

Behind the Scenes

with Kurt Hertzog



Stockroom Supply

You would be a rarity as a woodworker or woodturner if you weren't familiar with the "Crazy Canadian." This YouTube phenomenon has more than a dozen videos with millions of viewers. Paul Moore uses these videos as an advertising means to promote Stockroom Supply in his own off-the-wall, tongue-in-cheek version of what he believes some American's perception is of Canadians.

Back in the 1980s, Paul worked in a hardware store and advanced into managing the tool department. As part of the *Black & Decker* pro-tool advisory team, he was deeply involved in hand tools. With this background, Paul and his wife began a tool store that ultimately grew into seven stores. Eventually, they had to close the stores when they faced Home Depot's expansion into Canada.

With the closure of their tool stores, Paul and his wife began selling abrasive paper to the consumer market. At first, it was sold out of the trunk of their car, but quickly their sales moved into woodworking shows as well. In order to draw attention to their booth at the shows, Paul began to do live demonstrations with buffing wheels. This grew into the Sanding Mop product. Another popular sanding item was belt sander sleeves. The problem was that they had difficulty always having exactly the right size that customers needed. Paul's frustration with this led to the invention of the drum sander using Velcro attachment of strips of abrasive paper. The drum sander kit became the next Stockroom Supply product offering.

The Little Ripper product was originally developed for a bandsaw company, but their decision not to adopt it led Paul to patent it and produce it on his own. It was selling, but didn't take off until the creation of the sliding table about four years ago. Now, rather than relying on the bandsaw miter slot, the sliding table turns a bandsaw into an upright bandmill. At the 25th Anniversary Symposium of the American Association of Woodturners in St. Paul, the need for a way to safely cut bowl blanks became apparent. Many woodturners who made their blanks freehand were often putting their fingers into harm's way. Paul and his son Ethan developed the circle cutter attachment for the sliding table.

The Stockroom Supply company, which had begun in Paul's trunk, soon outgrew its home operation and moved to another expansion building. Soon it had to move again and is now housed at its present site. In 2005, Paul and his

wife bought the current building, which had a previous life as an independent automotive garage. The irony of it is that the building was built by Paul's father and operated by him up until about twenty-five years ago. The building was sold and owned by others until Stockroom Supply purchased it, and turned it into its manufacturing and warehousing operation.

Stockroom Supply has used its website to reach customers since the beginning, and it has won awards for being business and consumer friendly. The business is fairly evenly split between mail-order/Internet sales and the trade shows. Since Stockroom Supply's entry into the United States trade show circuit, Paul's wife and son take care of the seven woodworking shows in Canada and Paul takes care of the twelve- to thirty-show circuit for The Woodworking Shows in the United States. He demonstrates the Little Ripper and Circle Cutter at the U.S. shows mainly to take orders. The Canadian shows are "sales" shows, featuring the entire product offering from Stockroom Supply. In addition, it is the Canadian distributor for *JessEm* router tables, *Hegner* scroll saws, *Klingspor* abrasive paper, and *Woodline* products. Stockroom Supply also sells router bits and wood screws.

The company is a small, tight-knit family operation with five of the seven employees being from Paul's family. Its manufacturing operations, as well as its sales, warehousing, shipping, website, advertising, and product development, are located onsite. Currently, Stockroom Supply's own six products and other items keep them busy.

Originally made as a challenge, the viral videos have had their effect. Joe Strong of The Woodworking Shows challenged Paul to do seminars at the shows. Paul said he'd do a video in preparation, but only if Joe would use it on the show's website. That was the beginning of the Crazy Canadian videos, and as they say, "The rest is history." Done as a wild and zany eye-catcher, the series now numbers a dozen or more with many millions of viewers. Though done as a joke and a method to promote awareness of Stockroom Supply, the video personality is Paul's outlook on life. Being happy and having fun with all he does is Paul's method of operation. You can see all the Stockroom Supply products on their website at www.stockroomsupply.com.



Fig. 1. Located in the southern Niagara region of Ontario, Canada, Stockroom Supply isn't a typical "walk-in" sort of business. With a population of 6400, the town is miles and miles from the nearest Tim Horton's.



Fig. 2. Outgrowing its previous locations, the company is now located in an old automotive garage.



Fig. 3. Not necessarily intended as a showroom, Stockroom Supply will entertain any walk-in business. The showroom is really storage for its trade show booth displays.



Fig. 4. Originally, Stockroom Supply was selling abrasive paper to the consumer market. It is the distributor for Klingspor abrasive paper products in Canada.



Fig. 5. Another of their trade show and Internet sales products is an extensive line of router bits. These are the mobile displays of the router bits used in their trade show booth.



Fig. 6. Stockroom Supply is the Canadian distributor for JessEm router tables and Hegner scroll saws. These help round out its own woodworking and woodturning product offerings.



Fig. 7. The same as any manufacturing and warehousing operation, there are storage, receiving, and shipping areas. The entire operation is housed in the old automotive garage.

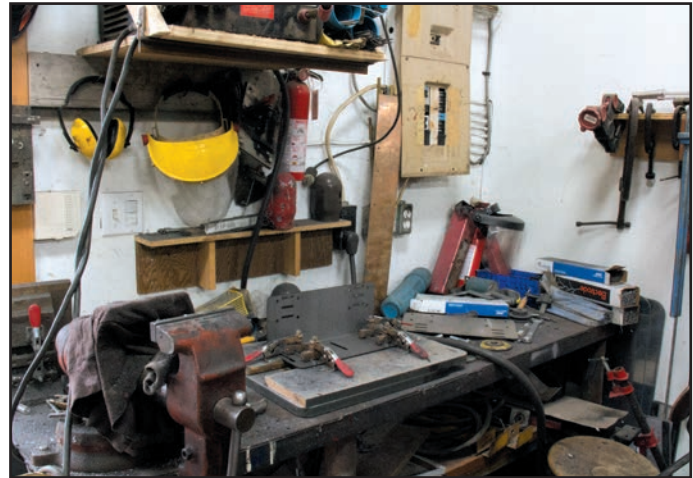


Fig. 10. Many of their products require welding. Jigs and fixtures make the process reliable and repeatable. The professionalism of the finished products belies the company's size.



Fig. 8. The manufacturing area is where all of Stockroom Supply's products are produced. Paul is proud that they manufacture their own products onsite, rather than source them from overseas.



Fig. 11. Fifty percent of their business is done by way of the Internet. Phone and Internet orders are handled in-house along with the website and social media aspects of the company.



Fig. 9. The manufacturing is done on manual machinery operated by Paul and his son Ethan. From raw material through the finished product (other than powder coat painting), the work is done by them onsite.



Fig. 12. The Stockroom Supply products are assembled in batch. At the U.S. trade shows, only orders are taken for

fulfillment. At the Canadian shows, products are available for purchase right at the show.



Fig. 13. Paul is a metal worker at heart and enjoys the time he spends at the lathe running production. Between Paul and Ethan, they produce virtually all the component parts for their products.



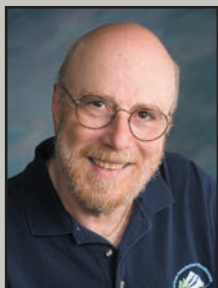
Fig. 14. Like many companies in the woodworking and woodturning field, Stockroom Supply is a small family-run company. Paul, his wife, son, daughter, and daughter-in-law (all shown), and two non-family members make up the entire company.



Fig. 15. Starting as a challenge to develop a trade show seminar, Paul concocted the “Crazy Canadian” persona. Shown here with his comedic dovetail saw, his entire shtick has gone viral on YouTube with many millions of viewers.



Fig. 16. If you are ever in Wainfleet, Ontario, stop in and say “hello.” You’ll recognize the place with Paul’s retired Prince Edward Province fire truck out front. It’s his get-around-town company car.



Kurt Hertzog

A professional woodturner, demonstrator, and teacher, Kurt Hertzog enjoys the continuum of woodturning, from making his own turning tools to photographing his finished turnings.

Kurt is a regular feature columnist for both *Woodturning Design* and *Woodturning* magazines, one of the five Council Members of the Pen Makers Guild, and a member of the Board of Directors of the American Association of Woodturners.

Kurt’s work has been featured in the American Association of Woodturners “Rounding The Corners” Exhibit, and he has been published in *Woodturning Design*, *American Woodturner*, *Woodturning*, *Pen World*, and *Stylus* magazines. You can see his work on his website at www.kurthertzog.com.