



MICHIGAN WOODWORKER

michiganwoodworkersguild.com



Michigan Woodworkers' Guild (est. 1981) January 2026 Vol. 47 No. 1

When / Where:

SUNDAY, JANUARY 11, 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**

In-Person Meeting:

Epoxy Creations

by various MWG members

Meeting Coordinated by: **Ragnar Bergethon**



IN-PERSON MEETING AT:
Livonia Senior Wellness Center

January:

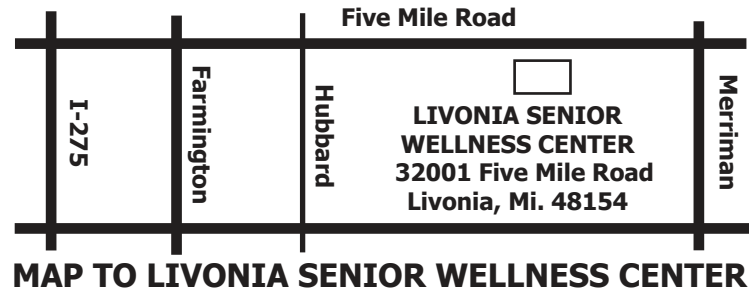
Exceptional Epoxy uses and techniques will be demonstrated by renowned MWG members, **Steve Stram**, **Ragnar Bergethon**, and **Bob Rawling** at our 2026 inaugural **January 11th** meeting. Coordinated by **Ragnar Bergethon**, join us to become enlightened with all things Epoxy.

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:

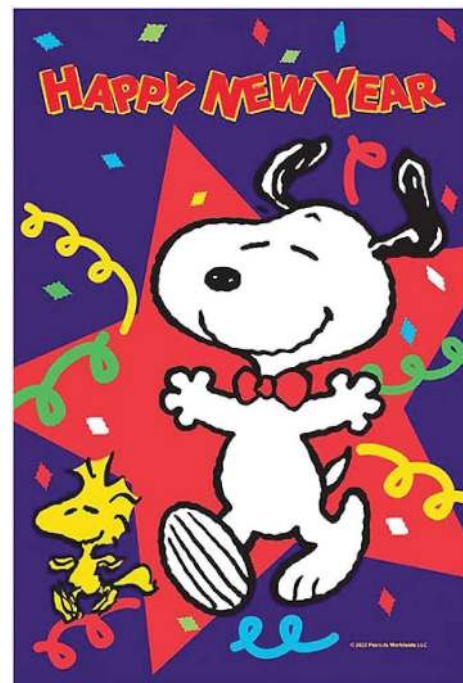
See how MWG Member **Dennis Heyza** reproduced an 18th century shelf clock at our March 8th 2:00 PM meeting. Coordinated by **Larry Last**, Dennis will discuss the process from photography to finishing all done using period methods



Epoxy

January 11th

Presenters, **Bob Rawlings**, **Ellen Shipes**, **Brian Leirstein**, **Ragnar Bergethon**, and **Steve Stram** will enlighten us about how to make tables, utility pieces, and furniture inlays with Epoxy. Starting at **2:00 PM**, the meeting is coordinated by **Larry Last**.

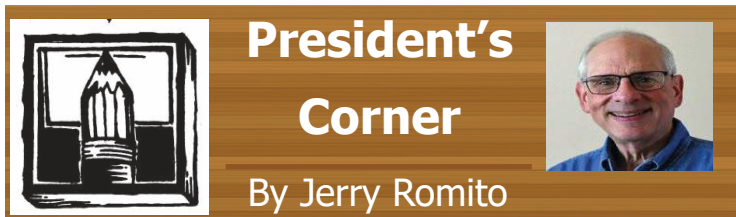




As of January 2026 your Michigan Woodworkers' Guild yearly dues are now payable.

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.



December, 2025

Hello To All MWG Woodworkers,

Since its December and we do not have a meeting or newsletter this month, I just want to send out this message to say hello, to let you know that the Guild is alive and well, and to cover some random topics of interest.

Membership

We currently have 166 members, which is a little less than last year. We gained 31 new members this year, but more than that have not renewed. We are always sad when we lose old members, but we take heart with the new members. Our MWG bank balance at the end of October was \$14,200, but this is growing as 2026 renewals come in.

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

January Meeting

Our next meeting is January 11, 2026. The social hour starts at 1:00 pm, and the meeting starts at 2:00 pm. The presentation is on "Epoxy", with a group of presenters describing their specialties. But pay attention to the big news:

The meeting will take place at the new Livonia Senior Wellness Center, located at 32001 Five Mile Road, Livonia. This is about a half-mile east of the old location on Five Mile Road. The meeting will be in the first floor Common Room.

Ken Wolf Memorial

We are of course deeply saddened by Ken Wolf's passing. His legacy will continue on, particularly with the toy program. I am pleased to report that Ken's wife Connie presented MWG with \$420 that Ken's friends and family donated to the MWG toy program in Ken's honor.

Tool Sales

Members are often looking to sell or buy used tools, so keep your eye on MWG emails for "tools for sale" or "tools wanted" announcements. If you have tools that you would like to sell or buy, absolutely send your details to me at GJRomito@aol.com, and I will send the info to the membership. It always helps to include a tool list, desired pricing, photos, and the address (or at least city) where the tools are located, along with any other descriptive information you choose.

Presentations for 2026

The 2026 presentation calendar is full, except for the all-day Saturday professional seminar. If you would like to suggest or recommend a professional presenter, please let me know at GJRomito@aol.com.

-Jerry Romito



MEETING REVIEW



By Dale Aushman

MWG Meeting Review

Jigs and Fixtures

Livonia, MI – 9 November 2025

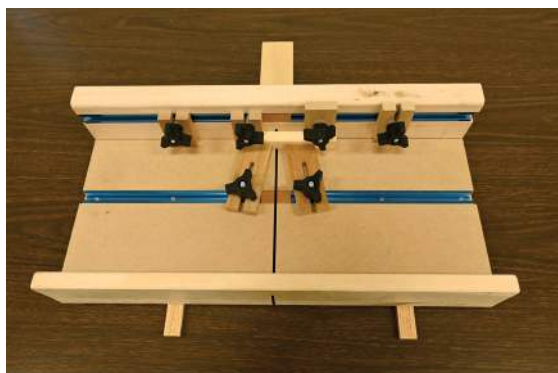
The November 2025 meeting featured our annual Jigs and Fixtures program. President **Jerry Romito** coordinated the presenters and served as the evening's MC. We had nine presenters, many of whom brought multiple jigs. Thanks to the continuing work of **Kevin Goulet**, all Guild meetings are now posted on the *Michigan Woodworkers Guild – Meeting Video* channel on YouTube.

Memorial to **Ken Wolf**

This year's program began with a memorial replay of last year's jig presentation by **Ken Wolf**, who recently passed away. A Guild member for 29 years, Ken made exceptional contributions, serving as President for four years and Vice President for ten. He was also long recognized as the Guild's master jig innovator—consistently producing finely engineered, beautifully made jigs, often complex and highly adjustable. His work set the standard for member-built shop aids.

Member Presentations

Dan Holowicki



Dan Holowicki's Crosscut Sled

Dan presented several jigs based on a Tom McLaughlin (Epic Woodworking) design.

- **Crosscut Sled and Extension:** His original sled, built four years ago, needed more capacity for a new cabinet project, so he built an extension allowing workpieces from 20–48 in. long. Both pieces were beautifully finished.
- **Stop Block:** A rear-mounted stop block prevents the sled from traveling far enough for the blade to exit the back of the fence safety block.
- **Shooting Board:** Dan also brought a McLaugh-



Dan Hawolicki with Crosscut Sled Stop Block

lin-style shooting board with attachments for 90° and 45° cuts, used with his Lee Valley low-angle shooting plane.

Jeff Street

Jeff brought an impressive collection of sled-style jigs:

- **Cutting Board Juice-Groove Jig:** A four-sided adjustable fence system for routing the perimeter grooves. Jeff noted the need for care around rounded corners, depending on router base shape.
- **Bandsaw Octagon/Center-Cut Sled:** A simple but useful sled for creating octagonal turning blanks, splitting square stock diagonally, or halving dowels.



Jeff Street's Cutting Board Juice-Groove jig

- **Small Crosscut Cutoff Sled:** Equipped with two parallel adjustable fences for holding irregular or cylindrical stock safely at right or slight angles.
- **45° Miter Sled:** A dedicated table-saw sled for picture-frame miters, with adjustable stop blocks and slightly oversized knob holes to permit fine fence tuning.



Jeff Street with Miter Sled

Jeff also displayed:

- **Two Handmade Planes:** A Cocobolo Krenov-style smoother and a small jointer plane, both using 5 mm A2 irons by Ron Hock.
- **Plane-Adjustment Hammer:** One brass head and one acrylic head.



Jeff Street Adjusting hand plane

- **Two Dead-Head Assembly Mallets:** Made from kingwood and rosewood with leather faces to avoid denting workpieces.

Paul Thoma

Paul presented a **large antique Miter Jack** - a combination vise and shooting board used for planing precise 90° and 45° surfaces. The jack can be positioned on either side, making it ideal for trimming small window muntins. Modern reproductions from Red Rose Reproductions cost \$1,100 (or \$50 for plans), but Paul found his vintage example at an es-



Paul Thoma with Antique Miter Jack

tate sale and estimates it to be over 100 years old.
<https://redrosereproductions.com/tools/Miter-Jack-Vise-c53439016>



Keith Whitehouse

Keith discussed **signing or labeling one's work**, noting that most craftsmen don't—but should. Labels add value, historical context, and documentation of wood species or special occasions. In extreme cases, signatures on period furniture can increase value dramatically.



Keith Whitehouse Showing Marking Options



Keith Whitehouse with project marking

Keith reviewed methods including Sharpie, clear labels, vibrating engravers, engraved/paint-filled lettering, and use of sealers on porous woods. Numeric punches, like those Jeff used on his planes, offer clean, durable marking. Keith shared an instructor's advice:

"If it's important, date it. If you're proud of it, sign it. If neither—why did you make it?"

Neal Hoegemeyer

Neal shared an **Adirondack chair project** built from a Rockler kit that includes cardboard templates (with optional ¼-in. MDF templates for \$25). Neal used the cardboard patterns to make thin plywood templates and found the instructions straightforward. He showed a photo from the morning of the meeting highlighting his green chair dusted with early-season snow—striking against his red deck. The chair is comfortable and well liked.



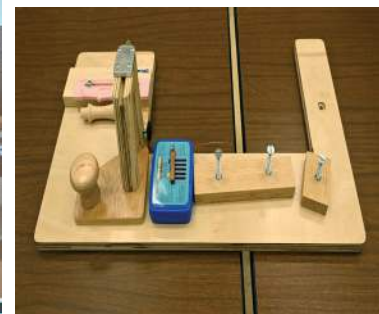
Neal Hoegemeyer Showing Finished Adirondack Chair

Ron Ross

Ron was commissioned to make 30 rocking-horse handles, but lacking an affordable lathe duplicator, he designed his own.



Ron Ross's Lathe Template Setup



Ron Ross Lathe Template Guide jig

- **Lathe Guide Template:** 3-D printed to the handle profile.
- **Sliding Tool Holder:** Mounted on a board spanning the lathe bed; a depth-adjustable "knife" follows the template profile.
- **Cutting Tool:** He used an Accusize metal-turning indexable cutter; while effective, it required skillful operation and initial shallow passes. Ron suggested that a more traditional lathe cutter might yield smoother results. A presentation photo showed the system assembled on a bench top lathe.



Ron Ross with Template Guide jig



Larry Last with Mini Bench-On-Bench

Larry Last

Larry presented two long-serving shop tools:

- **Shop-Made Router Table:** Built 35 years ago for window making. It uses a $\frac{3}{4}$ -in. plywood top milled to $\frac{1}{4}$ in. at the router mount for maximum bit projection. The surface is varnished and waxed, with no insert plate for a completely smooth surface. It includes a wall switch for safe control and a fence with vacuum port providing ~80% dust collection. Larry simply removes the router to change bits.



Larry Last Shop Made Router Table

- **Mini Bench-on-Bench:** A portable 14 × 34 in. oak-topped work surface assembled with pocket screws, with a shelf underneath (which, as he noted, collects “stuff”). If rebuilding, Larry would shape the leg bottoms with small feet for better stability on uneven surfaces. A small Lowe’s vise completes the setup.

Dave McCagg

Dave described the extensive set of jigs he created to produce about 250 logs for two Wood Magazine “Link-n log” cabin kits (Issue 221), using poplar har-



Link-n Logs House

vested from pallet wood. His system included:

- Table saw sled for 15° end notches
- Second TS sled with dado blade for rough notch clearing
- Router sled for smooth notch cleanup
- Chop-saw sled for final lengths
- Sled for stopped lengthwise grooves
- Router-table sled with $\frac{3}{4}$ -in. round-over bit for barrel shaping

Most jigs incorporated indexing sticks for rapid repeatability.



Dave also showed his modification of a **Ken Wolf** Forstner-bit jig for making wooden prong knobs. Without a drill-press foot switch, the original was hard to operate precisely, so Dave added indexing grooves and dowel keys for easier, more accurate alignment.

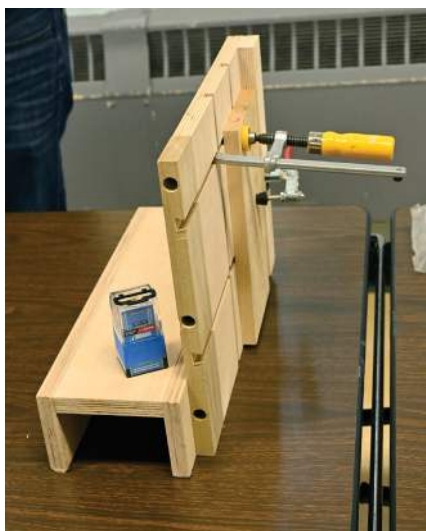


Ken Wolf Knob Machining Fixture

Gary Assarian

Gary concluded the evening with two table-saw jigs:

- **A tenoning jig** riding along the saw's fence bar, featuring dovetail-grooved clamp tracks.
- **The Wood Magazine Small-Parts Sled** (Wood Issue 291, Oct. 2023), beautifully built and



Gary Assarian Tenon Jig with Milescraft Hold Down clamps

equipped with customizable hold-downs and blue T-slot bars. Plans are available at woodstore.net. This jig greatly improves safety and accuracy when trimming very small parts.



Gary Assarian's Small Parts Sled



Gary Assarian Showing Wood Small Parts Article

Acknowledgments

We extend our thanks to all presenters for generously sharing their craftsmanship, to **Jerry Romito** for organizing the session, **Kevin Goulet** and **Dave McCagg** for video production, and **Dan Holowicki** for event photography.

- 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



- Some people are enamored with tools. Some others are enamored with process. The others are busy with making sawdust.
- There are no mistakes in woodworking until you run out of wood.
- If I can't fix it with a hammer, you've got an electrical problem.

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.

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**CHILDREN'S
HOSPITAL
MWG PROGRAM
UPDATE****From Ron and Dan****News from the Toy and Box Committee****We (Just Barely) Did it Again**

First and foremost, Ron, myself and the MWG BoD wish to thank all the members who have contributed countless hours of dedication to toy and box construction over the last 25+ years. All these toys and boxes had and do have a purpose in the Children's Hospital system, helping tremendously in bringing some sense of normalcy and caring to a child going through a tough medical diagnosis and treatment. The nine participants in this year's program were Ragnor "Berg" Bergathon, Vic Bonora, Bill Damico, Dan Holowicki, Meg Larsen, Larry Last, Lou Minna, Ron Ross and Jerry Schmidt. A heartfelt thank you all once again.

**MWG Cars Trucks Planes Bulldozer**

On December 8th we delivered the 2025 toy and box collection to Children's Hospital. We were greeted at the front door by several hospital staff members with carts ready to load up the boxed up items we brought. All had smiling faces, came immediately to

our vehicles, loaded up the boxes and thanked us many times over. Some quick paperwork by Ron and we were on our way home. Although we reached our goal (396 toys, 13 boxes), it was somewhat of a disappointment compared to previous years.

The table below shows the number of toys and boxes built and delivered to Children's Hospital by our members since 2018.

Year	Toys	Boxes	Participants
2018	571	53	N/A
2019	463	26	N/A
2020	363	68	12
2021	439	39	11
2022	554	22	14
2023	485	40	16
2024	478	22	14
2025	396	13	9

Coincidentally, 2018 was the highest number of toys in the past 25 years. 2020, at the height of Covid, was the lowest year for toys built but also the highest year for boxes built. Yet our current year's toy production was only 10% more than our worst year of 2020. The trend in the past three years has been downward in both toy and boxes built by our membership. Compared to the banner year of 2018 this year's toy production was down 30%. Boxes made by our membership have seen a likewise decline. Again compared to 2018, this past year's box production was down almost 80%. Perhaps most disheartening is that member participation in the largest and longest running annual program that the Guild does has also been trending downward the past three years, from a high of 16 members to a low of just 9 members. It is also interesting to note that the Guild membership is down about 20% in 2025 compared to recent previous years. A sign of the times? Perhaps.

It is a fact of life that a majority of MWG members are aging. And as we age it becomes more difficult to do tasks at the pace and frequency we did when we were 20 years younger. We see the same member's year over year as part of the Board of Directors and Officers. We see the same members routinely show-



ing up early prior to meetings to do the all important set-up tasks, without new faces. We see many of the same members attend several meetings each year. While it is true that younger individuals tend to be heavily involved in careers, family and social activities, leaving precious little time to pursue their own interests. It is a real challenge to get younger individuals involved in Guild activities.



Bill Damico's Toy Tow Truck

With all this said, I am encouraged to see we have had several new individuals join and attend meetings in 2025 along with two members that asked to be Officers at Large for the Board of Directors. It is also encouraging that several members have come to Ron and me to inquire about the Toy and Box program the last few meetings. It is my hope and desire that some of these new members (and perhaps some long time members) will develop an interest in our toy and box program and be able to participate.

One long time member who has been building toys for as long as I can remember remarked to me recently "if every member were to build just 10 toys think how many we would have for the hospital" With the current membership that would be well over 1500 toys! We would have no problem whatsoever meeting our goal.

Toys don't have to be complicated. They do not have to be made with exotic woods (actually domestic soft and hardwoods are best, reducing the chances of allergic reactions) or have intricate parts. They do

need to be well constructed and conform to the standards set by Children's Hospital and outlined in our documentation. Yet sturdy, simple toys can have interesting designs done by you. They do not need to be finished to heirloom quality but smooth surfaces without sharp edges are a must. Boxes can be anything from simple carry-alls to a high quality box that may be given to a family as a remembrance of their child who lost their battle with cancer or some other affliction.

Making simple, well built toys does not take a whole lot of time. When built in batches of say 6 to 10, a single toy may only need 3 – 4 hours to complete. It does take careful planning and execution though. I am working on some upcoming monthly articles where I will detail some of the steps and jigs I have developed that I use to build and shape the toys I make.

For 2026, Ron and I will explore what we can do to get more members interested and involved in the Children's Hospital Snowpile program. We may come to you, the members, and ask what it would take to get you involved. We will attempt to get more information from Children's Hospital in how our toys and boxes are used. The Guild will continue to supply wheels, axles and washers to those who wish to build toys. Ron and I will continue to answer your questions about toy and box building. We will explore doing presentations on toy and box building. We will do what it takes to continue the Guild's legacy of supporting the Children's Hospital Snowpile program. Once again, we wholeheartedly thank all those members who continue to support this program. Should you have any suggestions for the program please feel free to send either of us a note or speak to us at a future meeting.

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 - ross1508@gmail.com

Dan - 313-702-5836 - dan56laura@att.net



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 For name tags, sign up with Ed Stuckey at a
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Next MWG Luncheon: (Coordinated by TBD)
Thursday, 22 JANUARY 2026 at 10:16 AM