

MICHIGAN WOODWORKER



michiganwoodworkersguild.com

Michigan Woodworkers' Guild (est. 1981) June 2022

June 2022 Vol. 43 No. 6

When / Where:

SUNDAY, JUNE 12, 2022

(Tour Starts: **1:00 PM**, MWG Meeting: **12:30 PM**) Selfridge Military Air Museum,

Tour Open To All Members And Guests Coordinated by: Larry Last TOUR MEETING TIME: 12:30 PM



IN-PERSON MEETING AT: 27333 C St.

Harrison Township, MI

June:

Our 2022 June Field Trip will feature a one of a kind visit to **Selfridge Air Base** coordinated by **Larry Last**. Join us **June 12**th at **1:00 PM** on the East side of Detroit at Selfridge Air Base where you can ride in the F-16 Simulator. (See pg. 11 for more details)

July:

NO MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR JULY

Due to the summer shutdown, there is no July member meeting. All are encouraged to enjoy the month with family and friends as well as making more sawdust.

August:

Annual MWG Picnic- Aug. 14th, 2022

Where: Royal Oak VFW Park

Bring a dish to Pass, Guild to supply chicken,

pop, water, horseshoes

Swap meet starts at 1:00 PM



MWG Annual Field Trip to: Selfridge Military Air Museum

June 12th

Join the Michigan Woodworkers' Guild in a one of a kind tour of our own national landmark; Selfridge Military Air Museum. View the restoration progress of a WWII Bradley Tank and a Corsair fighter then take a ride in a F-16 Fighter Jet simulator. Enjoy this Special tour coordinated by: Larry Last



A Museum dedicated to Military Aviation History





President's Corner

By Jerry Romito



June 2022

I'm happy to report that last month's first live meeting in over two years was a tremendous success. With 45 members and guests attending, no one left hungry, as the Rigstad, Wolf, and Kudej ladies provided plenty of good food and desserts. There were over a dozen tables loaded with many hundreds of free tools brought in by members, and most of the tools exchanged hands. It's funny how we all thought that we were getting rid of stuff, yet I think some members went home with more than they came with! There was a free door prize raffle for four very nice prizes. Members also pre-signed up for the Sunday, June 12 tour of the Selfridge Air National Guard mu**seum**. Topping off the meeting was the presentation on pipe organ restoration by member Dave Wigton, a professional pipe organ restorer. This was a most outstanding presentation, and I strongly encourage you to read Dale Ausherman's in-depth review in this newsletter.

I now want to tell you a story to go along with Dave's presentation which highlighted his building of the massive pipe organ at the Old Saint Mary's Catholic Church in Detroit. During the meeting he mentioned in passing that there was going to be an organ concert at that church two days after our meeting. That comment might have slipped by many members, but I heard it and thought that I would look into it. Understand that classical music is not my forte, nor have I ever been to an organ concert. But I researched and found that the Detroit Chapter of the American Guild of Organists (AGO) was sponsoring the free concert that Tuesday night at the church, performed by concert organist Christopher Houlihan on the "Wigton Organ". My wife and I decided to attend, partly as a thank you to Dave for his presentation, but I can assure you that I had no idea of the fantastic night that was in store for us.

I called Dave to tell him that we were coming, and learned that he had just spent three days at the church fine tuning the organ. He happened to be near the entrance as we walked in, and I got chills as we all walked forward and then turned around to look up at the massive, beautiful structure towering behind us. (The organ is at the back of the church). Believe me, our little tv screen at the meeting did no justice to seeing the organ in person. There were probably 100 attendees. As we sat looking toward the front of the church, (in the area recommended by Dave and the experts there), a large screen was set up so we could see the organist on video.

The printed program's glowing biography of organist **Christopher Houlihan** explains that he has established an international reputation as a "virtuoso musician", and has performed on major organs all over the world. He played for 1-1/2 hours, and there is absolutely no way to describe in words either his mastery of the keyboards and pedals, or the breathtaking range and power of the Wigton Organ. They both received standing ovations. Those of us that wished were invited to a dinner at the Pegasus Taverna in Greektown, a short walk across the street from the church. There I had the opportunity to meet the organist (who sat next to Dave), who had high praise for the Wigton organ. The AGO toasted them both.

I left feeling so very proud to be able to say that Dave is one of our own.

Jerry Romito MWG President



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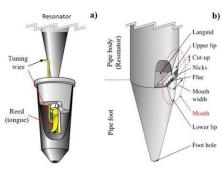
MWG Meeting Review David Wigton Building Organs 22 May 2022

Our May 2022 meeting was the first in-person Guild meeting in over two years, thus a wonderful opportunity to see and talk with woodworking friends and catch up on their well-being and recent projects. The meeting kicked off with a celebratory social hour where **Bill** and **Sally Rigstad** and other generous volunteers provided an expanded finger-food menu, including pizza and cake. And a crew of hardworking members organized a large set of tables loaded with free tools and shop items donated by members. In spite of my overloaded shop I could not resist picking up a few items which I simply could not live without.

The advertised program topic, *David Wigton on Building and Repair of Organs*, seemed interesting enough to me as I knew little of pipe organs. And I wondered how woodworking might figure in. Knowing nothing of David or his business, I assumed this would be a low key but interesting topic, perhaps watching a member build and/or repair small organs in his garage or small shop. Talk about underestimating something! This program was the most astounding and eye-opening I have seen in my 15 years of Guild membership.

David's company, *Wigton Pipe Organs, Inc.* has been building pipe organs both LARGE and small since 1975 and has built or rebuilt at least 35 instruments. (https://www.wigtonpipeorgans.com/index.html) His presentation focus was reviewing the major build of a new organ for (Old) St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church in Detroit, a four-year project completed in 1990. (See the "Opus" list on the website for all the projects, with clickable links on some for details.) Before reviewing this major blow-your-mind project,

David described the major components of a pipe organ, gave a brief history, discussed the main types, reviewed the major use venues (churches, concert halls, some private homes), and showed photos of major lo-



How Pipe Organ Works



Reed Organ

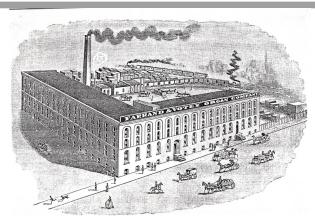
cal and national pipe organs. He had diagrams showing how a console key on a "manual" (keyboard) mechanically links to directing air to a particular pipe, and how control "stops" can direct the air to multiple pipes of the same note. A wonderfully clear description of pipe organ parts and their functions (wind supply, wind chests, pipe work, console, stop action, combination action. and key action) can be found at:

https://organ.byu.edu/organ-types-and-components/.



Electric Organ





Farrand & Votey, Detroit

As to history he spoke to the earliest known form, the *hydraulis* in Ancient Greece, in which the wind supply was created by the weight of displaced water in an airtight container. He touched on the development over time of the action controls, from early direct mechanical links to more recent longer-reach electric actuators. And the evolution of "winding" methods (i.e. wind power to the pipes), from early hand pumps, to water motors, to later electric blowers. He described the two types of pipes (reed, and air-flow like a big whistle), and ended with comments on the Farrand and Votey Organ Company, a nineteenth-century manufacturer of pianos, reed and pipe organs, and player pianos located in Detroit from 1881 until 1897.

As to his own history, he thinks of himself as an artisan builder, a skilled craftsman rather than a company manager. He joined the American Institute of Organ Builders (AIO) early in life and through related networking gained apprenticeships in established companies in the early 70's. He then established a new company in 1977 with a



couple of partners and soon became sole proprietor of the business. Eventually he had a large 3,000 sq. ft. shop in Highland Park. Over time he downsized facilities and has more recently downsized to his own basement shop.

The project to build a new organ for Old St. Mary's is an incredible story. The project took four years, with

David as the relatively young leader, designer, and builder, working jointly with only three other employees. Two of the four team members were woodworkers. Upon surveying the previous St. Mary's organ in 1983, it was determined that the most reliable approach was to build a completely new organ, rather than trying to use some of the previous pipework. The new organ would have mechanical action to guarantee a long life.



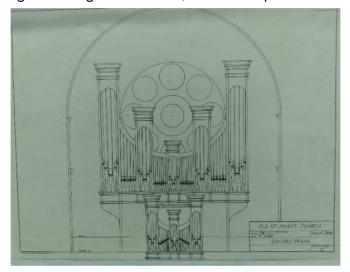
St. Marys Old Organ

As to design, the church desired to leave the St. Joseph window at least somewhat exposed, as the prior organ had done. It was decided that a French-style case with the smallest tower in the center would frame the window nicely. After a study of French organ cases, especially the late 18th-century cases by Riepp at Dole and Dijon, a design was developed by David that seemed to be at home in the large Romanesque room. Once this decision was made the remaining design steps were to develop the stop list and the case design, get an acoustical study, and order the pipes. All pipes came from suppliers in Germany or elsewhere in Europe, as David's company does not make pipes, which is a specialized craft in its own right.

The construction approach was to build the console and *Positif* case first. The Positif is a functionally complete (capable of standalone operation) smaller organ shown sitting at balcony floor level in the center of the eventual main case organ. The main case



on completion stands 34 feet tall! From the drawings in David's PowerPoint, the Positif case alone is over 12 feet tall. This can be seen in David's front view design drawing shown here, and in the photos of the



Design Drawing

completed organ. This Positif organ with the operating console could be played and used in services while the remainder of the full organ was completed. The latter would be phase two of the project. The 34 foot height of the main organ case gives one an understanding of the massive size of the instrument and the associated project. The peak of my sizable two-story house is only about 25 feet. And I thought that at the meeting I was going to see an organ built in a garage! The finished organ has 54 stops, 74 ranks, and 3,823 pipes! A great explanatory demo of an organist playing a large instrument with all the controls can be seen at https://youtu.be/NGNOopA4Qfc.

Such a massive ornate case has 100's of feet of large multi-layer architectural moldings. Dave had some of the straight molding made at Armstrong Millworks, Inc. in Highland, MI. The team made up the huge curved moldings by piecing of work pieces and using specialty molding machines. The photos show just how large the molding structures are.

The size of the organ cases forced David and his team to mill their own lumber. At that time it was difficult to find quartersawn white oak in large matched sizes. They felled all of the trees in the rural area



I-696 Wood Harvest

which would become part of I-696, and with the use of their own two-man chainsaw mill and portable band mills, produced all the lumber for this organ and several subsequent ones. And they built their own kiln to dry the lumber. The beautiful walnut pipe shades, the carved embellishments hiding the tops and feet of the display pipe groups, were carved by the Georg



Ornate Carving

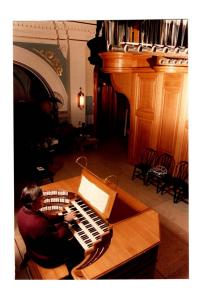
Keilhofer studio of Frankenmuth, Michigan. (Georg passed away in Dec of 2000.) The courage and tenacity of David and his team are nothing short of phenomenal. Hey, need tons of matched quartersawn



white oak? Easy peasy, just build your own sawmill and kiln.

Some of the pipes and main case parts were so long that they could not be stood up even in David's very large shop. Once again his perseverance and creativity showed up, as they dug a 7 ft. deep, 7 ft. by 14 ft. pit inside the shop building to add the needed height for assembly of the tall components.

David educated us in the mechanics and workings of a pipe organ by use of an operating scale model. This demo instrument was for a single key (one of many



St Marys Organ Console

keys on a "manual" or console keyboard level) and showed the key mechanical linkage to the valve controlling air to a single "rank" of different types of pipe, including a reed pipe. The model included the mechanisms and boxes for regulating the "wind" pressure. Various stops controlled which of the pipes were fed air, so that he could demonstrate the various

sounds which could be produced. He also showed how to "tune" the various pipes by adjusting their effective lengths by tapping on telescoping cylinders, or rolling a partial edge of a metal pipe, or by adjusting a tuning wire in the case of a reed pipe. He would simultaneously play the pipe to be tuned against a reference pipe (in this case a middle C note), and if out of tune there was a noticeable beat or modulation to the jointly produced sound. He would tap the adjusting mechanism until the beat slowed and disappeared, indicating the subject pipe was now tuned.

For me this presentation was incredibly entertaining and educational, as I had little prior knowledge of the



St. Marys Finished Organ

workings and construction of a pipe organ. But what truly impressed me was the courage, skill, and resilience of this small team of craftsmen to undertake and successfully complete this amazingly complex organ design and build. And this "Opus" project, while perhaps the largest, was one of dozens undertaken by David and his teams over the years. I am also told by President Jerry that the instrument's music results are phenomenal, based on his attendance at an organ concert at St. Mary's in the week following our meeting. For this concert the organ was played by a world-renowned organist. (See Jerry's comments in his normal column for newsletter issue.)

The PowerPoint slides used by David for his presentation can be found with the link shown below. We thank President Jerry and the program committee for arranging this amazing presentation. And of course we are greatly indebted to fellow member David Wigton for educating us and sharing his valuable time.

- Dale Ausherman





MWG Helpful Tools:

As we put more birthday candles on the cake, things naturally change. For instance we may notice that our arms just aren't long enough to be able to focus on a printed page or something else we want work on.

The YOCTOSUN LED Head Magnifier headset shown below has several worthwhile features:

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The Toymakers Corner

This month I'd like to start off with acknowledging a rather significant donation made to the toy program. Dr. Alchakaki of The Michigan Lung Institute donated \$250 for the purpose of supplies to make toys for the Snowpile program. One of our members is a patient of Dr. Alchakaki at the Institute and had told the good doctor about our involvement with Children's Hospital Snowpile program. He was so moved about the work the Guild does for this program he decided to help out financially with the donation. We are most grateful for the donation and will put it towards our purchase of wheels, axles and washers for toy makers.

I also want to mention a short conversation Ron and I had with another member who expressed interest in getting involved with toy making. Some time ago, his own child was undergoing treatment at Children's Hospital as an infant and was the recipient of several toys. This member said to me that he would love to give back to the Hospital for the excellent care his child received and felt there was no better way than to get involved with toy making. What an inspiring conversation it was.

Now on to my follow up on toy designs and modifications. As a way to pique some interest and inspiration for members considering building toys, I'd like to



Ken Wolf Yellow Toys



Ken Wolf Red Toys

that a few Guild members made last year.

Ken Wolf, the master of toymakers, stuck to some traditional designs last year, but his brightly colored



Ken Wolf Natural Finish Toys

finishes are exceptional. The designs are simple and can be easily modified to fit the stock on hand. I believe all these designs are now available on our website

Ken also made a few toys out of hardwoods, again with exceptional natural finish.



Berg Race Car

Ragnor 'Berg' Bergathon created quite a few high quality intricate toys this past Berg's devear. signs are a combination of his own ideas and cues from oth-

ers. They are all well made and very well finished. I had sevconversations eral with Berg about how he was going about the construction and ways to temporar-



Bergs Delivery Truck

are inspirational and very appropriate for young children.



Bergs Cars Staging for a

ily hold pieces together while the glue was drying. I have already received some inquiries about the Indv Race cars he made and referred them to 'Berg'. The pick-up trucks carrying a load of crayons



came

Bonaro



Long time member **Bill Damico** has made some very



Bill Damico Model Ts

T style flatbed trucks along with classic style cars were done. Bill chose a variety of spray painted colors as well as natural finishes.



Bill Damico Cars



Bill Damico Prototype Tow Truck

Bill also put together a prototype tow truck that he displayed at the May meeting. As you can see by the picture, he put in a lot of intricate

work, with many small parts and a glossy finish. The rolling eyes for headlights are really cute. Very well done.

Meg LarSen was new to the toy program in 2021 and chose to execute our traditional VW Bug and roadster designs with high

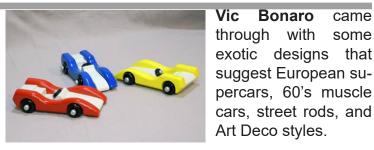




Meg LarSen Roadsters

Meg LarSen VW Bugs

quality finishes. We hope she continues to contribute in the future.



Vic Bonaro Vets

Vic also did some very unique takes on steam locomotives and trucks. All were well executed and finished.



Vic Bonaro Muscle Cars



Vic Bonaro Ford Roadsters



Vic Bonaro Rolls Royces



Vic Bonaro Trucks

These were by no means the only members who made toys last year. Time and space prohibit me from highlighting them all. But I do want to say that all the hard work of those that have supported this Guild program over the years is truly appreciated.

And now a reminder that we are still in need of toys and boxes for the Children's Hospital Christmas Snowpile program. We have set a goal of delivering 400 toys to Children's Hospital for many more years than I have been a member.

We also deliver plain boxes and somewhat fancier memory boxes. If you have made toys in the past and plan on doing so this year we thank you. If you have thought it might be an easy project to put together, yes it can. Please check out the toy program in our updated website for more inspiration. Just remember to keep your design simple, round over all edges, no metal parts and a smooth finish to aid in cleanliness and sanitation.

As has always been the policy, the Guild will provide wheels (1", 1 1/4" or 1 1/2" dia), nylon washers and wheel pegs free of charge to any member who wishes to make toys for this program. The Guild also has an inventory of non-standard wheels and other toy parts that have been recently categorized. While we do have a limited supply and do not plan to stock these once the current supply runs out, we currently have:

- •1 $\frac{3}{4}$ ", 2", 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ ", 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ ", 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ " and 3" diameter standard style wheels
- •1", 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ ", 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ ", 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ ", 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ " and 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ " diameter grooved tire style wheels
- •2" and 2 3/4" diameter wagon style wheels
- •1 $\frac{1}{4}$ ", 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ " and 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ " diameter flanged style train wheels
- Wood shapes such as acorns, beads, balls, caps and discs
- Large and small shaker style pegs
- •Three sizes of wood peg people
- Steam engine/steam train smokestacks
- •Various small pieces of poplar, suitable for glue-up

If you need these items, they can be obtained by contacting Ron or Dan. This is the one program MWG does annually to benefit those children who really, really need a reason to smile. Please make every

effort to support this Guild program. Why not make use of your extra shop time this year to create a small gift that can bring a smile to a child who would love to have a moment and forget about their reason for being in the hospital.

Thank you for your support. Dan Holowicki & Ron Ross

For further information or to arrange to drop off toys, please contact

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



Vic Bonaro Trains



Bill Damico Prototype Tow Truck



Michigan Woodworkers' Guild Selfridge Military Air Museum Tour

27333 C St, Harrison Twp, MI 48045

Sunday, June 12, 2022 1:00 PM- 4:00 PM

Costs: \$10:00 per person; Guests invited

In 1975, the Michigan Air Guard Historical Association (MAGHA) and the Selfridge Military Air Museum were formed by a group of Air National Guard officers and enlisted personnel. Their mission is to help preserve the heritage and traditions of the Michigan Air National Guard, Selfridge Air National Guard Base, and the units

that are/or were stationed there.

How to Get There:

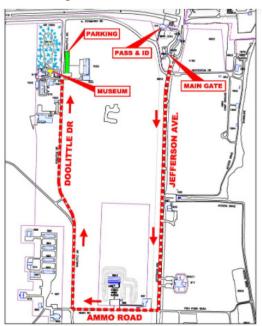
We are located east of I-94 and M-59 (Hall Rd.) From I-94: Proceed east on M-59 (Rosso Hwy) to Jefferson Avenue. Turn right to enter the main gate. Stop at the gate to get the vehicle pass.

Required documentation: valid driver's license, proof of insurance, and registration.

Please Note: Perimeter Road (immediately on right inside the gate is NOW CLOSED.

Follow the orange and black 'DETOUR' signs to

the Selfridge Military Air Museum. Map of detour pictured below. Parking is available in the parking lot to the front of Bldg. 1060 and across the street from the Museum and Air Park.



On Base Driving Details:

Follow Jefferson south to Ammo Road.

Turn right (west) on Ammo Road to Doolittle (flight line service road). Turn right (north) and follow Doolittle to Selfridge Military Air Museum (on left).

Museum parking is right across Doolittle from the airpark.

MWG MEETING TIME: 12:30 PM





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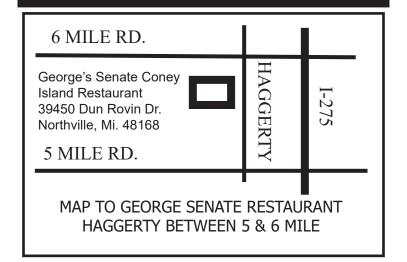
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For membership information contact Executive Board Members / Committee Chairs Dave McCagg at: d2mccagg@provide.net For name tags, sign up with Ed Stuckey at a regular meeting.

CREATE WITH CONFIDENCE



Next MWG Luncheon: (Coordinated by Bill Rigstad) Thursday, 23 JUNE 2022 at 10:16 AM

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Don Hess Secretary
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Dave McCagg Membership 734-482-6764
Larry LastPrograms/Website Calendar248-207-9386
Bob Mills Mentoring
Kevin Goulet Camera Chair 248-672-5341
Fred BallWeb Site Calendar (Backup) 248-681-3108
Ron RossToy Program