



Building Connections

Vermont WoodNet is a coalition of small-scale woodworkers and wood-related businesses whose mission is to strengthen business opportunities for Vermont wood product businesses based upon a commitment to the sustainability of the forest resource.

April 2003

Volume 2, Number 4

Mark your calendars

- April 23 Deadline to return WoodNet store survey
(Disregard the date printed on the survey form.)
- April 30 Quarterly Meeting (East) at Classic Designs, 84 Central Street, Saint Johnsbury (at the corner of Center and Summer Streets). 7-9pm
- May 5 Sustainable Woods Committee Meeting, Richmond Free Library. 6-8pm
- May 14 Quarterly Meeting (West) at Spooner Specialties, 141 River St (Route 2), Montpelier. 7-9pm
- May 17 WoodNet Demo Day at Spooner Specialties, 41 River Street (Route 2), Montpelier. 9am-5pm

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Featured Members

Patrica and Gerard Fontain

This husband and wife team operates a sawmill in Newport Center. The mill is located on a quiet country road about 7 1/2 miles outside of town. They are native Vermonter's. They have been married 10 years and have three children.

Gerard began his working career as a finished carpenter right out of high school. His wife Pat shares in the business by managing the office and together they are quite a team. After 15 years of woodworking Gerald feels quite at home with wood. When he suffered some injuries to his knees and back due to falls he found it was hard for him to continue carpentry full time. But his love of wood prompted him to start his own sawmill. That was 4 years ago, and they are still going strong!

Their business began with just the sawmill. They added a kiln about a year ago. Their equipment and resources continue to grow. They now have a conventional kiln for drying lumber with a maximum material length of 12', a growing inventory of kiln dried hardwoods, a Portable Woodmizer bandmill for on-site sawing at customers location, a Swinger articulating loader for material handling, a wood shop with a planer, molder, shaper, edger etc., a Bandit brush chipper; a John Deere tractor with wench and a Brush hog.

They would like to expand their business by doing some custom drying. They are members of the New England Kiln Drying Association. Their business is geared for smaller shops that require between 1,000 and 2,000 feet of dried wood. They also produce quality hardwood grade/survey stakes in 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6' lengths x 1 1/8" square or to custom order.

If you are ever in Newport Center they would love to have you stop for a visit. Stop by and meet these nice folks.

We Are Growing

There were 49 WoodNet members in 2001-2002. This membership year (2002-2003) there are 77 members, 27 individual and 50 business.

Governor's Table Project Update

In 2001 Vermont WoodNet received approval from then Governor Dean's office to design and build a conference table for the Pavilion State Office Building using wood from the elm trees removed from the statehouse lawn. Governor Douglas and his staff have now approved the table design and delivery schedule. Here is the latest plan.

The tables and podium will be delivered in June of this year. The fund raising campaign has begun. The table project budget is \$20,000. Business are being solicited for contributions. Those contributing will be acknowledged in all publicity as well as being listed as donors on the wood plaque that will be placed on the wall in the same room in the executive suite as the tables.

The elm for the tops of the tables is all sawn and dried now. That work was done at S. A. W. Mill in Morrisville. The ash for the table bases that came from Shelburne Farms was dried by Stephen Taylor in Lincoln and milled by Gary Svetlik in Hinesburg. It was machined by Randy Ouellette in Vergennes and is now at Fred Collins shop in Duxbury and Stephen Taylors shop in Lincoln for final fitting and assembly. When they are built both table bases will go to Ed Roy's shop in Colchester for finishing. Jim McCarthy of Koenig Cedar will transport the wood pieces between the woodworkers' shops.

The elm for the tops will go to Morse Lumber in Essex Junction and Newport Panel in North Troy for



assembly. When the tops are finished they will go to Brian Jones shop in Williston for final sanding, etc. One of the tops will then go to Randy Ouellette in Vergennes where his CNC will carve the outline of the State of Vermont into the top. It will then go back to Brian Jones shop where the State inlay will be done.

Both tops will then go to Ed Roy's shop for coating. Both tables will then be finally assembled at Brian Jones shop and finally delivered to the Governor in June.

The Podium base was turned by Dick Montague in Groton. The base will be fit with a top and finished by Sue McLam in Orange. It will be delivered with the tables in June.

Sustainable Woods Committee Meeting

Ten businesses met on Tuesday, April 2 in Richmond to discuss activities that support manufacturing, marketing and educational efforts around Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)-certified products. FSC means that the wood has been harvested using practices that adhere to social and ecological criteria. SmartWood is the local, independent organization that "certifies" landowners, resource managers, woodworkers and retail businesses in this region and is based in Richmond.

Fourteen WoodNet members are currently certified (with 3 pending) and the committee has proposed projects to address businesses needs in sourcing

supply, developing product and sales, designing marketing materials and organizing educational events.

The Committee's next meeting will be on Monday, May 5th from 6-8 PM at the Richmond Free Library in downtown Richmond (from I-89, take rte 2 east to the village; at the traffic light, take a right and follow over the RR tracks; the Library will be on your left).

For more information, contact committee co-chairs Jim McCarthy, Koenig Cedar (862-5642; koenig@together.net) and Nils Shenholm, Solhem Sauna (244-6460; nils@saunavermont.com)

Thank You Jim Cunningham

The entire Vermont WoodNet community would like to thank Jim Cunningham for his years of his hard work on our web site. Jim built the first Vermont WoodNet web site from scratch. His hard work did a wonderful job helping us get better exposure around the country and around the world. Through his hard work and tireless efforts we emerged into the information age. The electronic bulletin board that Jim created on the web site attracted many visitors and helped many to either find what they needed or sell what they didn't. The web site listing of events also helped to keep our membership and visitors well informed of upcoming Vermont WoodNet events.

For the past three years Jim has taken time away from his woodworking business to build our web site and maintain it for us. We are all very grateful to Jim for all his hard work and dedication on our behalf.

From all the Vermont WoodNet community, Thank you Jim.

Retail Store Survey

Vermont WoodNet is considering opening a retail store in the Burlington area. The purpose of this venture would be to give WoodNet Business Members a place to sell their products. Items could range from \$1 to more than \$5000 and could be one-of-a-kind or multiples. We need your input. Please help us evaluate the idea by completing the survey that is included in this newsletter and get it back to us by April 23, 2003. Your thoughts are vital to our decision.

Future Issues

The editor of *Building Connections* is interested in hearing from you. What kinds of articles would you like to see in future issues? How often should we publish? Are there specific topics you would like us to explore? Drop us a note at:

Vermont WoodNet
PO Box 4562
Burlington, VT 05406
Call Dawn at 802-877-0007 or
email us at DawnMac@adelphia.net
We want to hear from you.

Vermont WoodNet and the LRCC

Vermont WoodNet has recently joined the Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce. In doing so we hope to enjoy increased presence in marketing opportunities via a web site link from the LRCC web site at www.vermont.org to the Vermont WoodNet web site at www.vtwoodnet.org.

We are also presenting the Chamber with a proposal to build display cases at the two new Williston rest areas which would be used to showcase Vermont WoodNet member products as well as products and services of other members of the Chamber. We hope to utilize FSC Certified wood in this display and to include education materials on the benefits of sustainable forest practices. The sustainable wood committee has been developing this plan over the last two months and we had our first presentation on March 25th 2003. Vermont WoodNet will be represented by Gary Svetlik, Brian Jones and Jim McCarthy. We are receiving assistance in this endeavor from Kelly Ault who is representing Businesses for the Northern Forest. Jim Geier of Vermont Folk Rockers has kindly allowed us to use one of his very comfortable and well built Rockers as a showpiece. Any member who is interested in the benefits of this can contact Jim by email at koenig@together.net or by phone at 244-4952 to be kept abreast of the developments in this project. The results of the meeting will be published on our web site.

Copies of Guide Available

Copies of the Vermont WoodNet Resource Guide 2002-2003 Edition are still available. This Resource Guide is packed with information about everything the small wood product manufacturer might need to know, from Financial Assistance to fellow woodworkers to magazines and catalogs. Copies are \$12 each (\$10 plus \$2 to cover mailing costs). Call Dawn at 802-877-0007 with your credit card order or send a check for \$12 and address to:

VT WoodNet
PO Box 4562
Burlington, VT 05406
Consider becoming a member
and get your copy for free.



2003 Membership Drive Kick Off

Vermont WoodNet will be kicking off our 2003-2004 Membership drive on May 1, 2003. We have six different membership levels. If you work with wood one of them should be just right for you! The membership levels and dues for each are as follows.

Student membership:	\$10
Individual membership:	\$25
Small business membership:	\$50
Business membership:	\$100
Sponsoring membership:	\$500
Advertising membership:	\$1000

Each membership has it's own benefits. To learn about the different membership levels visit our web site at www.vtwoodnet.org. or call Dawn at 802-877-0007 and ask her to send you a membership brochure. Keep your eye on the mail in early May for our Membership Mailing — and tell a friend about Vermont WoodNet.

Membership is valid July 1st through June 30th. When you pay your membership fee during the months July through March, your membership will be counted for the current year. If you pay your membership fee between April 1st and June 30th, you will automatically become a member for the remainder of the year (through June 30th) and be considered a paid-in-full member for the following year. That's getting 3 months of free membership!

Steering Committee Members

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