



The Newsletter of the Minnesota Woodworkers Guild

V1-N5, May 2026

Editor's Note

-Ed Estlow

Happy May and Full Planting Season, folks! We've got a full plate this month:

- President's Corner from Paul Ehrlich,
- An alert from David Lane that the current and previous Northern Woods winners are posted on the website (Mike Johnson has also listed them below),
- Khrysslyn Goodman is back with a full summary of activities of the Education Committee,
- And alert from Sheer Craft' about their "Dust off your boat, maybe it'll float" event coming up tomorrow! This is the event where they'll "leak test their recent winning Northern Woods entry,
- I've summarized the activities of the Hopkins Men's Shed, an interesting group of men in the western suburbs doing all sorts of woodworking projects and developing an ongoing fellowship and community with each other.

President's Corner

-Paul Ehrlich

This has been an exciting month with the highlight being another successful (forty second year) Northern Woods Exhibition. We had 45 entries and a great attendance of Guild members, family, friends and the public. The grand prize winner (along with Peoples choice and Peer Award) was a stunning bicycle made of mahogany and carbon fiber made by Daniel Nelson. As always there were so many spectacular pieces! There is a great article about the event online at <https://eplocalnews.org/2026/05/06/fine-woodworking-filled-eden-prairie-center-this-spring/> and of course all the entries and the winners are on the Guild website. Many thanks to Jake Brown for chairing the event this year, and we are welcoming Mike Johnson back as our 2027 chair.

- Scholarships: This year the Guild will be awarding three scholarships of up to \$1,000 each for members who would like to attend a class. The deadline to enter is May 30, 2026 so please apply now if you are interested at https://members.mnwwg.org/site_event_detail.cfm?pk_association_event=36830
- Education: The education committee is taking registrations for four new classes. Stay tuned for more exciting announcements about the future of this program!
- Programs: Earlier this week we had a great program focused on both Northern Woods winners and members who attended classes over the last year using Guild scholarships. If you missed it you can find the recording on our YouTube channel. Next months program (June 10, 2026, is going to be focused on wood turning. More details will be announced soon.
- Expo and a new “Gala” event: Our next big event is the Woodworkers Expo which will again be in the Progress Building at the State Fair Grounds. This year it will start on Friday afternoon and go through Saturday (October 16, 17 2026). We are also planning on having our first annual “Guild Gala” on Friday evening October 16, 2026. This will feature the past, present and future of the Guild and will include a catered dinner.
- Exhibit in Winona: The Guilds Taliesin Nayla has curated an exhibit titled “Made by Hand” which is at the Winona Arts Center. For more information see: <https://winonaarts.org/exhibits/>
- Memory and Memorial Boxes: The Memory Box and CNC SIGS have recently delivered a large group of boxes to Essential Hospital in Duluth. Some of these boxes were displayed at our meeting this week and the craftsmanship and creativity are great to see. Thanks to our members for their hard work and to our sponsors (including Forest Products) for donating materials.





Memorial Boxes

- Guild Chest: Those of you who have been involved in the Guild for a long time may be familiar with the Guild “Presidents Chest”. This was made by Guild members (including Willis Bowman) years ago and used to store the Guilds papers. It is a remarkable (and very large) piece.



Guild chest and detail of carving

Northern Woods

David Lane

I just finished updating the [Member's Gallery](#) on the web page so folks can now view the award winners for this year [see below for a list, Ed.], plus all of this year's entries, as well as the past winners going back to 1996. I have a blurb and a link to the Gallery in the News & Updates column on the home page, but I wanted to direct everyone's attention to it in the newsletter as well.

Northern Woods Winners

Mike Johnson

Youth Award	Andrew Lessard, Jewellery Box
Best First Time in Show	Phil Winger, Sheercraft, Traditional Lapstrake Rowboat
Woodworking for Pleasure	David Lane, Opposites Attract
Best Traditional Piece	Tom Casper, Shaker Stand
Most Technically Accomplished	Mark Jefferis and Susan Wood, Eli Terry Clock
Best Original Design	Talen Rabe, Red Rocking Chair
Best Detail	Stu Fox, Snow White Night Stand
Best Finish	Tony Kubalak, Cadwalader Saddle Chair
Best Turning	Kevin Groenke, Tools for Makers Who Like Nice Things
Glenn Gordon Award	Charles "Os" Finne, Hollows and Rounds
Peer Award	Daniel Nelson, Wood Bike
Award of Excellent #3	Jake Brown, Metro Scourge
Award of Excellent #2	Dale Anderson, Simple Elegance
Award of Excellent #1	Eric Johnson, Philadelphia Chippendale Dressing Table
Best in Show	Daniel Nelson, Wood Bike

2026 MNWWG Woodworkers Expo

Norbert Nielubowski

The 7th Woodworkers Expo will be held on October 16 and 17, 2026 in the Progress Building at the Minnesota State Fairgrounds.

Once again, we will have a Member's Gallery to showcase Guild Members' work. This is a chance for Guild members of all skill levels to display their work and help us promote the benefits of Guild membership. So, if you have a project you are working on that you would like to display, or if this gives you the motivation to complete a project by October, contact the Expo committee at expo@mnwwg.org

Do you have an idea for a woodworking demonstration that you would really like to see? Or a vendor whose product you would like to see demonstrated in person? Contact us at expo@mnwwg.org and we'll try to make it happen!

Education

Khrisslyn Goodman

What a month for the MnWWG Education Committee! We are thrilled to report that every in-person class this spring has filled to capacity, with wait lists forming for several offerings. None of this would be possible without the remarkable energy and generosity of our instructors and assistants, and we are deeply grateful for each of them.

Classes Completed This Spring

We wrapped up four classes this season, and the enthusiasm from participants has been incredible:

- **Digital Design: SketchUp** and **Digital Design: Fusion 360**, both sessions were so well-received that participants from the Fusion class are already organizing an ongoing online Fusion SIG. Stay tuned for more details on that!
- **Mortise-and-Tenon Joints** and **Woodworking 1**, both offered in collaboration with Millennium Studio, with a huge thank you to George Thomas for serving as shop assistant for both sessions.

Coming Up

We have more great programming on the horizon:

- **Woodworking 2**
- **Mortise-and-Tenon Joints** (repeat session back by popular demand!)
- **Hand Tool Series**, a new collaboration with Sheer Craft

And in development for late spring or summer: an intermediate-level finishing class with Charlie Kocourek, a box-building class with Ed Neu, and a third session with George Thomas (details TBD). We can't wait to share more as those take shape.

Website & Member Resources

Work continues on improving how members access safety videos and sign safety agreements through our website and AMO tools. We're also building out reference resources, including a new guide on how to buy lumber. Keep an eye on the website for updates.

MN Demonstration Day at the State Fair

The date for the Guild's second annual appearance at the Great Minnesota Get-Together will be confirmed by the end of May. Upcoming Education Committee meetings will focus on the communication plan and volunteer recruitment... so if you're interested in being part

of Demonstration Day this year, please let us know by emailing "education@mnwwg.org". We will need about 12 people to demonstrate (each demonstration is about 30 minutes, but we can be very flexible with time), and we will also need people to help set up, take down, and engage the public during the day!

Guild Scholarship

We are excited to share that a draft scholarship overview is nearly ready. The Education Committee will review and finalize it at our May 21 meeting, after which it will be posted on the Guild website. We look forward to sharing this new opportunity with members soon.

Sheer Craft's "Dust off your boat, maybe it'll float" event!

From Sheer Craft's Newsletter

[You'll remember, Sheer Craft was the winner of our "Best First Time in Show" award at the recent Northern Woods show at Eden Prairie Center. Coming up this Sunday, May 17th, Sheer Craft is holding an event featuring that craft that's nearly as dramatic as the title of this section! I'll let them tell it. -Ed.]

"[W]e're going to put the lapstrake skiff we've spent six months building into the water. It's always a bit exciting to see if someone forgot to plug a hole or peen a rivet. Please join us to celebrate boats, water, crafting together, and mild irresponsibility. We encourage you to bring a boat, but if you can't, we'll still get you out on the lake. Details below:

- "Meet at **our shop** at 1017 Front Ave in Saint Paul at **1:00pm** on Sunday, May 17th.
- "At **1:30pm**, if the weather cooperates, we will head over to the boat launch on **lake Phalen**.
- "We will have some refreshments and snacks but feel free to bring your own!
- "If the weather doesn't cooperate, we will stay in our shop and exchange boating stories."



Men's Shed

Ed Estlow

There's a quiet revolution happening in Hopkins. Perhaps 'revolution' isn't quite the word for it, but when I read an article by Nora Hertel (linked to below), it seemed to me to be revolutionary.

Ms. Hertel contacted the MNWWG a few weeks ago. She heads up a non-profit organization called Project Optimist and wanted to alert us to a piece she'd written for the organization's website. Paul Ehrlich and I each read the piece and wanted to pass along its message to the Guild.

Men from Hopkins are gathering together and creating projects for the community – Little Free Libraries, beds, clothing racks, benches, etc. The other thing they're creating is just as visible, but less tangible – community. Fellowship. Side-by-side, shoulder-to-shoulder time, as the article states.



The gathering is the thing. What men do at these gatherings, called “Men’s Sheds,” is secondary. From the article:

Men’s Sheds started in Australia in 1993. They provide spaces for men to connect with each other for their mental and physical wellbeing. They can serve as an antidote to the loneliness epidemic and poor mental health. Sheds look and function like social or service clubs.

“Sheds are grassroots. It's whatever the members want to do. That's number one. They can choose to be a choral group. There's a shed that actually, their whole thing is model railroads. That's in North Carolina,” said Mark Winston, director of the U.S. Men’s Sheds Association.

Members of the Hopkins group have a penchant for tinkering, fixing, and building. That shapes their activities.

To discover more about the Men’s Shed phenomenon, you can read the entire article by Nora Hertel at the Project Optimist [website](#).