

**American Association of Woodturners  
Board Meeting Minutes  
Tampa, Florida  
January 5-6, 2013**

**Call to Order**

A regular meeting of the AAW Board of Directors was convened at 8:30 a.m., January 5, with AAW Board President Dale Larson presiding. In addition, the following Board members were present: Cassandra Speier, Kurt Hertzog, Binh Pho, Stan Wellborn, Tom Wirsing, Rob Wallace, and Lou Williams. Botho von Hampeln participated by videoconference.

**Executive Session**

The meeting opened with a brief executive session with Board members only in attendance

The regular meeting resumed at 9:05 a.m. with Board members joined by Phil McDonald, Linda Ferber, and Betty Scarpino.

**Approval of the Minutes**

The Board meeting minutes of November 12 and 26, 2012, were approved as corrected.

**Symposium Committee Board Assignments**

Dale reviewed the assignments of Board liaisons to each of the symposium committees, and appointed newly elected Board members to appropriate committees as part of planning for the Tampa symposium. Committee chairs were noted and prepped for the meeting with local volunteers.

**Executive Director Review of 2012 Budget Performance**

Phil highlighted key points of his director's report for the past year, noting that AAW will end the year with an anticipated budget shortfall of approximately \$100,000. An end-of-year fundraising appeal targeted at \$20,000 raised nearly \$35,000 as of the end of December, most of which is unrestricted funding. His plan is to allocate around \$10,000 to a technology fund for website and database upgrades, and approximately \$22,000 for general 2012 budget relief. He will have a more specific recommendation for the February Board meeting after consultation with auditors.

AAW merchandise sales in December 2012 totaled around \$17,000, with a substantial amount coming from the holiday gift-giving promotion. After the symposium, the office may move to a print-on-demand schedule for T-shirts and other logo items.

The Finance Committee has vetted the 2012 budget and approved its submission for external audit.

**Presentation of FY 2013 Business Plan**

Discussion ensued on the FY 2013 Business Plan prepared by the ED. The budget review process identified priorities for the next year that will focus on building membership through new and renewing members, office staffing, symposium planning, and fundraising.

Membership as of December 2012 stands at just over 15,000. Dues income has been difficult to predict, in large part because of past accounting methods that have hampered forecasts based on earlier trends. Membership levels still point to a net growth of approximately three percent per year.

Phil noted that AAW membership is fairly well defined and there are significant numbers of people leaving the workforce every day that fit our member profile. The AAW needs to reach beyond the traditional method of recruiting new members from within chapters through various incentive programs, including a new effort in 2013 in which new members will receive a discount coupon from a major lathe manufacturer. In Phil's words, the AAW must be both "capitalistic" and "evangelistic" in seeking new members and income.

Journal-to-Books on-demand publishing is planned for both non-members as well as members, and must be coupled with creative marketing promotions. Communications outreach is essential, including integrating digital assets management and social media coordination in our plans. AAW needs to recognize and satisfy the "value proposition" for meeting demand for woodturning information, education, and sponsorship. Phil plans to see where the AAW budget is at mid-year to evaluate whether an additional staff member could be hired, but in the meantime he plans to recruit two interns who will concentrate efforts on sales of journal-to-books and communications.

Phil stressed that the symposium is our premier event, both for educating members and for fundraising. He noted the need to communicate broadly, beyond recruiting members to attend, but also to the collectors and general public, including possible incentives to attract art enthusiasts who may not be familiar with turned wood art. Rob Wallace will explore lists of arts organization for further contacts. In addition, since our conference coordinator does not have incentive to sell vendor booths, Phil is taking the initiative with Pierre Productions to contact past vendors as well as local companies to purchase floor space.

### **Attendance at 2013 Regional Symposiums**

As noted in the Board meeting agenda, Board members are expected to volunteer to represent the AAW at regional turning events in their areas. Dale reviewed the list of regional symposiums and made appropriate assignments.

### **Finance Committee Policy on Budget & Spending**

The Finance Committee addressed the issue of AAW Board members obligating financial commitments by proposing a motion that all expenditures first need to be presented to the finance committee for approval.

After discussion, the Finance Committee submitted a motion, which did not require a second:  
*The Finance Committee shall be responsible for reviewing and making recommendations to approve all expenditures requested by the AAW Board or a board member(s) that have not been included in the annual budget.*

Motion carried unanimously.

Sandi noted the committee will meet monthly to address financial issues and assist Phil in making them accountable to the Board.

### **AAW Involvement in SOFA Event**

Binh led a discussion on whether AAW should host a booth at the SOFA arts / crafts exhibit in Chicago in November. After weighing the pros and cons, the Board decided against funding a booth for 2013, but will revisit the possibility for 2015.

### **Use of Remote Bidding for EOG Live Auction**

To encourage broader participation in the EOG auction at the Tampa banquet, the Board is exploring the possibility of using on-line communications technology to enable remote bidding. Startup costs are estimated at between \$5,000 and \$7,000. The Board decided to have Phil further study the idea and implement it in Tampa if it appears feasible and if costs can be taken out of the proceeds of the auction.

### **Meeting with Local Chapter Representatives**

The Board recessed to meet with approximately 40 members of six Florida chapters whose volunteers will assist with logistics for the Tampa symposium. Kurt reviewed the responsibilities of the symposium committees, introduced Board liaisons, and answered questions.

### **Venue for 2015 Symposium**

The Board was joined by Gail Olmsted of CCC, the AAW conference coordinator, and Al Hockenbery, to discuss possible locations for the 2015 symposium. Because the overriding considerations are costs and local volunteer support, it was suggested that the AAW focus on areas of greatest membership concentration – the upper Midwest, the mid-Atlantic, and the south-central states. Among sites proposed for 2015 were Baltimore, Columbus, Nashville, Memphis, Indianapolis, Denver, Boston, and Providence. Gail will prepare an RFP for Phil to review, and the Board will determine which cities to approach in the near future. Al and Gail then exited the meeting.

### **Strategies for Communications with Local Chapters**

Phil reviewed the recent history of AAW's liability coverage, noting that Travelers Insurance Company had reinterpreted the limits of coverage and that our longstanding policy no longer included individual chapters as of the end of 2012. He is working diligently to find other policies that will either cover chapters or will allow chapters to purchase coverage through an AAW policy.

Another suggestion would create a blanket exemption for chapters, using the AAW's 501(c)[3] tax status to include all chapters as nonprofit entities, thus allowing them to be part of our overall insurance coverage. This is the model apparently followed by the Boy Scouts. Phil will check further into that option and verify legal issues with Ellen McVeigh, AAW's legal counsel, to see what would be required and report to the Board.

The Board determined that notification should be sent immediately to all chapter presidents informing them of the change in insurance coverage. An e-mail letter will be drafted by Phil and signed by him, Dale, David Morris (chair of the Insurance Committee), and John Hill (past chair of the committee).

Stan reiterated the need to enhance our communications with the chapters through regular teleconferences with chapter officers led by Dale and Phil. AAW banners are an important branding tool that provides high visibility for the organization at local chapters and woodturning schools. Phil will look into our existing supply of banners and provide one to schools and chapters that no longer have a banner to display. Cost of banners is \$40 each.

### **Future Meeting Planner Contracts**

At previous Board meetings, it has been suggested that the AAW procure competitive bids for future symposium planner contracts. Phil stressed that the conference planner must perform as a project manager, and that structural changes in the contract will be necessary. A process has been put in place to acquire such bids, and Phil will have a summary and assessment of these bids ready for the February meeting.

### **Ethics Committee Membership**

Binh informed the Board that the Ethics Committee has worked through a number of important issues, and several members have asked to rotate out. Four new members must be appointed, none of which can have any direct relationship with the AAW board. Joe Dickey will remain as chair. Dale will solicit nominations and bring them to the February meeting.

### **Proposed List of Invited Artists for Phoenix**

Sixteen demonstrators were nominated to demonstrate at the Phoenix symposium in 2014. They were approved and will be invited.

### **Discussion of AAW-Sponsored Videos on History of Woodturning**

Binh reminded the Board that the AAW has long intended to produce videos on the important landmarks and individuals in woodturning history. He noted that a proposed video on the art and legacy of Giles Gilson remained unfinished, in large part because of funding. Dale asked whether the AAW should be in the video business, and the consensus was that the organization should consider projects on a case-by-case basis. Stan will discuss with Fleur Bresler the possibility of obtaining the wherewithal to complete the Gilson project.

### **Board Committee Reports**

Committee reports were submitted in advance and included in the Board agenda book. In the interest of time, Dale suggested that committee chairs highlight only areas of greatest concern and priority.

**Permanent Collection** – The report prepared by Kevin Wallace and Perry Price of the American Craft Council suggested several options for management of the AAW Permanent Woodturning Collection at the Saint Paul headquarters. Lou and Sandi will consult with Kevin and Tib Shaw on next steps.

**Fundraising** – Stan reported that Byron Rosbrugh and committee are focusing this year on finding corporate sponsorships particularly for the Tampa symposium. The Board agrees that any contributions from the recent fundraising campaign as well as any corporate donations must be acknowledged with appropriate thanks and listed in the Resource Directory and the website. Phil and Betty also are working on other ideas and will report at a future meeting. Stan stressed that fundraising is a long-term process and involves years of donor cultivation and relationship building.

**Communications** – Website project has been tabled until financial circumstances allow a redesign. In the meantime, Stan noted the need to augment and upgrade the list of online demonstrators, which chapters rank as a major need. Phil also is hoping to combine the various AAW databases as a first step in preparing for a new website.

**Publications** – Phil noted that the proposed journal-to-books project from John Kelsey has low up-front costs and limited financial risk. Jean believes the upside potential as a revenue source for AAW is very positive, and a first edition could be available as early as February, available either as a print-on-demand or digital download version.

**Bylaws** – The committee policy is to be responsible for requests for any changes in AAW Bylaws. Rob has been given one suggestion that is time to abolish the proxy voting section, and the committee will address that and report back to Board.

**Safety** – Rob noted that recent incidents involving turning mishaps is a call to action to promote a stronger culture of safety within AAW. Don Derry and Ed Brannon both have agreed to serve on the committee, and to expand the educational role of the AAW around safety in woodturning practices, especially by demonstrators. The committee is open to suggestions, but may initially produce a PowerPoint-type presentation that could be used by chapter as a safety training program. Rob also will coordinate with John Kelsey as he edits an on-demand safety book prior to publication.

**POP** – Binh reported there will not be a POP auction at the Tampa symposium. POP is exploring possible on-line services to market POP wood art.

**Symposium** – The Tampa Collectors Initiative led by J. Paul Fennell and Malcolm Zander is inviting Florida galleries to the symposium. Dale added that Albert LeCoff has asked for a spot near the Instant Gallery for the Center for Wood Art. Albert is considering having his publishing company pay for a booth and sell books. The policy remains that vendors who sell items must pay for their space.

Kurt updated developments and planned procedural changes for the Tampa symposium. Access management is to be tightened, perhaps including color-coded badges for admission and crowd control. Rob and others suggested that badges print the first name larger and drop the chapter name. Sandi also wants to limit the entry and egress to the IG and the area for the silent auction. Security people will be assigned to monitor more closely to create a heightened sense of security. Photography will be done at a specific draped area near the IG.

A planned panel on handicapped turning will be a special attraction. A new committee will be the Vendor Ambassadors to assist and ensure a smoother experience for vendors.

The Thursday dinner for demonstrators will allow one ticket per demonstrator. Extra tickets for guests must be purchased. Demo room checks will be conducted at 3 p.m. Thursday.

### **Board Communications**

Kurt suggested that future Board teleconference meetings could be enhanced by use of videoconferencing and cloud technologies. He and Lou recommended that the AAW explore such conduits as Skype and Go-to-Meeting for secure real-time meetings, and Dropbox for transmission of Board documents. Kurt will set up a Dropbox account and Phil will explore web-based conference tools.

### **Future Board Meeting Dates**

The Board will hold teleconference meetings at 6 p.m. CST on the second Monday of the month. Scheduled dates include the following:

Monday, February 11

Monday, March 11

Monday, April 8

Monday, May 13

After the June meeting in Tampa, the Board may consider a reduced number of meetings for the remainder of the year. The annual fall meeting will be held November 8–10 in Saint Paul.

## **Resolution to Establish an AAW Brokerage Account**

John Hill has proposed creation of a stock brokerage account to facilitate donation of stocks and other market investments by AAW members as charitable contributions or through planned giving. This would be a Vanguard account and will be overseen by the Endowment and Fundraising Committees. The authorization to establish the account was presented in the following resolution:

***RESOLVED, that the corporation is hereby authorized to establish a brokerage account with Vanguard Investments. Further, the corporation authorizes John Hill, Joel Rakower, and Philip Hauser to act on behalf of the American Association of Woodturners to establish said brokerage account.***

***FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Executive Director be, and hereby is, authorized to execute and to take such other action, as shall be deemed necessary to fulfill the foregoing resolution.***

Kurt moved to accept the resolution for adoption by the Board of Directors and Rob Wallace seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

## **Exhibition of Binh Pho Art at Mobile Museum of Art**

Binh informed the Board of his solo exhibition “Shadow of the Turning” would open January 17 at the Mobile Museum of Art. Dale asked if the Board sees any conflict if an article on this exhibition runs in the *American Woodturner*. He expressed his personal view that it is an undue burden to request that an artist’s service on the AAW board restrict that artist’s ability to be featured in an AAW publication.

Discussion ensued, and both Rob and Stan said they were contributing articles to the journal and would not want to feel constrained by a policy of not allowing Board members’ writing or work to be prohibited from publication. Botho suggests that the Board be governed by common sense on this issue. The consensus was that Binh’s exhibition is a historical event and the AAW should cover it, and that the minutes will reflect that the Board had this discussion.

Binh also said he has accepted a position on another board, the Fuller Craft Museum in Brockton, Massachusetts, and he plans to work on a bridge between the museum and the AAW. Binh stated he will ask AAW Board approval on all such activities.

## **Resolution for Addition the AAW Policies and Procedures Handbook**

Kurt moved that the following passage be included in the AAW Policies & Procedures Handbook:

*The current four major officers of any AAW-affiliated chapter – President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer (or their equivalents if under different title) – must be members in good standing of the AAW for the chapter to maintain its AAW chapter status.*

Cassandra Speier seconded the motion. After discussion, motion passed unanimously.

## **Coordination of Board Messages**

Botho reiterated his view that monthly message from the AAW Board be coordinated through Phil. This would not restrict Board members from communicating to members directly through Board messages, but would allow better planning of messages. The Board agreed that ideas be sent to Phil but that the policy of having monthly communications from individual Board members would continue.

*(The Board recessed at 5:15 p.m. for the day and resumed meeting at 8:30 a.m. Sunday, January 6.)*

### **Analysis of AAW Membership Survey**

Dale summarized the survey, in which 3,500 online questionnaires were sent to AAW members in August. Dennis Fuge said our response rate was excellent and results should be reliable. Lou and Rob observed that this was not a truly accurate survey because it was computer-based and therefore not random. The floor was opened for ideas on how the information could be used to benefit AAW.

Stan noted that there were few surprises in the findings on demographics, income, family status, and what members considered of value from AAW. Drawing on his marketing experience, Lou said the findings could be used to develop a more qualitative measure of our membership and refined through the use of focus groups.

Lou, Botho, and Stan will consult with Phil to get a better sense of content-related issues to ascertain the real value that members find in AAW. This could form the basis for creating the next strategic plan by identifying what AAW is doing well and further developing the value proposition. The group will present a report to the Board at the June meeting.

### **Priorities and Goals for 2013 and Beyond**

Dale and Phil expressed the sense of the Board to get AAW on sound financial footing, to expand our financial input beyond our dues, and focus on making AAW a profit center. Our fiduciary responsibility is for the sustainability of the organization into the future. That means our priorities for financial sustainability include recruitment of new and renewing members, active fundraising, and generation of new revenue streams.

Sandi has concluded that the website is such a high priority that the Board should seriously consider financing the project. If we need to spend between \$70,000 and \$100,000, she suggests borrowing \$20,000 from the endowment, adding \$15,000 or more from donations we have received, and financing the rest. Dale asked if the database could be separated from the overall website work. Phil is taking a close look at this and will report back to the Board.

Rob concurred that the website is a vital value-added aspect and could be the key to attracting newer and younger members, augmented by social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and others. Stan suggested that AAW offer a one-year introductory offer of membership of \$25 for new (non-renewing) members as an incentive. Botho believes we should be looking at the broader woodworking community that could develop an interest in lathe production in addition to flatwork.

Lou noted that additional data on members wants and needs could provide valuable grist for a Board retreat to develop a new five-year strategic plan.

Discussion ensued on expanding the AAW into more of an international organization, given the increasing globalization of commerce and closer communications capabilities. Rob suggested that as a stopgap perhaps a virtual organization of turning affiliates around the world would be advisable as a first step. Botho opined that we should for the present use the inroads offered by Turners Without Borders.

### **Adjournment**

Lou moved the meeting adjourn, and Stan seconded. Motion passed unanimously and meeting ended at 11:53 a.m.