

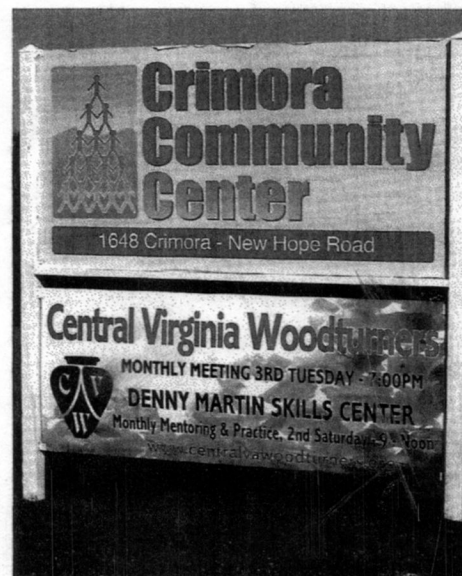
CVW Boosts Outreach with New Skills Center

After several years of membership growth, the Central Virginia Woodturners (CVW) realized a larger, improved skills center was needed to provide woodturning instruction for beginners and to continue attracting new members. We had five lathes, a sharpening station, and a bandsaw in our old storeroom at the Community Center in Crimora, Virginia. This facility is a repurposed 1926 school building where we hold our monthly meetings. Recently, we were able to rent a classroom in the same building for a minimal amount, provided we fix it up. The building managers provided the needed electrical work, and members did the rest: cleaning, plastering, repainting, installing air conditioning, and building cabinets for the tools that were purchased or donated by members.

In December 2013, we dedicated the new workspace, calling it the Denny Martin Skills Center in honor of a very active and innovative club member who had recently passed away. In January 2014, we initiated monthly skills sessions where five or six of our club mentors continue to give individual instruction to all who want to learn—both members and

the general public. Spindle and bowl turning, bandsaw and chainsaw safety, blank selection, tool sharpening, sanding procedures, and embellishment have been popular with our attendees. We started teaching basic turning skills and quickly realized the importance of teaching tool sharpening, too, so we purchased a second grinding station from our sister club, The Woodturners of the Virginias. Sanding created some problems with airborne dust, so our club president donated an air-filtration system and another member donated a dust collector to connect to a sanding station.

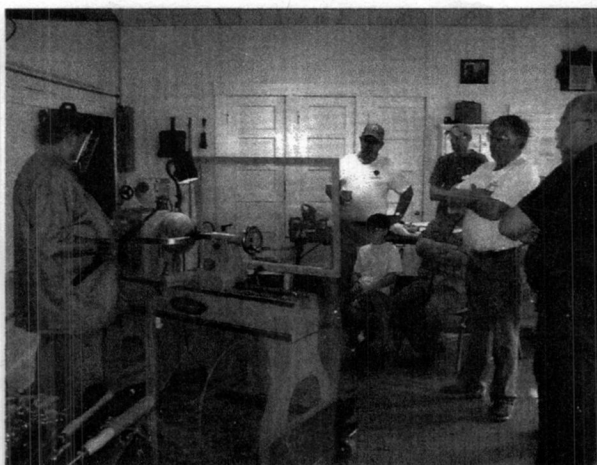
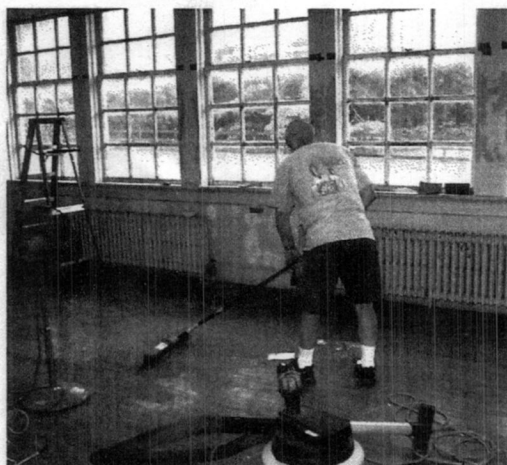
Thanks to a donated vacuum system, we can demonstrate vacuum chucking procedures. We have also added another lathe and protective shields for the lathes to allow safe, close-up observation. One of our members also recognized the need to upgrade the restroom facilities and found an opportunity to salvage fixtures and stall panels from a local school that had been closed recently. This project was completed in March and adds to the upgrades we have made as part of a long-term community service activity.



Central Virginia Woodturners has created and dedicated a new space for woodturning instruction: the Denny Martin Skills Center. Doing so has enabled the chapter to increase its community outreach and build membership.

To date, 131 individuals have received 336 hours of mentoring. Our youngest student started when he was nine years old, and a ninety-one-year-old member recently commented that he was learning new techniques in each session. The skills sessions last four hours with a

break for refreshments and open discussion. We have found that the real benefit of the Skills Center has been the outreach to bring in new members and advance the skills of current members. ■



Club members gave an old classroom new life by donating their time, tools, and skills to create an improved space for woodturning meetings and demonstrations.

—Jim Oates, Denny Martin Skills Center Coordinator