

NORTHWEST CORNER WOODWORKERS ASSOCIATION

December, 2009

Next Meeting: December 1, Hillcrest Park Lodge

7:00PM General Meeting

1717 South 13th Street, Mount Vernon

Phone: 360-770-7203 or 360-387-4174

I-5 exit 226 (Kincaid Street Exit). Go East up the hill. This is Broadway Street. Continue on Broadway to S 13th Street (which is about 5 to 6 blocks from the freeway). Turn right (south) onto South 13th and go about 6 blocks. The park is on the right. Turn into the park, the parking lot is in front of the lodge.

Walking the Talk

Our general membership meeting of November 3 was very short. President **Jeffrey O'Donnell** requested updates from committee chairs and then proceeded to turn the meeting over to program chairman, **Jim Bucknell**, for our program.

Jim introduced **Jim Tolpin**, author, lecturer, teacher, philosopher, and eminent master woodworker as our guest speaker at the November meeting where he clearly made his point favoring handwork above machine work.

Tolpin is old school, of course, and that's what he's about these days, practicing and teaching his methods garnered since 1969, when he opened a finish carpentry and custom cabinetmaking

Toys for Tots Night *at NCWA*

Toys, handcrafted for the children in need in our area, will be displayed at our annual pizza and softdrink gala. Come and see the results of many happy hours crafting gizmos and googaws, hardwoods and softwoods, large and small and all in between. See you there!

business. Jim is one of the founders and teachers at the Port Townsend Woodworking School.

Mr. Tolpin doesn't eschew woodworking machines, especially when used for production, but he learned the fundamentals "by working with and learning from members of the last generation of traditionally apprenticed cabinetmakers and boat builders."

Tolpin has authored many books including "**Jim Tolpin's Table Saw Magic, Measure Twice, Cut Once,**" and my personal favorite, "**Jim Tolpin's Woodworking Wit & Wisdom.**"

He has both wit and wisdom in the latter volume,

garnered from thirty years of lessons from the trade, where he offers such aphorisms as “The three most fundamental and essential tools (his eyes, his hands, and his experience) can’t be bought.”

He added, “I experienced an amazing, though bittersweet, epiphany. I came to understand that tools, like doughnuts, were only a means to an end. You could be a well-rounded woodworker as a result of the doughnuts, but not the tools.” This occurred when Jim, working on a yacht restoration, watched in awe as an older companion attached a new section of scarfed rub rail, requiring a precise compound angle, within two minutes. He cut the compound joint by eye!

Tolpin offers other thought-provoking advice in



Jim Tolpin

this book, including “There is no such thing as a mistake in woodworking.” And “Sanding is the slowest, most tedious, and most counter-productive way to prepare a surface for the clearest, richest finish.” “A scrap of tarpaper and a chunk of scrap wood comprise one of the most precise layout tools available to a woodworker.” Finally, “Dovetails are not the holy grail of



Mr. Tolpin points out the beauty of hand work

woodworking.”

Many thanks to program chairman **Jim Bucknell** for bringing such a notable woodworker to our assembly. Mr. Tolpin was invited to spend the night at Jim and Judy’s home for further conversations. This delighted both Jims and led to an offer from Tolpin to return to NCWA next year with a promise to demonstrate how to plane a wavy, two-foot board dead flat in ten minutes! Now that ought to fill the house. —Jay Geisel

Arts Alive! Brings Out the Best in Us

Saturday, November 3, 2009. It’s another wet, cool, blustery day. What else do you expect at Arts Alive!

The rain didn’t last past noon and we got off to a fine start at the LaConner Civic Garden Club building on Second Street. We were not expecting crowds, but people started showing up when the weather abated. Our exhibitors set up on Friday afternoon with the woodturners group already in

display mode. There was an elaborate display of Toys for Tots spread across the fireplace end of the room, the fruits of many members' labors. We estimated that a good percentage of our members were showing their products this year, a decided

the kitchen. To compliment Andy's work, our members displayed furniture: several tables, a desk, a modern-age stool, a large cabinet-in-process, and much more.



“Seahorse”
Sculpture by Andy Swanson

growth from last year.

Venue Chairman **Phil Choquette** was busy trying to find space for even more display items and there was a shortage of tables, but everything was quickly organized into true exhibition style. Large items like **Andy Swanson's** towering carved seahorse and his three large driftwood pieces were centered in the middle of our allotted area next to



Gary Weyers and his most attentive fan

In one corner by the entry, **Gary Weyers** set up shop with his big scroll saw and a table filled with small scroll items, some in 3D. He worked both days demonstrating his wizardry at stack cutting



Semi-circular table by Jim Murphy
Parlor table by Logan Sullivan

and producing small items that he gave to equally small children.



Jerry Couchman's fine crafted boxes

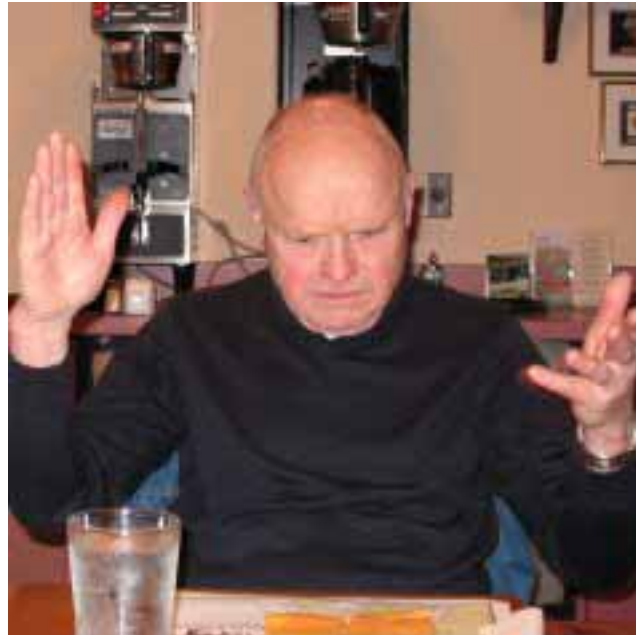
Toward the end of Saturday, the first of our two-day show, we saw enthusiastic buyers appear and six of our members sold an item or more. All-in-all the six members with sale materials racked up more than \$700 in the two-day event.

Popular items this year were small, inexpensive gift items with practical uses. Our new vice president, **Jerry Couchman**, who offered several exquisite boxes, sold a couple of big ticket items.

Others who had sales included **Nancy Anderson**, who offered Christmas tree ornaments scroll saw cut from thin plywood, **Phil Choquette**, who displayed his wonderful cutting boards, **Richard Zegers'** clever card racks, frames, and kitchen utensils, and **Jay Geisel**, whose kitchen utensils were made with much care.

Logan Sullivan, who will be graduating soon from Central Washington University, and has his sights set on teaching industrial technologies (including woodworking) at the high school level, sold a

dazzling cutting board made of dozens of small and colorful wood pieces. His modern art styled furniture, a table and two stools of advanced design, were also offered for sale with accompanying literature.



Gene Benson Toys for Tots Exhortations

The **Toys for Tots** collection, aided by the resolute **Gene Benson**, collected cash and checks from the public who saw a fantastic grouping of toys, a sampling from the total production that will be delivered to the Marine Corps Reserve next month. The toys were made by scores of members and thus they too became exhibitors at Arts Alive!

The Toys for Tots display included two elaborate and attractive toy train sets, made by **John Gruenwald** who made a total of eleven sets for the kids. **Val Matthews** created more than a hundred four-wheeled autos about two inches long that were given to kids at the show. Val envisions carrying a bunch of them in his pockets and handing them out as holiday treats.

Other member exhibitors with projects to be seen, but not for sale, included **Jim Bucknell's** cigar boxes, **Jim Torrence's** business card boxes and native American replica flutes, **Jim Murphy's**



John Gruenwald displays his toy train

semicircular top tea table, **Bill Thisius' boxes**, **Chuck Robertson** who crafted a reproduction of a classic small hay wagon, and **Nick Van** who displayed a desk made for his grandson.



Chuck Robertson's miniature hay wagon

Other members displayed their work but, for now, they shall remain nameless because your faithful scribe did not record all the names.

There were 22 exhibitors in total. On one table **Ed Pysher** had his laptop running to show his DVD of NCWA activities. Great job, Ed.

At the most recent Board meeting our participation in Arts Alive! was deemed a success and Board members gave Chairman **Phil Choquette** an appropriate "Atta Boy." –Jay Geisel



Meet Charley Drake
Next year's Newsletter Editor

Board Meeting - Wednesday, November 18, 2009

President **Jeff O'Donnell** opened the meeting at 7:00PM and congratulated **Jim Torrence** and **Jerry Couchman** on their election to President and Vice President respectively for the Club year beginning January 1, 2010.

Phil Coquette reported on the results of Arts

Alive. He noted that 20 to 30 Club members participated by showing articles for sale and for display. Club members who sold product netted \$757.00. It is expected that recruiting activities will net up to five new members. Phil said he would make contact with the woodturners to strengthen our coordination next year.

Jim Bucknell reported that the Christmas Toys for Toys program is all set to go. Pizza and pop



Charley Drake shows Jim Torrence and Chuck Robertson how to maintain and set up a bandsaw.

will be the dinner de jur. **Nick Van** will attempt to get a head count to Jim by early next week so pizza can be ordered. Jim requested that Hillcrest Lodge be opened at 5:30PM on December 1 so members could set up the Toys for Tots display.

Education Committee chair **Chuck Robertson** reported that the education program continues in full swing and that **Charley Drake** will conduct a “Bandsaw Tuneup” class on Saturday, November 21. Chuck noted that he will step down as Education Committee chair at the conclusion of the “education year” near the end of June, 2010 and that members of the committee will be asked

to fill the position.

Ed Pysher, Membership Committee chair, reported that the club signed up two new members since the November general meeting. Regrettably, he reported that **Troy Burks** has moved from the area and will no longer be a club member. The



Just a smidgen of the Toys for Tots inventory

meeting was adjourned at 8:30PM. –Nick Van

Toys for Tots – A Time for Joy

Tuesday, December 1 is our last meeting before the Christmas holidays and, like the previous five years, is dedicated to “**Toys for Tots.**” All of the toys made this year will be on display and then will be given to our local Marine Corps League Detachment. This is a heartwarming display of the caring we have for the kids; kids who need to know that someone does, indeed, care about them. I am proud of, but humbled by, all the members of NCWA who participated in this year’s Toys for Tots activities. I thank you, the Marines thank you and most of all, the children in our area will be most thankful.



Dwain Colby conducts "first article test" of production aircraft for Toys for Tots

As someone who grew up in a different time (the great depression), I remember how sad a time Christmas can be, but I didn't know it was because we were that poor. I just remember how thrilled I

was when unexpected surprises appeared. This is the feeling each of you have given to many young people in our community.

We will have a number of guests at our December meeting. Representatives from Washington Alder (contributors of much of the hardwood used by us for Toys for Tots), Skagit Valley Herald, whose charity drive is blessed by the work we accomplish, and members of the Marine Corps League will join us in our celebration.

Come and join in our club's celebration. -- Gene Benson



Nancy Anderson's very popular Christmas and Hannukah Decorations

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COMING EVENTS

Dec 1	7:00 PM	Toys for Tots Gala	Hillcrest Lodge, Mount Vernon
Dec 17	7:00 PM	Board Meeting	Farmhouse Restaurant on Hwy 20
Dec 19	Noon	Newsletter Deadline	Charley's email(cndrake@wavecable.com)
Jan 5	7:00 PM	Membership Meeting	Hillcrest Lodge, Mount Vernon

The NCWA is open to all interested woodworkers, and was formed to promote high standards in woodworking, woodworking education and showcasing local woodworking. Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM. Location is announced in the newsletter. Dues are \$30 per year, payable to NCWA, 150 Swinomish Dr., Laconner, WA 98257. Newsletter submissions are welcomed and are due by the 3rd Saturday of the month. Submit to NCWA Newsletter, 5955 Central Ave., Anacortes, WA 98221, or email to chdrake@wavecable.com or call 360-588-8448.

2008-09 Officers and Chairpersons

President:	Jeff O'Donnell	(360) 678-2205	Education	Chuck Robertson	(360) 387-6333
Vice President	Jim Torrance	(360) 629-6670	Librarian	Gary Danilson	(360) 424-9268
Secretary	Jay Geisel	(360) 466-3908	Newsletter	Charley Drake	(360) 588-8448
Treasurer	Doug Duehning	(360) 466-1281	Membership	Ed Pysher	(360) 770-7203
Board at Large	Glenn Koontz	(360) 466-5910	Shows	Phil Choquette	(360) 675-8320
Board at Large	Dave Blair	(360) 733-3911	Toys for Tots	Gene Benson	(360) 466-3004
Programs	Jim Bucknell	(360) 766-5088	Webmeister	Mike New	(360) 707-2314
Activities	Gary Weyers	(360) 380-0888			

**NCWA NEWSLETTER**

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