

Annual CMW Retreat Builds Community

Strong woodturning clubs are intentional in supporting skill development for beginning participants. They also ensure club members get to know each other and feel part of a local woodturning community. The Carolina Mountain Woodturners (CMW) has addressed both goals through the development of an annual retreat.

April 2024 event

CMW will hold its seventh retreat at Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts (Gatlinburg, Tennessee) April 18-21, 2024. Participants must be CMW members (\$35.00), but the club welcomes new members no matter where they live.

The annual event was started by club member Tucker Garrison in 2015. Key ideas are that members travel to Arrowmont for classes taught by CMW members and fellowship in a beautiful Smokey Mountain retreat setting. In past years, forty to fifty club members participated in the four-day event. Participants select four courses: a half-day course on Thursday, full-day courses on both Friday and Saturday, and another half-day course on Sunday. There are three to four courses offered in each time band, allowing for exposure to a range of topics and equipment.

Classes change from year to year. Past topics have included sharpening and basic cuts, lidded boxes, pepper mills, coloring and embellishing, and more. Classes are offered for beginning, intermediate, and experienced turners. New additions for this year include hybrid wood/resin items and carving with micromotors.

The CMW retreat is possible because Arrowmont allows us to schedule the facilities between their usual class terms. Our members can stay on campus and enjoy group meals in the cafeteria there. We have access to two woodturning studios with large and medium-sized lathes. Additionally,

Arrowmont provides space for CMW to set up twelve lathes owned by the club and to set up a room for sessions on carving and embellishment, which do not require lathes.

Participants pay for their housing, meal package, and materials, and CMW covers most or all costs for renting the facility. Club members volunteer time for organizing, managing, and teaching. The result is an extremely low-cost event with many benefits.

Open to all

The retreat is open to all skill levels, but it is especially successful at building foundational skills for new turners and advancing the skills of intermediate turners. This is an opportunity for

members who do not own a lathe to have hands-on experiences on a full- or mid-size lathe. CMW and Arrowmont have turning tools available for use during the retreat.

We have found that turning together, enjoying fellowship during meals, and rocking on the porch in the evening encourage club members to make new friends and feel a deeper connection to the club. ■

—Kevin Felderhoff, Carolina Mountain Woodturners

To learn more and see the handbook and schedule for the upcoming event, visit carolinamountainwoodturners.org/arrowmont.



CMW's 2022 retreat participants gather in front of the Arrowmont dining hall between classes.



One class experimented with using colors to embellish turned bowls.



Nicole Foti receives guidance from Jim Duxbury in turning a finial.



After a day of woodturning classes, participants gather on the covered porch at Arrowmont to enjoy the evening in the Smoky Mountains and deepen friendships.