



# From The Shop



The newsletter of the Lehigh Valley Woodworker's Guild

Issue 10.2008

**Next Meeting: October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2008 (3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday!)**  
**Location:** WOODCRAFT on Lehigh Street!!

**Title:** October Woodworking contest .....  
**and 10% off birthday discount from Woodcraft!!**

**NOT YOUR BIRTHDAY? NO PROBLEM!**

**WOODCRAFT WOULD LIKE TO EXTEND OUR BIRTHDAY DISCOUNT TO ALL GUILD MEMBERS AT THE OCTOBER 21<sup>st</sup> MEETING. (THAT NIGHT ONLY ALL BIRTHDAY EXCLUSIONS APPLY).**

**They will provide food and drinks.**

## **Annual Woodworking Contest! October Meeting!**

Up front so you remember!! Allen Powell went over the procedure for the contest, as follows:

3 categories:

- Woodworking
- Turning
- Miscellaneous er Miscclaane – er Other.

3 levels in each category:

- 0 – 5 years in woodworking
- 5 – 10 years in woodworking
- Professional (> 10 years, hardly makes a pro, but you ought to be decent)

Valuable prizes:

- \$100 people's choice award, \$50 for first in category, \$25 for second, or something like that. Sounds like too many prizes to me.

Judges will be 3 members of the steering committee who, unlike me, do woodworking. I would be doing woodworking but I use up too much time writing this thing.

Our professional friends who judged the last one will not be used this year due to threats on their lives from former losers, but we will not mention losing as it is still too painful for some of us. (edges too sharp – I loved that one! Glue squeeze out – yeah, right..)

I will not be the reporter of record in October as I will be busy on vacation. First meeting I will miss since April 2006, but who's counting? I was going to submit something for the contest but I cut myself on one of the wood edges and have not finished scraping all the glue off yet... Have a good time.

## September Highlights:



**Tom Loveless better hold onto the 2200 watt router. He gave a great demo of Festool's latest and greatest.**

**FESTOOL DEMO!** The Kapex Sliding Compound Miter Saw, A monster router, Edge trimmer!

Our local Woodcraft, namely John Schaffer, arranged to have Tom Loveless of Festool provide a presentation on some new products. Ah, Festool. We have had a couple of demos from them, and the layout in Woodcraft allows a good look at them all. I guess the question is – What woodworker in their right mind would NOT want to toss every tool they own and replace it with a Festool product? I have some fine power tools. And they are all like new because I never have time to use them as I am too busy writing this newsletter (Didn't I say that in the last section?). Porter Cable, DeWalt. Bosch. Great stuff. Great stuff for the money. Festool is in a class by itself. First off, I do not know of vendor, tool for tool, that is more expensive. But the features, robustness, finish, ergonomics – they are worth every penny in my opinion if you A – Can afford it – and B – have the need. We will see some of that here.



**Melanie Carl, Assistant Manager of Woodcraft sets up nice handouts for our members.**

Tom Loveless was in millwork and other woodworking for 23 years as a craftsman and an owner. Festool approached him to represent them as a solutions and applications specialist. Wow. What the hell is that? Well, it is a person who knows the business and knows tools and knows how tools impact the business. Tom works with distributors and end users to show them how Festool can perform a certain function that they may need to do their work. Tom travels around in a van with one of each Festool product in it so he is prepared to address any situation. (I mentioned if he gave me his keys, I would be happy to act as valet parking for the van, but he was smarter than that. I think Schaffer warned him about me....). This is something you get for the price as well.

Tom started with the monster router. He started by saying that, until this unit came along, the best router around was the PC 7539 plunge (My first real router!) When your average tool manufacturer builds a tool, it needs safety, features, a certain degree of robustness, and must be priced to compete with other vendors' offerings. When Festool sets out to build a tool, they do not build one based on price point. Price has already more or less been covered – they ain't cheap. They build it based on the idea that the tool should have the best robustness that they can build into it, features that will enable the user to do darned near whatever they need to do with it based on use, perhaps a who bunch of stuff they may not need today but may want tomorrow, safety, dust collection, Ergonomics that not only make the tool safe and comfortable but saves time

in use. Lots in input from users. The OF2200. 2200 watts. 18 amps (POP that breaker, sonny!). Variable speed. Captures 90+ percent of the dust due to an ingenious clear shroud on top of the base that slides up and out of the way but slips down over the shaft and collet to seal the top, and a rotating cup on the bottom. Routers create a LOT of sawdust. Mounted on a table, it can be controlled to some degree. But handheld? It was pure pleasure to watch. Tom used a BIG roundover bit on a hunk of oak. Like a ¾" or 1" roundover. I am using the word Big here. One pass. . Tom mentioned that, in one demo, a user actually snapped a ½" Carbide bit – this is powerful! The dust was almost non existent. Plus, this puppy did not even slow down a little. Not a little.



**Here is the router in action doing the second pass. The first pass that took off most of the wood is done. Where's the sawdust? There was almost none.**

Oh, yeah, hogging off all that wood leaves a bad edge, right? Well, it was very good on the first pass, but Festool has a feature that allows a 2 mm cleanup pass. The initial setting does the work. Then with the flip of a lever, the bit is dropped another 2 mm to your finished depth and a final pass is made which leaves a finishable surface. Amazing. Such a simple feature. Have we all done this? Yes. With the flip of a switch or did we have to readjust for the cleanup pass? You tell me.

Some other nice features are a ratchet that tightens the bit and holds the bit while the wrench does the rest of the work tightening the collet. Oh, yeah, the ratchet level is electric green, like all Festool controls. In Tom's words, "if it is green, it does something." The handles have easy access to the VS feature, on and off, plunge lock. Oh yeah, the lock engages both pillars for extra accuracy and stability. You can also do a micro adjust after the initial setting without drastically changing anything by the used of some ingenious stops. Very cool.



If it is green, it does something. Bit ratchet in the middle, fine tune adjust at top left, a network of rods on the left to allow fine tune after locking, the 2 mm final pass setting, VS on top right. If you get a black and white printed copy, these are not green.



The ever popular Festool systainer with the accessories and extra base plates. Pricy, but well made and thought out.

Of course, no Festool comes without an accessory kit. The router is designed with snap off baseplates. A robust mechanism hold it in place, and a lever disengages it. There are a few different baseplates,

one of which is an offset base for more stable routing on edges. The baseplates also employ drop in collars that have all manner of functions, and one is the right size for use on the Porter Cable collar system as well. There is a micro adjust edge guide as well that is also made with the same robustness, smoothness, and precision that Festool puts into all of its products.



Nice shot of the offset accessory baseplate, with the rotating dust collection cup attached. Great idea that works.



A closer look at the business end of this router. Note that the center hub has a clear plastic collar that lowers over the bit to act as a dust collection plenum.

Let's talk a little about price - \$800 for the router. Yup. \$800. The accessory kit with the baseplates and guides and other doo dads will set you back another \$325. All in Festool "Systainers". Tom talked a little about this, and applied it to a production shop. Many production applications require a hand held router. How much time does it require to clean up? And you know you cannot just clean up at the end of the day because routers create a lot of debris. How much does a dust collection system not only contribute to lack of cleanup but to the cleanliness of the shop? After the Festool demo, no sweep up was needed! A second point was that, when he ran his own shop, he had a wall full of routers. These are good name tools. A

bearing rebuild on a PC7539 plunge cost about \$125, and, even though this is a production quality tool, used heavily, it was not unusual for him to send one out twice a year for a rebuild. With a price of \$450, and \$250 a year in rebuild cost, you are very close to the price of a Festool, which is warranted for 3 years. Add it up over 3 years and you likely save money with the Festool just on purchase and maintenance costs. Now – the home shop owner will likely NEVER use a PC7539 long enough to burn out the bearings (Well, the bearings on my PC 6" Saw Boss are shot.), but then there is the dust collection and the features. I can say that, having seen this tool in use, if I was going out as a buyer for a monster router, and had the money to spend, I would look very closely at this marvelous tool.



**Standard mount laminate trimmer. But it has fine tuning controls, great stability, offset baseplate, many other features. This does conventional laminate trimming to the edge of the top.**



**The right angle baseplate. The ball bearing rides the side and the adjustable depth bit trims laminate to the edge of the side. Again, infinitely adjustable in a very fine tune manner and offset plate for stability.**

Next up was a laminate trimmer, the new MFK700. Hard to get too excited about a laminate trimmer. But it was cool. It works in the conventional manner, and also has a horizontal baseplate that allows running the router plate along the top of the piece with the bearing riding the side to trim off top excess. This is a big time

saver for production shops or people who do a lot of laminate work. Tom advised of some real life time trials he did with kitchen counter fabricators that cut time to flush cut a vertical piece into a small fraction of a fellow using conventional methods (belt sanders and such..).

One big difference between this and other laminate trimmers right off the bat was the robustness of the tool and the fine tuning smooth adjustments. Down to 1/10<sup>th</sup> of a mm! Not like most machines that are flimsy at best (except for the old PC laminate trimmer that is no longer made...). This one comes in a systainer with all the baseplates and stuff for \$510. Not a really exciting tool, but important if the application requires it. Dust collection built in and capture 90% plus in most applications.



**The Kapex. Amazing saw. It has everything you would want and a few things you would not expect but love. Cannot possibly explain it all in this review, but Woodcraft has them on display.**

Last but far from least is the Kapex Sliding compound miter saw. \$1400. And Woodcraft is selling a lot of them. When Festool designed this, they set out to give 12" capacity with a 10" blade. Reason – a 12" blade has too much flex in it to provide accuracy that they wanted in one of their tools. People use this for trim work. Trim work requires precision. I do trim work with an axe and some filler. My stepson gets upset if you can see a hairline in a joint. So – would I spend \$1400 for a Kapex? Again, depends on your use for the tool, need for the features and accuracy and robustness.

Frankly, 12" sliders always scared me, and they are usually huge and heavy. The Kapex is pretty easy to move. It is a variable speed, dual laser tool. Lasers are also field adjustable and every person may have their own preference for setup. It is a rail forward design, so it balances better than a rear rail system which tends to be back heavy. It can cut a full 12", and 3 1/2" thick at 90 degrees. It can cut 6 5/8 crown. The saw not only slides but it also locks for pure "chop box" applications, and since the back side of the blade goes up past the

center point, the rear capacity of this as a chop box is equal to a 12" saw. There is also a fine tune depth of cut that allows you to make field dados. Not with smooth bottoms, but pretty good. Has a quick change blade – lock the arbor with a small knob and unlock the blade. The blade locks with an Allen wrench. The tool has a cord wrap too. Most SCMS's have the bevel adjust to the rear, a twist lock type thing. This has a level lock and a twist handle n front that adjusts bevel in a rack and pinion method that was silky smooth. Plus, since the lock is a lever and not a twist lock, there is no shifting / walking to the setting. It weights 47 pounds, which is pretty light in view of the power, size and features. Of course, it has all the nice dust collection features of all Festools. When locked up in chop box setup, since the blade guard (which acts as a plenum in normal cutting and assists in dust collection) us locked up, dust collection is still excellent but not quite as good.



Tom Loveless begins his presentation on the Kapex.

There is a very neat item included with the saw. A protractor that can capture either inside or outside bevel angles so they can be accurately transferred onto the Kapex. Great for places where walls are not square, which is every home I have ever worked in (I believe that anyone who sets a saw on 45 degrees and expects to get a good inside or outside cut on trim needs some serious counseling...). I liked this protractor thing a lot and asked if it could be purchased separately. This can be purchased separately for like \$130, and is not cheap but is well made (how many times have I used to word 'robust'? – it just fits these products...). John Schaffer said actually the cost of the saw is \$1400, but it was \$1300 for the protractor and \$100 for the saw. I told him to keep the protractor and I would give him \$100 for the saw but I needed time to find an ATM machine.



Note that when the saw is set up on chop box mode, the setup takes advantage of the height of the space to the rear of the blade to allow a very deep cut.



The tilt is controlled by a flip lock in the rear and a front handle twist. Set it, flip the lock again. Front tilt controls make it easier to get where you want without going to the back of the saw.

Tom Loveless did a great job presenting. Moved through each product briskly and pointed out every feature in the course of setting up the demos. Obviously knew his subject matter, no sales pitch, pointed out the value added. Lets face it, for the money, these things better have a lot of value added, and they do.

Festool – I have said it before. If you have the money and use tools casually, they are still worth it in that you get the pleasure of using a fine piece of machinery. If you are on a limited budget and a casual tool user, You may need to think twice. If you are in this category but used the hell out of a certain tool, given the features and build quality, you cannot really go wrong. Festools uniformly perform at the top of most tools tests I have seen and add the reliability and dust

collection and features, and it is a compelling choice. If you are in a professional shop, Tom's example of how a Festool actually costs less was something to ponder.



Dual laser shows up well here. The room was pretty well lit too.



Hold down is typically robust and well engineered Festool. Note the miter gauge set jig in the storage compartment in the base sticking out to the lower left.

I do not own any Festool products. I do not use the tools I have. That said, I may be giving my stepson my circular saw one day as I really like the Festool circular saws. Their sanders are wonderful. That monster router is just amazing. You make the choices. All of their tools are amazing, the dust collection is world class, the reliability as well. The systainer system and accessories are a real plus. The systems (tables, guides, other items) are well engineered and thought

out. You make the choices. If you can cost justify them, you will have a magnificent tool that you will never look at with buyer's remorse. If you cannot cost justify them, and buy them anyway, I hope you are not married - unless your wife does woodworking too....

### Blocks and Allen's new bag!



Allen shows the guild how his cosmetics will not fall out of his new bag because of the chic Velcro closure! Actually a great bag for blocks very well made by Tim Enot's wife and associates.

Allen Powell followed the woodworking contest info with a review of the block project deadlines. Bob Enot had a sample of the bag for the blocks, beautifully made to dimensions that will hold a standard set. What a great thing to do!

### From former speaker Scott Shimandle of OSHA

I do want to let you that our OSHA office is currently conducting a Local Emphasis Enforcement Program on Saw Mills, Planing Mills and mfg of Wood Pallets and Skids. The emphasis of the OSHA inspection is on how the company is managing the occupational noise exposure from the equipment and machinery. We are also looking at how the employer is managing it's Hearing Conservation Program to provide/afford employees protection from noise. For additional information on noise and OSHA's standard go to the attached hyperlink of our web page.

<http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/noisehearingconservation/>

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours in Safety and Health,  
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**Tony O'Malley selling a show piece and some tools:**



**Picture does not do justice to this great window unit for sale by Tony O'Malley**

Tony just placed some tools on Craigslist and among them are Lie Nielsen - a pair of never-opened spokeshaves, list price \$270 for \$220. Still in un-opened boxes.

Contact info:

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**To Contact Us Via Email, [tonyo@fast.net](mailto:tonyo@fast.net)**

**mailing address is:**

Tony O'Malley Custom Woodwork  
556 N. 2nd St  
Emmaus, PA 18049

**His web site is:**

[http://www.tonycustomwood.com/WindowSeats\\_3.html](http://www.tonycustomwood.com/WindowSeats_3.html)

### **Drag and Brag**



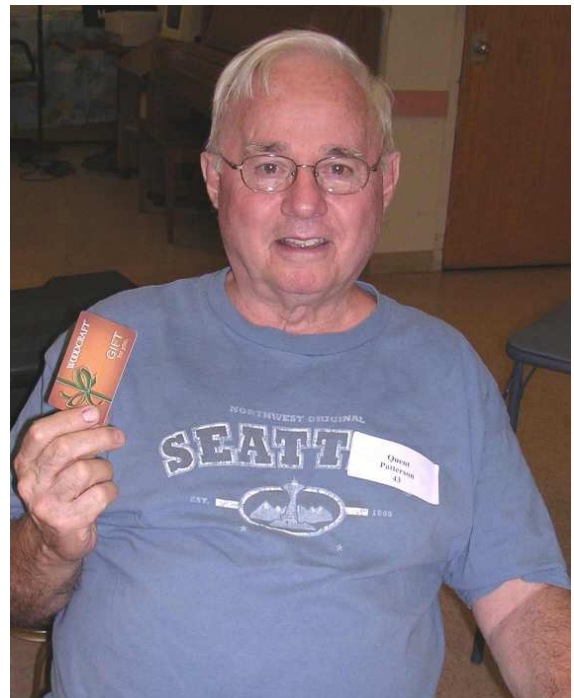
**Root of unknown material on a marble base. Will Schmidt (WHO ELSE?) is looking for a name. IN the foreground is a small sycamore desk piece that can be used as a letter opener. Will donated it for a door prize won by..**



**Don Westwood! Thanks, Will!**

### **Steering Committee notes**

### **And the Woodcraft winner is...**



**Smiling Quentin Patterson - AGAIN!!**

### **Wood Specials**

#### **SHADY LANE TREE FARM**

Louise & Mike Peters  
5220 Shimerville Road  
Emmaus, PA  
610 965-5612 Please call

**FLEETWOOD LUMBER & FLOORING**

BILL BURKERT  
27 Rapp Rd.  
Fleetwood, PA  
610 944-8364 Please call  
**Member discount 5%**

**Bailey Wood Products, Inc.**

441 Mountain Rd.  
RD#2 Box 38  
Kempton, PA  
610 756-6827

**Woodcraft**

Pkwy Shopping Ctr.  
1534 Lehigh St.  
Allentown, Pa., 18103

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**2008 Meeting Calendar:**

Month	Topic	Speaker
October 21st	CONTEST TIME!	
November 18th	FREUD DEMO!	Freud tools –arranged by Woodcraft

**Next Meeting: OCTOBER 21st, 2008 (3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday!)**

**Location: WOODCRAFT on LEHIGH STREET!!**

**LVWWG Annual Contest Oct 21 @ Woodcraft**  
**10% Birthday Discount for All**  
**Refreshment Supplied by Woodcraft**

