



The Finish Line

By Wilf Torunski

This will be my last official newsletter column as the WoodLINKS USA National Program Director.

Mark Smith, whom I have known for many years, will be replacing me in that capacity and I wish both he and Linda all the best wishes for success in the future.

Today, as I reflect on my own situation as a paraplegic casualty of an infected spine, it occurred to me that my situation was very similar to WoodLINKS USA's.

A very important part of spinal rehabilitation is getting ones muscles to start firing and bearing weight. I am referring to the trunk muscles and the leg muscles. Swimming pool therapy is very important as a precursor to future activities.

This week, I was able to walk in a coherent path with the help of the side bar in the pool.

Not once, but 5 times back and forth in about four feet of water. An important one hundred feet. This told me that my leg muscles would connect in the future once I developed my muscle power. My heart did a "big five" to itself recognizing the first significant steps to a full recovery in the future.

I immediately thought of WoodLINKS USA and similar parallel where after 6 years and over 125 schools, it was also having to get ready for the next major growth hurdles.

The major growth hurdle will be to become adequately funded so that it can remain the best national industry- education program in the USA. And it will have to involve many more industry and school partners.

I will continue to work with Mark and the WoodLINKS USA Board of Directors in any way I can to try to achieve this goal.

On a final note, I sincerely wish to thank the past contributors and volunteers, board members and presidents – Larry Hilchie, Keith Malmstadt and Dr. Paul Winistorfer for all their help and passionate zeal in trying to make WoodLINKS USA a success. I will

think of all of you often because you are indeed special and effective leaders.

Also - a big thanks to the real heroes – the industry partners, WoodLINKS teachers and association members for all their support for their commitments to this wonderful project.

May we meet again in the future.

Warmly,

Wilf and Donna

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Introducing...



Mark Smith
WoodLINKS USA
National Program Director



From President Paul Winistorfer

To WoodLINKS USA Supporters and Friends,

I have the following to report to you this month:

WoodLINKS USA announces that Mr. Mark Smith has been chosen

as our new National Program Director. Mark will assume his new duties with WoodLINKS in the coming weeks. Mark comes to WoodLINKS USA from Shiloh High School in Hume, Illinois where he has been a WoodLINKS teacher since 1996. Mark earned his BS in Industrial Technology from Eastern Illinois University in 1988, and has continued to earn and learn via continuing education courses in various wood manufacturing technologies.

Mark's WoodLINKS program at Shiloh High School has grown into one of the very best in the country, with exceptional support from industry partners, parents and the Shiloh school administration. Mark and his students gained notoriety in the past few years with the wooden sunglasses project, marketed by iWood ecodesign (www.iwoodecodesign.com).

Mark brings industry and classroom experience to WoodLINKS USA, as well as demonstrated success in establishing a strong WoodLINKS program at Shiloh High School. Mark is passionate about the wood industry, working with students and industry supporters and is knowledgeable and enthusiastic about WoodLINKS.

A formal press release will provide additional information and will be available the week of June 25th. Mark will be present at AWFS working on behalf of WoodLINKS USA and our industry supporters, teachers and students.

A special thank you to the search and selection committee assisting me in this process for WoodLINKS:

Steve Ehle – Wood Digest Magazine

Duane Griffiths – Stiles Education

Larry Hilchie – Michael Weinig America

Keith Malmstadt – Great Lake Woods

John Schultz – Super This Saws

John Zinn – Trade Show and Exhibitor Services

Coming Up...

- WoodLINKS will be represented in a presentation to the Engineered Wood Technology Association in Atlanta June 21.
- WoodLINKS will be present at the AWFS Show in July and we will orchestrate teachers and students attending the show via in-service training opportunities.
- WoodLINKS will be represented a presentation at the AWI Top Executive Conference in Louisville, KY, next October 5th.

A regional WoodLINKS effort is being formed in Southside Virginia, with interest and support of Danville Community College, Southside Community College, the Southern Virginia Higher Education Center, Halifax County Public Schools, Pittsylvania Public Schools, Danville City Public Schools, and Virginia Tech. Springing from the many successes of WoodLINKS USA, there is a shared and common vision among these partners to create a regional effort leveraging strengths of all partners into a new programming effort for this region.

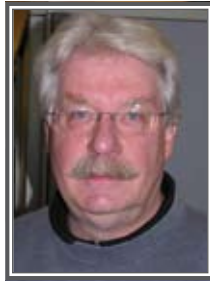
We will have an opportunity at AWFS to express our thanks to Wilf and Donna Torunski for their leadership, friendship and passionate, heartfelt work with WoodLINKS over these years. Please watch for news of this recognition in the coming weeks leading up to AWFS in Las Vegas.

As we move forward in the coming months your continued support is needed more than ever as we transition to Mark Smith as our new National Program Director. Together we can achieve what we cannot do alone.

On behalf of the students, teachers, and the WoodLINKS USA Board of Directors we thank you for your support of WoodLINKS USA.

Warmest regards,

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WoodLINKS Expands Scope In Dairy State

By Steve Ehle,
Wisconsin WoodLINKS
Coordinator

Over the past few years, WoodLINKS has evolved beyond its original concept, but not so much that we've lost sight of our basic mission: Providing schools with the tools to produce qualified, skilled and motivated workers for the woodworking industry.

Still, and I'll use Wisconsin as an example, WoodLINKS has stretched its reach and its scope. Besides high schools, we've added a number of middle schools to the program. And, we've been joined by post-secondary schools, Madison Area Technical College, in particular.

In addition to the education sector, the profile of our industry partners in the Badger State has also evolved. One of our strongest partners is Burger Boat of Manitowoc which, because of a serious need for people to work in its mill-work shop, has sponsored a number of schools in northeast Wisconsin.

The people at Burger realize they can't just pull in anyone off the street to help produce the extremely high end yacht interiors the company fashions out of exotic species of wood. There's too much at stake.

In addition to Burger, we've gained partners which lean more towards the primary side of the business. Kretz Lumber, a vertically integrated producer of lumber and value-added products, is a strong supporter in the Central Wisconsin region. This Antigo area company also manages its own woodlots and provides free seminars to teachers and students on the timber management and grading.

Most recently, I've fielded WoodLINKS inquiries from a major manufacturer of modular homes. But why not? This company produces kitchens and other millwork-related components for its homes which range from medium-end to nearly high-end of the building market. If this partnership happens, I feel it will be a great match for the program here.

WoodLINKS Wisconsin – as well as other state WoodLINKS efforts – has also reached out to colleges, universities and major trade associations located in the state. We've also begun a strong partnership with the state department of public instruction which organizes the Skills USA program in the state.

These partnerships provide us with a larger quiver of tools to help us continue meeting our goal of linking the education sector with private industry. With everyone from these wide-ranging endeavors pulling in the same direction, success is ensured.

But why should that be so surprising? Cooperation and resource sharing are what makes things work, whether you're teaching a trade or producing a fiber-based product. This is truly a win-win situation for all involved.

We'll continue to look for other partners and supporters in the State of Wisconsin, with an ultimate mission of using what we're doing here as a template for other states that have WoodLINKS programs.



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