

AAFW HISTORY

A brief recap of the history of the ARIZONA ASSOCIATION OF FINE WOODWORKERS, which was started in 1983 by Doug Forsha and Keith Stevens and kept going by the efforts of many others over the years.

The **Arizona Association of Fine Woodworkers** has been formed for the purpose of advancing the woodworking arts, and in particular, to encourage the exchange of information and skills, to sponsor exhibits of member's work, and to promote the recognition of woodworking as art. There is a place in the Association for any individual interested in wood and woodworking, from the absolute neophyte to the skilled professional.

Founding Members:

Doug Forsha – President & Chairman of the Board

Paula Cooperider - Vice President

Nancy Forsha – Secretary

Tony Perez – Treasurer & Board Member

Steve Aga – Board Member

Al Bowen – Board Member

Tom Eckert- Board Member

Bill Woods – Adviser

STATEMENT OF POLICY TOWARDS OUTSIDE INDIVIDUALS, ORGANIZATIONS AND BUSINESSES

Because the **Arizona Association of Fine Woodworkers** wishes of appeal to the widest possible range of woodworking interests, and to extend membership to the greatest number of people, the founders feel it is necessary to clearly establish the **Association's** intention to remain independent of any direct affiliations with any outside individual, organization or business.

In order to be fair and equitable toward both the membership and outside interests, we will attempt to demonstrate good will and open-minded consideration in all our dealings with vendors, sponsors and benefactors, always with the object of the greatest benefit to the broadest possible audience. The **Association** will therefore consciously avoid favoritism toward specific interests, while at the same time giving recognition for all efforts which further our stated aims.

The Association would like its policy to stand as an open invitation for wide participation.

Highlights by year

- 1983 *AAFW club began. General Meetings held bi-monthly, with Demonstration, Lecture, or presentation to be held monthly.*
January 4, 1983 – 148 people attended the first general meeting, with 68 signing up as charter members.
May - The first AAFW show was held at El Dorado Park in Scottsdale, with a general meeting and family picnic.
A “toys-for-tots” workshop was held at the “Cutting Edge”, with toys from Hobby Horses to Wooden Blocks being made by attendees.
November - A tool swap meet was held at Pierce Park in Phoenix.
- 1984 AAFW Show/picnic held at Los Olivas Adult Center, Phoenix, with attendance of over 300 people.
A toy workshop held at “Wood World”, with 28 members attending - 217 toys were made.
- 1985 AAFW Incorporated and registered with the Arizona Corporation Commission as a non-profit organization.
A toy workshop Held at “Wood World”.
- 1986 The first issue of our newsletter created with a home computer (not the internet yet).
Explored possibility of joining “Working With Wood Show” held annually at Mesa Centennial Hall.
December - Annual “Gifts for Kids” workshop held at “Wood World”.
- 1987 AAFW had a booth at the “Phoenix Woodworking Show”.
Some members participated with Grand Canyon State Woodcarvers, and Scottsdale Jaycees in their Christmas toy programs.
- 1988 AAFW & Grand Canyon State Woodcarvers Assoc. combined Christmas Toy Program. The first batch of 100 toys were given to the Spina-bifida children at R & G Ranch on Indian School Road.
- 1989 Many of the general meetings have included showing members work. Members are encouraged to bring their work to show to others.
A Christmas party with toys, entertainment and dinner at R&G Ranch for Spina-bifida children, done in conjunction with the Grand Canyon State Woodcarvers was held in December.
- 1990 Newsletter renamed “Wood Chips”. Seminar by Sam Maloof planned but cancelled due to heart attack.
No report of toys made, but a Thank You letter from Child Crisis Center was found.
- 1991 Toy making workshops – over 100 toys made.
- 1993 Toy jeep kits made by member Reid Parker - given to members to assemble. Thank you letter from Salvation Army Family Shelter for toys donated.
- 1994 Several members attended a woodturning symposium in Phoenix. Annual AAFW Show at Los Olivas Park with 60 people attending and 140 exhibits.
Toy workshop held at “Timber Woodworking Machinery”. Suggestion was made to try to make more toys suitable for girls.
- 1995 First annual meeting and Christmas Party held at Monte’s La Casa Vieja.
Over 100 gifts presented to Channel 12 Community Housing Partnership, Church of the Savior ABC School, Sunshine Acres, and individual children.
- 1996 American Woodworker Magazine published photo of some of our members at their woodwork.
National Woodworking Show in Nov. ‘96’.

Members started making toys in their own shops and donating them to club, rather than just in club sponsored workshops.

- 1997 February – Lecture by Norm Abrams of “This Old House” TV program.
December issue of Wood Chips was first to display color photos.
Reid Parker has more jeep kits to be assembled by members and distributed to Indian Children in Northern Arizona. Jim May collected toys for local distribution.
- 1998 Annual show moved from November to February.
- 1999 The AAFW booth at the Arizona Woodworkers Show displayed toys you could make in 1 hour and furniture that took weeks to make. The AAFW was interviewed by two national magazines and articles appeared in their publications.
Toys were collected at the annual picnic.
- 2000 February – AAFW Show.
December – Wood Chips published on internet for first time.
- 2001 517 toys distributed, 300 were taken to Westwood School.
- 2002 1086 Toys were distributed, 410 donated by Sun City Seniors.
- 2003 Started Saturday mentor workshop program.
Doll cradle toy pattern developed for girl presents. Christmas party held at Wesley Community Center, with 300 kids attending. 2727 toys distributed to Save the Family, Sunshine Acres, East Valley Crisis Center, West Valley Crisis Center, Westwood Elementary School, Pappas School, St. Vincent de Paul Dental Clinic, and the Salvation Army.
- 2004 Arizona Woodworker Show Cancelled, so we joined The Arizona Woodcarvers at their show at the Centennial Hall in Mesa.
The Gifts for Kids drive distributed 1550 toys in December.
- 2005 Demonstration and display at Maricopa County Fair, but poor attendance and participation by members. The AAFW annual picnic was held in November at SRP Pera Club.
Almost 3000 toys were distributed to agencies in the greater Phoenix area, and 200 kids attended the annual Christmas Party at Wesley Community Center.
- 2006 AAFW participated with the Arizona Wood Carvers in their annual show. We also participated in the Timber Wood Machinery Co. show at their store in Mesa.
For Christmas, 1400 toys were distributed to 8 different locations.
- 2007 AAFW and Arizona Wood Carvers again combined their annual show.
The mentor workshop program included two shop tours – one east and one west.
Demos included a variety of subjects, including building guitars, using different shop tools, and workshop safety.
1040 toys were distributed this Christmas.
- 2008 Combined show with Arizona Wood Carvers again this year. 4 mentor programs scheduled through the year.
The number of toys distributed was less than previous years, but specific numbers not given.
- 2009 January – Shop tours held for the Phoenix/Scottsdale area. February – 5th annual Excellence in Woodworking Show held in east Mesa.

- 2010 Hundreds of toys including 50 doll cradles made by high school woodworking class with blankets made by high school sewing class were distributed to several different charities.
- 2011 Excellence in Woodworking Show was held in February. Monthly Demonstrations by various people, Mentor Workshops, tool swap meet, and "Presidents Challenge" (Build something useful using 2" x 4" x 96" piece of wood), filled out this year's program.
Toy drive expanded to include small gift projects that children at crisis centers can give to their mothers for birthday or Christmas presents. 300 toys were given to Salvation Army and Crisis Nursery.
- 2012 – 2017 No history has been written for this period. (The newsletter was delivered electronically on the internet, and no hard copies were saved to assemble this history.)

PRESIDENTS

1983	Doug Forsha	2001	Thorman Ellison
1984	Andy Trotti	2002	Wes McCoy
1985	Bob Swanson	2003	Bob Shields
1986	Dave McDowell	2004	Bill Smith
1987	John Lea	2005	Rick Ford
1988	Neil Butterfield	2006	Steve Harris
1989	Bill Senior	2007	Roger Weinreber
1990	John Hutira	2008	Roger Weinreber
1991	Jeff Scovil	2009	Mike McKinney
1992	Perry Stuckey	2010	Raul Ramirez
1993	Herb Miller	2011	Raul Ramirez
1994	Bill Boy	2012	Raul Ramirez
1995	Gary McCaslin	2013	Raul Ramirez
1996	Don Milam	2014	John Weeks
1997	Michael Holland	2015	Lisa Wakley
1998	Ralph Gumbert	2016	Gary McCaslin
1999	Ralph Gumbert	2017	Dave VanEss
2000	John Lea		

- 2017 The Board of Directors decided that we should change the club's name because we determined that potential members were concerned that they were not "FINE" Woodworkers. A survey showed potential members were afraid they would not fit in. Our club has members with all skill levels. Our new name is Arizona Woodworkers.