MICHIGAN WOODWORKER

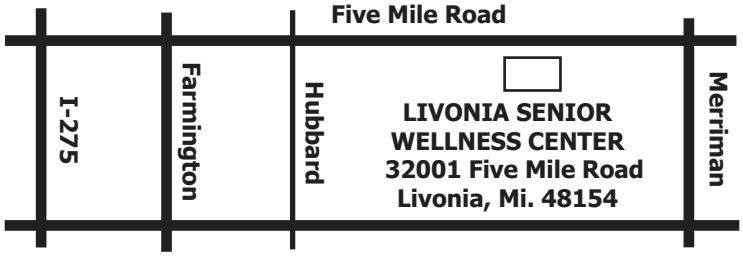
michiganwoodworkersguild.com

Michigan Woodworkers' Guild (est. 1981) February 2026 Vol. 47 No. 2

When / Where:

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2026

(Socializing Starts at 1:00 PM , Business meeting Starts at 2:00 PM)
Livonia Senior Wellness Center, Livonia, MI
Note: **NEW MEETING PLACE AND LOCATION**



MAP TO LIVONIA SENIOR WELLNESS CENTER

In-Person Meeting:

Decorative Boxes

by Jeff Street

Meeting Coordinated by: **Larry Last**

IN-PERSON MEETING AT:
Livonia Senior WellnessCenter

February:

At our **2:00 PM February 8th** meeting, MWG Member **Jeff Street** will show "***A look at Decorative Boxes***". Coordinated by **Larry Last**, Jeff will cover a broad range of Box Building topics along with examples and expert tips for future builds.

March:

See how MWG Member **Dennis Heyza** reproduced an 18th century shelf clock at our March 8th 2:00 PM meeting. Coordinated by **Larry Last**, Dennis will discuss the process from photography to finishing all done using period methods

April:

MWG members, **Ragnar Bergethon**, **Steve Gross**, **Duane Kimmel**, and **Ron Ross** will demonstrate how to make custom wooden pens which make excellent gifts for family and friends. Coordinated by **Larry Last**, join us at 2:00 PM on April 12th

Decorative Boxes

February 8th

MWG Member **Jeff Street** will show "***A look at Decorative Boxes***". Jeff covers a broad range of Box Building topics along with examples and expert tips for future builds. Starting at **2:00 PM**, the meeting is coordinated by **Larry Last**.

IN MEMORIUM

President's Note:

We were saddened to learn that **Bill Gayde**, a member for 38 years and one of the driving forces behind the guild's development passed away peacefully on January 19, 2026, at the age of 92.

Bill served at various times as President and as Chairman of the library, newsletter, website, by-laws, picnic, and membership committees, often concurrently. Our members could always count on Bill's friendship and steadfast guidance, infused with his forthright personality, no-nonsense approach, and his deep knowledge of the guild's purpose and history.

MWG presented Bill with an Outstanding Service Awar in 2022.

You can see Bill's obituary at this link:

https://www.sullivanfuneraldirectors.com/obituaries/william-gayde/#!/Obituary

President's Corner

By Jerry Romito

January, 2026

New Livonia Meeting Venue

Our January meeting was held at the new Livonia Senior Wellness Center, and the (61) attendees were pleasantly impressed. The built-in ceiling speaker system with provided microphones was outstanding, a huge projection screen rolled down from the ceiling at the push of a button, and the lights could be dimmed. The modern kitchen is sparkling. The large first-floor room is easily accessible from the parking lot, and of course all of the furnishings are brand new. Of course the rental rate is a bit more than the old building, but we feel that it is worth it. Hopefully even more members will check it out at the February 8 meeting.

MITES Judging

Some of you already know that our guild is a long-time supporter of **MITES** – the Michigan Industrial & Technology Education Society. But we have many new members that may not know about **MITES**. This is a largely volunteer organization for Michigan students and educators to focus on industrial arts and technology in the classroom and the workforce. As a regular part of their program, MITES hosts an annual student project competition, which features thousands of projects built by students in grades 7-12.

Volunteer judges for these competitions are gathered from around the state, and MWG members have frequently helped judge the woodworking portion.

MITES has just put out the call for volunteers this year, and those of us who have done it before can tell you that it is a worthwhile experience. Even though the skill level demonstrated by the students is out-

standing, you do not need to be intimidated by the idea of judging. Any MWG member can handle it, since **MITES** uses a team-judging process that involves consensus voting. The good news is that the competition is near us in Waterford (it is usually up north), so travel will not be a problem.

I would like to see a strong contingent from our guild sign up to judge. So far (11) MWG members have signed up, and even more would be nice. I have copied below the **MITES** email asking for judges. It gives the details, and you use the included RSVP link to sign up directly with **MITES**. Click the box "WO" for woodworking. Please think about judging, and if you do sign up, let me know so that I can compile the list. If you want to talk about it feel free to contact me at GJRomito@aol.com.

https://forms.gle/s4SzujTUkMk6x1sF9

-Jerry Romito

As of January 2026 your Michigan Woodworkers' Guild yearly dues are now payable.

Feel free to right away complete the renewal process by paying your $25 dues **Early** and **Often**.

A membership renewal form can be found on the website dropdown menu under "**Membership - Payment/Renewals**" or by selecting the link below.

Find the latest MWG Membership Form with the following link:
https://michiganwoodworkersguild.com/wp-content/uploads/membership/2025_MWG_Membership_Application_FORM_12-26-24.pdf

MEETING REVIEW

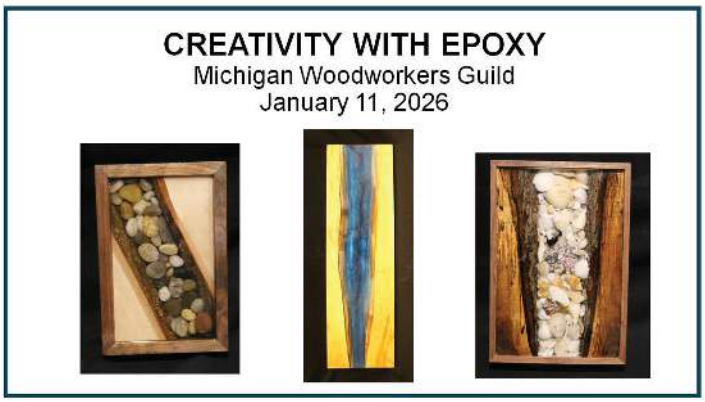
By Dale Ausherman

MWG Meeting Review
Creativity with Epoxy
Livonia, MI – January 11, 2026

Our first Guild meeting held at the new Livonia Senior Wellness Center took place on January 11th 2026 and featured a series of presentations on the use of epoxy in woodworking projects. The topic was organized by **Ragnar Bergethon** (Berg), a Guild Officer-at-Large with key resources suggested by **Larry Last**. Thanks to the hard work of **Kevin Goulet**, all Guild meetings are now posted to the *Michigan Woodworkers Guild – Meeting Video* channel on YouTube (www.youtube.com). The channel name is: **Michigan Woodworkers Guild – Meeting Video**.

OPC Speakers Ellen Shipes Bob Rawlings with Berg

Ragnar opened the meeting with a general introduction to epoxy resins and their use in woodworking projects. He later covered the use of pressure pots and vacuum chambers for creating castings and stabilizing wood for turning. Guests **Bob Rawlings** and **Ellen Shipes**, from the Older Peoples Center (OPC) of the City of Rochester Hills, City of Rochester, and the Charter Township of Oakland, followed with a presentation titled *Designing and Making Epoxy Projects*. Their topics included materials, techniques, and safety, along with methods for repairing scratches and removing bubbles and foreign matter. **Steve Stram** then presented a briefing on making epoxy inlays in furniture and bowls. All speakers used PowerPoint slides and displayed examples of their equipment, materials, and finished projects. Member **Brian Leirstein** made available some equipment used in the demonstrations, and prepared sample castings



Creativity With Epoxy Presentation 11JAN2026

illustrating the value of pressure pots and vacuum chambers for reducing bubbles. Unfortunately Brian became ill and was unable to attend the meeting.

Berg assembled a comprehensive PowerPoint briefing that included his overview presentation, Bob and Ellen's charts on epoxy woodworking projects, and his own charts on pressure pots and vacuum chambers. This briefing is posted on the MWG website shown below:

Find Berg's Epoxy Presentation with the following link:
https://michiganwoodworkersguild.com/wp-content/uploads/meetings/Epoxy_by_Ragnar_Bergethon_1-11-26PDF.pdf

In his introduction, Berg described epoxy as a versatile two-part system consisting of resin and hardener that chemically react to form a strong solid polymer resistant to water, chemicals, wear, and impact. Epoxy adheres well to materials such as wood, metal, ceramic, glass, and most plastics. While epoxy itself is a plastic, it differs from most plastics in that it cannot be melted or reshaped after curing. Epoxy formulations range from soft and pliable (likened to gummy bears) to very hard, such as those used in skateboard wheels and hard hats. Many of us have used epoxy adhesives such as Gorilla Glue or J-B Weld Epoxy Glue. In my research I discovered that the word "epoxy" comes from Greek roots, combining epi (meaning "over") and oxi (referring to oxygen), describing the reactive epoxide ring structure central to these resins.

Safety in the use of epoxy was emphasized. Users should wear an apron and closed footwear to avoid skin contact from drips. Nitrile gloves are recommended, along with safety glasses or goggles. A respirator should be used, and work should be performed in a well-ventilated area.

In his charts, Berg reviewed important factors to consider when purchasing epoxy and listed commonly used brands of epoxy kits, their resins, and tinting options. He prefers Alumilite or Resinangel kits and Rolie tint powder, noting that paste and liquid tints are also available. He reviewed resin types typically used in woodworking, including quick-curing, general-purpose, deep-pour, and casting epoxies, along with their working times (pot life), curing times, layering capabilities, and typical applications.

Berg's Epoxy Sources

Berg also recommended several useful books on epoxy:

1. *Epoxy Resin – The Complete Guide for Artists, Builders and Makers* by Jess Crow, $29.95
2. *Epoxy Resin Art for Beginners* by Lena Alder, $26.99
3. *Epoxy Resin Mastery Bible for Beginners* by Liam Carter, $26.90

Bob and Ellen followed with guidance on designing and making epoxy projects and maintaining their appearance once completed. Their charts are included in the same PowerPoint briefing posted on the MWG website.

Casting / Forms Considerations for Epoxy

Bob and Ellen discussed building project forms or frames and the subsequent casting process. They offered tips for making wooden frames lined with resin-release tapes such as Tssart Resin Tape and Spectape. A mold release agent is usually not necessary. If making a finished wood frame, a release agent or tape is not required; however, sealing all wood components is mandatory to prevent sticking. All joinery should also be sealed with silicone sealant, as epoxy can seep through even very small gaps.

Commercial frame kits are also available in fixed or adjustable sizes, typically made of 4/5-inch-thick HDPE (high-density polyethylene) or UHMW (ultra-high molecular weight) material. Costs vary by size but can range from $200 to $300 for a variable-size kit. Despite the high-density materials, some manufacturers still recommend using a mold release agent. When using casting molds, a release spray such as Stoner Mold Release by Alumilite may be advisable.

Following Bob and Ellen, Berg returned to present the use of pressure pots and vacuum chambers. Both methods are used to eliminate bubbles from epoxy while it is still uncured, and therefore the maximum size of a casting is limited by the interior dimensions of the pot or chamber. Epoxy cure time is not accelerated by either method.

Pressure Pots and Vacuum Chambers used with Epoxy

Pressure pots do not remove bubbles; instead, the applied pressure compresses the bubbles to microscopic size so they are no longer visible. Once cured, the epoxy is strong enough to prevent bubble expansion. Vacuum chambers operate differently by creating a vacuum that causes the epoxy to expand, allowing bubbles to escape. After degassing, the epoxy contracts back to its original volume. Vacuum systems are particularly effective for deep pours, where bubbles may be trapped far below the surface.

Vacuum systems are also used to force resin into weak, fibered, or spalted wood, producing stabilized wood commonly used for pens and general woodturning. At the January 2023 meeting, the late **Ken Wolf** demonstrated wood stabilization using vacuum resin. Stabilization impregnates wood with resin to improve density, durability, hardness, and moisture resistance, while also allowing coloration. The well-known Blue Spruce mallet heads are made from stabilized wood. Ken introduced members to TurnTex, LLC, a company that pioneered vacuum stabilization and supplies resins, dyes, vacuum chambers, and accessories. Their website includes a comprehensive help center with demonstration videos: https://turntex.com/.

Steve Stram concluded the meeting with a presentation on epoxy inlays. His interest began with a *Fine Woodworking* article by **Christopher Moore** from issue #267 (Mar/Apr 2018). Epoxy resin is well suited for inlay work because it enables delicate, complex designs without having to cut and fit intricate inlay pieces. Steve's briefing is also posted on the MWG website at the link shown below.

Fine Woodworking's Epoxy Inlay Project

Find Steve's Epoxy Presentation with the following link:
https://michiganwoodworkersguild.com/wp-content/uploads/meetings/EPOXY_by_Steve_Stram_1-11-26.pdf

Using the article as a guide, Steve attempted four designs of varying complexity, inlaid into small Honey Locust boards. He used Entropy epoxy as cited in the article. That company now operates under the Michigan-based Gougeon Brothers in Saginaw.

Silicone Border Around Epoxy Pour

Steve noted several challenges. He regretted not using the author's recommended GE Type 1 caulk, as his chosen caulk puddled and failed to adequately contain the liquid epoxy. Pouring from a lipped mixing cup also proved difficult, allowing epoxy to run over and under the caulk. As a result, Steve had to use a chisel and hammer to remove hardened excess epoxy. He also found that the Entropy epoxy cured very slowly at 77°F, requiring him to use a university surplus laboratory furnace at 120°F for 70 minutes. Additionally, when sanding the cured epoxy, his sandpaper clogged rapidly—possibly due to the Honey Locust wood—leading him to use a trim router bit to remove the excess pour.

Steve Epoxy Pour

Steves Finished Epoxy Pour Projects

As an observation, Steve quoted the article's author: "I have seen some dramatic failures with resin inlay, both my own and those of friends. Improper setup times, incomplete hardening, bubbles, shrinkage, colors gone wrong—all are potential pitfalls. But they can be avoided." Steve concurred, having experienced many of these difficulties firsthand. He believes they can be overcome, and the final chart in his briefing outlines what he plans to do differently on his next attempt. We thank Steve for taking the plunge and allowing members to learn from his early experiences.

We thank presenters **Bob Rawlings**, **Ellen Shipes**, **Ragnar Bergethon**, and **Steve Stram** for their excellent presentations and their willingness to share their work. We also thank **Brian Leirstein** for his preparatory work. Appreciation is extended to **Larry Last** for bringing people with relevant expertise into the team, **Paul Thoma** and **Dave McCagg** for video production, **Dan Holowicki** for event photography, and **Kevin Goulet** for editing the video recording and posting it to YouTube.

- Dale Ausherman

TRUNK-A-WOOD EXCHANGE

Do you have some wood that hasn't seen the light of day in decades?

Do you have cut-offs from your last project which are just too good for the burn pile?

Do you have pieces that you would like to donate to the MWG Toy Program?

We invite everyone to bring their pieces for sale, exchange, or give-away.

Just open your trunk in the parking lot to let everyone see the treasures you have (**Please keep these pieces outside**).

Who knows, you probably will go home with nothing more than what you came with or some extra "got-to-have, never been seen before" samples of your own.

DUSTY HUMOR

- **Few hand tool purists can make a living with them.**
- **Better tools save time; they don't make you a better craftsman!**
- **If you can't find the time to do it properly, how will you find the time to fix it?**

These phrases are provided purely for your humorous enjoyment. Feel free to send your favorite woodworking pun to the MWG Newsletter Editor for possible future publication.

CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL MWG PROGRAM UPDATE

From Ron and Dan

News from the Toy and Box Committee

How I Plan and Lay out a Batch of Toys

Many of the toy cars and trucks I make are based on designs that have been available on our website for quite a number of years. I have modified several of the existing designs and have come up a few of my own. Some of the simplest car and truck designs are a single block of wood shaped to a certain profile, with 4 wheels added. Many others are a single block for the main body, and then a couple smaller pieces added on.
I tend to make most of my toys from hardwood scraps such as maple, cherry, birch, poplar, mahogany and sometimes walnut. My go to finish for hardwood cars/trucks is several coats of Minwax satin polyurethane wiped on with a cloth pad. I have used pine on occasion but will tend to paint these. I use Rust-O-Leum 2X spray paint for the toys I paint.

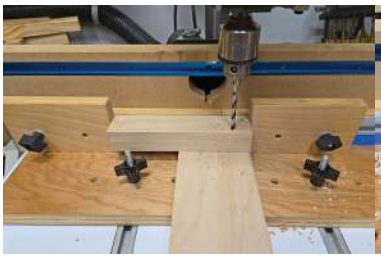
Over the years I have made profile templates out of ¼" plywood or hardboard that I keep on hand. These templates are durable and come in handy to lay out the profile on a block of wood or even to quickly determine if a block of wood is large enough for a certain toy. Making a template is rather easy. Copy one of the MWG designs available or draw your own on a piece of graph paper. Cut out the shape and trace it onto a piece of plywood or hardboard. Carefully cut out the shape with a band saw, jigsaw or coping saw. Fair the edges with files and sandpaper as needed. I'll drill 1/8" diameter holes at the locations for axle holes and at locations for other design details. These templates will last for years.

To get started, I sort through the scraps accumulating in the shop and select the ones suitable for toy stock. I take note of the sizes available and begin looking at toy designs I have on hand to determine which ones I can make with the scraps available. Many of the toy cars I make have a race car feel to them, which also tend to have a stripe running through the middle. Gluing up three pieces of stock with a contrasting wood in the center is a good way to mimic such a racing stripe. The toy bodies I make tend to be anywhere in width from 1 ¼" to 2". Again, sorting through your scraps for those with the appropriate thickness helps in the planning process.

Once you have gathered up the stock and decide how many and which type of toys you are making it is time to get started. If you need to glue up stock to get the desired thickness needed now is the time for that. The stock to be glued needs to be flat, smooth and parallel. I'll look at grain direction when selecting stock for gluing up multiple pieces, this helps for future jointing or planing. A pencil line indicating the layout for gluing up blanks is helpful.

Glue-up and clamping of the blanks is fairly straight forward. I use Tight Bond II most of the time, it allows for ample glue up time. Applying glue to the surfaces being glued in a uniform layer is done using a silicone spreader or small inexpensive paint brush. I use several F style clamps to apply pressure to the glued up blank. It also helps to remove any large amounts of glue squeeze-out at this time. I'll let the glued up blanks sit overnight with clamp pressure before any more work is done. The next day the glue-ups are unclamped and prepared for squaring two adjoining edges. Having 2 edges square is most helpful when drilling the holes for axles. I will square two surfaces on my jointer, it takes a little more work but this can also be done with a good sharp hand plane checking for square with a small 6" square. Then it was off to the table saw to rip all the blanks to the proper width, height and length. Again, a tablesaw is not needed for this, a band saw is another good way to rip to width and height, a chop saw can be used for cutting to final length. Cleaning up any saw marks can be done with a good sharp hand plane.

The next operation was laying out the wheel hole locations. Leaving the blanks square is very helpful when laying out the locations and drilling the axle holes or other holes. A few years back I made a custom jig I use for positioning and holding toy blanks on the drill press. It is much easier to do this on blanks that have square ends and are of the same length. Stops can be set up on the jig and it is just a matter of clamping each blank in the jig, drilling an axle hole then moving onto the next blank. I use a 7/32" brad point bit to drill all the axle holes. Some of the cars I make, specifically the roadsters and station wagons, require a circular recess in the body to inset the wheels slightly. This is also best done in a jig on the drill press using a forstner bit. These recesses should be cut before drilling the axle peg holes, as the point of the forstner will help to center the smaller brad point used for the axle peg holes.



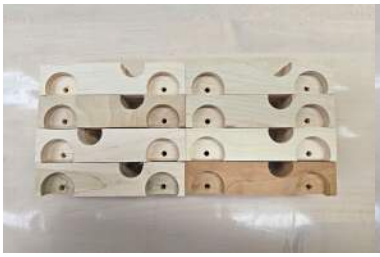
Drilling Axle Holes **Drilling Tire Recesses**

The dragster, roadster and sprint race car toys I make require a circular hole drilled through the width of the blank to simulate the race car's cockpit. I find this is quite easy to do on the drill press with a square blank and forstner bit. This is easily done but does require making sure that the body blank is well clamped to the drill press fixture and table, ensuring there is no movement of the body blank during drilling of the simulated cockpit.

Also, the truck cab has a hole drilled through it to simulate side windows. Again easily done on a drill press with a square blank. I try to lay out several truck cockpits on one blank, making it easier and safer to handle at the drill press.

Drilling Race Car Cockpits

This pretty much covers laying out the body blanks and drilling holes for axles and the like. Next time it is on to laying out the profile, cutting, and shaping.
If you are new to toy making, you can review past newsletters on the website which show materials the guild provide (at now cost to you) such as wheels in 3 sizes, axles and washers.



Roadster Bodies Drilled **Truck Body and Cab**

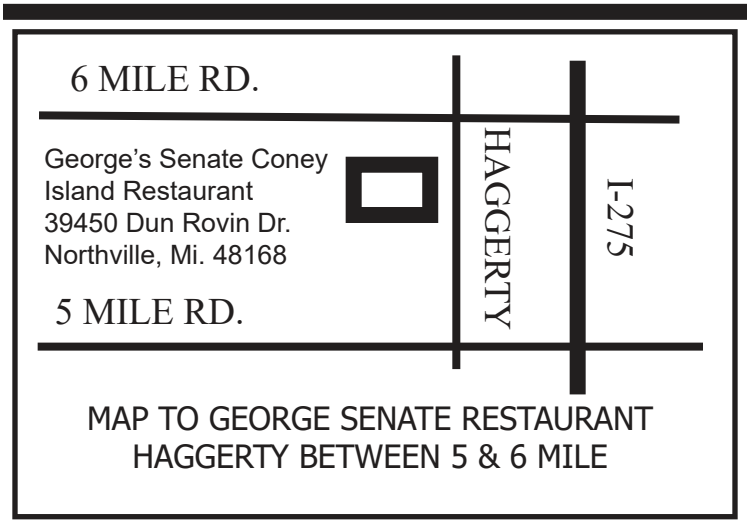
Wishing all of you the very best for 2026 along with the desire, inspiration and wherewithal to spend time creating in the woodshop.

Our contact info
Ron - 734- 812-5531 - rross1508@gmail.com
Dan - 313-702-5836 - dan56laura@att.net

Donate "Any Tool, Any Condition"

For membership information contact Dave McCagg at: d2mccagg@provide.net

For name tags, sign up with Ed Stuckey at a regular meeting.



MAP TO GEORGE SENATE RESTAURANT
HAGGERTY BETWEEN 5 & 6 MILE

Next MWG Luncheon: (Coordinated by TBD)
Thursday, 26 FEBRUARY 2026 at 10:16 AM

Executive Board Members / Committee Chairs

Jerry Romito..... President..... 248-475-5976
Frank Kalinsky.. Vice President.... 734-516-3405
Dan Holowicki... Secretary..... 734-283-9898
Ed Stuckey..... Treasurer..... 313-345-3671
Dan Holowicki..... Officer at Large..... 734-283-9898
Tony Gigliotti ..... Officer at Large 248-853-8349
OPEN ..... Officer at Large ..... OPEN
Ron Ross..... Officer at Large..... 734-812-5531
Rich Herbert..... Officer at Large..... 248-628-0644
Ragnar Bergethon... Officer at Large..... 248-608-8436
Paul Thoma ..... Officer at Large.....734-829-7192
Gary Assarian... Officer at Large..... 248-310-9328
Dave McCagg.....Officer at Large..... 734-482-6764
Ragnar Bergethon.. Website 248-608-8436
Dave McCagg..... Newsletter Editor..... 734-482-6764
Dave McCagg..... Membership..... 734-482-6764
Larry Last..Programs/Website Calendar.....248-207-9386
Bob Mills..... Mentoring..... 248-535-6718
Kevin Goulet ..... Camera Chair 248-672-5341
Fred Ball....Web Site Calendar (Backup)..... 248-681-3108
Ron Ross.....Toy Program..... 734-812-5531
Kevin Goulet.....Officer at Large..... 248-672-5341
Ron Ross.....Food Coordinator..... 734-812-5531