



# Old Saw *Articles*

The Newsletter of the Guild of New Hampshire Woodworkers

by Peter Breu

## The Secret of Our Success

**F**rom the very first meeting of the Guild that I attended some 20+ years ago in Mike Fonner's basement shop, it was clear to me that this organization relied upon volunteers and the spirit of volunteerism. All too soon I volunteered to organize a book purchase (Peter Bloch assured me that all I needed to do was announce it, organize it and it would be a great thing!) and I found myself flooded by boxes and boxes of books and meeting lots of happy guild members.

Somehow that led too quickly to becoming president of the organization (that trajectory remains quite mysterious...) and from that high and mighty perch it was even more obvious that the Guild only worked because of the spirit of volunteerism. From presenters volunteering to host meetings, to the hard working folks who man the booth at Sunapee, to the turners who make the amazing Turning Symposium happen every three years, it is those volunteers who make the Guild an amazing and quite unique organization. I have seen first hand several other

such organizations and heard of many more, and it is clear that what we created is unique exactly because of the spirit of volunteerism. When new members quickly understand that spirit, by and large they become infected with it, and so it passes on and grows.

When we ask presenters at the Turning Symposium to give their presentation gratis, we are asking for something totally unique, but it is understood that everyone who makes the symposium and the greater Guild happen is also working without compensation. I used the word infectious very much on purpose. I am convinced that this spirit is infectious and imbues the Guild with something that continues to bring out the very best in people. It continues to delight me, and I am sure it will continue to be the guiding principle of our outstanding Guild—Peter Breu.

*Editor's Note: We hope you will think about Peter's perspective on the Guild when you see a call for volunteers in TouchUps or on the website. ●*



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