

Best Practices #028, Benefits of Local Membership

Heading: Membership

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There are numerous advantages that accrue to those who become active members of local AAW Chapters. This paper provides a partial listing of benefits that may be obtained in addition to those available through AAW Membership.

Techniques and Skills Development: Demonstrations by local members and invited expert turners at each meeting provide exposure to new techniques and helpful information. One member says, “If a picture is worth a thousand words then a demo must be worth a thousand pictures”. Open discussion and friendly critique allow participants to learn and grow regardless of their skill level. Design skills and ideas may be improved by viewing the works of others.

Communication and Information: There is regular sharing of information regarding local, regional and national/international events, people, opportunities, publications and items for purchase. Mailings from AAW, other chapters (woodturning and other), galleries, and instructional sources are shared at meetings and through email and mailings between regular meetings. Chapter libraries provide a variety of instructional videos and materials to members free of charge.

Development of Leadership and other Personal Skills: Volunteer roles, which are assumed at the local level, offer opportunities to develop and improve personal skills in leadership, management, public speaking, turning demonstration, etc. Project management and team skills are enhanced through participation in club projects and event planning and management.

Marketing and Purchasing. Silent auctions, raffles and the like are held at meetings and provide good opportunities to purchase wood, equipment and supplies at low prices. Bulk purchases of sandpaper, CA glue and other turning supplies and clothing yield the benefits of volume buying. Club members exchange information about marketing opportunities and approaches for promoting their work.

Networking and Camaraderie. Getting to know other woodturners to share ideas and approaches is one of the most frequently mentioned benefits of local club membership. Great fellowship and interaction are frequently mentioned benefits of belonging to a local woodturning chapter. These interactions occur at meetings as well as other events such as picnics and special holiday get-togethers. Networking between members outside of regularly scheduled meetings provides mentoring opportunities. Chapter rosters make other woodturners available for assistance with a special problem or to learn or improve your techniques and methods.

Summary: AAW Local Chapter membership is an excellent way in which people at a variety of levels may participate and grow in the tradition of woodturning through networking, instruction, information exchange and camaraderie. As one member stated, “It’s the best investment I have made in woodturning”.

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