

PAXTON/PATTERSON  
FEATURED SCHOOL

# Woodshop...?

## ...No, it's much more!

SPRINGFIELD HIGH SCHOOL, SPRINGFIELD, PA

### An Environment That Stimulates Problem Solving

SPECIAL  
POINTS OF  
INTEREST:

- **Projects that stimulate and excite students through problem solving and critical thinking**
- **Meet the Teacher**
- **Projects that require thinking and skill**
- **What does it take to be the teacher**
- **About Springfield High School**

At Springfield High School students develop outstanding problem solving skills because their teacher, George Trout, rarely specifically answers their questions. Instead of telling them how to do something Mr. Trout says "I pride myself on never giving the exact, full answer when asked. I simply try to bump them in the right direction by firing a question back that makes them think a little deeper." This is a skill that excellent teachers master because in doing so they teach their students how to think, which is much more valuable than how to do something or give a correct answer.

As Trout puts it "the goal is to assist as many kids as possible in the least amount of time by pinballing from one to the next with

tidbits of information. When everything gels it is a beautiful sight, even better than a well made piece of furniture."



**Mr. Trout offering a Question not providing an answer**

Production mistakes are not only accepted they are encouraged as learning experiences. Woodworking has proven to be a valuable vehicle not only to help kids problem solve, think for themselves and gain confidence, but also to motivate, provide friendly competition, and promote collaborative learning. The wood-working environment provides a practical venue to teach measuring and fractions which is often lost in a typical classroom.

As Mr. Trout says "it is my hope that these life lessons will be remembered and carried forward to every aspect of their life. Their clocks, furniture and other projects will always serve as a reminder of what they accomplished at such a young age and inspire them for new challenges."

### Meet the Teacher - George Trout

George Trout is an amazing teacher but he really never had that as his goal. Instead he focused on helping students apply math & science while developing superior problem solving abilities. Currently in his 21st year of teaching without ever taking a sick day, he says "I remain convinced that I made the right deci-

sion to stay in the profession. I've had some of the greatest kids in the world, often for two, three or even four years. They are amazing and have made my job and life worthwhile." A great teacher like a great coach always points to others as the reason for success.



# Projects That Require Thinking and Skill

Trout's classes routinely attract both male and female students and they create some finely crafted projects. These photos demonstrate the craftsmanship and the detail of the projects.



Projects by Trout students Chris D'Esposito (right) and Katheryne Sponheimer (left).



*"Surprising to most, I do not consider myself a wood worker in the least."*

*George Trout*

## What Does It Take To Be the Teacher?

"Surprising to most, I do not consider myself a woodworker in the least. I have never hand-cut a dovetail, fashioned a cabriole leg, shell-carving, ball-and-claw foot, or mortise-and-tenon joint from start to finish in my life." says Trout. "I have however instructed and assisted on thousands. My job is to get them started and to help solve problems along the way."



Tyler Hodinka (above)

## About Springfield High School

Set in the center of Springfield, Delaware County, PA, 10 miles south of Philadelphia, the school is a comprehensive high school of approximately 1,200 students, of which 140 -150 are annually enrolled into the Industrial Materials program taught by Mr. Trout. He would love to share more about his program or give you ideas for your own so please call or e-mail..

For more information contact:

**George Trout**  
**Springfield High School**  
**49 West Leamy Avenue**  
**Springfield, PA 19064**

**610-938-6144**  
**Please e-mail Mr. Trout with**  
**comments at**  
**TROUTGEO@ssd.k12.pa.us**



Jason & Jeremy Lynch with their 1924 Model-T Truck