

Product Reviews

Interesting Items from SWAT • Part 1

by Kurt Hertzog

Last August, I had the opportunity to attend the SWAT Symposium in Waco, Texas. The symposium is always located in Waco in late August, and runs on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. The attendance at SWAT is second in total attendees only to the AAW Annual Symposium. It was well planned and well executed, with super facilities and great presenters. I enjoyed it thoroughly and highly recommend it. The 2013 event is scheduled for August 23-25. I regret that a prior teaching engagement will prevent me from attending, but I can assure you that it is already on my calendar for 2014. Some items in the trade show at SWAT that I thought might be of interest are included in this group of product reviews. Space prevents me from including them all, but look for more in the next issue.

SHOE COVERS BY KAY

At a quiet booth in the trade show, a lady was busily sewing—she was making turning smocks and shoe covers. I have enough turning smocks to last several lifetimes, but the shoe covers struck a chord. For those who turn while wearing shorts—as I often do—the chips that get into your shoes or sneakers come back to haunt you (not usually at that moment, but down the road). You can brush off the chips, shake out your shoes, and try to get all the debris off the socks—but you never get all of it. At some point, the little pieces of wood that escaped the brushing, make it through the washer, and hide in the weave of the socks,

waiting to spike you when you least expect it. Over the years, I've used everything from snowshoe gaiters to cleanroom booties. Sure, they work somewhat, but typically they are overkill and a pain. Kay Leonard's shoe covers give us a beautiful solution. Velcro closures make them easy to put on and fasten (see Fig. 1). The shoe covers hug your leg, shield your shoes, and depending on your personal style, are quite fashionable. I bought a pair and absolutely love them. They are well made, easy to use, accomplish their task, and available at a bargain price. They were \$10 at the show in the snazzy blue color. Contact Kay directly if you have "spikey" socks in your life and long for a change in the situation (see Fig. 2). She can be reached at 903-372-9056 or by e-mail at KAYL99417@gmail.com.

THE LITTLE RIPPER AND ROUND RIPPER COMBO

If you've ever spent any time on YouTube, you might have seen the turning videos by the "Crazy Canadian." Paul Moore and his family run a company called Stockroom Supply in Wainfleet, Ontario, Canada (see page 74). Paul is an absolute lark to meet and deal with. His company not only is a dealer for many woodworking products, but is also a manufacturer. One of the items that Paul has designed and he and his company manufacture is the "Little Ripper" and an accessory called the "Round

Fig. 1



Simply made and fully functional, the shoe covers provide ankle-hugging contact, yet are easily put on with Velcro fasteners.

Fig. 2



I saw two different colors on display in Kay's booth, but she may have other colors to select from.

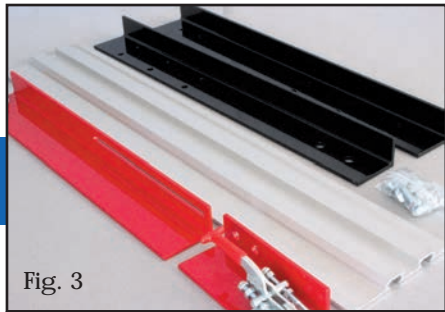


Fig. 3

The foundation of the Little Ripper is the track system and the table-clamping mechanism. The design is adjustable and will grasp almost any make and size of bandsaw.

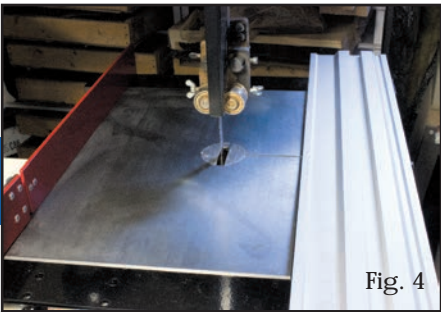


Fig. 4

Once assembled to the saw, the fastening clamp is loosened, allowing left and right adjustment for the guide channel. All the system pieces ride in and are guided by the extruded aluminum channel.



Fig. 5

The resawing clamp is easy to use. The entire clamping mechanism is adjustable and can clamp anything from a section of log to dimensioned stock.



Fig. 6

With virtually no effort, the sliding clamp is slid forward in the channel and the system will cut off the thickness of wood for which it has been set up.



Fig. 7

This is the optional bowl-blank fixture. The bowl blank rests on a pin with the clamp screw shallowly threaded into the blank.



Fig. 8

The clamping framework for the Round Ripper will accommodate a 16" diameter x 8" high blank.

Ripper." The entire system works incredibly well by guiding everything on an extruded aluminum track that is clamped to the bandsaw table (see Fig. 3). The Little Ripper arrives in a flat box—it is fairly heavy, but is easily assembled on the bandsaw. The design is intentionally adjustable to accommodate a wide range of saws.

Once the guide rail and clamping system are in place, the Little Ripper platform and clamp are assembled (see Fig. 4). With major-league gripping teeth, the wood-gripping system easily clamps round, flat, green, or dry stock. A length of log (with most of the branches cut off) is secured to the ripper slide fixture as easily as dry dimensioned lumber. The package comes with extension rails allowing for expansion to grip much larger work.

The alignment cut is accomplished with the very first cut so that every subsequent cut will be uniform in thickness. That thickness is set by the adjustment of the guide rail (see Fig. 5). You can cut thick or thin—it makes no difference to the Little Ripper. After the truing cut, it was easy to cut very thin, yet extremely uniform pieces the thickness of veneer—less than 0.012" thick in 4" x 4" x 12" dry cherry. I didn't try for thinner, but certainly the Little Ripper

was stable and accurately guided enough to do so (see Fig. 6).

The Round Ripper is an optional attachment (or can be bought with the initial package) and uses the same clamping and guide mechanism discussed previously. The Round Ripper allows bowl blanks or other circular objects to be cut easily and safely (see Fig. 7). The Round Ripper is set up with the stop blocks adjusted so that the center bowl-blank pivot point is properly aligned with the saw blade. The blank rests on a pin in the bottom of the fixture and a screw is shallowly threaded into the blank from above. This permits half logs to be cut safely with the bark side down. The upper shaft, threaded into the blank, allows the blank to be rotated during the cut by a hand-wheel on top of the fixture safely far away from the blade. The diameter limitation is based on the clamping framework. The brackets that I have will accommodate blanks 16" in diameter and up to 8" thick (see Fig. 8).

I found the Little Ripper and the Round Ripper easy to set up and very easy to use. Both worked well. The Little Ripper cuts nicely, producing uniform and easily controlled thickness both in dry or wet wood. The Round Ripper per-

formed equally as well. The saw blade for the bowl blanks obviously needs to be selected based on the diameter circle being cut. I removed my usual 3/4" three teeth per inch (tpi) blade and replaced it with a 5/16" three tpi blade that was used for both operations. That blade worked well for both types of cutting.

Since both fixtures sit on top of the aluminum guide channel with the sliding blocks sitting in the guide slots, putting them in place or changing them is a simple operation. Just pick a fixture up, set it into the channel, and it is ready for use.

The parts for the Little Ripper and the Round Ripper are made by Stockroom Supply at their facility in Wainfleet. Everything is industrial grade with aluminum or powder-coated steel parts and quality hardware. Folks with the need for veneer or the desire to resaw lumber will find that the Little Ripper is a valuable addition to their shop; and bowl turners will certainly enjoy the Round Ripper. My suggestion is to buy the combo package and enjoy them both. You can order or find out more about the *Stockroom Supply* products at www.stockroomsupply.com/shop or by calling 877-287-5017. Don't forget to visit YouTube and search out the "Crazy Canadian" videos. I'm sure that you'll get a kick out of them.

JT TURNING TOOLS

The SmartSteady is from JT Turning Tools in Omaha, Nebraska. They had an assortment of many new implementations of tools and equipment for woodturners on display at SWAT. Over time, there will be product reviews on many more of their products; but for this issue, I'll review the SmartSteady and the Gizmo.

Built from massive components, the SmartSteady is stable and stays put. It is the traditional three-roller steady system with the advantages of using one, two, or three wheels for support, and an "Erector set" modularity that allows for almost any size to be accommodated (see Fig. 9). Not only are the uprights modular so that they can keep getting taller and taller as needed, but there is no framework that the piece being turned has to pass through. There are two huge advantages to a "nonsur-

rounding" system. First, you can add the steady and remove it from service without disrupting the work mounting or tailstock or both. Second, and really versatile, is that the support wheels do not need to be in line; they can be positioned as desired both up and down the length of the turning, and also on a rotated axis should the shape warrant that positioning. You also have the freedom to position the support rollers radially around the turning with much more flexibility than most other steady supports (see Fig. 10).

The SmartSteady achieves this incredible versatility from the design. The base plate has six different mounting positions for the upright post brackets. This allows for very small diameter work to be cradled by sliding the brackets inward so that they scissor, and for larger work by either placing the brackets at the extremes or skewing the base plate as needed (see Fig. 11).

High-quality roller blade wheels with the best bearing sets are used along with industrial-grade materials and hardware. The mass of the materials makes everything rigid and vibration dampening, so that once adjusted, things run smoothly and support the work well. The SmartSteady also is easily adapted to various-size lathes. A change of the ways locking block is all that is needed to go from one size to another size lathe using all the rest of the system components.

I own several steadies ranging from homemade to local-toolshop made to quality manufactured products. In comparison, the SmartSteady was easiest to use, the most versatile, and the smoothest running of the entire lot. Another bonus is the shipping cost. Though very heavy, it will ship in a flat-rate USPS box at a reasonable price. You can find out more about the SmartSteady and the other *JT Turning Tools* product line at www.jtturningtools.com or call 402-330-9801.

The Gizmo

The folks at JT Turning Tools had several other items that were interesting. Though I couldn't include all of them, I did manage to spend some time using the "Gizmo." The Gizmo is *JT Turning Tools* hollowing system. The Gizmo

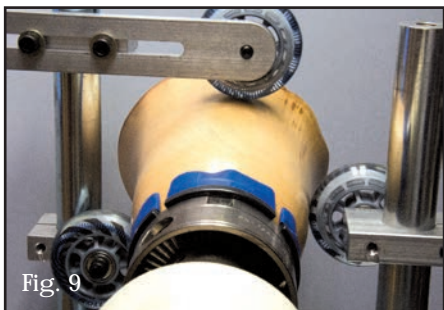


Fig. 9

The SmartSteady is a modular construction that allows end users to configure the size steady for the size work they normally do.

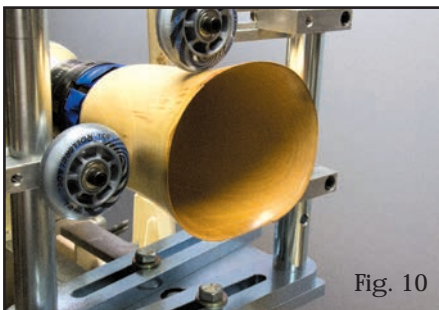


Fig. 10

Without a surrounding framework, the SmartSteady can be employed and just as easily removed without any disruption of the work already mounted—it can be added, adjusted, used, and removed with a few wrench turns.



Fig. 11

Being versatile by design and made with quality fabrication and components, this rest is adaptable from small to large work.

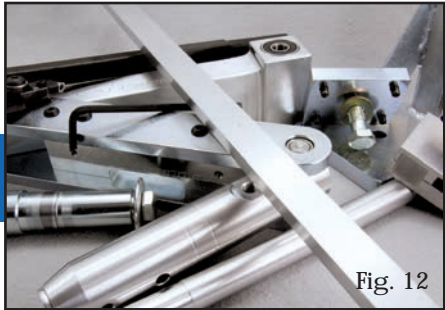


Fig. 12
The Gizmo is made from quality parts and the design lends itself to different-size lathes with only one simple part change—the mounting bracket.



Fig. 13
The Gizmo has a unique construction in the articulated arm segment. It is a fabrication that works in principle similar to an “I” beam.

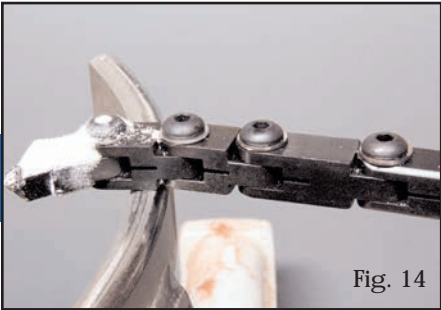


Fig. 14
The cutter mounting system is a link system that allows for easy and flexible cutter positioning, but is strong and rigid in the cutter-deflection direction.

arrived packaged nicely and was easily put together and adjusted (see Fig. 12). Similar to many other articulated arm systems, it has a mounting bracket that will allow it to be used on different-size lathes. The lathe clamping block is the same design as used on the SmartSteady, so it is easily installed or removed from the lathe.

The Gizmo has a laser system that clamps nicely on the laser-mounting riser and is easily adjusted to indicate the cutter tip or the desired wall thickness, depending on your style. Two special design and manufacturing features set the Gizmo apart. The structural link in the articulated arm segment is designed and built similar to a metal “I” beam (see Fig. 13). The concept is not only incredibly strong and rigid, but the piece can be made and adjusted to be true, rather than a welded assembly that often distorts from true because of the welding process stresses.

The other unique feature is the cutting tool-mounting system (see Fig. 14). Rather than the traditional pivoting point and clamping mechanism, the Gizmo uses a metal linkage that has tremendous adjustability. It is very rigid and strong in the direction of the force, yet can be articulated by way of four pivoting points that lock by tightening

a cap screw. Straight lines, varying curves, “S” bends, and more can be created with the tool-mounting system (see Fig. 15). The carbide cutter makes short work of the hollowing process and is bedded properly to give it plenty of support. The cutter holder can be rotated to any angle to allow for a variety of cutter presentations (see Fig. 16). It worked flawlessly and was easy to use. The easy and flexible laser adjustment and the cutter-positioning system made it very adaptable to cutting needs. The Gizmo is heavy duty and built with quality materials—built to last a lifetime and then some. You can find out more at www.jtturningtools.com or call 402-330-9801.

HUNTER WOODTURNING TOOL ADDITIONS

Though they aren’t terribly new by the time this issue prints, I’ve had a chance to test-drive some of the recent additions to the *Hunter Tool Systems* product line. I also had a chance to spend some time with Mike Hunter at the SWAT Symposium and become familiar with recent additions.

The square-shafted tool of the Hercules series is named appropriately. It is a beefy tool meant for the stresses put on a hardworking tool. The square tool shaft

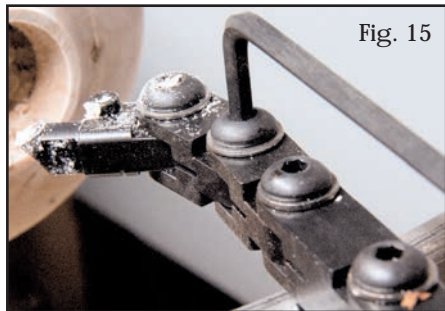


Fig. 15
The four individual pivot points let the user adjust to virtually any desired position with respect to the arm. With an Allen wrench, you can quickly and easily adjust to straights, varying bends, “S” curves, and more.



Fig. 16
There is a flexible laser system to indicate the cutter position or wall thickness in accordance with your wishes.



Fig. 17
These are some of the recent additions to the *Hunter Tool Systems* family—the *Hunter #1 Mini Hercules* (left), the *#2 Osprey* (right rear), and the *#1 Osprey* (right front).



Fig. 18
The #1 Osprey (left) and the #1 Mini Hercules (center) share the same carbide cutter design bedded at different angles; the #2 Osprey (right) cutter is much larger in size. The Ospreys have round tool shafts, while the Mini Hercules has a square tool shaft.



Fig. 19
The #1 Mini Hercules square tool shaft helps keep the tool flat on the rest during use. Both Osprey tools cut nicely when rotated to present a skewed cutting edge for an extremely clean as cut surface finish.



Fig. 20
There is a new dog series of laser-cut pen blank kits from Kallenshaan Woods, which include a chihuahua, beagle, German shepherd, yellow lab, golden retriever, and poodle, and coming soon are a Yorkshire terrier, boxer, Cairn terrier, Welsh corgi, and weimaraner.

presents the cutter to the work in a fixed orientation, and it is for doing the removal without “finessing” the tool rotation. The difference between the #3 Hercules and the #1 Mini Hercules is the cutter size (see Fig. 17). The shaft is changed to accommodate the cutter size and workload. The #3 has a 5/8" square shaft and the #1 Mini Hercules uses a 3/8" square shaft; both are available handled or unhandled. I got mine unhandled, and they easily fit and lock into the various set-screwed handles around my shop.

I spent considerable time using the #1 Mini Hercules and it performed extremely well. It was used for roughing spindles, spindle shaping, bowl work, box hollowing, and general turning where I needed a rugged tool. It performed all the tasks thrown at it without any complaints. With all my testing, I didn't even need to rotate the cutter to present a fresh edge (see Fig. 18).

The Hunter Osprey series tools follow the same nomenclature. The #1 Osprey uses the #1 cutter and is sized appropriately; the #2 Osprey uses the #2 cutter and is larger to accommodate the cutter bedding needs, but also the tool overhang in use. The Osprey series has round tool shafts that allow the user to rotate the tool as needed to present the cutter in a slicing position. This works extremely well to remove dense woods cleanly, especially when cutting end grain. The #1 and #2 both worked quite nicely for all the tasks I put them through. Mine were unhandled and I used them in the aluminum handles I bought years ago. The handles were light and mid length, allowing for dexterity when trying to see how many different places I could use the tools. The Osprey tools performed everything I asked of them and were especially handy cutting end-grain lidded boxes (see Fig. 19).

The Hercules and Osprey tools are built and finished in the tradition of all the Hunter Tools products. They are sturdily built with the cutter supported well in a form-fitting nest with a Torx head screw securing the cutter. As needed, the Torx screw is loosened, the cutter rotated, and then refastened. Once the entire cutter is spent, a replacement is installed and you are ready to go again.

The carbide cutters are not only long-lasting, but extremely tough. From my experience with both the Hercules and the Osprey series, I think they would be a valuable addition to any tool selection. You can see the tools in action by visiting www.hunterwoodturningtool.com to view the videos. More information, pricing, and the tools are available from there, as well as from retailers worldwide.



Fig. 21
Typical of the Kallenshaan Woods kits are precision-cut pieces that are all singulated and through-colored. The dog series provides realistic looks without being so complex that the kits become complicated.

KALLENSHAAN WOODS DOG SERIES PEN BLANK KITS

I'm running short on space, but I wanted to at least make you aware of the new dog series available from the folks at Kallenshaan Woods (see Figs. 20 and 21). They've released this new series with their typical multicolor woods to create “pictures” of your favorite breed. Currently, there are six kits available with more being released soon. Watch for a complete review of these kits in the next issue. In the interim, you can find more information about Kallenshaan Woods dog series at www.kallenshaanwoods.com.

In the next issue, there will be a review on the Kallenshaan Woods kits, more from JT Turning Tools, the latest eccentric chuck, stabilizing blanks, and more.