



2020 Spoon Gathering June 4, 5 & 6, 2020

Join us in Milan for 3 enjoyable days of carving, green woodworking, demonstrations, workshops, presentations, networking, and friendship.

Mission statement.

Sharing the knowledge of carving spoons and related handcrafts, while creating an inclusive gathering for all.



Preparations for the 2020 Spoon Gathering are a work in progress. Some details may change as the event draws closer. If you have not attended before, please contact the school so that you can be added to the email list and receive any updated information as it comes available.

Feel free to contact the school with any questions.

The Spoon Gathering

The seed for a unique green woodworking event was planted more than a decade ago by artist and MVAS spoon carving instructor, Frank Foltz. Frank and the early organizers of the Spoon Gathering envisaged the creation of an event that would encourage carvers and spoon enthusiasts to gather once a year to celebrate the humble wooden spoon.

What started as a small gathering of spoon carvers and enthusiasts in St. Paul has grown into a vibrant and entertaining 3-day festival of carving, friendship, and learning. Each year, carvers from across the United States and beyond converge on Milan to celebrate the wooden spoon, an international symbol of family, meals, and friendship.

The Spoon Gathering today offers a family friendly event for those interested in wood spoon carving and traditional handcrafts. Demonstrations, workshops, and presentations are varied and are sourced from not just the world of spoon carving, but also related arts, skills, and knowledge. In past years, these have included, knife sharpening, spoon blank harvesting and shaping, wood bowl turning on a spring-pole lathe, kuksa carving, birch bark weaving, blade forging and Norwegian knife making, dying wood with natural dyes, chip carving, fan birds and kolrosing.

Novices and absolute beginners are catered to and made to feel welcome. Throughout the weekend, a tent site is set up which allows beginners to access the hands on instruction of a number of Minnesota's finest spoon carvers.

Other highlights of the weekend include a spoon and related arts exhibition by the gathering attendees and a Friday evening potluck party and get-together. Free camping is available. The Spoon Gathering is a carving weekend, so bring your spoon blanks and carving tools or just come to watch and enjoy the weekend.

Venue and Dates

Location: Milan Village Arts School & Burns Park, Milan. Visit www.milanvillageartsschool.org and click on "Location" in the main menu.

Thursday, Jun 4 12 noon till late into the evening.

Friday, Jun 5 All day and late into the evening.

Saturday, Jun 6 All day and late into the evening.

Sunday, June 3

The school is open Sunday morning, if attendees wish to use the facilities.

Registration

Please go to www.milanvillageartsschool.org to register. Tickets are limited.

Registration Fee: Pre-purchased Tickets

Saturday: \$20/adult

Friday & Saturday: \$20/adult

Thursday through Saturday \$30/adult, \$45/family

Pre-registering guarantees a ticket. Numbers are limited to the size of the venue to around 200. Milan is quite a small town with a population of around 350. If the event fills, it is possible to attend for the Saturday only.

Registration fee: \$20 per adult.

[A family consists of a couple or a couple with children.](#)
[Children under the age of 18 are free.](#)

Organized Demonstrators

Demonstrations, workshops, and presentations are still being finalized. All 3 days will have something on offer. As soon as they are finalized, an email will be sent out so please make sure you are on the school's email list for the event. As they become available, the school will also list them on the Spoon Gathering Facebook page and the school's webpage www.milanvillageartsschool.org. Once everything is finalized, a document titled "[Schedule of Events](#)" will be sent out. Anja Sundberg from Sweden is joining us this year and will either be demonstrating or holding a workshop on either the Friday or Saturday.

Impromptu Chalkboard Demonstrations

Keeping with the tradition of sharing knowledge freely, impromptu demonstrations are encouraged and add color and interest to the weekend. While the school arranges demonstrations and presentations for the weekend, please feel free to set up and demonstrate your particular skill. You will always get an appreciative and attentive crowd. A blackboard will be available on the front porch for you to list your demonstration, time and location.

Organized Classes.

2 ½ day pre-event classes will be held again this year.

Anja Sundberg: Details to follow

A second class: Details to follow

Paul Linden: Tool Sharpening Demystified (Beginner and above)

There will be a class in the school till noon Thursday, so please refrain from entering the school till noon.

Carving Time

The Spoon Gathering is a spoon-carving festival, so be prepared to carve. While demonstrations add to the interest of the Gathering, this is a time to meet fellow carvers, network, and work on your latest project. Beginners and novices will be well catered for.

Spoon Blanks

Please bring along a supply of blanks. If you have extra, please bring them for sale, to barter or trade. There is always someone looking for a blank. If you do not have blanks, there is generally a supply available for sale at a reasonable price. Blanks are also available from the bandsaw site by the shelter. Please give a donation. All proceeds go toward the event.

Can I buy carving related tools at the Gathering?

Del Stubbs from Pinewood Forge, <http://pinewoodforge.com>, will be returning this year and will have carving knives and tools for sale over the weekend. If anyone wishes to set up a table and sell items, they are welcome. There is no stall fee, but please contact the school first.

Attendees Items for Sale

Carvers and attendees often have items for sale. This is OK as long as they are spoon or carving related. If you are selling a large amount, please consider donating 5% of your profit to the Spoon Gathering. The school does not monitor sales and contributions are based on the honor system. All funds are used to help fund future Spoon Gatherings. Bartering, trading, and selling is encouraged. If you are not sure about something, please contact the school.

Spoons on Display: Saturday

As is tradition, space and tables will be provided in the school to display your spoons on the Saturday from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. Bring along any spoons you have carved, or other spoons in your collection. While spoons are the focus, feel free to bring other carved items of interest, especially related to green woodworking and carving. You are sure to find admirers. Feel free to sell some of your items. The school is not responsible for selling items, so if you sell, please have your photo with your display so a potential buyer is able to locate you. **Please label your display with your name and hometown. See one of the event organizers for labels.**

The Spoon Wheel for beginners or beginners at heart.

There will be a designated area for beginners to learn from experienced carvers. There will be an "instructor" rotation on an hourly basis so that new carvers can learn a variety of carving techniques. A blackboard will be set up under the smaller tent to advertise the instructor's name and time. If you are interested in being a volunteer teacher in the Spoon Wheel please contact the school prior to the event.

Volunteer Opportunities

There are many opportunities to help during the festival. If you would like to help during the Spoon Gathering, please contact the school.

The Weather

Early June on the prairie can bring almost any type of weather. We have had rain, high temps, cold and drizzly weather and beautiful sunny days.

The best thing to do is be prepared for any type of weather as conditions can change quickly. We will send out a final email shortly before the weekend regarding the weather. Please check the weather reports before departing home.

Refreshments

Complementary Scandinavian coffee, tea, and treats will be provided throughout the weekend. A freewill donation bowl is located in the Beverage Room. If you would like to bring cookies or snacks for the table, please do so. Your contribution will always be appreciated.

Consumption of alcohol is allowed, but please be responsible. This is a family event. MVAS has a drug free policy.

Music

If you are a musician, feel free to bring your instruments. We encourage music, but please remember we are located in the center of town. Noise outside needs to be kept to a minimum after 10 p.m. Socializing often goes on till late into the night. Please be quiet by the fire after 10 and move inside if necessary.

Potluck Party: Friday 6:00 p.m. and onwards.

In past years, the potluck party has been held on the Saturday evening. This was possible when the Gathering was a 1 day or 2 day event. By request, the potluck party has been moved to the Friday evening.

Please bring something to add to the table. There is a microwave in the school if you wish to reheat something. Feel free to bring refreshments of your choice. Please bring your own plate and utensils.

Saturday Evening Meal

We are in the process of organizing a meal for the Saturday evening. In the past, this was held Friday evening. More details to follow.

Thursday or on arrival

On arrival, look for Ron or an organizer. If you can't find an organizer, feel free to set up camp in Burns Park, across from the school. The school will be open at all times, so come in, relax, and use the facilities. The center of the park is used for workshops and activities, so set up tents on the perimeter. There is an alternative campsite just one block away, which is quieter and has more space.

A campfire and a BBQ will be located in front of the school for the purpose of atmosphere and cooking. The school has a microwave in the kitchen for attendees use.

The Milan Beach Resort Cafe is just a short drive away and is open for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Both Appleton and Montevideo have alternative places to eat.

The school will remain open in the evenings as long as carvers wish to socialize and carve.

What do I need to bring?

Please bring your own chair.

Tools you will need for carving and blanks. The school has a number chopping blocks and 3 carving horses.

Cooking equipment. There are no open fires allowed in Burns Park. Gas and charcoal grills are permitted. There will also be a gas grill in front of the school available for cooking. Cooking is also done on the fire pit in front of the school.

Camping equipment if you choose to camp in the park.

Coolers for food and drinks (if needed). There are no refrigeration facilities provided.

Accommodations

Burns Park: Free camping is available on the Thursday, Friday & Saturday nights.

Those attending a pre-event class may camp earlier. Please inform the school.

Pick a spot and set up camp. Toilets will be available in the alley on the east side of the park. There is also a restroom in the school. The town water in the park is safe to drink. Bottled water is available at Bergen's Prairie Market on Main St. There are no facilities for showers onsite, but are available close by (see below). **Note, open fires are not allowed in the park.** Gas and coal BBQs are permitted. A gas BBQ will be provided in front of the school. A fire pit will be provided in front of the school and attendees often use that for cooking.

Also note that it is not permitted to park vehicles in Burns Park. Please park your vehicle on a side street. If you park on the perimeter of the park, please park nose or rear in so that we can maximise the parking space.

If you wish to have full-serviced camping facilities, you will need to camp at the Lac Qui Parle State Park campgrounds about 5 miles outside of town. Call **320-734-4450**.

A limited number of RV hookups are available in the Lions Park on Hwy 7/59 in town.

Payment is by donation. For information call **320-734-4411** and talk to the Town Clerk.

Campers are allowed wherever they can find space. There are no powered sites in the park or by the school.

For those looking for more space or a quieter location, the field behind the Milan Community Center (old Milan High School) is available for camping and is just a short walk to downtown.

Please note that camping is only available on the Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights. If you arrive in Milan on the Wednesday, you will need to find alternative accommodation. The Lac qui Parle State Park is a good option.

Showers

There are no showers onsite, but there are showers available at the Lac qui Parle State Park campgrounds. Please try to use the showers outside of peak camper time.

Cost:

1. If you are a current holder of a Minnesota State Parks Annual Vehicle Permit (\$25), the showers are free. No key necessary. Just go and have a shower.
2. If you do not have an annual permit, it is possible to purchase a 1 day permit at the front gates to the upper campground (\$5). The permit is per car, so several people can enter at a time.

For other choices of accommodation, please visit www.milanvillageartschool.org and click on "location" on the top menu.

Services in Town

Bergen's Prairie Market

Thursday & Friday 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Saturday 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Sunday 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

The Milan Beach Resort Cafe.

3 miles west on HWY 40 on the banks of Lac qui Parle.

Prairie State Bank

ATM available 24/7

billy maple tree's Gift Shop

Friday 10:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Saturday 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Gas Station

On the corner of Hwy 40 and Hwy 7 as you come into Milan from the south. The station is card only.

Cell phones

Phone reception in Milan can be questionable depending on your provider.

Feel free to use the school's phone if it is an emergency. Talk to Ron or an organizer.

There is no fee for charging phones, computers or cameras in the school. There are multiple places to charge a phone in the school. Attendees are responsible for their own property.

Frank Foltz. Founder of the Spoon Gathering

Frank Foltz was born in Mt. Pleasant, MI, where he lived until leaving for Chicago to pursue an education. He began whittling when kids were still encouraged to develop their skills with a knife, carving his first neckerchief slide with the Boy Scouts at age 11. Carving became a part of his life and after moving to Minnesota in 1976, Frank began carving wooden signs for businesses.

While finishing a degree in creative therapy in 2001, Frank began carving spoons and woodenware in the Scandinavian tradition from Minnesota hardwood and fruitwood. His spoons were a co-operative venture between his creative whimsical nature and the piece of wood with which he was working. No two pieces are alike and all are intended to be used as well as enjoyed for the elegant beauty of the wood and design. One of his main interests was reviving the use of wooden spoons in everyday life for eating as well as cooking and the carving of spoons for self and friends. To that end, he found himself spending more time teaching spoon carving as folk art. Frank was an extremely popular wood spoon carving instructor at the Milan Village Arts School for a number of years until his passing in 2009.

