

Woodworkers Club of Houston

2022 Toy Challenge

Rev. # 4

January 16, 2022

In 2021 the Club membership made nearly 2,000 toys donated to 20 organizations for distribution to underprivileged or challenged children and adults. This number seems to corollate with the past few years with the exception of 2020 when the members made almost 4,500 toys in the spare time that was likely driven by the outbreak of Covid-19.

All of the Toymakers deserve a well-deserved Thank You.

For 2022 I'd like for the Club Members to "Step Up" our game by creating a Toy Challenge.

February Challenge - Any "new" type of toy that is not a car, truck or puzzle that has not appeared in in the past several years. Be creative, but read below to see what you may want to reserve for later months.

To be clear, for this month's challenge, a puzzle is defined as a traditional scroll saw flat puzzle. For example, the February project could be a puzzle box, or one of those 3D brain teasers.

Monthly Toy Challenge – You could win \$500 worth of stuff!

First off – Don't stop making the toys you have made in the past. We still need cars, trucks, and puzzles, along with the other great toys made in years past.

The Toy Challenge aims to stimulate some creativity in the types of toys we make. Although I am using the word TOY, it does not need to be a traditional toy – it can be any item made from wood that would be appreciated by our "clients". It is not intended to replace the traditional cars, animals and puzzles you are making – keep banging those out. The Toy Challenge will be a monthly program to showcase their creativity and skill for some simple items to be distributed to our organizations. There will be a significant prize to be awarded at the Picnic in October.

The Guidelines for the Challenge will be similar to the traditional toys:

- Sand to 220 grit. The objective here is to provide a smooth, comfortable, splinter-free item for small hands,
- Unfinished or painted as appropriate
- Nothing that is so complex that you or others would not want to make 12 or more copies,
- The categories won't be too specific that might require a specific tool. For example, it won't be a "puzzle" because that generally means "scroll saw" and not everyone does that. Not everyone turns, either.
- Detailed plans are not required, but a simple sketch and instructions would be helpful for others to use to make more copies.

How the Toy Challenge will work:

At each monthly meeting you will bring in your toy(s) to make a brief (2-3 minute) presentation (similar to Show and Tell)

Each month you bring an item, you will receive 1 point.

If more than 1 person brings items, there will be "vote" by the members in attendance to pick their favorite and the winner gets an additional point. Additionally, the Club may provide toy making supplies (glue, sandpaper....) to the winner each month.

At the October Picnic your points will be converted to special raffle tickets (1 point = 1 raffle ticket) for a special drawing for a Grand Prize that will be a combination of Gift Certificates or other goods donated by various sponsors (i.e., Clark's, Houston Hardwoods, Mason's Mill, Hardwood Products, maybe Highland Woodworkers, Tay Tools...) that I will solicit (shame if I must) in the coming months. The total package will worth be at least \$500. No raffle tickets will be sold for this drawing – they must be earned through the year.

Finally, I will be asking Rockler's Houston and Woodcraft South for a small bit of space to display some of your toys – detail's to be worked out. The displays may include the Club Brochure and perhaps some advertisement for *Toying Around with the Houston Woodworkers* book. Anyone interested in helping with the design and construction of the display cabinet or shelf should contact Andy Tofuri.

Upcoming Monthly Challenges:

March - A toy with moving parts (Example would be Charles Volek's pull toy Ducks or Grasshoppers)

April – An item specifically for girls (historically they are "underserved" by our huge supply of cars)

May – A toothbrush holder. This should be painted or finished to withstand water. (New toothbrushes and a small tube of toothpaste will be provided for each copy at the Toy Sorting event in November).

June – TBD

July – A toy that makes sound; a simple drum, a train whistle, a cigar box guitar...

August – A toy that needs to be assembled by the child (or even an adult, as some of our organizations serve challenged adults). It would have to be something fairly simple that would not require any special tools. More details to come as I solicit input from our recipient organizations. Examples might be; a birdhouse, a boat. If glue is needed, we can provide small bottles/tubes of child safe glue at the time of the Sorting.

September – TBD

October – TBD

Members suggestions for Monthly Challenges to fill in the blanks are welcome. Send your ideas to Andy Tofuri at andy.tofuri@comcast.net

Any new designs that go into “production mode” that may require parts other than the traditional wheels and axle pegs will be considered for purchase by the club using funds designated for toy making upon approval of the Board of Directors.

Stay tuned for updates.