

The Old Country Guild of Woodturners, Schenectady, New York

What do a replica of a Dutch sailing ship and wheelchairs have in common? Both have received the concentrated efforts of this fledgling woodturning club to help with fundraising. The Old Country Guild Of Woodturners (OCGW) was formed in 2007 at an informal dinner of likeminded woodturners and scrollsaw woodworkers who wanted to learn woodturning. We elected Jack Teffenhart as president. The OCGW now has between 10 and 15 members who attend monthly meetings.

Two of the founding members, Don Orr and Dave Nilson, were involved in building a replica of a 17th century Dutch sailing vessel, the *Onrust*, (theonrust.com), so it seemed natural to aid their effort by making turned pens to help spur donors for the ship-building. Later, Schenectady County Historian Don Rittner visited a club meeting to give us background information about the original ship and the replica project.

At another meeting, club member George Guadiane introduced us to Charlie Croteau, a woodworker who uses a wheelchair. Charlie presented information about the Free Wheelchair Mission (freewheelchairmission.org), an international foundation that raises funds to build inexpensive, durable wheelchairs from bicycle wheels, tires, and plastic-resin chairs. These wheelchairs bring mobility to those who cannot afford a conventional wheelchair. To raise funds for the purchase of raw materials, the foundation auctions off handmade craft items. Club members sprang into action to produce turned bottle stoppers. Many club members, including George Guadiane, also made other items. George acted as intermediary to make

sure our projects reached the foundation's auction venue.

Members have since turned other items to support fundraising efforts close to their hearts. All someone has to do is let the group know about the

need and the support is there. We are a small but determined group of woodturners, trying to make a difference one turned project at a time. ■

—Mike Kross



Bottle stoppers turned by club members for the Mission fundraiser.



Replica of New York's first ship of 1614, the *Onrust*.



Each club member received a Free Wheelchair Mission T-shirt.



Turned pens made from scrap-wood leftovers from the ship's construction.



OCGW members. Back row from left: Lou Carusone, Dave Nilson, George Guadiane, and Bill Cherry; seated from left: Lou DeMola, Brandon Feder, Mike Kross, and Patrick Cummings; kneeling from left: Chris Stolicky and Don Orr