

GETTING A LOCAL CHAPTER STARTED

For those of you who are working to bring together a group of turners in your area -- and expect eventually to form a chapter of the AAW -- here are a few suggestions to help you.

First, get a small group of interested woodworkers and turners (perhaps as few as 4-5 people).

1. Set up a first meeting -- the content of the program is important.
 - A. Find a central location (woodworking business, local high school, community college, grange hall, church, bank, member's shop or place of business).
 - B. Arrange to have name tags and refreshments.
 - C. Get a list of names, addresses and telephone numbers of all attendees.
2. Get a news release out at least two weeks before the first meeting.
 - A. Send a short, well-written announcement of the meeting to all your local papers.
 - B. List why, where, when and what you plan to do. Give a telephone number where you can be reached for further questions.
3. Keep the goals broad, but plan a variety of programs to attract people with a wide spectrum of skill-levels and interests.
4. Use those people who come as resources. Encourage even small contributions, ideas, or suggestions. Have attendees give their names and experience in a "round-robin" style.
5. At the first meeting:
 - A. Set a time and a place for the next meeting.
 - B. Select at least a president, secretary, treasurer and newsletter chairperson.
6. Have a "show and tell" time at each meeting. Encourage everyone to participate. Follow presentations with additional discussions.
7. Program possibilities:

Slides, demonstrations, show a video (with discussions), shop visits - production and individual members, tool sharpening, tool selection and sources, wood identification and selection, identification of local trees that would be suitable for turning, jigs and fixtures, special techniques, chucks, finishing, sanding - power and hand, boring, threading and pricing works to sell.
8. Community involvement:
 - A. Place displays of woodturnings in local storefronts and try to arrange to demonstrate woodturning in the local high schools, church groups, Rotary exchange, 4-H, Scouts, street fairs, sidewalk sales and so forth. If there are any local craft shows, set up to demonstrate. **OUR MAIN AAW OFFICE WILL PROVIDE YOU WITH AS MANY BROCHURES AS YOU NEED . . . JUST CALL THEM: 651-484-9094.**
 - B. Contact hardware, lumber and tool outlets, some may offer discounts.

- C. Contact area craft organizations and offer demonstrations and programs.
 - D. Establish a community project and support a "worthy cause."
 - E. Seek out old tools, lathes, "old-timers" and local history connected with lathework, (i.e., pictures, persons, places, and artifacts).
 - F. Set up an "each one teach one" process in the area.
9. Second Meeting:
- A. Establish some goals, by-laws, constitution and a uniform meeting schedule (e.g., the 2nd Tuesday of the month).
 - B. Set dues based on realistic costs of keeping the chapter afloat for the year. Consider including AAW dues for each member as a part of the local chapter dues.
 - C. Have a good program (not too long) and introduce every attendee with name tags.
 - D. Have show-and-tell time at each meeting and encourage participation from everyone.
 - E. Try a challenge project - give out 4-7 pieces of some special wood and request each recipient to bring it to the next meeting turned and finished.
 - F. Start building a chapter library of catalogs, books and video tapes.
10. Newsletter: Try to get out a newsletter soon after each meeting or at least one week before the next meeting.
- A. Include a review of the previous meeting and information about the next meeting.
 - B. Include personal notes about members, awards from shows, trips, demonstrations given, and articles published.
 - C. Discuss wood, tools, offers of help, shop sharing, etc.
 - D. Provide some sort of humor: cartoons, philosophical sayings, etc.
 - E. List names and information about new members.
 - F. List show and sale opportunities in your area.
 - G. Provide the names and telephone numbers of the president, secretary, treasurer and "newsletter person."

Chapter success will depend on the leadership, activities, and enthusiasm of members. Consider developing a one-year cycle of events, planned in advance so members can make preparations (and pieces). This planning should give substance to the year. An annual event - such as a picnic, show, auction, public display or demonstration - will help to keep the group looking ahead and moving forward.

Success of the American Association of Woodturners will be reflected by the vigorous qualities shown at the chapter level. National events will be strong, if local chapters are strong.

For more information about local chapter formation or activities, please contact:

Kurt Hertzog
585-359-2235
kurth@woodturner.org