen

ericjonhansen@gmail.com 952-567-4625 or any other Board or committee member.

Newsletter: Roger McCambridge
roger@mccambridge.org 920-660-4462

Web Site: Matt Hamblin
mhamblin6703@gmail.com 920-419-3910

Officers:

President - Greg Levenhagen

Vice Pres - Tom Smith

Secretary - Gerald Jensen

Treasurer - Craig Effertz

Other Board Members:

Membership -Eric Hansen

Programs—Tom Smith & Greg Levenhagen (temp)

Newsletter— Roger McCambridge

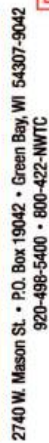
Library -Dave Kaus

Website- Matt Hamblin

Other committees:

Annual Show: Randy Hendricks, Jim Michiels

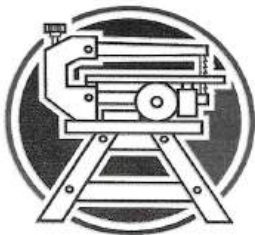
Event Facilitator: open



2740 W. Mason St. • P.O. Box 19042 • Green Bay, WI 54307-9042
920-498-5400 • 800-422-NWTC

Energy in





Midwest Scroll Saw and Woodworking Trade Show 2026

Friday, August 7, 2026 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Saturday August 8, 2026 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Dubuque County Fairgrounds

14569 Old Hwy Rd, Dubuque, Iowa, 52002

Join us for the Midwest's premier woodworking event, where enthusiasts of all skill levels come together to share ideas, learn new techniques, and celebrate the art of woodworking.

Admission: \$15 for both days, \$10 for one day (children under 18 free when accompanied by a paid adult)

Food available on-site throughout the show

Learn

Classes, Seminars and Demos: Attend free on-floor demonstrations and a full line-up of pay-as-you-go hands-on classes and seminars. Details will be posted on the website, shown below, as they are finalized.

Scroll Sawing and Pen Turning: Try your hand at scroll sawing or pen turning with guidance from Veterans Freedom Center volunteers. Take home your creations!

Connect

Contests: Enter or admire projects in contests for scroll sawing (fretwork, intarsia, and open class), wood turning, and wood carving. Ribbons and prizes awarded! Rules and information on the website, shown below.

Show and Tell Tables: Display, or be inspired by, outstanding projects from any woodworking discipline, swap ideas, share tips & techniques and visit with woodworkers. Items may be displayed for a few hours or during the entire show.

Friday Evening Dinner: Enjoy Midwest cuisine and connect with fellow show attendees. Many people make lifelong friends at this show. Registration form will be available on the website, shown below.

Discover

Vendor Marketplace and Crafts for Sale: Browse a line-up of large and small businesses generally offering tools, lumber, patterns, supplies and finished projects. Unique handmade crafts, ornaments, and specialty items from local artisans and vendors will also be available for purchase.

Veterans Freedom Center Tours: Stop by the Veterans Freedom Center Thursday, Aug. 6 from 5:00-7:00 p.m. to learn more about woodworking and other resources available for veterans in the tri-state area.

Win

Door Prizes and Grand Prizes: Submit your admission ticket to enter drawings for loads of door prizes for attendees! Grand prizes awarded at 4:30 p.m. Friday and 3:30 p.m. Saturday. **You must be present to win.**

Learn more at www.midwesttradeshow.com or on Facebook: **Midwest Scroll Saw Trade Show**. Questions? Email Karen at dirkdraws2@gmail.com or call 608-348-8332.