



# MINNESOTA WOODWORKERS GUILD

## The Newsletter of the Minnesota Woodworkers Guild

January 2026

### **Newsletter Introduction from the Editor**

Hello fellow woodworkers! Happy New Year and welcome to the first issue of the reconstituted MN Woodworkers Guild newsletter. I'm [Ed Estlow](#), your new newsletter editor. More about me in a minute but first a bit about this new start for the newsletter.

In times past, the Guild did publish a newsletter. That ended about ten years ago. High time to start it up again, don't you agree?

As we begin again, please understand it'll be a bit of a work in progress. It'll be a little rough around the edges at first (e.g. a shocking lack of images for this first issue), but as we get into a publishing rhythm and contributors come on board, the newsletter will only get better! And please feel free to offer suggestions, and even contributions of information or articles as you see fit. (I promise not to pencil-whip your work too badly!)

And if you're curious about me, below is a little bit of additional background, since I'm not only new to editing this letter, I'm also new to the MN Woodworkers Guild as well.

My professional background is in engineering and technical project management. I've extrapolated (morphed?) that into fine jewelry design, gemology, and freelance writing. These days, I pay the bills as a technical writer for Polaris Industries' Government & Defense group.

As for woodworking, most of you are much farther along on your woodworking journey compared to my own modest efforts. Mine have been limited to fairly utilitarian projects - several sets of bookshelves and interior cabinets, a toolbox or two, and even dabbling in bamboo fly rod making. Pretty much stuff where form follows function. I love the feel of sawdust in my fingers and the fragrance of freshly worked wood (well... technically, bamboo is a grass), and as I near retirement, I plan to experience more of that.

Please feel free to contact me with corrections, updates, news, items of interest, content for the next newsletter, etc.

You can reach me at:

[eestlow@mnwwg.org](mailto:eestlow@mnwwg.org)

or

[newsletter@mnwwg.org](mailto:newsletter@mnwwg.org)

I'm looking forward to getting to know all of you!

With that, I'll hand it over to Paul Ehrlich.

### **President's Update**

As we start 2026 this is a good time to look back at what the Guild has accomplished over the last year. There is so much that we have achieved as an organization, and many thanks are due to our members who volunteer to make all this possible. Also special thanks to Ed Estlow for taking on bringing back our monthly newsletter!

**Programs:** Each month our program committee has put on an either online or in person program. They all have been great but some highlights for me included: 1) Shop Tours which is always a source of inspiration!; 2) The session on wood bending with Mark, Ron and Roger – a great concise master class on three different approaches to bending wood; 3) Bob Behnke from Titebond talking about adhesives – a very technical but informative session that provided some valuable tips for how to use glue. All our programs are available on the Guild's YouTube channel for viewing.

**Events:** We had a great Northern Woods show in April with over 50 entries. Northern Woods continues to showcase the incredible talent of our members and demonstrates the incredible versatility and artistry of what can be done using wood as a medium. In August we were invited to do a "demo day" at the State Fair and shared a variety of skills ranging from finishing to guitar making. In October we were back at the State Fair grounds for the Woodworkers Expo which had a record number of vendors and fantastic attendance. One event that was missed this year was the Fall Seminar – which we postponed as the Guild works on development of a new "hands on" education program under the leadership of Khrisslyn Goodman.



*Display Case at the State Fair*

**Leadership:** The Guild has been fortunate to have many dedicated volunteers and board members who have served for many years. This includes Ed Neu who served as President for eight years, Richard Tendick who had numerous roles on the board for over 20 years and Bob Kraby who served for over 10 years. These folks as well as Mike Johnson (Northern Woods Chair), and Travis Frey (Treasurer) all left the board this year. We are fortunate to have many other experienced members who have stayed on including George Lucas who has been our Sponsor Liaison and is now our Vice President. We also have new board members including Karl Heal (Treasurer), Jake Brown (Northern Woods), Norbert Nielubowski (Expo, Education), Khrisslyn Goodman (Education) and Michael Goetz (Communications).

**Looking Forward:** Earlier this week the board met to discuss our long-term vision and strategy. There are so many things that the Guild is doing well at including our programs and being financially stable. But we also have things we want to be doing better, including more focus on education as well as events for networking and fellowship. More to follow as we work to build a strategic plan.

**2025 Donations:** Finally, thanks to so much to our members who responded to our end of the year fund raising drive. Over \$5,500 was donated which is fantastic! These funds will be used for new projects and programs.

Sincerely,

Paul Ehrlich

President Minnesota Woodworkers Guild

[President@mnwwg.org](mailto:President@mnwwg.org)

### **St. Paul Woodworkers Lunch Special Interest Group (SIG)**

Two years ago, three woodworkers met at the MNWWG Fall Seminar. Having had a great time getting to know each other and realizing they all lived in St Paul, they decided to get together for lunch the following month. That was the beginning of the unofficial St Paul Woodworkers Lunch SIG.

Our group has now expanded to 7- 9 people, depending on schedules, but the original group hasn't missed a monthly meeting in over 2 years. We try a different restaurant every month, have great discussions about current woodworking projects and attempt to solve the problems of the world.

Woodworking, while a great hobby, is very often a solitary pursuit. With the loss of other shared social events like bowling leagues or fraternal organizations, our lunch SIG gives us the chance to socialize in person and not in front of a computer screen. In addition, it's a great resource for picking other people's brains to help solve woodworking conundrums.

This has been so successful we would like to see this project spread to other parts of the metro area and greater Minnesota- if you are interested in forming a Woodworkers Lunch SIG in your area contact either Ron Ausen [rausen@mnwwg.org](mailto:rausen@mnwwg.org) or Norbert Nielubowski [nnielubowski@mnwwg.org](mailto:nnielubowski@mnwwg.org) and we can help connect you with other MNWWG members in your area.

Norbert Nielubowski

Minnesota Woodworkers Guild Expo Committee

### **Minnesota Woodworker's Guild Supporters**

The Minnesota Woodworkers Guild currently has nearly 50 Supporters. Each of the supporters offers guild members a special deal, usually a discount or wholesale pricing. These supporters offer nearly everything that the woodworker may need for their projects. See <https://mnwwg.org/supporters/> for a current list of supporters and details of what deals they offer to guild members.

One of our supporters is Hirshfield's. They offer all types of paints and wood finishing supplies. There are more than 40 Hirshfield's locations in Minnesota. Go to <https://www.hirshfields.com/store-locator/> to find a store close to your location. The stores in Monticello, Plymouth, Blaine, Hudson, and Savage are considered wood stores and more focused on wood stains and finishes. As a Guild member you can receive their Contractor's discount, which can be 30% or more off the retail price.

You will need to log into your account to access the [Member Center](#) to obtain the discount codes of Hirshfield's, as well as many of our supporters.

George Lucas  
VP and Sponsor/ Supporter Liaison

### **Education**

The Education Committee is back in action, and we're grateful for our talented and dedicated volunteers! In addition to guild board members Paul Ehrlich, Khriisslyn Goodman, and Norbert Nielubowski, the committee includes Mike Bierscheid, Dave Duddleston, and Tali Nyala. John Madsen and George Thomas are also trying it on for size!

We have two activities launching soon. The first is a series of online focus groups to help us better understand the needs of different member groups and determine which class schedules work best (days of the week, times of day, and session length). Please consider joining one of the online sessions! Even though we have designated some current skill level groups for each of the sessions to help people feel most comfortable, you are welcome to join woodworkers of any level; we will make sure there are relevant discussion questions for everyone. The focus group sessions are scheduled for one hour, but we may finish earlier. If you can only make 15 or 30 minutes of it, please join us for the amount of time you are available!

Wed Jan 28, 4pm Beginners (although anyone can join!) link: <https://meet.google.com/ojf-fpxd-qtq> or dial: 1 713-496-2967 PIN: 776 677 901#

Wed Jan 28, 7pm Beginners (although anyone can join!) link: <https://meet.google.com/yag-qbsz-ava> or dial: (US) +1 321-215-4966 PIN: 507 677 818#

Mon Feb 2, 9 am Intermediate (although anyone can join!)  
link: <https://meet.google.com/mjn-cnea-vbe> or dial: (US) +1 941-254-6078 PIN: 564 949 945#

Mon Feb 2, 12 noon Advanced (although anyone can join!) link: <https://meet.google.com/ent-zbgc-tzf> or dial: (US) +1 405-356-8024 PIN: 153 785 848#

Tue Feb 3, 4pm Advanced (although anyone can join!) link: <https://meet.google.com/wwp-xoyf-rfu> or dial: (US) +1 337-340-3634 PIN: 448 964 789#

Tue Feb 10, 4pm Pro (although anyone can join!) link: <https://meet.google.com/pxq-pnii-mjv> or dial: (US) +1 863-333-9851 PIN: 277 067 123#

Thu Feb 12, 6pm Women and non-binary, link: <https://meet.google.com/yws-xmwz-wva> or dial: (US) +1 929-324-6461 PIN: 718 786 834#

Thu Feb 12, 7pm Pro (although anyone can join!) link: <https://meet.google.com/fwd-zobh-chx> or dial: (US) +1 609-775-9494 PIN: 671 264 873#

The second is our long-awaited first round of educational offerings. The Education Committee used results from last February's survey to identify the topics members are most interested in, and digital design ranked near the top. Given the season and the weather that comes with it, we're starting with an online offering, which also suits the digital content nicely. Stay tuned for details and sign-up opportunities: we'll offer a free introductory hour for both SketchUp and Fusion, followed by regular classes in each, meeting every other week.

Since we first convened, we've been considering what sets Minnesota Woodworkers Guild events apart from other educational offerings. We keep coming back to fellowship, and we'll continue creating opportunities for members to build relationships as well as tight joinery!

Khrisslyn Goodman  
Education Committee Chair

## **2026 Programs Report**

January 13th

We started off the 2026 with a great program at Sheer Craft in Saint Paul on boat building and woodworking. Sheer Craft teaches woodworking and boat building classes at their shop located in South Como neighborhood of Saint Paul, MN. They teach woodworking basics or you can learn to build a canoe from start to finish - their classes are designed for beginners and experienced woodworkers alike.

Sheer Craft focuses on using traditional techniques and hand tools and building a community around craft and hands-on activities. They are in process of building a traditional lapstrake boat which we viewed and watched as Phil demonstrated how to make a watertight rolling bevel with a block plane. They gave us a tour of their shop and talked about its recent renovation and some of their early trials and tribulations as a woodworking business in the Twin Cities. Much thanks to Phil and Maria of Sheer Craft for a great program.

February 10th

For our February 2026 meeting we tour Guild member shops. It is another installment of the popular Shop Tours format. Guild members will show off their shops. This will be a Zoom only meeting. Each tour is pre-recorded and edited for time constraints. Many of the tour hosts will be available live to answer questions submitted via the chat option. This is a great opportunity to learn about shops from our fellow members.

March 10th

“Design with the grain.” “Let the grain speak for itself!” “I just LOVE that wood because of the grain.” So, Guild members, how about coming to the March meeting of the MN Woodworkers Guild meeting to hear Tom Caspar present some solid basics on how to consider grain patterns in your work. Perhaps the unofficial title of this presentation is “Grain Graphics”.

Tom Caspar has a long history with the Guild and in the business of woodworking. Tom was a founding member of the Guild, was the editor of American Woodworker and Woodwork magazines, originated the “Unplugged Workshop” course at the Center for Furniture Craftsmanship in Maine, and continues to teach woodworking in his shop.

Come hear Tom’s clear and concise session on the topic of grain graphics.

April

No monthly meeting as we have Northern Woods Exhibition

May

Join us for our May 2026 meeting for a recap of the Northern Woods Exhibition. The May 2026 Guild meeting will be a give you a chance to meet several of the outstanding exhibitors at our 2026 Northern Woods Exhibition, see their pieces, and learn why and how they created them.

June

Program TBD.

July 14th

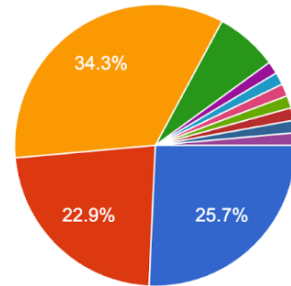
For the July meeting we'll all gather at the covered Jaycees shelter at the Roseville Central Park (Lexington Avenue) for an outdoor evening of good food and socializing. To attend the picnic, you only need to RSVP so that we have enough food and beverages for everyone.

Please check the website for further details and to keep current on upcoming programs. And, if you have any ideas for a program, please email the program committee at [mlabo@mnwwg.org](mailto:mlabo@mnwwg.org). Also, we are looking for additional members to be a part of the program committee, if you are interested, please email [mlabo@mnwwg.org](mailto:mlabo@mnwwg.org).

Matthew LaBo  
Programs Committee

### **Survey Results**

This past fall the Communications Committee conducted a survey on how people receive their information and spend time online – both directly from MNWWG and online in general. Thank you to the 79 people who responded! The survey results will help the Committee decide where and how to connect with you.



### **Social Media**

The vast majority of you spend your social media time on what I would call the Big Three – YouTube (72%), Facebook (46%), and Instagram (32%). On the other hand, there wasn't much interest in TikTok (1%) and about 13% of you don't use social media at all. For those who do, about 26% are there for about an hour a week. Another 23% are there for about five hours a week. And roughly 5% spend two or more hours a day kibitzing online.

### **Information about MNWWG**

We should have known, nearly all of you (~98%) receive your information from the Guild via e-mail. 43% of you are also checking our website, and 19% of you are checking in via the Group IO e-mails. about 5-8% of you get your Guild information from Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram.

### **Newsletter Content Contribution**

About a third of you would be interested in contributing to the newsletter (I'll be in touch!).

### **Conclusions**

There's additional detailed information that the Committee will be using to be more effective in how we connect with you. Hopefully you'll see that in the coming months.

Ed Estlow  
Communications Committee member & Newsletter Editor

## **Upcoming Events**

### **February Meeting – Shop Tours – 2026**

From February 10, 2026, 6:30 pm to February 10, 2026, 9:00 pm

[More Information](#)

### **March 2026 Meeting – Tom Caspar Presents Grain Graphics**

From March 10, 2026, 6:30 pm to March 10, 2026, 9:00 pm

[More Information](#)

### **Northern Woods Exhibition 2026 – Volunteer**

From April 22, 2026, 5:04 pm to April 26, 2026, 8:04 pm

[More Information](#)

## **Classified Ads**

Check our [website](#) for the latest classifieds.