

## AAW 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration

1. What motivated the founders to start a chapter? A small group of men found a common interest in the art and techniques of turning wood on a lathe. The need to exchange ideas and the educational benefits of this exchange were the motivation for forming the club. Northwestern Michigan Woodturners filed for membership with the AAW in 1986/7 and used the name "Michigan Woodturners Club". A Detroit group filed around the same time requesting the same name. Recognizing that the Detroit area would yield a much larger chapter, we changed our name to Northwestern Michigan Woodturners.
2. How many joined the new chapter? Original membership was around 8-10.
3. Who were the founders? The club was pretty loose and unstructured in the beginning. Most meetings had around 8 - 10 participants. There is no documentation, but early members were **Cliff Schroeder**, Traverse City, MI, **Larry Skendzel**, Traverse City, MI, **Bob Russell**, Charlevoix, MI, **Jim Smith**, Ellsworth MI, **Jack Leggat**, Kewadin MI, **John Pearl**, Charlevoix, MI, **Tom Clark**, Traverse City, MI, **Ernie Carrick**, Bellaire, MI, and **Don Perry**, Roscommon, MI. **Cliff Schroeder was also at the original organizational meeting at Arrowmont when the idea of AAW was born.**
4. Where did the first group meet? The first meeting was held at the Bellaire High School, in Bellaire Michigan. The school instructor who taught woodworking invited the group to a demonstration on the school's lathe, which was followed by a meeting at a members' workshop in Bellaire. We think that was **Ernie Carrick**. For the first 10 or more years the club met at members' homes. For the most part that fostered great comradery. There were some downsides, like **Ted Earls** unheated garage in January!
5. How much were the dues? There were no dues, and the host had to provide donuts and coffee.
6. Are there any original members still involved with the chapter? There is only one original member in today's club – **Larry Skendzel**.
7. What are some of the favorite memories of the chapter? As a small group the members were very committed and dedicated to turning and advancing their skills and sharing any and all the resources they could find. We have had some great guest demonstrators. Names like **John Jordon** joined us at **Cliff Schroeder's** workshop in a standalone garage at his home. We emptied his garage of all his tools and equipment, and moved the TV from his house to the garage to use as a projection monitor. At another demo, the demonstrators insisted he needed a "One-Way" lathe. **Larry Skendzel** had one so they got together and hauled it to **Cliff Schroeder's** garage. **Larry Skendzel** recalls "They were a great group of men who were pleasant and eager to help others" In the mid 1990's the club participated in the Charlevoix Michigan Art Show with two booths. They took along a lathe and made chips fly for the buyers, and sold the turned pieces.
8. What are some of the milestones of the chapter? In 1999 the club gained some recognition nationally with the AAW Collaborative Challenge. The club's entry was called the "General", a turned, wooden replica of a civil war era railroad steam engine. The auction price was \$8000. **Vern Hammarlund** drew the design plans for the "General" and displayed them at the annual club Christmas Party. Members were encouraged to sign up for a part that they would like to turn. Knowing that sections for the civil war era train engine were welded and bolted together, Vern was concerned that glue would not be adequate to hold the 3 section boiler together, so he designed a frame similar to a car frame, to which the parts were attached. **Lyle Jamieson** recalls "The train was a significant bonding project for our club and many lasting friendships were started" (See attached picture).

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9. How has the AAW affiliation affected the chapter? Northwestern Michigan Woodturners is a Star Chapter of the AAW. Our President, **Lyle Jamieson** is nationally recognized as one of the industry's great teacher/demonstrators and visits many AAW Chapters. Lyle's affiliation with the industry in general, and AAW specifically has been a priceless factor in the success of the club. The quality of turning for every member has benefited from Lyle's presence, and contributions. In the past 3 years, the AAW has emerged as a great source for those wishing to "kick it up notch". The website, newsletters, and annual symposium are a great resource for our members.
10. Today's club: Northwestern Michigan Woodturners serves a large geographical area of North Western Michigan's lower peninsula. We have about 35 active members and meet monthly. We have a website [www.teturners.org](http://www.teturners.org), and a monthly newsletter. We enjoy involvement with the community, and display our work annually at the Traverse City Library. Since 2007 we have been a significant player in the Goodwill Industries "Empty Bowl" charity. We work with youth in the community by providing a mentoring program for students in the Construction Treads division of the Traverser Bay Area Intermediate School District.