



Update from the Board of Directors March 10, 2021

Our lives have experienced major changes in the past 12 months as we have found ways to deal with the global pandemic. The last in-person monthly meeting of the Guild was in February, 2020. We had to postpone, and then cancel our annual Northern Woods Exhibition for 2020. We also had to cancel our traditional summer picnic, our second annual Expo and Tool Swap, and our perennial Fall Seminar. But none of this has stopped the forward progress of the Guild. We've adapted and changed the way we operate and are making plans to move forward.

Monthly Meetings:

We quickly realized that in order to keep our group together and learning ways to be better woodworkers we needed to continue meeting monthly. So, we turned away from in-person meetings and focused our efforts on holding virtual meetings on the Zoom.us platform. Our Programs Committee has done an excellent job selecting interesting topics and presenters. We have managed to learn on-the-fly how to produce virtual meetings, and have done fairly well. As a result, these meetings have been quite popular. We have consistently had 80-100 folks join each month - much more than we have seen in our in-person meetings on a regular basis. Plus, many members who live well outside the metro area have been able to attend meetings for their first time ever.

Because of the great participation we have had at our virtual monthly meetings, the Guild has upgraded its subscription to Zoom.us to allow us to have as many as 500 participants in a meeting. Surely everyone who wants to attend will be able to. An added benefit has been that we have been able to record these meetings and have been posting them on our [YouTube](#) channel so those who missed the meetings can still enjoy them.

We will continue to hold these virtual meetings until enough of our population has acquired immunity to COVID to safely hold in-person meetings again – probably not until the fall of 2021. When we are again able to meet in person, the Guild is making plans to continue live-streaming our meetings, and posting their recordings on our YouTube channel, so those who cannot travel to attend them can still enjoy them.

Northern Woods Exhibition:

Our Northern Woods committee met in late January to discuss what to do about our annual April event in 2021. They quickly decided planning a safe gathering for the last week in April was not possible. The committee is optimistic that it might be possible for us to gather safely, and meet and greet the public by the time fall comes around, so we procured a venue for the first weekend in October. Presently, our *2021 edition of the Northern Woods Exhibition* is planned to be held at *Eden Prairie Center October 7-10, 2021*. The committee will meet late this spring to assess whether this is still a prudent plan.

Summer Picnic:

For many of the past Julys we have hosted a free-to-all picnic in Roseville where we have all been able to meet, talk woodworking, and enjoy some good friends and picnic food. We would really love to be able to do this again in 2021, but we concluded that gathering in July, even outside, still presents too much of a health risk to our members. So, the picnic will not be held this year.

Expo and Tool Swap:

This is on our books for *September 18, 2021*, once again at the armory in Bloomington, MN. The committee is proceeding with plans, feeling we will be able to safely hold this partly indoor event in the fall.

They sure could use your help with the event. If you can, please volunteer to help by contacting Ron Ausen at (651) 271-4829.

Fall Seminar:

The committee and Board of Directors feel optimistic that by November we'll all be able to meet as a group and have the seminar. So, the committee is proceeding with plans to secure the services of a notable expert woodworker to teach us what they know. Keep visiting our [web site](#) to stay in touch with plans.

Tuition Grant Program:

At the 2019 Fall Seminar we announced the re-boot of our Tuition Grant Program, which had been neglected for a number of years. We selected our candidates and awarded grants in March of 2020. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, neither of our recipients were able to attend their intended classes in 2020, but are looking forward to participating this year. As a result of these delays the Guild did not open enrollment for the program in 2020. We will resume accepting applications in 2021 for classes in 2022.

We hope you all continue to stay safe, get your vaccinations, attend our monthly virtual meetings, and look forward to a brighter 2021.

Minnesota Woodworkers Guild
[Board of Directors](#)