

Do You Own Tools You Never Use?

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Every so often I open a cabinet or drawer and find a tool I haven't used in several years, or maybe never. I'm sure I'm not alone in this category. I wonder why I ever made that purchase (I don't have a family history that provided hand-me-downs). Maybe I succumbed to a pop-up ad on my computer, or maybe the discounted, one-time sale at the local woodworking retailer hit me at a weak moment while I was in the store looking for something entirely different. Or, in the best case, I watched a video and the expert presenter used a tool or material I would need if I decided to build whatever it was he/she was building. Maybe it's none of the above! In the worst case, I discover that I have two of the same – possibly an early sign of dementia.

I have occasionally bought and sold items on Craig's List, but I'm finding that service less and less useful. My millennial contacts tell me nobody uses Craig's List anymore – they have moved on to Facebook Marketplace. And too often, if you get any responses at all, they are from obvious scammers like your Nigerian friends. If you have something to sell that is easy to ship (like a chisel for example), eBay is an option, but not really a practical one if you are selling a miter saw (unless you state up front that the item is for local pickup only). So, what do you do with something you never use?

I sold my house in July 2021. While decluttering, one option I used extensively was donations to several charities, including Restore (Habitat for Humanity). This organization welcomes tools, some building materials, and construction components like doors, windows, etc. But I'm not sure a buyer at Restore would appreciate a really fine mortise chisel, or tenoning jig, or flush cutting double edge Japanese saw. And I'm not sure what other outlets would welcome such donations.

Yes, I know all about the pandemic and the inability of in-person meetings, especially group meetings. I realized that the Saturday monthly EMGW events were about more than the featured speaker but a chance for social gathering and exchanging ideas, experiences, project results, and lots of tips. Socializing provided added benefits to membership – we get some of these benefit at the Monday night FIG zoom meetings hosted by Tim, but it's only some, not all.

All of which brings me to the 64 thousand dollar question (for those old enough to remember the show). I yearn for the pre-pandemic times, the monthly in-person meetings, and especially the annual EMGW member's auction.

I am aware of several organizations, both charitable and for-profit, that are holding on-line auctions these days. In fact, I have contributed a little-free-library (littlefreelibrary.org) to two charities for sale at their auctions. (see photo)



So --- what do you do with the tools you never use? I wonder if the annual EMGW auction could be hosted online. Would it work? Would members be interested in buying and selling to each other over the world-wide web? Deliveries would have to be organized individually.

A few days after writing this Bevel Cut article I got an email from Woodcraft Woburn, as I'm sure did all of you, announcing their first annual tool swap – a live event to take place in their parking lot on Saturday Oct 16. “All deals are between seller and buyer” – the store is not involved apparently. This eliminates the need for an on-line auction and gives you a chance to see and touch the items you are thinking of purchasing. So now I'm thinking that this could be an approach for the guild. We could meet in an outdoor space, socialize, and unload those tools you never use – all while supporting EMGW.