



Old Saw *Articles*

The Newsletter of the Guild of New Hampshire Woodworkers

by Al Saffron

Thetford Academy Grant

The Guild supports the growth of woodworking with grants to students and schools, as well as the programs members are familiar with. At its January meeting, after what the meeting minutes described as significant discussion, the Steering Committee (SC) approved \$3,000 of a \$4,000 grant request for a new Powermatic 3520B lathe from Chris Schmidt, Design Technology Instructor at Thetford Academy in Vermont. The approval was made confident that the school could find the \$1000 from other sources and they would get the lathe, but we also knew that wasn't certain and our check would be too little.

Was the \$4,000 amount a major concern for the SC? Yes and no. The fund has the money. The SC considers important factors with each grant request—the situation, the number of people benefiting, the use of the money, and other resources available. These factors become even more important as the amount of money requested gets larger.

Thetford Academy is an independent town academy serving as the public school for grades 7-12 for the town of Thetford, as well as the school of choice for many surrounding towns, including several in New Hampshire. The Design Technology Program serves approximately 100 students each year. Also benefiting from the shop is the Upper Valley Woodturners Club with members from both NH and VT who meet at the shop every other month and support the Academy students. And when possible, the

school offers adult education classes that would use the shop to the community as well.

Currently, Thetford owns two Laguna 1 hp lathes and two Delta midi-lathes, all of which are used nearly every day. The Laguna lathes are a bit underpowered, often cutting out when turning larger bowls. One of the lathes has lost its digital speed readout and lacks the hand turning wheel on the headstock. It is in need of new bearings and has no safety shield. Rather than pay to repair this lathe, Chris thought it better to replace it with a Powermatic 3520B, which has a shield guard, a digital speed readout and smoother controls making it a safer machine for the students. The Powermatic would also have the power to turn larger bowls, and an indexing capability allowing students to do more advanced decorative work. Purchasing a new lathe would be a safer investment for the school and offer many years of use for future students.

It was clear that the new Powermatic lathe was needed, a good choice, and would benefit many. But \$4,000 is a very large part of our education funds, and that was a major concern for the SC. How would that limit what we could do for others? Fortunately among the ten of us around the table that night, we had some lathe cost expertise as well as some with familiarity with Thetford Academy. After the SC considered other resources that might be available to Chris, it was decided we could provide \$3,000, still a significant sum for the Guild, and that we

needed to ask Chris and the Academy to make up the rest.

We considered other resources, but we didn't realize there would be several together. First, Dan's Maxsaver of Charlestown, NH, the Academy's local Powermatic dealer came through with a very generous discount, possibly foregoing most if not all their profit. The Upper Valley Woodturners contributed by saving the school the freight and setup charges by doing it themselves, and later may be able to provide some additional turning tools. With those contributions, the Academy was able to cover the balance. The shop got its new lathe on March 9th and the next day the Guild received these photos of the first student turning an impressive looking bowl. Congratulations Thetford Academy on your new lathe.

I wish to acknowledge Chris Schmidt for his contribution to this article, inadvertent that it was. Thanks—AS. ●



Sophomore Dillon Piper—the student who got first crack at the new Powermatic. The bowl in the picture will be his entry in the contest at the Guild's May Youth Symposium. He and two other students will be joining Christopher Schmidt for that Saturday.



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