

# The Founding of the WGO

By Mark Salusbury

## Introductory Remarks by Penny McCahill:

Assembling information from a past that I was not part of has been both fascinating and challenging. Some morsels of information were well documented; others not. Mark Salusbury had vivid memories of how the WGO began. He had played an active role in the early years and his recollections follow.

In addition to Mark, there were several guild members who had been significantly involved twenty years ago but who had since 'disappeared from WGO life'. Communicating with them was exciting, not only to me as researcher but also to those members who were surprised at being contacted 'out of the blue', so to speak. In some instances, it became evident that the rekindling of a connection with the WGO generated a spurt of warmth or joy in their varied lives.

Please, read and enjoy Mark's recollections that follow. Also check out the WGO website in the future for a more extensive presentation of our history. If you have any comments about what you read, please do not hesitate to contact us via the webmaster. Your feedback and contributions are encouraged.

## Mark's Recollections - January, 2007

The Woodturners Guild of Ontario came about initially out of the interests of two men: Greg Gage and Mark Salusbury in 1988.

Greg Gage was the Maintenance Foreman for Novopharm Pharmaceutical in Scarborough and Mark Salusbury owned the fledgling Fleetwood Tool Supply, also in Scarborough.

Greg was a keenly interested novice in the craft of woodturning in all forms, from bowls and 'green' hollow vessels to architectural and furniture spindle turning. He was so keen that on the days the Woodturners' Association of Eastern Ontario (W.A.E.O.) held their monthly meetings in Ottawa, Ontario, (then the only active woodturners' club in Canada) he'd work his full 7a.m.-to-4:30 p.m. day in Scarborough, drive for four and a half hours to Ottawa, attend the woodturners' meeting until 11:00 p.m., drive the four and a half hours home, grab a few winks, and then go to work for 7:00 am.



Mark Salusbury

Mark on the other hand, had a general interest in 'woodturning', as much as he had in all other areas of the combined crafts within 'fine woodworking'.

Having just started Fleetwood Tool Supply, an industrial/retail outlet for quality woodworking equipment, tooling and supplies in the spring of 1988, he was looking for a way to contribute to the woodworking community and create a niche for the firm to distinguish Fleetwood Tool Supply from other woodworking specialty tool stores.



Susan Salusbury

It was Kemp McMeekin, owner of Tree Heritage of Merrickville, who, in a conversation with Mark Salusbury, suggested we start a woodturning club in the Toronto area. Kemp was a supplier of lathe chucks and turning tools to Fleetwood Tool Supply and an active member of the W.A.E.O. He knew of Greg's interest in woodturning and his mind-numbing journeys to Ottawa, and thought that a club in the GTA would become popular, based on the interest in the craft in the Ottawa region. It would also be a way to maintain Greg's health and sanity.

Mark thought about it. At Fleetwood Tool Supply, there was space which could be made available behind the showroom that could easily be converted into a meeting and demonstration room, about 700 sq. feet, and Fleetwood had the machinery and supplies already in-house which could be provided as 'demo' product to get the club going.

Over the following few weeks, Mark met Greg for the first time, instantly becoming friends. As woodturning customers came into the store to buy accessories or supplies, Mark asked for their thoughts about getting involved with a woodturning club if one were formed at the store; the response was immediate and overwhelmingly favorable.

A few of Fleetwood's most keen clients and friends were contacted and an executive was formed to get the 'club' going. Greg Gage was elected President and Mark Salusbury Vice President with Susan Salusbury, Mark's wife and Fleetwood's Treasurer, voted club Secretary/Treasurer until the club was firmly established. I recall this being in the Spring of 1989.

A few options for a club name were suggested. Then we thought it'd be a good idea to see if any other group had used the names we had come up with; so Mark contacted his company lawyer who suggested we settle on The Woodturners' Guild of Ontario,

in case our group grew to represent a provincial body of like-minded woodturners. He conducted a title search for us and registered the name pro bono.

On the evening of our first meeting, Greg went after work to a rental supply firm he dealt with for Novopharm and got about forty chairs and a large coffee percolator, which the firm donated to our cause, put them in the back of his pickup truck and drove over to Fleetwood Tool Supply where we set them up in our newly created space. Greg continued procuring our seating and coffee urn every meeting, monthly, and for all special 'demo' meetings during the years we met at Fleetwood.

Greg and Mark had worked nights to reconstruct and decorate the guild's new 'home' installing doors and cutting large window openings into the dividing wall to create viewing areas between the 'meeting room' and the showroom. Clear red cedar trim and fresh coat of birch white paint finished it off.

The first equipment we used was all brand new and 'state-of-the-art'; a General 260 lathe (no riser blocks as we hadn't invented them yet) with manual variable speed, an Axminster self-centering four-jaw chuck with standard and 'O'Donnell' jaws and a set of the best Henry Taylor HSS turning tools including the just introduced 'deep fluted long-and-strong bowl gouge' all donated from stock and provided to learn with.

Our first meeting that spring, we had about a dozen or so budding turners out but that number quickly grew over the following months. We met monthly until June then suspended meetings until the fall.

In September of 1989, we started our first full year of meetings beginning with democratic elections. Greg Gage, President and Mark Salusbury, Vice President retained their offices while Susan Salusbury stepped down to be replaced by new members in the positions of Treasurer and Secretary. I believe also, a new position of 'Membership Secretary' may have been created and filled at that time.

The WGO grew by reputation and in numbers quite rapidly to the point that Greg had to bring sixty folding chairs; many evenings our 700-square-foot room was filled to "standing room only" with late arrivals watching the proceedings through the openings we'd cut through the wall from the showroom.

We were able to provide group and individual learning experiences in our 'classroom'. We also provided the magazines, books, tools, accessories, machinery, and supplies that we all needed to continue the learning journey in our home shops.

In the summers of 1989 and '90, Greg and Mark travelled to Arrowmont School in Tennessee and learned new skills from contemporary 'masters' like Ray Key, Del

Stubbs, Mick O'Donnell, Alan Lacer and Bonnie Klein. During the September to June months that the club met, we'd pass on what we'd learned at Arrowmont by doing demos to the members and along with demos that other members also did, we all learned from each other.

Not to diminish the other 'Masters', the two weeks that Greg and I spent as students of Del Stubbs was very special for us all. Del was woodturnings' 'golden boy' internationally; to be lucky enough to spend any time with him was amazing but to get two weeks was almost unheard of.

In many ways the 'father' of contemporary turning', Del was a superb technician, a wonderful turner with incredible control and eye-hand coordination; plus, he was a great and inspiring demonstrator and teacher. He taught most of the turners of the day through workshops and/or through his hugely popular video, the first of many produced by the Taunton Press. What he taught Greg and I became the foundation for all of the turning we did thereafter and for what we inspired in others for many years. Most importantly, Del taught us to think about the cause and effect of all our actions and to feel what was happening in the turning process in the minutest detail. We learned to appreciate the way the fibers of the wood were being severed with the presentation of any given tool and how to use any keen edge to its fullest. Del helped us to understand that woodturning is a full body inter-sensory experience; that delicate control and relaxed understanding would make us better turners. We all benefited from that revelation having already realized that the 'brute force' approach was neither satisfying nor productive.

At every meeting of those beginning days, Larry Lalonde would sell 50/50 draw tickets for donated prizes that woodturners would lust after, including bottles of wine, turning tools, abrasives, blocks of wood and turning blanks, etc. We raised an astounding amount of money for ourselves in this way, with all the proceeds going to the club's coffers to buy tooling, materials, audio visual equipment and to defray the costs of bringing in guest turners to offer us new perspectives and techniques.

In the months that followed and until Mark decided to close Fleetwood's doors in the Summer of 1991, the WGO met monthly, September through June. We hosted a number of 'special' guest turners. Among them were included Francois Lambert, a hollow-form expert from St. Polycarpe, Quebec; Michael Hosaluk, a fine emerging creative turner from Saskatoon, Saskatchewan; Bonnie Klein, internationally recognized as a premiere 'small object' turner from Renton, Washington, U.S.A.; and Mick O'Donnell, an excellent creative and technical turner from northern Scotland.

Following the closing of Fleetwood Tool Supply, within a couple of years, the WGO also hosted Vic Wood, a wonderful creative production turner and educator from Australia, a close friend of Richard Raffan and friend and former colleague of Ontario's own superbly talented creative mind, 'designer/maker' Stephen Hogbin. The Vic Wood seminar was so highly anticipated it became a multi-club event which we held in the wood studio of Sheridan College of Applied Arts and Technology in Oakville. We also hosted Richard Raffan who conducted a series of demonstrations, group and private workshops held at the late 'Record Tool' located in Pickering. Record kindly provided the use of their showrooms, lathes, and tooling for events which lasted over several days.

With Fleetwood closing, through the hard work of Michael Bonnycastle, the WGO found a new home at Markham District High School where we continued to meet for several years until forced, through school board politics, to relocate to the current high school venue in Pickering.

### Concluding Comments by Penny McCahill:

Two photos from the early days have been made available by Denis Lalonde, now of both the Kawartha Guild and the WGO.

We believe that the photo below is from the early 1990s at the Durham Woodworkers' Club on Ulaili Road in Oshawa. In those days, the Oshawa Group belonged to the WGO.



Photographer:  
Bruce Jones (Oshawa)

From left to right:

Denis Lalonde  
Jack Rogerson (Deceased)  
Murray Gibson (Deceased)  
Ian Waymark  
(Guest, Technitool Canada)  
Emil Baumgartner  
Rudi Riss  
David Walker

The photo below was taken in October, 1990 at the Pickering Woodworking Show.



From left to right:

Larry Lalonde  
Derek Jones  
Martin Groneng  
Jack Bennet  
John Hopkins  
Betty Scarpino  
Bill Usher  
Dave Moores  
Roly Anderson  
Emil Baumgartner  
Michael Bonnycastle

The following photos were taken at different WGO meetings by Larry Lalonde



Left to right:

Martin Groneng  
Rudy Riss  
Denis Lalonde  
Dave Walker  
Ron David



Left to right:

Francois Lambert  
Tom Cunnian  
Garth McGillvary  
Denis LaLonde  
Bruce Jones



Left to right:

Ron David  
Michael Hosaluk & son  
David Walker  
Denis LaLonde  
Rudy Riss  
Bruce Jones  
Arnie Perrett



Left to right:

Bonnie Klein  
Denis Lalonde  
Dave Walker  
Bruce Jones  
Not identified

The WGO's December 2007 Meeting and Social featured a contest to assist in the building of our guild's history. Contestants participated in teams of two to identify the faces in the following early and memorable picture, contributed by Denis Lalonde. The picture was taken on a Saturday in the fall of 1989 at Fleetwood Tools (Mark Salusbury's shop).

The contest winners were: 1st Place: Vince Lebert and Doug Newlove  
 2nd Place: Denis Lalonde and John Andruski  
 3rd Place: Steve LeFevre and Bernie Kamutzki

There are still five faces that have not as yet been identified. If you know who they are, please contact the webmaster with the name(s) so that they may be added to the listing.



- |                        |                     |                       |                      |
|------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Michael Bonnycastle | 2. Garth McGillvray | 3. James E. Hill, Sr. | 4. Howard Moody      |
| 5. Tom Cunnian         | 6. Bob Carriere     | 7. Gordon Howarth     | 8. Steve LeFevre     |
| 9. Robert Hitchcox     | 10. Mark Salusbury  | 11. Larry Lalonde     | 12. Doug Newlove     |
| 13. ?                  | 14. ?               | 15. Greg Gage         | 16. Martin Groneng   |
| 17. Denis Lalonde      | 18. ?               | 19. Diana Ridout      | 20. Francois Lambert |
| 21. ?                  | 22. ?               | 23. Brian Burkholder  |                      |



**First Recorded WGO Membership List – c1990**

1	Greg	Gage	Pickering	36	Jeff	Parsons	Simcoe
2	Mark	Salusbury	Unionville	37	Stan	Clarke	Scarborough
3	Susan	Salusbury	Unionville	38	Joseph	Werner	Peterborough
4	Robert A.	Carriere	Pickering	39	Ken	Lidgett	Downsview
5	Larry	Lalonde	Scarborough	40	Ross	Cossar	Peterborough
6	Martin	Groneng	Agincourt	41	James E.	Connell	Toronto
7	John R.	Kerr	Port Hope	42	Alex	Tabor	St. Marly's
8	Gordon F.	Howarth	Baillieboro	43	George E.	Jones	Scarborough
9	Fred	Eden	Newmarket	44	Kaarel	Tali	Willowdale
10	A.E. Arnie	Perrett	Whitby	45	Bob	Wise	Toronto
11	Denis M.	Lalonde	Oshawa	46	Gary	Mount	Markham
12	Di (Mrs)	Ridout	Scarborough	47	Brian	Burkholder	Pickering
13	Tom	Cunnian	Don Mills	48	Stephen A.	Lefevre	Scarborough
14	Howard S.	Moody	Willowdale	49	Cliff	McDowell	Agincourt
15	Emil	Baumgartner	Oshawa	50	Len	Abbott	Queensville
16	Bruce	Jones	Oshawa	51	Vince	Thomson	Toronto
17	Jamie	Jagoe	Ajax	52	William E.	Hewitt	Toronto
18	Rudolf (Rudy)	Riss	Whitby	53	Wayne H.	Dobson	Bolton
19	James C.	Hill	Saanich, BC	54	Jim	Lindamood	Kearney
20	James E.	Hill	Toronto	55	Michael	Hofsetter	Agincourt
21	George	Dix	Don Mills	56	Gordon	Urquhart	Claremont
22	Michael K.	Bonnycastle	Scarborough	57	Gil	Stockley	Agincourt
23	Doug	Newlove	Islington	58	Konrad	Kaudelka	Scarborough
24	Neil	McLeod	Sunderland	59	Hans G.	Von Cube	Oakville
25	R. Craig	Nicholson	Willowdale	60	Archie	Chrus	Scarborough
26	Dave	Walker	Oshawa	61	Robert O.	Lee	Scarborough
27	Keith	Hail	West Hill	62	Jack	Veenstra	Richmond Hill
28	John	Gilker	Ajax	63	G.A. Laurie	Patterson	Scarborough
29	Gordon	Irwin	Scarborough	64	Don L.	Mumford	Bolton
30	Bernie	Kamutzki	Etobicoke	65	Don	Carter	Pickering
31	Ken	Bauman	Willowdale	66	A. Robert	Hitchox	Oakville
32	Ernest	Boucher	Toronto	67	John	Falls	Bobcaygeon
33	William	Tammel	Oshawa	68	Dale	Van der Veen	Pontypool
34	Derek S.	Lungley	Scarborough	69	John E.	Lang	Toronto
35	Michael P.	Aldridge	Toronto	70	Grayling	Lamont	Richmond Hill