

Kurt's clinic

Kurt Hertzog answers readers' questions

With the revival of the face-to-face meetings, seminars, and other gatherings, my club is thinking of holding an all-day training and turning class at our nearby fairgrounds. Have you been involved with these types of things before? What are the pluses and minus to be concerned with?

First, I think it is a great idea. Nothing builds camaraderie and club teamwork like a communal event. That said, don't undertake any project with a group that is too small and too laid back to dig in and get it done. Don't take any of my cautions or concerns as a big negative or reason to not undertake the 'big turn' but only to be certain you've considered them.

The comment about nearby fairgrounds raises my concerns about your local community rules. Can you apply for a permit to use the park, a facility, or lodge? That automatically gives you permission to use the facilities on that date and between the reserved times. Lodges or the like will have electricity for your lathes, lights as needed, and many times kitchens are included. Having an onsite rest room also makes your day more enjoyable. The minor charge for renting a facility like this is more than offset with nearby parking and periodic check-ins by the park police, as well as a semblance of official status.

There will be paperwork needed to designate who oversees the rental, who is responsible for clean-up, and who is the go-to for the authorities while you are there. Chances are good that you will need to provide an insurance rider showing you are covered for liability during your event.

If your club or group doesn't already have a liability insurance, you can obtain a short-term insurance rider at a very modest sum through one of your local insurance companies. Most of the time, any use of municipal facility requires a bond of \$1- \$2m dollars. Getting that coverage for a day to cover your event might cost \$35. My advice is don't play games with any needed insurance bond. Not only do you leave yourself hanging out in the breeze should something happen and you've played games with being covered, but you'll also break any trust you may have built with the local officials.

Something else to consider, regardless of your events location, is the openness to the public. Will access be to only your club members or to the public? Is the purpose just for your club to have a fun day in the sunshine or is it to draw potential new members? Be certain that you plan (and document) whichever your choice is. It often makes a big difference. Over the years, when we've planned these events to include the local population, especially the local schools or kids' community groups, the city fathers become much more receptive. Not only that, but they often will waive any of the rental fees or special use expenses. Do remember that, should you have youngsters as potential participants, you'll need to be certain that their parents or a guardian is in attendance.

Not to rain on the parade, but do consider your location, its cover, and any problems you'll face with unexpected inclement weather. A hillside of mini-lathes with club members and Cub Scouts turning pens, bottle stoppers, or trinkets will turn into a muddy mess in only a few moments should the skies open up.

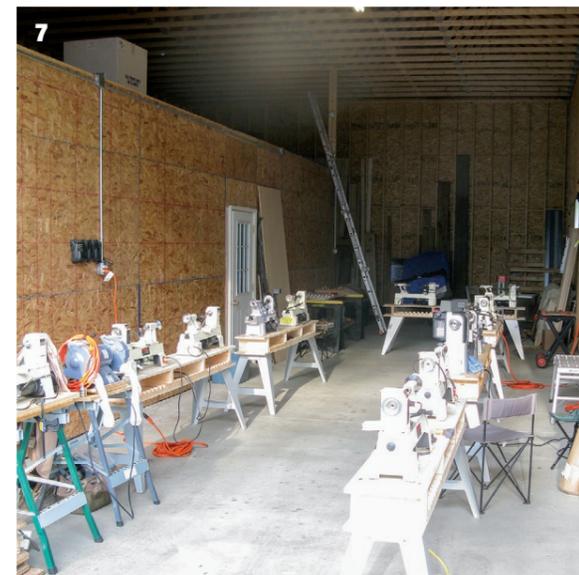


1 You need not swing for the fences. A member's shop that has sufficient table space and the necessary support stuff makes a great impromptu turning spot **2** Getting the right number of folks is key. Too crowded is not good. Having room for some training or project orientation is a good way to start the session **3** You'll be amazed at how quickly the available space will be used and the chip generation turns into the major mess

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4 Whether a bring your own lunch or pitch in for pizza, the friendship building around the lunch table is quite amazing **5** If you ever expected to be invited back, you had better leave the place as good as or better than you found it. Be certain all pitch into this detail **6** The fresh air, sunshine, and break are well worth the time. You don't realise how much just a bit of sunshine will brighten your turning spirits **7** If you get access to a larger place, use it. This is ideal for quite a few turners and instructors. It would be a place that lends itself to newbies and their attending instructor **8** The ability to provide tools, already prepped for use, with a storage rack that can quickly identify if any tools have gone astray is perfect.



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9 Do you think the neighbours know that a gaggle of turners have showed up for some fun? Again, part of your planning is obviously parking as well as turning space and electricity **10** Natural light and plenty of space makes this offsite turning spot wonderful. Easy to set up, use, clean up, make this one of my favourite spots **11** Remember the part about how hungry turners can get over the course of an afternoon. Pizza is one of our favourites. Notice the healthy food too

Let's imagine you have access to a large barn or other site that doesn't require renting or reserving. Using a place that a club member owns changes the situation, but not much. You still should be certain you have liability coverage of some kind. It might be the home owner's, the club chapter insurance, or bought for-the-day insurance. You have more flexibility in the dates for your event, repeating it such as every Saturday during June, or what suits your group. Great ways to get the entire club involved. Obviously, the equipment set-up and tear-down require vehicles, electrical hookup, tools, grinders, PPE, etc. You can involve the non-turners with clean-up, food prep, snack area operation, your lending library, and general cheering on of the participants.

You'll notice that nowhere have I spoken about money. Whether a token donation to the club, reimbursement for materials used or other, money will often cause unwanted complications, especially when your event involves municipal facilities. I choose to leave it totally in your hands. We find that all hands throwing a something into the passed hat will more than pay for the huge sheets of pizza that tend to get consumed at the lunch break. That's the extent of our financial operation.

With that rambling about sites, insurance, etc., let me just quickly launch the thoughts that jump out at me in general.

- Equipment to be used, checked out, repaired/tuned as necessary.
- Club gear will need to be cleaned, packed, and returned to storage.
- Is there sufficient club gear to be used or is it a BYOL (bring your own lathe) day?
- Has there been a rainy day plan, whether location change or postponement?
- Is there a good way to communicate that change to the folks once everything is in motion?
- Have you planned for sufficient instructors if you will be teaching?
- You need to have plenty of instructors especially with newcomers.
- Never leave newcomers alone. Never, never, never.
- Raw material supplies should be more than adequate.
- Nothing brings down a day like running out of kits, bowl blanks, green wood, or whatever.
- You'll need a reasonably sized and complete first aid kit along with knowing how to use it.

Why have an event like this?

- Builds your club camaraderie.
- Gets people turning instead of other distractions.
- Brings in potential new members even if that wasn't the plan.
- Lets members buy, sell, and trade among themselves when they can see and try things.
- Gets the leadership to see the talents of members they may not be familiar with.
- It lets the more bashful show their stuff, again being a potential club demo candidate.
- Lets the club build inventory for any upcoming events where it raises money by selling.
- Helps everyone shake off the frump from being locked up for so long.

Additional thoughts... many times, a club is looking for a meeting place, a temporary event space, or other location. We have had plenty of luck teaming up with the local churches, boys' and girls' clubs, 4H clubs, local high schools, community colleges, and small businesses. A two-way street can be built with our club providing labour or expertise and them providing access to a facility. This can work well for these one-off turning events. Don't wait until you need to arrange this. Be fostering these relationships in an ongoing manner.