

Water Gap Woodturners Holiday Happiness

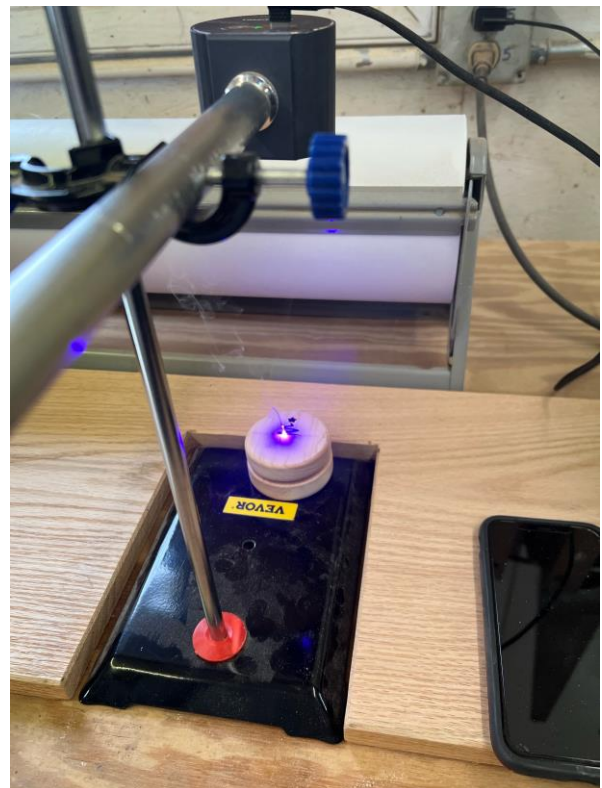
A lawyer, a banker and an Engineer all walk into a woodturning shop. And there, they become part of a group of men and women from a wide range of professional backgrounds. The only thing that they really have in common is a love of woodturning. Some of the members of the Water Gap

club have been there since the beginning and beyond. The woodturners club only got it's start in 2008 but it's roots go deep at Peter's Valley School of Craft in Layton, NJ. Peter's Valley has been an artists educational center since 1970. Here, students of varying mediums have the opportunity to learn from and work with nationally and internationally-recognized artists.

But today, way back in the woods of Layton, this group gathers in the Holiday Spirit. Each year, the woodturners, novices and seasoned alike, gather at the studio to make toys. They come armed with wood they have gathered, paints, string and everything they need to



make and assemble simple, classic toys for children who may not otherwise have the greatest of Christmases. And then they get to work! With multiple lathes going at once in the studio, it can get noisy quickly. Each turner has their own style and speed. You can tell the newbies from the old pros. But each one, regardless of their proficiency, strives to make the best top, wand, yo-yo or ball and cup game that they can. They look forward to comparing their finished products with the others and getting and sharing tips and tricks. This gathering may be about the toys, the kids and the Holiday Spirit but you can easily see that this group enjoys each other and their craft every time they get together. At the end of this session they will gather up the toys and assign one member to deliver them to a local organization that specializes in helping families in need. Project Self-Sufficiency in Newton, NJ is the perfect partner for the Water Gap Woodturners.



Project Self-Sufficiency started small in 1986, when it was staffed by two employees housed in storage closets of the local community college. The program has come a long way since those days! But they have always made Christmas special for local families in need with what has become The Season of Hope Toy Shop. The program accepts toy and monetary donations each year for this special event. The “Shop” uses the facility’s banquet room to set up and every inch is used in displaying large amounts of toys, games, books and more.

It's an impressive sight to be sure! Project Self-Sufficiency has been helping it's community in many ways all year round for almost 40 years and surely the ability to put smiles on the faces of whole family's on Christmas morning has got to be one of the best. The Water Gap Woodturners are thrilled to help with those smiles! And it's not just the children who will be delighted by these toys. At drop off, every adult who peeked in the box was transported to their own childhood and



choose a favorite memory to tell about the toy that they held in their hands. Several confessed to being quite bad at the ball and cup game and demonstrated that, over the years, they really hadn't gotten any better! But that didn't erase the smile from their face as they placed the toy back in the box and continued on their

way. It's safe to say that these handmade little pieces of love will have the same effect on the kids who receive them! And one day, in their future that will surely be better than their past, they will pick up a similar toy and smile with the memory created by the WGWT and PSS.

Many of the WGWT members that I spoke to used words like “meditative”, “instant gratification” and “social” to describe some of their reasons for being part of the club. I think this diverse group could also add “caring”, “thoughtful” and “kind-hearted”. Here's to the Season of Hope for all of us and the joy that a small club in the woods of Northern New Jersey spreads each year.



For more information about the Water Gap Woodturners, visit their website:

<https://watergapwoodturners.wordpress.com>

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