

SAWMILL FORUM

CASEY
CREAMER

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DOCTOR



Whenever new customers make it clear that they run a small operation that won't be running while they are at my shop having their saw hammered, I usually suggest that they bring their loose collar with them. This allows me to check the taper, which can have a big impact on how well the saw runs or doesn't run.

The fast collar, of course, is the side more likely to have problems, but it's not as easy to bring along because it's more or less permanently attached to the mandrel shaft. Pronouncing the loose collar to be good enough, therefore, doesn't necessarily mean that the fast collar doesn't need to be resurfaced. But it's a pretty safe bet that if the loose collar is bad, so is the fast collar. When the customer and I can look at the loose collar together, it gives us a good opportunity to have a conversation about the importance of good, accurate collars and what their function is. I also show them how to check the fast collar when they get home.

Today, a new customer brought in a loose collar, the likes of which I have never seen. He has an old Lane hand-set mill. I

almost threw up when I saw this collar, before he explained that it was like that when he bought mill and set it up. He didn't realize there was anything odd about it until I started to gag. You can see what I'm talking about in the photos below.

I can't even begin to imagine what the previous owner might have been thinking when installing that extra washer with those two gaping flat spots. I spent quite a bit of time trying to figure what the misguided intent could have been. I don't think my customer even knew at first that there was a separate washer as part of this mess.

After thinking about this bizarre set up for a few minutes, I explained to the customer what must be happening when the saw is clamped into that configuration.

My next task was to inspect the saw and begin working on it. In just a few minutes, I was able to locate some very severe bends that perfectly matched the shape of the extra washer. Needless to say, these are not the kinds of bends you want to see in a saw, especially right at the collar line. I proceeded



to find a lot more wrong with the saw—most likely resulting from running it after it was distorted by the weird collar and washer.

Just so there is no confusion here: There have been a few companies making saw mandrels with a removable fast collar. Of course it is hard to call it a “fast” collar if it is removable. The design employs a collar washer between the saw and the non-removable collar. This collar washer is essentially flat on one side, but it has the proper taper and relief configuration on the saw side. So when you shear the pins and damage the collar, you have damaged a removable part that can be easily taken to a machine shop to be resurfaced without having to remove the entire mandrel. And, you can also have a mated spare loose collar and removable collar washer sitting on the shelf for a quick change.

But the one I worked on (and scratched my head over) today had absolutely no relationship to that saw design. Isn't it grand that we get to see new things all the time?

Questions about sawmills and their operation should be sent to Forum, The Northern Logger, P.O. Box 69, Old Forge, NY 13420, FAX #315-369-3736.

The author is a saw doctor and president of Seneca Saw Works, Inc., P.O. Box 681, Burdett, NY 14818, tel. (607) 546-5887, email casey@senecasaw.com.

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