

BEST PRACTICES

Best Practices #042: Promoting Demonstrations Heading: Demonstrations



When chapters schedule presentations by notable woodturners, or demonstrate new lathes or other tools by manufacturers, it is most important that they promote these events to ensure maximum turnout. Promotion pays off in many ways – it can help bring in new membership and entrance fees, it can garner wider exposure and enthusiasm for you club, it can sometimes get you news coverage, and it can help attract other demonstrators and even bigger audiences, in the future.

A solid attendance will encourage the demonstrators, too. “How many members do you have?” is often the first question a potential presenter will ask, for obvious reasons. An equipment manufacturer will be more likely to donate supplies to a chapter if it shows it can generate a good and interested crowd of onlookers. A turner’s interest in presenting a top-flight demonstration will certainly increase when the audience is large and eager to learn.

So, how do you engineer the publicity to get a big turnout? Here are some strategies that are likely to prove most effective:

Public and Press Notices

Many local newspapers will allow you to place “Public Notice” at no charge. If your chapter covers a regional geographic area – and might attract attendees from a fairly wide area – it’s worth identifying the daily and weekly papers and neighborhood periodicals you will need to contact.

You may decide, for example, to target an area in which people could travel to your event within a 1- ½ hour drive radius. To find the news outlets in this area, you can go to your local public library reference section and review the *Gale Directory of Publications and Broadcast Media*. All the local media outlets are listed in this book. Searching within your state, all the counties will be listed in alphabetical order. Make a list of all the newspapers, their telephone numbers, and e-mail addresses (the e-mail addresses are especially important; this is how you will send your press releases). You also can log onto <http://www.newspapers.com/index.htm> and search by state.

Don’t forget any large metropolitan cities where people from your area might reside. Papers from these cities may be harder to approach, but many have websites with lists of future public meetings. You should call the newspapers first and verify their e-mail address and the deadline for your releases. About three weeks prior to your demonstration, e-mail

a press release or media advisory to all the newspapers you wrote down during your research at the library.

Don't forget the AAW Calendar of Events at www.woodturner.org

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