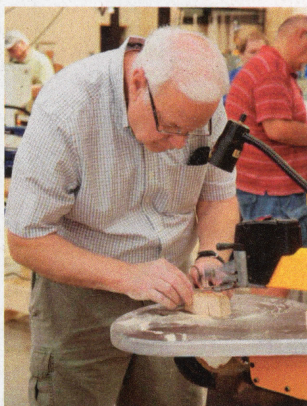


# SHOP TALK

## 60,000 Toys from St. Louis Guild



Wayne Watson, vice president of the St. Louis Woodworkers Guild, worked on toy cars. The cars are formed with a specialty cutter, then crosscut, routed and sanded. Wheels are installed last.



Bob Zahner used the scroll saw to cut one of the Guild's simple toys.

### Rockler Store Hosts Toy Build Event

Almost 25 years old, the St. Louis Woodworkers Guild is expected to reach a total of 60,000 toy donations by year's end — thanks in part to events like “Toy Build Day” held at the local Rockler Woodworking and Hardware store.

The Guild began in 1994, and that's also when members began building toys and donating them to local children's hospitals. With 515 toys donated the first year,



In about two hours, the St. Louis Woodworkers Guild and others built over 75 toys for donation to area hospitals.

the volume quickly grew to average about 1,900 toys per year. As membership and enthusiasm grew, the volume increased to more than 5,000 toys donated in 2016. In June of 2017, the Guild delivered its 50,000th toy.

Until recently, the Guild was supplying toys to just three hospitals in the area, but with increased donations they have expanded the program to include five different hospital facilities and “Toys for Tots®” in the St. Louis area.

Enthusiasm for the program is driven by several long-time members that have had children and grandchildren hospitalized for extended periods of time. They have personally seen the need to keep young minds occupied by donating over 1,000 items each for the last several years.

Items donated include an assortment of puzzles, toys, kits to be glued and assembled, dolls, butterflies, cars, trucks, hummingbirds and just about anything the imagination can dream up.

“Treasure boxes” shaped like hearts, birds, or any other desired shape are a big hit. Lids are held on with an axle peg and rotate to reveal the secret storage area inside.

Some of the items that have been built include jigsaw puzzles with extra-large pieces and loose fits for children with special needs. Fishing poles with magnetic bobbers allow children to catch fish with magnets in their nose.

Almost all items are unfinished so the children can use their imagination, paints, stickers and markers to bring the items to life. This is not only fun, but an important part of many children's therapy. Children unable to leave the hospital and shop for Mother's Day and Father's Day, birthday or holiday presents will often give items they've decorated to a loved one as a gift.

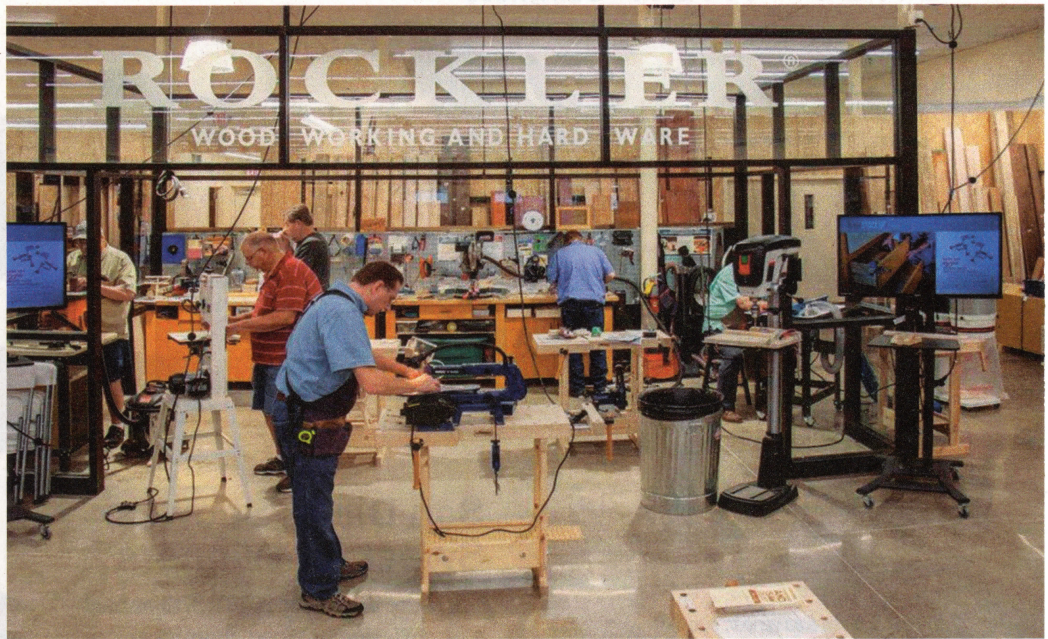
With about 230 members, the guild established a goal of 30% participation in the toy program in any one year. Because there are many new members with limited

photos by David Glazer





**Guild member Rich Sanders is one of the active participants in toy building.**



**About 30 people attended the 2018 toy making event held at the St. Louis Rockler store. Another toy build at the store is scheduled for January 2019.**

shop equipment at home, the Guild has held toy building sessions at the guild workshop as well as at the Rockler store. New members get instruction on saws, sanders and hands-on experience making simple toys for donation to the program. A few "kits" are also provided at the meetings that contain wood and patterns for members to fabricate and return finished toys at the next meeting.

Donations also come from Guild sponsors and employees, as well as others. Plus, the Guild has a booth set up at the annual Woodworking Show St. Louis where kids can build racecars and donate them to the program.

The St. Louis Woodworker's Guild's donations aren't just limited to toys: they've also partnered with Bring Me A Book St. Louis ([bringmeabookstl.org](http://bringmeabookstl.org)) to help them reach a goal of bringing hardback quality books to under-resourced children to read aloud at home and school. Bring Me a Book provides bookcases and books to pre-kindergarten through

first grade classrooms, as well as books for the children to take home and keep. The St. Louis Woodworkers Guild is building small bookcases for the children to store those books in at home. They build and finish about 30 small bookcases at a time to accommodate every child in a classroom.

Thirty people is also the estimated attendance for the first Toy Build Day at the St. Louis Rockler store. Some were there to observe and to learn, both about the Guild and about woodworking and charitable opportunities.

Another Toy Build Day event is scheduled to be held at the St. Louis Rockler Store on January 12, 2019. Further information can be obtained from the store online at <http://www.rockler.com/retail/stores/mo/st-louis-missouri-hardware-store> or by calling 314-209-1116.

Further information about the St. Louis Woodworking Guild, including galleries of members' work, a library and additional resources, is at [www.slwg.org](http://www.slwg.org).



**The toys are made from untreated wood, with the edges well-sanded. Most are left unfinished for further decoration by the recipients.**



**Rockler associate Ted Hellmann was among those building a variety of toys at the event.**