MICHIGAN WOODWORKER

michiganwoodworkersguild.com

Michigan Woodworkers' Guild (est. 1981) May 2026 Vol. 47 No. 5

When / Where:

SUNDAY, MAY 17, 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:

Cabinet Building

by Jim Demers

Meeting Coordinated by: **Larry Last**

IN-PERSON MEETING AT:
Livonia Senior WellnessCenter

May:

15MAY2026 – Vogue Furniture Company factory tour. Coordinated by **Ed Stuckey**, be early for a **9:30 AM start time**.

17MAY2026 – MWG Member Meeting - Professional Cabinet Maker, **Jim Demers** discusses his decades long experiences and business perspective. Coordinated by Larry Last, meeting socializing **starts at 1:00 PM**, business meeting at 2:00 PM.

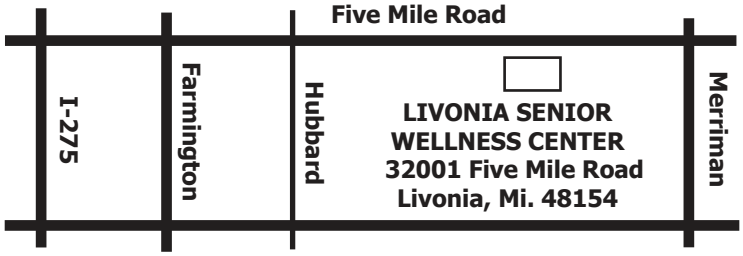
June: 2026 MWG Field Trip

Where: Allen Park High School Shop,
18401 Champaign , Allen Park, Mi. 48101
When: **June 13th 10:00-12:00 pm**
Contact: **Dan Holowicki**
See what the students, hopefully future MWG members, are making.

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.



MAP TO LIVONIA SENIOR WELLNESS CENTER

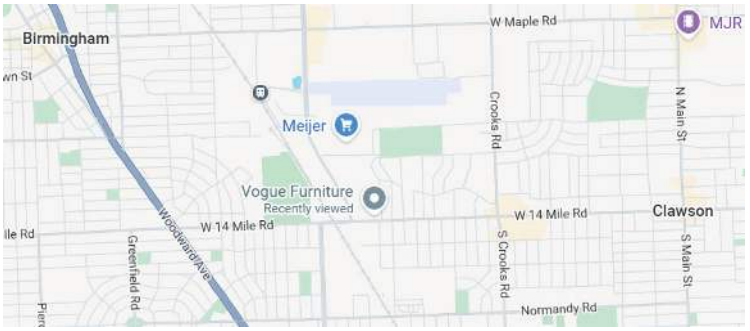
Cabinet Building
A Business Perspective

May 17th

Join us as Professional Cabinet Maker, **Jim Demers** will discuss his experiences and three decades long business perspective. Coordinated by **Larry Last**, everything starts at **1:00 PM**

SPECIAL FACTORY TOUR

MWG Treasurer, **Ed Stuckey** has coordinated a life changing tour of famed high ended custom cabinet and furniture manufacturer **Vogue Furniture Company** for Friday, **15MAY2026** from **9:30 am-11:30 am**. Employing more than 50 people, the 40,000 sq. ft. facility is located at **2720 West 14 Mile Rd, Royal Oak**. Website is www.voguefurniture.net
Make sure you are on time for this fantastic tour. Contact **Ed Stuckey** at (313) 345-3671 for confirmation reservations.



President's Corner

By Jerry Romito

May 2026

In my April article I asked for member feedback with a list of questions, and I got a grand total of two responses, although they were wonderfully insightful, and gave our board much to consider. So in my continuing effort to encourage interaction among members, let me ask something else. Would any of you be interested in a monthly Shop Talk Zoom session, say on the last Tuesday of each month at 7pm – 8pm? The idea would be for members to log into the session and bring up any shop topics or questions that the group could kick around. Sessions like this often start off slowly, but once they get going the conversations build up. I could be the facilitator, or anyone else could be as well. I would email the Zoom link ahead of the session, and all you would need to do is click on it. You don't have to have Zoom or know anything about it, and it works on any computer, tablet, or cell phone. I am a member of the Mid Michigan Woodworkers Guild (MMWG), and they have this program, although I have not joined in yet. Let me know if you would have any interest at GJRomito@aol.com.

The Sam Beauford Woodworking Institute is really expanding their outreach. They spoke to us in February, and then spoke to the MMWG and the West Michigan Woodworkers Guild at their April meetings. See what we were able to help start? Now they are giving us an opportunity to see projects from some of their graduates at The 2026 Michigan Contemporary Craft Exhibition, running from May 29 thru June 5 at the Hickman Gallery on the campus of Adrian University. You can learn more at this link:
https://sbwi.edu/news/michigan-contemporary-craft-exhibition-2026

As always, let me know if you want to bring something to my attention.

Jerry Romito

WOODWORK APPS

By Kevin Goulet

Woodshop Aplication

This is a new column of the MWG newsletter that will share helpful computer woodworking tools with our members.

Recently I was watching one of my favorite YouTube woodworking channels, *WoodWorkWeb* by **Colin Knecht**, and he demonstrated a phone app that would be very useful in your shop.

The "Woodworker's Companion," which is available as a free download app for both Android and Apple. It is also available at www.mywoodapp.com (no subscription is required). This app has useful tools such as a Board foot calculator which is very easy to use. Also there is a fraction calculator which converts whole numbers to fractions and to metric also. It further calculates wood movement, finish and epoxy resin mixing. It even has a decibel meter tool. There are a number more of tools included in this app that you may find helpful.

Once you navigate to YouTube search for the "WoodWorkWeb.com" channel then look for a video that was posted in February 2025 named "New Woodworking Phone App Is Changing How I Work, Plus Awesome Bench Clamp Build" Colin starts talking about the woodworking app at the 7-minute 37 seconds mark.

Kevin Goulet

MEETING REVIEW

By Dale Ausherman

MWG Meeting Review
Pen Turning
Livonia, MI – 12 April 2026

The craft of pen turning has been developing for nearly forty years and has become very popular over the last couple of decades. For our April meeting at the new Livonia Senior Wellness Center, **Ragnar Bergethon (Berg)**, **Duane Kimmel**, and **Ron Ross** presented an in-depth introduction and demonstration of pen turning, including methods, tools, materials, and finishing. All three speakers showed a number of wonderful examples of their pen work, made with different materials and designs.

A turned pen consists of a tubular metal pen/pencil mechanism on which a turned barrel and turned cap are mounted along with the pen tip, a decorative ring between barrel and cap, and a final decorative clip. The real creative work is in preparing and turning the barrel and cap blanks on a lathe, finishing the turned blanks, and assembling the pen on a pen press or equivalent.

For the presentation, Berg led the way with a focus on the basic tools, equipment and jigs for drilling, trimming, mounting, and turning the wood blanks on his variable speed Rikon MIDI lathe. The lathe was first fitted with drive stock pen jaws and a tail stock chuck for drilling the barrel and cap blanks. He also used the jaws and chuck to trim the blanks to precise length with a special barrel-trimmer bit. He then switched to a pen-turning mandrel in the drive stock, and a “mandrel saver” in the tail stock, to turn the barrel and cap. While sequentially performing all of these steps Berg spoke to their key aspects and noted things to be careful of in practice.

Interspaced with Berg performing all the basic lathe steps, Ron and Duane addressed the less expensive use of a drill press and a drill-centering vise for drilling and trimming the blanks.

They also discussed the use of non-wood materials, such as acrylics and animal antlers, for the barrels and caps, greatly expanding the appearance of pens which can be made. Ron discussed specialize pen kits he has used, such as Faith Hope Love pens of Olive wood from Bethlehem, and Stadium Pen Blanks which uses wood from sports team’s recycled stadium or arena seats. These pen kits have decorative center rings and clip caps reflecting the specific sport and teams involved. The resulting pens are quite popular as gifts.

Pen and Pencil Kit Suppliers

Duane expanded on the variety of materials which can be used, including cutting board assembly leftovers, corncobs, and countertop materials such as Corian, Hi-Macs, and Staron. (Beware the health risks of sanding dust from some of these materials.) He also spoke to the variety of pens available, including roller balls, ball point, and fountain pens. There are even pens made from the spent casings of large rifle ammunition. Duane also had several examples of adding decorative embossed lines on the turned parts, imparted by the use of guitar strings during the turning process. And Ron showed a product consisting of such strings but with little ball handles attached to avoid discomfort or heat injury in use.

Acrylic Pen Material

While this craft is called “pen” turning, the methods and tools are also used to make decorative wooden handles for implements in the office, shop or kitchen. The team showed examples of letter openers and a ratcheting screw/nut driver.

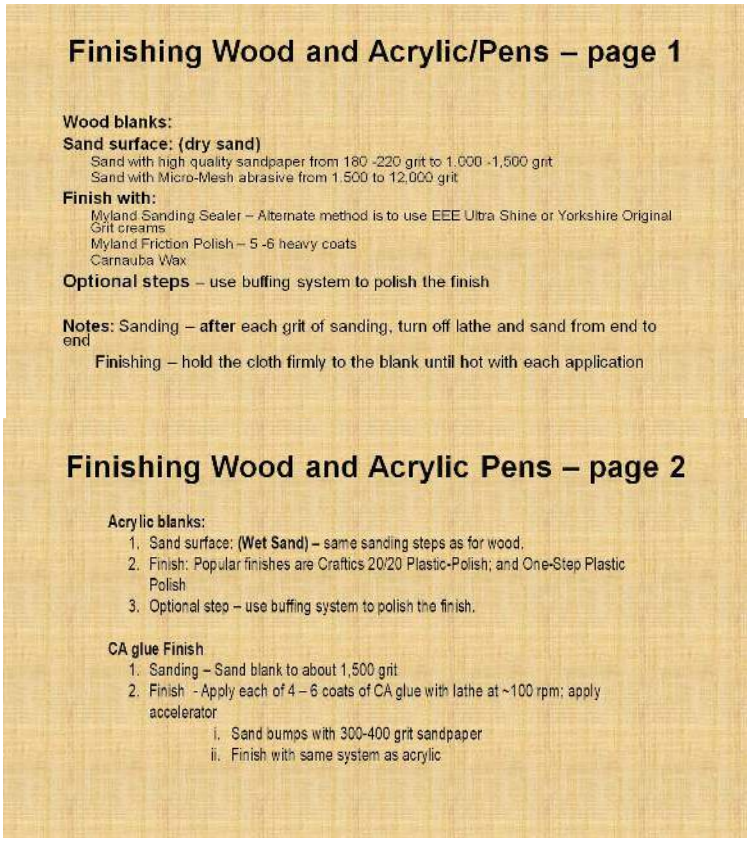
Ron Ross and Berg Describing Pen Turning Options

The explosion in pen turning has been driven by the wide availability of affordable kits for pens of various styles such as firearm, jeweled, fountain pens, and many other themes, and materials (exotic woods, acrylics, epoxies, even antlers). The team showed catalogs from well-known pen kit suppliers (Penn State Industries (https://www.pennstateind.com) being a widely-used favorite), and provided a list of nine favorite suppliers which include Lee Valley, Rockler, and Woodcraft among many others. Duane provided four different sheets of assembly instructions, which showed differences between example kits. There are suppliers which focus on pen blanks, the blocks of

Duane Describing Pen Materials

Berg Turning Pen Blank

wood or other materials which become the barrel and cap of a completed pen. Google any of these names with “pen turning” as added search terms and you will see the tremendous variety of pen styles available, as well as kits, tools, and wood or acrylic pen blanks. As Berg worked at the lathe, he reviewed the key



Pen Finishing Steps

steps in making a completed pen. Then Ron and Duane added details and lessons learned to each step of the processes:

- **Prepare Blanks**: Cut the original approx. 5 in. pen blanks in half then trim to about 1/8 in longer than the kit brass tubes, using marks to ensure grain alignment when reassembled.

- **Drill & Glue**: Using a drill chuck on a lathe, or drill press and a drill-centering vise, drill lengthwise holes with diameter specified by the kit through the blanks and glue in the brass tubes using CA glue or epoxy. Most prefer epoxy as being less likely to break bond. Use coarse sandpaper to clean and rough up the exterior of the tubes and take steps to avoid getting glue inside the tubes.

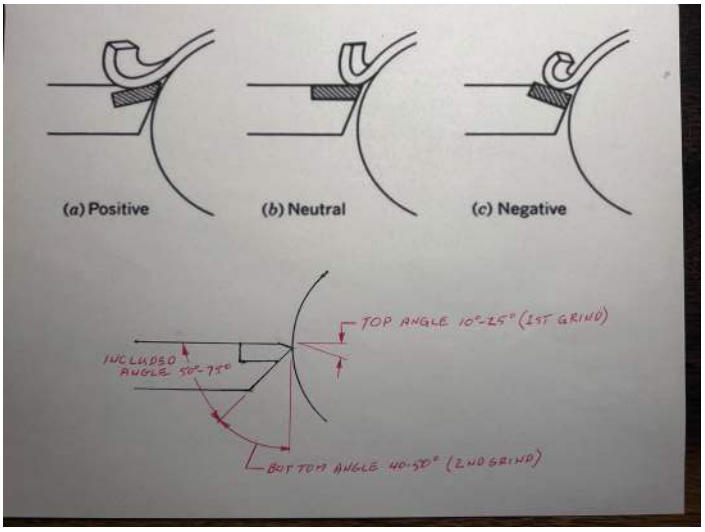
- **Square Ends**: Use a pen Barrel Trimmer or Barrel Trimmer jig for Disk Sander to square the ends of the blanks flush with the brass tubes.

- **Mount on Lathe**: Mount the blanks on a pen mandrel with proper bushings per the kit. Tighten the mandrel components with the brass knurling knob, but beware of over tightening which can warp the mandrel. Much better to use a Mandrel Saver, a specialized lathe live center which eliminates warping. Also a mandrel saver enables mounting the barrel and cap together with sufficient pressure to turn them both at one time.

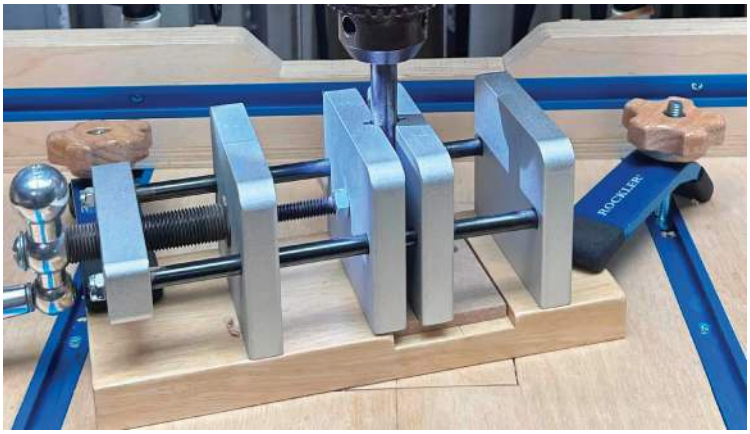
- **Turn the Blank**: At 1,500 – 3,000 RPM use a Roughing Gouge, Spindle Gouge, Skew, or Berg's favorite, a Robert Sorby SpindleMaster to turn the blanks down to the desired shape. For acrylic Ron prefers a negative rake scraper (explained by Ron in some detail) which avoids surface dimples. And many prefer the nearly foolproof Carbide Turning Tools.

- **Sanding**: Speed about 800 – 900 rpm with high-quality sandpaper from 220 grit through 1,000 -1,500 grit. Lightly sand WITH the grain after using each level of grit. Then sand with Micro-Mesh abrasive from 1,500 to 12,000 grit, again along grain between grits. Clean the wood after each grit with a dust or paper cloth.

- **Finishing**: At about 550 rpm apply Myland Sanding Sealer, then 5-6 coats of Myland Friction Polish (or alternatives in slides), then Carnauba Wax.



Negative Rake Tool Justification



Self Centering Vice

Rub a paper towel against the blank during each application until the paper gets very warm, assuring that the waxes are melted into the blank.

- **Assemble**: Press the hardware (tip, clip, mechanism) into the barrel using a pen press or vise. I have successfully used an Irwin Quick-Grip clamp whose shaft is held in a vise.

For these live processes be sure to use proper PPE including Face Shield, Face Breathing Mask, Safety Glasses, Hearing Protection, and a Vacuum System for removal of airborne dust. Also you will need Good Lighting for Lathe Area.

We thank Berg, Duane and Ron for their excellent presentations and for sharing their knowledge. And we acknowledge the hard work of **Paul Thoma** and **Dave McCagg** for video production, Dan Holowicki for event photography; and **Kevin Goulet** for editing and posting the recording to YouTube (Michigan Woodworkers Guild – Meeting Video channel).

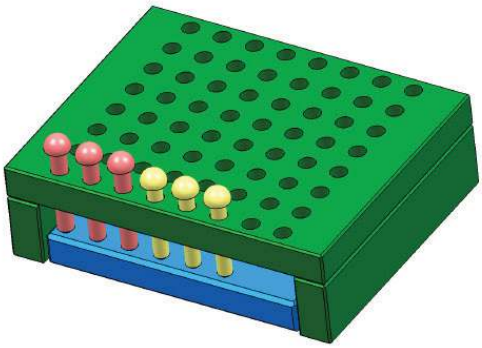
Dale Ausherman

MWG DESIGN CENTER

From the Editor

In support of the MWG Toy Program, **Ken Wolf** has developed several jigs and fixtures to help in the easy construction of multiple toys. Primarily, Ken has constructed jigs to coat both axle heads as well as wheels.

Below is Ken's jig to coat axle heads. It has been initially designed in CAD from which detailed drawings were made followed by a physical sample . For a detailed drawing of this jig please see the MWG website.



You can find the Ken's Axle Painting fixture on the MWG website with the following link:
https://michiganwoodworkersguild.com/wp-content/uploads/designs/Ken_Wolfs_Axle_Coating_Fixture_2-17-21.pdf

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

- **We are now doing the impossible it's just taking a little longer**
- **If you can't find the time to do it properly, how will you find the time to fix it?**
- **Life's better in the forest**

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

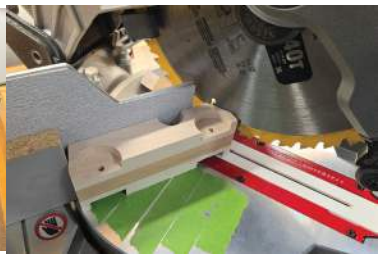
Laying out, Cutting and Shaping Toys

In the February newsletter we covered gluing up blanks, squaring up the blanks, drilling axle holes and wheel recesses. Now we need to lay out the toy profile, rough cut and final shaping of the blanks. I'll be mentioning specifics on several different styles of vehicle bodies I make quite often. These are station wagons, flatbed and tanker trucks, roadsters, sprint race cars and drag race cars.

As covered previously, I have made profile templates out of ¼" plywood or hardboard that I keep on hand. Now it is time to put them to use. These templates may have been placed on the wood blanks previously to mark axle locations. If you did not trace the template profile completely onto the blank previously, now is the time to do so. I use pencils on lighter colored woods and a fine Sharpie on darker woods such as cherry or walnut.

The station wagon toy cars and truck bodies are a prime example of all straight or angular cuts without curves. The station wagon consists of a 1" thick body and a ¾" upper cabin. The truck bodies are generally 2 inches wide by 1 ½" high. The truck cabs I make are about 1 ½" wide and 1 3/8" high. The fronts and rears of all these blanks just have angled cuts anywhere between 0 degrees and 45 degrees depending on the location. These angled cuts can be carefully and accurately cut out on a miter saw, utilizing stop blocks positioned on the miter saw fence. Alternately, with a proper jig, these cuts can be made on a tablesaw. A band saw will also work, however the cut surface will no doubt be rougher and will take additional time to smooth. The following pictures show two angled cut operations using stop blocks and clamps at the miter saw.

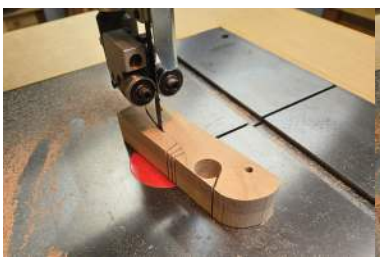
Truck Body Angle Saw Cut



Roadster Body Saw Cut

When making tanker trucks I use a short piece of oval handrail that measures about 1 ½" high by 2 ½" wide and about 4" long. One end is cut square that will but up against the truck 'cab' while the other end is cut at about 5 degrees. This is also easily done on a miter saw, band saw or by hand if you wish.

The roadster bodies start with angled cuts at the front and rear using any of the techniques listed above. The sloping hood of the roadsters I normally cut on a band saw. While this leaves a rough surface, it is easily cleaned up later. The roadsters do have several prominent curves at the fronts and rear. Again, these curves can be rough cut on a band saw. The sprint style race cars and dragsters have a number of curves which are also best cut on a band saw. The following images shows me cutting out a sprint car and a dragster at the band saw. Notice the several short relief cuts I did in the dragster blank. This helps when cutting tight curves on a band saw to relieve any twisting pressure on the blade. I do tend to use a 3/8" wide blade on my band saw for these cuts. It



Sprint Car Band Saw Cut

Dragster Band Saw Cut

allows a tighter curve cut than a half inch wide blade but also gives more control cutting straight cuts than you would get with a ¼" wide blade.

A word of caution here, many of these parts are relatively small and if hand held, would mean your fingers could be quite close to a moving saw blade. This is where clamps, jigs and fixtures can come in real handy. If a saw cutting operation feels unsafe, stop immediately. Rethink and do it safer.

Now that all the vehicle bodies have been rough cut to shape, it's time to smooth the curves and angled cuts. The easiest way to clean up the sloping hood surface of the roadsters is with a smoothing plane. I clamp the roadster body in my bench vise so that the hood surface is roughly parallel to the bench top then take a series of thin shavings to create an even, flat surface. A block plane, #3 or #4 smoothing plane are the best tools for this. See the following image.

Roadster Body Hood Hand Planing

The next operation in my process is to do some initial sanding and roundovers for all the corners. The station wagons and truck bodies need little sanding at this time since they are just squared blanks with angled ends. An initial sanding with 150 grit paper and a sanding block are sufficient. I have 3 different types of sanding blocks I use, hard rubber, cork and felt. The hard rubber is great at this initial sanding stage. The cork block I tend to use with 220 grit and sometimes 320 grit paper. The felt block I will use with 320 grit paper for lightly sanding between coats of finish.

The curves and cockpit regions of the roadsters and race cars are best smoothed with a spindle sander. I have a dedicated Jet spindle sander. Many woodworkers use sanding spindles chucked into their drill presses, which is also a satisfactory method. The slowest method involves wrapping sandpaper around an appropriately sized wooden dowel and hand sanding. Not very desirable. Below are some images of me using a spindle sander.

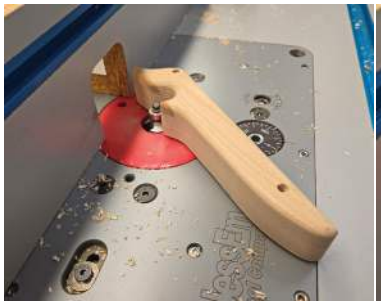
Roadster Body Spindle Sandling

Dragster Body Sanding

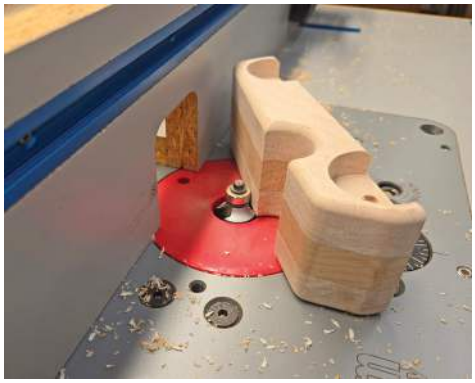
Sprint Body Spindle Sanding

The bodies are now ready for relieving the sharp corners. In the past I have used a 1/8" or a ¼" radius router bit with a top bearing to ease the edges. However I have found the 1/8" is too small and the ¼" is too big for the toys I generally make. I purchased a 3/16" roundover bit from Infinity Tools and found this radius to be just about right. I do these roundovers in two steps, raising the bit above the table so that about 2/3 of the roundover is created. Then I will raise the bit the remaining distance and cut once again. This helps reduce tearout and improves control. When doing this operation with the bit chucked

in a router mounted within a router table, extreme care must be taken. These bodies are relative small and your fingers can be quite close to a bit rotating at 18,000 RPM. Need I say more. Small parts holders are available from various wood supply houses that make this operation somewhat safer.

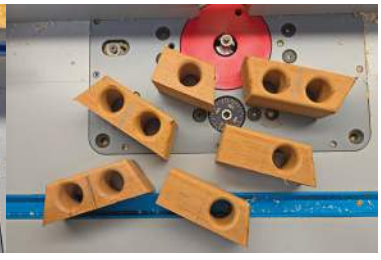


Dragster Body Roundovers **Sprint Car Body Roundover**



Roadster Body Roundovers

In the case of the 'cabs' for the trucks I make, I use a larger block of wood to lay out several cabs then radius the 'windows'. Then I selectively cut the blocks to radius the outer edges in steps, reducing the operations needed where my fingers get close to the bit. When I get down to the final roundovers on individual 'cabs' I use a small parts holder.



Truck Cab Roundovers

Truck Cab Roundovers

With roundovers done, it is time to glue the truck cabs and tanks onto the truck bodies. A couple 'F' style clamps and some wood glue are all that is needed here. Care should be taken so that the 'cabs' and tanks line up square to the bodies. Light pressure with a couple clamps until the glue sets up and you are that much close to finish.

Likewise when making station wagons I will also glue the upper cabin onto the bodies in much the same manner. I have made trucks with flatbeds where I use a thin piece of wood (about ¼" thick) for the bed. These tend to be about 2 ½" wide and 4" long.

Truck Body Glue Ups

This would be a good time to glue the bed onto the truck body too. So now you have a bunch of toy bodies that are all shaped, and rough sanded. All that is left is final sanding, applying finish and assembly. We'll tackle those next time.

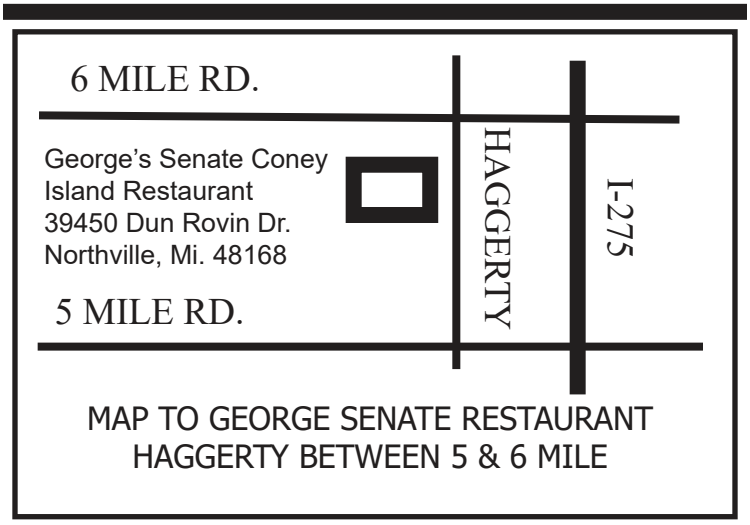
For further information on our toy/box program, request wheels and axles or to arrange to drop off toys or boxes, please contact

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, 28 MAY 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