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ILLUSTRATED

SUMMER 2008 ■ ISSUE 43

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NEW DEPARTMENT!

on the web

Walking Stick Gallery

Serpentine Walking Stick, pg. 32

See a variety of David Stehly's beautifully detailed walking sticks that we couldn't make room for in the article.

Color Reference Chart

Paint Primer, pg. 62

It can be difficult to match an instructor's paint colors. This handy chart makes it easy to compare different brands!

Turned Wood Gallery

Carving on Turning, pg. 46

See more of the artists' carved turnings online and be sure to check out the brand new book!

Sharpening Techniques

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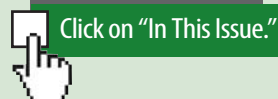
Custom Chess Set Gallery

Strategy with a Theme, pg. 24

This is another article that quickly filled the allotted space. Log on to view a variety of Jim Arnold's creative chess sets.

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Alex's Birdhouse Adventure

My youngest son, Alex, is in Cub Scouts. My husband handles the heavy lifting, like building the Pinewood Derby car, but he works second shift, so a lot of the smaller items fall on me. This year, one of the requirements was to build a birdhouse. I absolutely fell in love with Barry McKenzie's birdhouse featured on the cover of the last issue and knew that was the one I wanted to build with Alex.

I started searching for white cedar. After several fruitless experiences, I called a small lumber yard in my hometown. He didn't have white cedar, but said he'd be happy to order a piece for me. I was quite disappointed a week later when I went to pick up the wood. In my mind, I envisioned beautiful, white, smooth wood. The board he offered me was grey, unfinished and ranged from ¼" to ½"-thick across the 8" width. I didn't have to take it, he told me, but heck for five dollars I figured I could do some sanding, or Alex could anyway.

Well it turns out Alex hates to sand. And I actually knew this from watching the Pinewood Derby ordeal, but thought I could talk him into it. No such luck. So I sanded, and I sanded, and I sanded some more. Next we went up to the shop to measure and cut our pieces. Then we measured and drilled the holes to accommodate the dowels for the front door. Unfortunately, I forgot to take the reduced width of the stock into consideration, so I drilled the holes a second time.

We glued the birdhouse together, and you know, it didn't look half bad! Now for the next dilemma. Alex wanted to paint it blue—he's a huge Patriots fan. I, on the other hand, did not want a blue birdhouse in my yard. I'm happy to say I won that battle. We painted the birdhouse green, just like Barry's original and then carved the design. Those little round berries are tricky, some of them were conveniently omitted from the final carving.

We hung the birdhouse on a fence post where we can see it from the front porch. It's nowhere near as beautiful as Barry McKenzie's version, but Alex and I are pretty darn proud of it. He keeps asking me to open the front to see if anyone has taken up residence. My mom saw it and asked me to make her one... I'm not sure I'll be undertaking that project again any time soon, but if I do make another one, I'll plan ahead and order planed wood from one of the vendors on page 93!

Shannon Flowers

Shannon@FoxChapelPublishing.com



My son, Alex, proudly displays the chip-carved birdhouse we created.

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Micro Motor Detailer, page 21

Heavy-Duty Flex-Shaft Power Carver Kit, page 18

Woodcarving excellence.



Woodcarving instructor email scam

There's a new twist on a familiar scam circulating in the woodcarving community. Instead of requesting a price for the "beautiful (insert name) carving/artwork," a price is asked for carving instruction. I received this instructor inquiry and refer to it as the "Blossom Letter." Blossom introduces herself and tells us a bit about her son. He is an exchange student, soon to come to the United States, and Blossom is wondering if it's possible to arrange a woodcarving tutor for her son. Cost is no object, she just wants her son to have the best instruction. She then asks for a price.



First red flag: really bad grammar. Second red flag: She doesn't say in her initial letter WHERE her son plans on attending school. Are we to assume woodcarving instruction determines where her son will attend school? Usually school/host family arrangements are made well in advance.

Upon answering Blossom's query, she gives you a few more details. Arrangements are made for payment. She even gives you a phone number. Next a check shows up. Of course it's for several thousand more than the cost of instruction. "Oops," Blossom says, "could you please wire the difference back by Western Union?" She then gives you very detailed instructions on how, where, and who to wire the money to.

The scam is that you deposit your check and wire the difference, then a few days later, you get word from your bank that the check has bounced. You are now out whatever amount you wired to Blossom. These checks are sophisticated forgeries. The scammer is depending on the several days it takes to pass through the banking system. By then it's too late to stop the Western Union transfer.

Several of my friends had also received this letter, and we all had one thing in common—we belong to the same woodcarving forums. Having administrator privileges on one, I went behind the scenes and found our scammer. This person registered on three forums using the same user name, e-mail address, and IP address (I traced the IP to Beirut). I posted the information publicly on the woodcarving forums. Blossom was banned, and I'd like to think I slowed the scammer down a bit.

Please be suspicious about out-of-the blue emails. Check the validity of an e-mail with an internet search. Most times you'll get several sources verifying the inquiry is a scam. You will know for sure when you get that check for more than you requested. There really isn't anything you can do to stop these people; all you can do is be vigilant.

Editors Note: Lori is one of several Woodcarving Illustrated authors that received similar solicitations. We encourage you to exercise caution anytime you get an unsolicited e-mail. Take the time to find out all of the details before agreeing to anything.

Lori Corbett
Contributing Editor



FOX HUNT

Keith Revolt of Traverse City, MI and LT Harrison Roper of Hewitt, TX, currently serving in Iraq, are the winners drawn from the correct entries received for *WCI* Spring 2008 (Issue 42). The fox was on Page 72, photo 7 of the Kolrosing article.

If you find the fox in this issue, contact us and tell us the page number and location. Two readers randomly selected from all correct replies will receive a \$25 Fox Chapel Publishing gift certificate. Entries must be received by July 1, 2008, to be eligible. *NOTE: If his feet were on the "ground," the contest fox always faces left (other foxes appearing in WCI don't count).*

Send your entry to *Woodcarving Illustrated*, Attn: Find the Fox, 1970 Broad St., East Petersburg, PA 17520, or e-mail to editors@woodcarvingillustrated.com.



Set It Straight

The cover shown in Further Reading for the "Elegant Oak Leaf Mantel Clock," by Wayne Barton, which appeared in *WCI* Spring 2008 (Issue 42) was incorrect. The correct cover for *The Complete Guide to Chip Carving* by Wayne Barton is shown above.

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Getting paid when your carving is damaged in shipping

Susan Mattix of Hudson, FL, regularly deals with a gallery in Illinois. One of her unsold carvings was being returned. When the carving arrived, the packaging material was in perfect condition, but the carving inside was in pieces.

"When I unpacked my Santa riding the pig...it was awful!" Susan said. "Both hind legs of the pig were snapped off. The carousel-style post was snapped off at the base."

Several other pieces were broken off and the base itself had deep gouges in it.

"This was not the usual tiny end of something snapped off," Susan added. "It took some serious force!"

Susan immediately called the gallery and initiated a claim with the carrier service. After several emails and calls, Susan requested an on-site inspection instead of



Susan's carving was badly damaged.



Jason Salada, Fox Chapel Publishing's Warehouse Manager, offers a few tips on dealing with a damage claim:

- *Insure the carving. UPS insures each package for \$100 automatically, but your artwork may be worth more.*
- *Inspect the box upon arrival. Make sure the driver notes any damage.*
- *Report any damages immediately. If the shipper has a vendor account, it is often easier for them to initiate the claim, but the receiver always has the right to file a claim.*
- *Keep the box and packaging material. The carrier will want to inspect the contents as well as how it was packaged.*
- *Use caution; if the shipper authorizes a payment, they may require the damaged item to be surrendered.*
- *For best results, use a box with a strength rating certificate on the bottom. If the package is within the weight recommendations, the certificate can expedite the claim.*
- *Pack your artwork well to withstand a rough journey. Wrap the carving in bubble wrap or surround it with packing peanuts. Make sure there is no room for movement inside the box. Then place that box inside a larger one with packing peanuts surrounding the smaller box.*

having the courier pick up the damaged artwork. The carrier sent her specific instructions on how to photograph the packaging material and the broken carving.

"They wanted to recreate the way it was packed when it arrived," Susan said. After nearly two months of correspondence, the shipping company settled the claim and paid for her loss.

"The best advice I can give is to be nice, submit all the information they ask for, and be persistent when you don't hear anything for a while," Susan said.



Call for Entries!

Woodcarving Illustrated is pleased to announce the 2008 Santa Carving Contest. Compete for top prizes and the chance to have your work featured in the magazine. Judges will select one Grand Prize Winner and three Honorable Mentions. Finalists will be featured on the WCI website where the People's Choice Award will be selected by the woodcarving community.

Deadline for entries: September 1, 2008.

Contest Rules:

1. Carvings will be judged on overall presentation, technical execution, and originality.
2. Carvings cannot have been entered in a previous WCI sponsored contest.
3. Carvers may submit more than one piece.
4. Winners may be asked to ship their Santas to East Petersburg for studio photography. Carvings will be returned.
5. By entering the contest, you are agreeing to have a pattern of your carving published in the magazine.

To Enter:

Submit the following information:

1. Clear photos of all four sides of your carving. Photos must be traditional prints or digital files. Photos printed on home printers cannot be accepted.
2. Information on the project size and types of wood used.
3. Your name, address, phone number.

Entries will be acknowledged, but photos and materials received will not be returned. Please do not submit original artwork.

Artists retain all copyrights, but consent to having their project published in print and electronically for the editorial and promotional use of WCI. This may include having a pattern of the project published.

Submit entries to:

Santa Carving Contest, Woodcarving Illustrated, 1970 Broad Street, East Petersburg, PA 17520, or email: Editors@WoodcarvingIllustrated.com.

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Cutting triangular blanks

TOP TIP ✓

From Don Worley
New Carlisle, OH

It can be difficult to cut the triangular blanks for Mark Gargac's Olde World Santa (WCI Holiday 2007, Issue 41) using a table saw or band saw with a traditional rip fence. Since I planned to cut several, I designed a jig that makes it safe and easy to cut the blanks with a band saw.

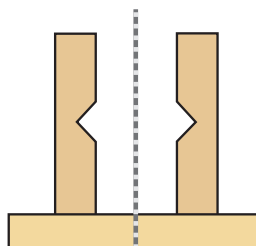
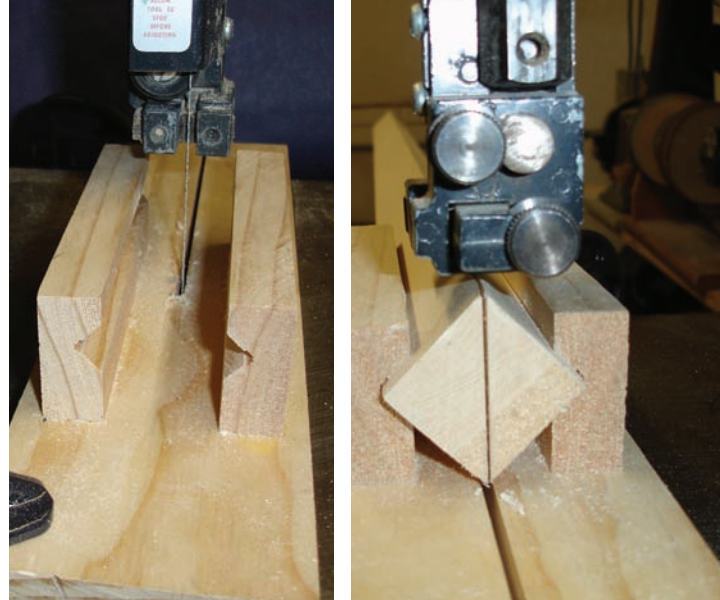
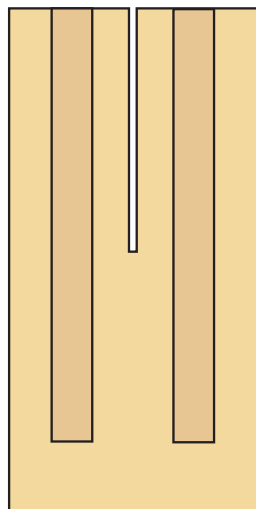
This jig was designed to be used on my Sears band saw; the base is sized to fit from one side of the table to the other. The jig makes it easy to rip a 1⅜"-wide x 1⅜"-thick block diagonally into two triangular pieces.

Cut a slot half way through the base in the center of the blank to accommodate the band saw blade.

Cut two 45° grooves on each of the upright pieces, creating a triangle to hold the corners of the stock. Set your table saw at a 45°-angle and cut one side of the groove. The cut should be half the thickness of the wood you are using for the uprights. Flip the blank over, and cut the other side of the groove. Screw the uprights to the base so the distance from the bottom of one groove to the bottom of the opposite groove is 1⅞". Adjust the space as necessary to fit the stock you are cutting. Leave a bit of space to allow the blank to be pushed through the jig.

To use the jig, position it on your band saw table with the blade centered in the jig. Clamp the jig in place and feed the blanks through. Push the blank through the jig until you get close to the blade. Then feed the next blank through. The incoming blank pushes the first blank through the blade. On the last blank, pull the wood past the saw blade from the cut side.

Top view



Side view

A simple jig makes it safe and easy to cut triangular blanks for a variety of carvings.



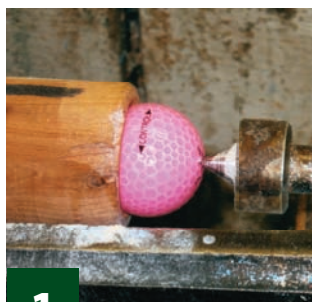
TOP TIP in our next issue will win a Super Carving Set from Dura-GRIT. Send your tip to *Woodcarving Illustrated*, 1970 Broad St., East Petersburg, PA 17520, or email to Duncan@FoxChapelPublishing.com.

Removing Golf Ball Covers

From Don Cary
Lima, OH

I use a lathe to remove the covers from golf balls for carving. Turn a semi-circular recess in a piece of wood. Size the recess smaller than the diameter of the golf ball, but deep enough that it doesn't bottom out when you clamp the ball between the wood and the lathe's tail stock.

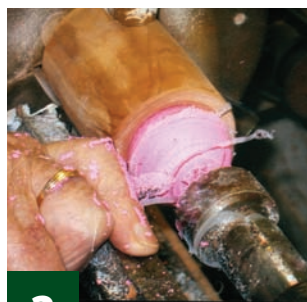
Photos by Kevin Roberson and Ryan Courtney



1

Secure the ball.

Clamp the ball between the recessed piece of wood and the lathe tail stock. Make sure the ball is held securely. Don't be afraid of damaging the core with the tail stock; the small hole will disappear in the core material.



2

Remove the cover.

Score the cover with a bench knife and use a ¼"-wide skew chisel and a gouge to shave away the cover. Smooth the core with a file and a sanding screen. Remove the ball from the lathe and pop off any remaining cover.

Tips from the Masters

Temporarily attach eyes to a nail head with putty for easy placement.

(David Stehly, Page 34)

Use caution when cutting along the grain with a veiner or V-tool.

(Chris Pye, Page 57)

Correct painting mistakes with a quick knife cut.

(Larry Koosed, Page 67)



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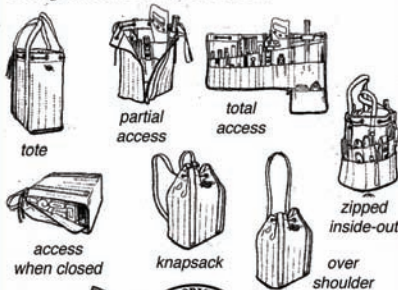
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Tree Spirit

Allen Berg of Lizton, IN, carved this tree spirit into a live cottonwood tree. He uses a chain saw to rough out his carvings and adds the final details using chisels and gouges. In addition to carving live trees, Allen carves a variety of Santas, ornaments, and busts. One of his ornaments, a carving of the historic Whitcomb Riley home in Indiana, was displayed on the White House Christmas tree.



Walnut Clock, Basswood Owl

William Zelt of Loveland, CO, used basswood (linden) for the owl and walnut for the main clock. It measures 18" wide by 26" tall. He inset the numbers into the dial face and painted the clock hands to match the insets. William recommends creating a clay model for every project to work out any problems before you start carving. The clock is featured in William's book, *The Spirit of Carving Clocks*. To order his book, send \$20 (includes s&h) to William Zelt, PO Box 7714, Loveland, CO 80537.

Chain Saw-Carved Bench

Julie A. Ray of Spokane, WA, works as a pediatric registered nurse. The father of one of her patients is a chain-saw carver, and inspired Julie to get an electric chain saw and teach herself to carve. Julie constructed this Hawaiian-themed bench from recycled wood and painted it with acrylic washes.



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New DVDs cover the basics of traditional carving

Woodcarving with Chris Pye, Volume 2: Letter Carving and Volume 3: Ornamental Carving

By Bob Duncan

Chris Pye's books have always been a go-to resource for me, but nothing compares to seeing the action in real time. These DVDs focus on basic carving techniques. Actually seeing the subtle hand and arm movements makes the process a lot less intimidating.

In Volume 2, Chris breaks the Roman-style alphabet into four sections: uprights, serifs, junctions, and curves. He demonstrates how to carve each section. Once you master these four elements, you can carve any letter. Chris covers everything you need to know to successfully carve letters including the tools required, and how to hold and use them.

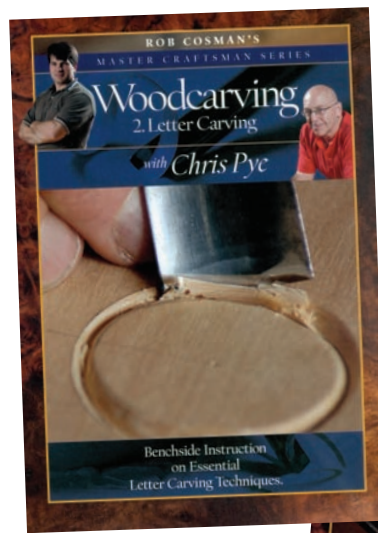
Chris' systematic method makes it easy to learn the techniques for well-shaped and identically spaced letters. He emphasizes that unless you are a carving prodigy, your first letters will probably not look like his. While he provides the basic instruction necessary to carve letters, Chris states he cannot demonstrate all the details of designing a sign in a 90 minute DVD. For that information, he refers to his book, *Lettercarving in Wood: A Practical Course*.

In Volume 3, Chris builds on the basic carving skills and shows how to carve a classic leaf motif that can be used to embellish a variety of objects. Chris introduces a few new tools and demonstrates the two main ways he holds his tools: the low-angle grip and the high angle grip. I've read about the grips, but it wasn't until I saw them in use that I fully understood; I had to try them out. Chris warns that the grips may seem uncomfortable—and they were—but I see the value of his method of holding.

Chris also demonstrates how to turn the square leaf motif into a triangular leaf design. The additional information on adapting the design is just as valuable as the actual carving instruction.

His teaching style is the same on both DVDs: introduce a basic design, walk you through carving that design, and then show you how to best practice the techniques.

Chris' instructions are put to the test when Canadian woodworker Rob Cosman, who hosts the DVDs, tries his hand at carving. Chris guides Rob



The second and third DVDs in Chris Pye's instructional series focus on letter and ornamental carving.



through the process and points out common mistakes. While Rob's work is not as clean as Chris', it looks good—which is encouraging for other student carvers.

Chris and Rob have teamed up on three DVDs: Vol. 1 Sharpening Techniques was reviewed in WCI Spring 2008 (Issue 42). DVDs are \$32.50 each + s&h. Contact Tools for Working Wood at 800-426-4613, www.toolsforworkingwood.com, or Treeline USA, 800-598-2743, www.treelineusa.com.



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SPECIAL SOURCES:

For more patterns from Lora S. Irish, visit her website at www.carvingpatterns.com. It features free patterns and patterns for purchase as well as helpful carving advice. Please note that the patterns are only available online.



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Checkmate

Novel chip-carved chess set is sure to become a family heirloom

By Barry McKenzie

Chess was invented in India around the 6th century A.D. This set combines one of the oldest forms of carving with one of the oldest board games. Although the set is highly decorative and makes a beautiful display, it is fully functional and quite durable.

I use standard design elements to distinguish the pieces. The king has a cross on top, connecting it with the Crusades. The queen has a crown identifying her royalty. The knight is a stylized representation of a knight's horse. The bishop has a top much like a Pope's miter. The rook's top represents the ramparts of a medieval castle wall.

The completed set looks impressive, but in reality, you only need to master five basic cuts. The trick is reproducing these cuts consistently. I used simple chips to embellish the game board, but it could be left as a solid surface. The design for the board squares is rotated and repeated to create the overall pattern.

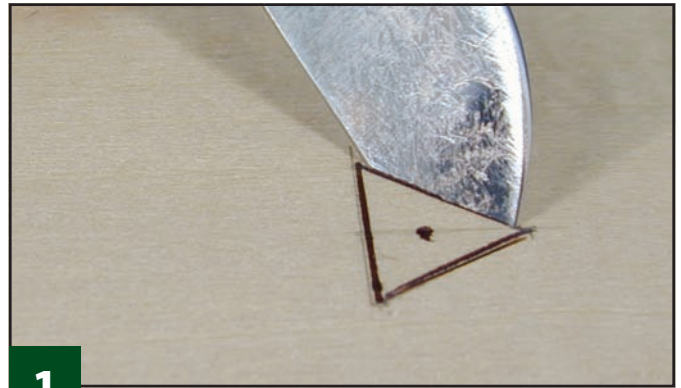
I used basswood and butternut for my set. Both woods are well-suited for chip carving. You could carve the entire set from basswood and use stains to distinguish the opposing sides.



Five Basic Chip Cuts

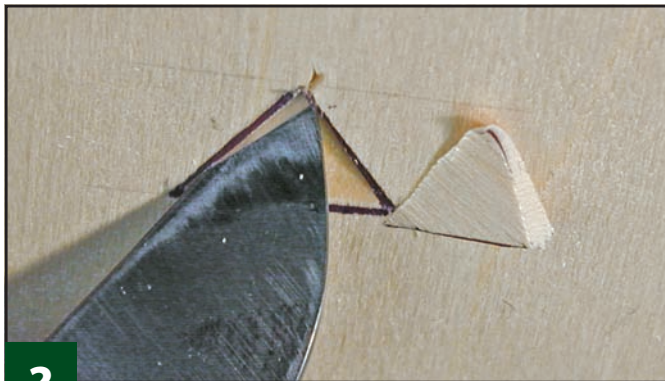
Start by cutting the chess piece blanks. For most pieces, that entails sawing them to size and tapering them using a disc sander or a belt sander. Sand the blanks with progressively finer grits of sandpaper up to 220-grit. Transfer the patterns to the blanks. I like to draw the designs onto the blanks using a ruler and a mechanical pencil, but you can also use graphite transfer paper and a stylus.

Five basic chip cuts will complete the chess set. Practice the cuts on scrap wood until you are comfortable that you can reproduce them consistently. Don't feel like you have to complete the entire set at once. Carve a few pieces then take a break with a different project.



1

The traditional angular deep chip. This chip can be any size, as long as the cuts all converge at the deepest point in the middle of the chip. Hold the knife at the same angle to make all of the cuts. After you free the chip, go back and lightly carve into the corner to remove any splintered wood and clean up the chip.



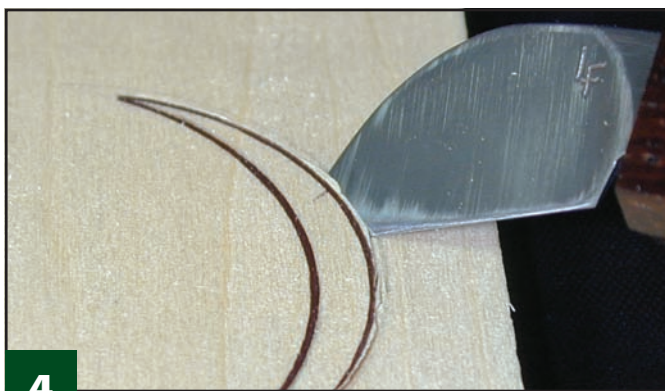
2

The shallow chip. Draw the chip the same as the angular deep chip, but cut it differently. Make vertical cuts on both sides of the triangle. The deepest cuts are at the triangle's point and decrease in depth as you approach the triangle's base. Hold the knife nearly horizontal and cut from one side of the base to the other, while sliding the tip of the knife up to the deepest part of the chip at the tip of the triangle.



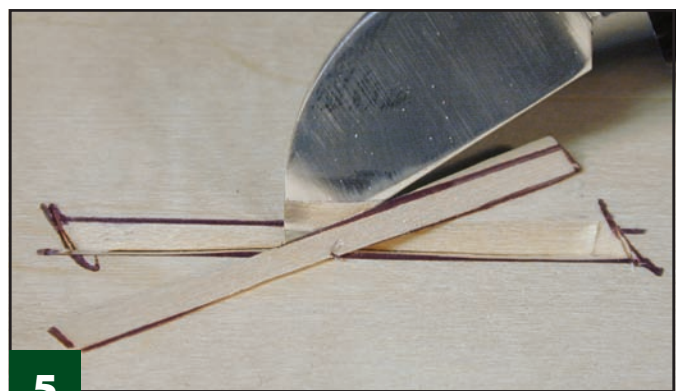
3

"Old World" style chip. Traditionally made using chisels, gouges, and skew knives, this chip can be made with a chip-carving knife. It requires two angular cuts and two vertical cuts. Hold the knife at an angle and cut along the two sides of the large triangle towards the point of the small triangle. Make two vertical cuts along the sides of the small triangle to release the chip. Do not remove the wood for the small triangle.



4

Flare or free-form angular line cut. Establish the bottom of the chip with the first cut, and free the chip with the second cut. The angle at which you hold the blade changes depending on the depth and width of the line. As the chip gets deeper, the angle increases until the knife is nearly vertical. For the shallow areas, the angle decreases until the knife is nearly horizontal.



5

Straight line cut. Establish the bottom of the chip with the first cut and release the chip with the second cut. Depending on the width of the line, you may need to make short cuts on either end of the line to free the chip. The blade is held at an identical angle when making all of the cuts. The depth of the cut is the same from end to end.

Finishing

My main objective is to seal the wood around the top surface of the chip cavity before more finish is added to the chip. This will keep the chips looking crisp and clean-cut. If finish gets down in the chips without sealing around the chip cavity first, the finish will bleed or weep out from the edges of the chip cavity, giving the chip a dull, muted look.

Step 1: Seal the main surface. Brush a light amount of finish on the exterior surface, avoiding the chip cavities. Use a ½"-wide, stiff artists' brush. Tilt the wood to reflect light off the surface and spot any areas missing finish or stain.

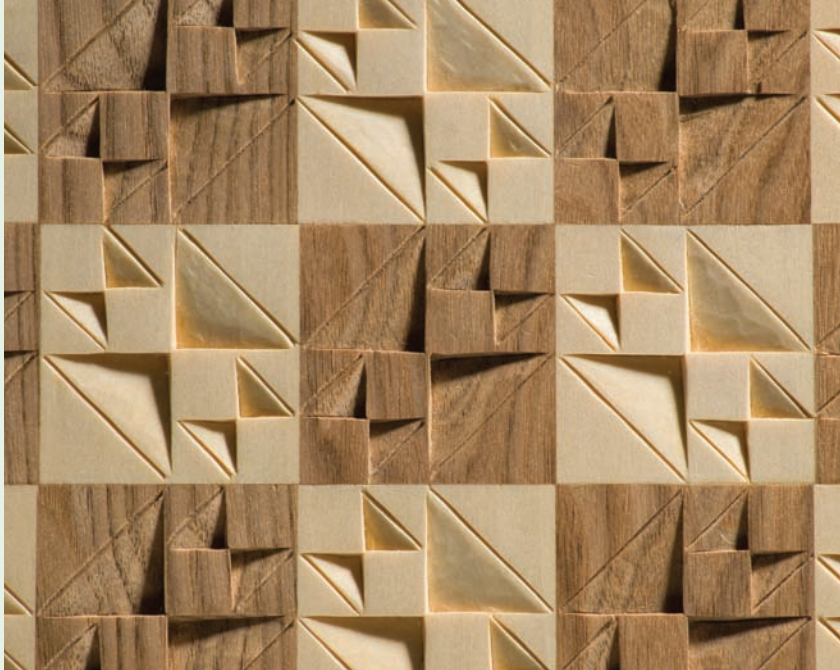
Step 2: Seal the edges of the chips. Brush additional finish on the surface, getting some finish around the top edge of the chip cavities, but not inside the cavities. Swipe a damp brush across the top of the chips.

Step 3: Add finish to the chip cavities. Wet the surface much more than the first two applications, and get some finish down inside the top edge of the cavities. Do not flood the cavity. Swipe a wet brush across the top and slightly over the edge of the cavity.

Step 4: Flood the chip cavity. Fill the cavities with finish. Before the finish starts to dry, wipe off the surface, the top of the chips, and down in the cavities with a soft rag. Continue brushing with a dry brush to remove the excess finish.

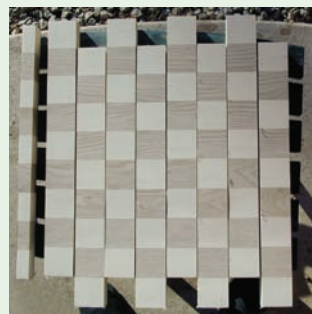
Step 5: Accent the chip cavities. Flood the chip cavities with light-colored stain, and immediately remove as much finish as possible with a rag. Then brush with a dry brush until you remove all of the finish from the cavities. This step is optional.

Step 6: Apply a second coat of finish. If the chip cavities look dull, flood the cavities with more finish. Remove as much finish as possible with a rag, and brush the chips with a dry brush to remove all of the finish from the cavities. You can apply an additional coat to give the project a high gloss finish.



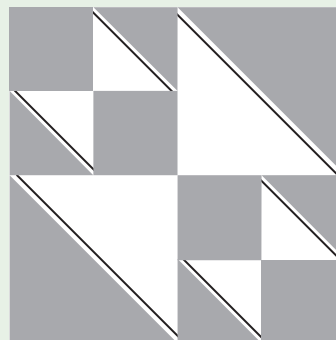
The Game Board

Cut nine 1" x 1¼" x 9½" strips, five of basswood and four of butternut. Glue them together in an alternating pattern. After the glue has dried, cut the blank into eight 1¼"-wide strips (the extra length offsets the wood removed by the saw with each cut). Offset the strips by one entire square to produce the alternating dark and light pattern. Glue the strips in place, then cut off the overhanging squares.



Carving the Game Board

All the squares use the same pattern, but the image used to embellish the dark squares is rotated 90° to create an overall pattern for the entire board. Use a shallow chip technique to remove the light areas of the pattern. You can also embellish the chips with a thin, shallow line cut at the base of the triangles.

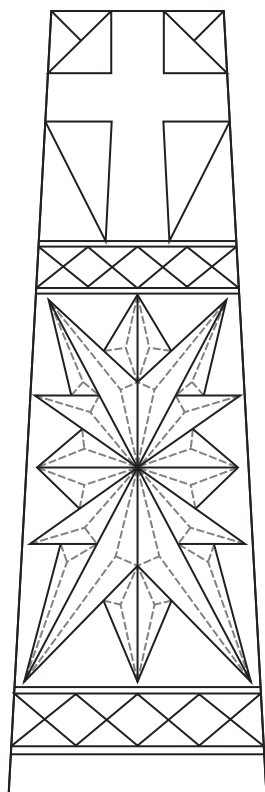


This pattern is used for both white and dark squares.

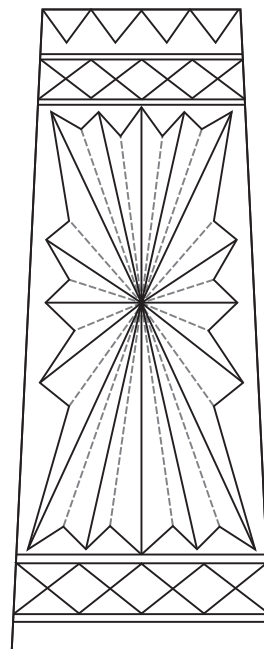
To complete the game board and give it a polished look, miter-cut commercial molding and edge glue them around the squares to serve as a frame.



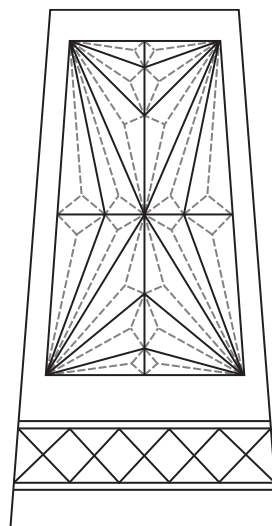
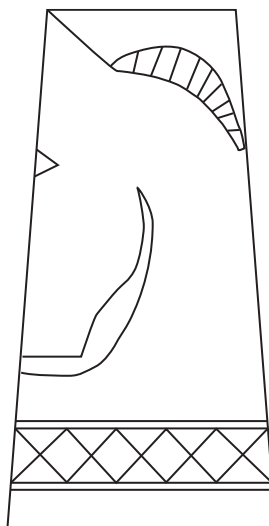
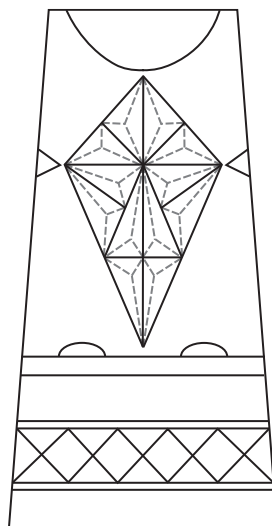
King



Queen



Knight



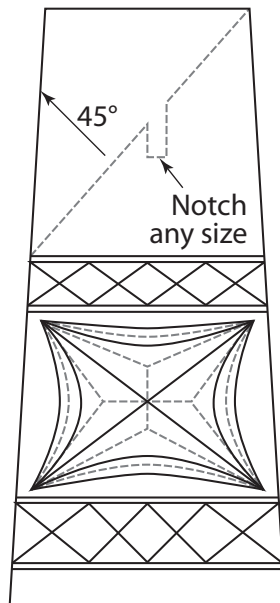
Line up an opponent,
and get ready to play on this
beautiful chip-carved chess set.



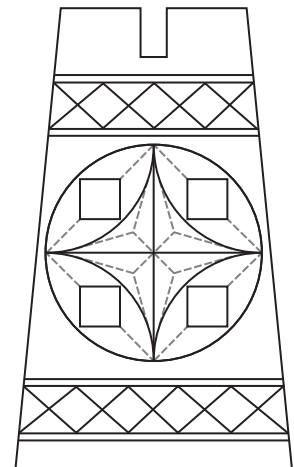
Checkmate Patterns



Bishop



Rook



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materials & tools

MATERIALS:

1 3/8" x 1 3/8" x 34" basswood (light pieces)
 1 3/8" x 1 3/8" x 34" butternut (dark pieces)
 5 each 1" x 1 3/4" x 9 1/2" basswood (light squares)
 4 each 1" x 1 3/4" x 9 1/2" butternut (dark squares)
 Assorted grits of sandpaper up to 220-grit
 Low gloss or clear satin oil finish of choice
 Polyurethane finish of choice
 Light-colored gel stain of choice (optional)
 Finishing rags

TOOLS:

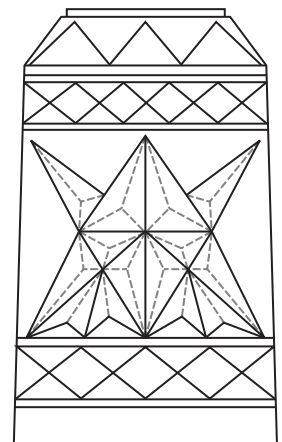
Chip carving knife of choice
 Saw of choice (to cut pieces and board squares)
 Disc sander or belt sander
 Paintbrushes of choice

SPECIAL SOURCES:

Select basswood and butternut:
 Krantz Wood Sales,
 651-464-5632,
jkrantz@usfamily.net
 Chip carving Knife:
 Lee Ferguson 479-443-0084,
www.fergusonknives.com



Pawn



About the Author

Barry McKenzie is a popular instructor and owner of the School of Chip Carving. Barry writes a regular chip-carving newsletter and has several pattern booklets available. Contact him at 23427 Route 66, Lebanon,

MO 65536, or chipcarvingschool@hotmail.com.

further reading

For more finishing techniques, see Issue 52 of *Chip Carvers Quarterly* newsletter, which covers finishing techniques by some very accomplished chip carvers. Contact Barry McKenzie, 417-532-8434, www.chipcarvingschool.com.

Strategy *with a Theme*



Jim Arnold's clever chess set designs

The *AFRICAN TRIBAL CHESSE SET*, carved from walnut and poplar.

If not for a hurricane in the late 1990s, Jim Arnold's career might have taken a different path. During a power outage in his home state of Florida, Jim's wife pointed out that chisels don't require electricity. Taking her advice, Jim got started and carved a chess set by candlelight.

Before he started carving full time, Jim spent many years as a charter boat captain, sailing and teaching scuba diving.

Combining his love of both woodworking and the ocean, Jim's first themed chess set was titled *ATLANTIS*. He has developed dozens of specialized chess sets, but *ATLANTIS* is still the most popular.

The theme ideas come from a variety of sources. Jim says the easiest way to develop a concept is to think of the different sides in terms of natural

antagonists. Sets like *THE HIPPIES VERSUS THE ESTABLISHMENT* and *THE CIVIL WAR* are good examples. Private commissions often dictate the subject matter and have inspired sets such as *DUCK HUNTING* and *THE FIREFIGHTER'S CHESSE SET*.

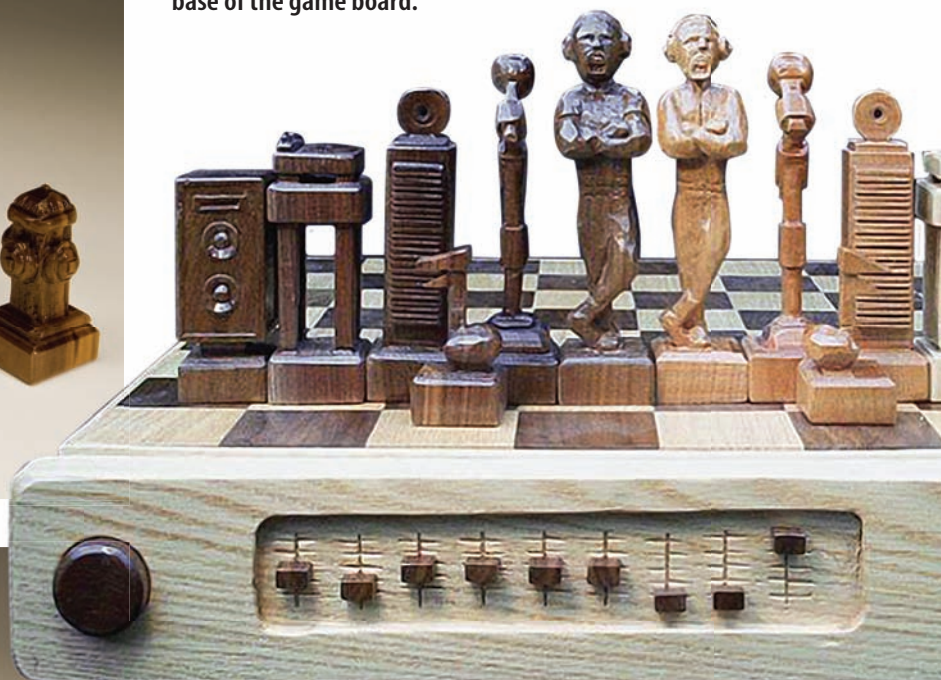
"I like for my work to tell a story," Jim said. "I can cover a subject thoroughly, because of all the pieces involved in the game. What's really fun is how the theme overtakes you in mid-game when the pieces are spread out all over the board interacting with each other."

While *ATLANTIS* was Jim's start in the world of themed sets, it wasn't his first experience creating a hand-carved chess set. "I had spent several months at

THE FIREFIGHTER'S CHESS SET



The *DJ Chess Set*, carved from maple and walnut, incorporates an equalizer into the base of the game board.



ATLANTIS



“I like for my work to tell a story...when the pieces are spread out all over the board interacting with each other.”

my mother's home, helping her through an illness,” Jim explained “While in her garage, I found some rusty bench chisels and a couple of power tools that had belonged to my father. I cleaned up the chisels and decided to recreate the old family chess set that I learned to play on. I only made the set because it reminded me of my Dad; I had no intention of making a second. I still see my father in every one I make.”

Jim starts each new project by researching the theme. Then he makes sketches for the front and side views of each piece. He cuts the pieces with a band saw, then shapes them with chisels and gouges. “I don't use knives, rotary power carvers, or CNC machinery,” Jim explained. His sets are hand carved from walnut, poplar, and maple. Several coats of lacquer protect them for years of playing.

Over the years the theme has found its way onto the chessboard as well. *THE DJ Chess Set* incorporates an equalizer into the base of the board. Jim feels customizing the board adds interest to the set and helps to tell the story.

Jim sells his chess sets on the Internet and at local art shows. Prices range from \$175 to \$1,500 depending on size and the level of detail.



About the Artist

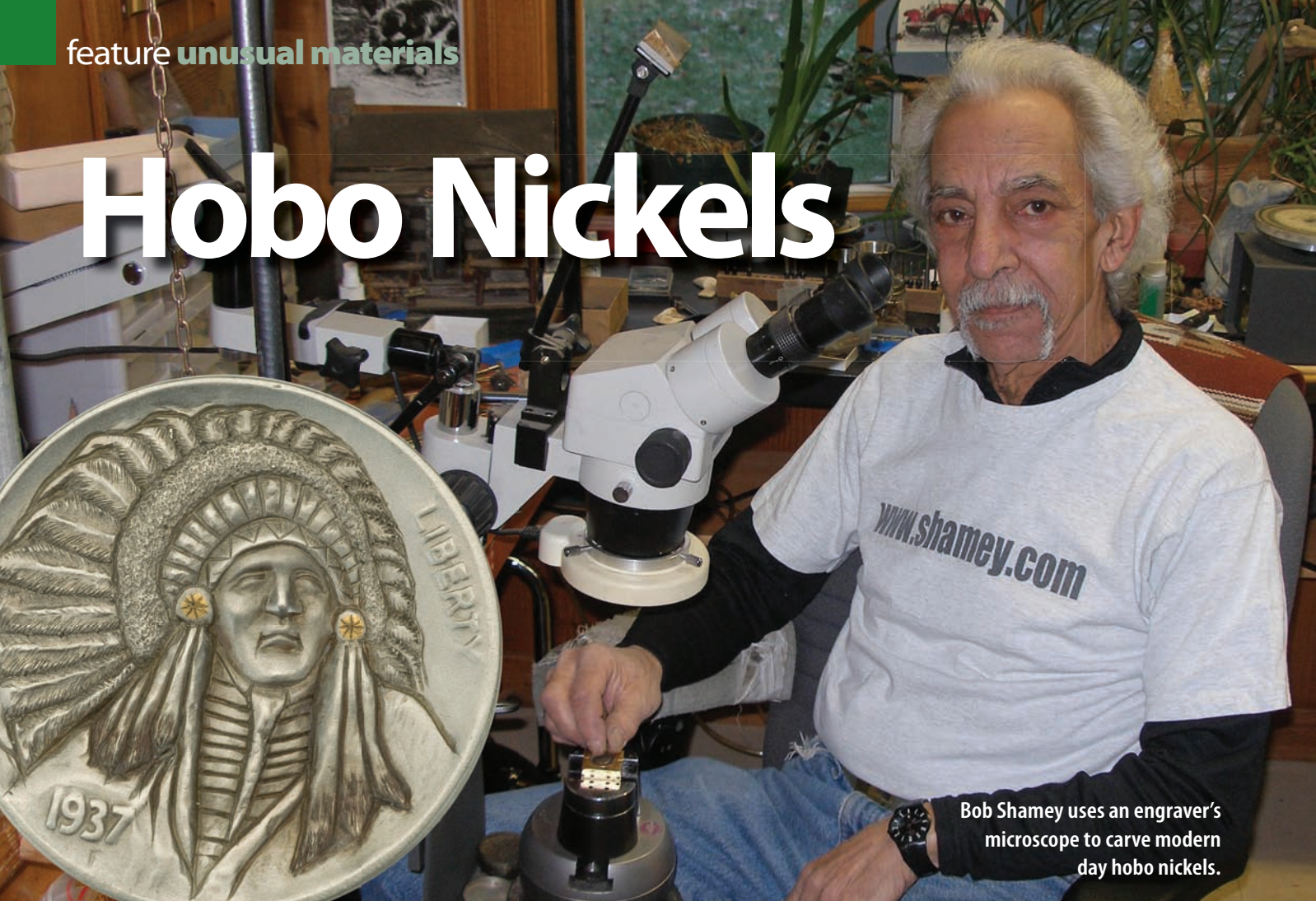
In addition to carving chess sets, Jim Arnold of East Palatka, FL., teaches woodcarving classes at the Larimer Art Center in Palatka. For more of his work, visit yessy.com/epkingsa.

ONLINE BONUS

Additional themed chess set photos available on our website.

woodcarvingillustrated.com

Hobo Nickels



Bob Shamey uses an engraver's microscope to carve modern day hobo nickels.

Modern carvers recreate unique American folk art

By Bob Shamey



Buffalo nickels feature the bust of a Native American on one side and a buffalo on the reverse, both of which are large images, providing a good canvas for carvers.

The nickel is the hardest U.S. coin in circulation, and it's smaller than your thumbprint. Buffalo nickels, the raw material for hobo nickels, are real coins that are carved to alter the original design. They are a challenge to carve using an engraver's microscope and jeweler's tools. Can you imagine the skill and patience the Depression-era hobos invested in carving them with only makeshift tools by flickering firelight?

The nickels were carved with sharpened nails or Allen wrenches, and pocket knives, while the hobos relaxed around their evening campfires. These carved nickels could be traded for favors such as meals or places to sleep.

Hobo artists would turn the Indian head into clown faces, women, bearded men, ethnic

figures, or even self portraits. The buffalo was turned into men with backpacks, and other animals, such as donkeys and elephants. While the majority of these coins are unsigned, the most notable of the hobo nickel carvers signed their work Bert and Bo. Recently, a Bert nickel sold at auction for \$9,000. Vintage hobo nickels are popular among coin collectors and usually go for \$100 to \$300.

In the early 1990s, there was a revival in hobo nickel carving, and many modern artists started carving replicas of these unique pieces of American folk art. A friend introduced me to the art form in 2004. Since then, I have carved more than 200 coins, many of which can be found in private coin collections around the country.



“An original hobo nickel recently sold at auction for \$9,000!”



From top: A traditional hobo carved into a nickel, an alien complete with spaceship, and a portrait of John Wayne.



Historically, hobos put their carved coins in with their tobacco to color them. Some would throw them in the campfire and drag them out in the morning. Modern carvers use several methods to emphasize the fine details and get rid of the newly carved, shiny look. Some carvers lightly color the coin with a permanent black marker. Others use a mixture of gun bluing, an etching solution, and a splash of iodine. I use a silver and nickel oxidizing liquid available from jewelry-making suppliers.

I belong to the Original Hobo Nickel Society, an organization devoted to the preservation and appreciation of hobo nickels. In addition to providing information about historic hobo nickels, the society encourages appreciation of modern engravers creating new designs with today's coins. The organization publishes a quarterly newsletter (BoTales) and holds an annual hobo nickel auction to benefit a scholarship for young

numismatists (coin collectors). For more information on the society and the history of hobo nickels, visit www.hobonickels.org.

Coin Carving Tools

While original artisans used makeshift tools to create their nickels, modern tools make the task much easier. My experience in jewelry making enabled me to experiment with different tools and techniques. I use the following tools when creating my replicas:

- #10 Optivisor or an engraver's microscope
- Dremel-type flexible shaft with a selection of different burs
- GRS Gravermax or air-assisted engraving handpiece
- Different types of hand gravers
- Various types of rubber abrasive wheels and rods
- Different grits and sizes of die makers' ceramic abrasive stones
- A small sandblaster with glass beads

From top: A buffalo skull, Abraham Lincoln, and a Native American Chief featuring 24-karat gold inlay on the headdress.



This 12-car freight train, complete with a waving hobo, is carved on the coin's edge.



About the Author

Bob Shamey of Ligonier, PA, specializes in miniature carvings. He was featured on "Ripley's Believe It or Not" three times and holds the

Guinness record for the smallest carved chain with 17 links carved from a toothpick. His toothpick carvings and fruit pit carvings were both featured in past issues of WCI. For more of his work, visit www.shamey.com.

First Cuts

Artists chronicle their journeys from beginner to accomplished carver



BRUCE HENN

A life-long student

"I started carving on a camping trip in 1970. I picked up a chunk of a redwood 2x4 and started hacking away with a dull pocket knife. After a few frustrating minutes, I searched through my tool box looking for anything sharp enough to cut wood. The only thing I found was a utility knife with a retractable blade. The tool and the

wood were both bad choices. A couple hours and a few bandages later, an animal emerged. I was very proud when my wife recognized it as a rabbit—I was hooked. I liked carving animals because I lacked the ability and the know-how to carve human faces.

"In the early 1980s I was lucky enough to meet Harold Enlow and watch him demonstrate his carving techniques. I was truly amazed. In 1985, I read about Ed Zinger and the first Woodcarving Rendezvous. I went and met great people like Ed Zinger, Joe Wannamaker, and a man called C-Max Winsted. I was in hog heaven. I attended the show several times over the next 11 years. In 1995, I started teaching caricature carving at the event. From 1996 to 2003 I taught, learned, and generally enjoyed the experience. I still take classes whenever I can—it's an ongoing learning process."

Bruce Henn joined the ranks of the Caricature Carvers of America (CCA) in 2006. He earned the prestigious Ron Ryan award from the Dayton (OH) Carvers Guild in 1998. Bruce lives in Troy, OH and is a Boy Scouts of America Merit Badge Counselor. An award-winning carver, Bruce teaches classes and judges shows around the country. Contact him at 1150 Kerr Rd., Troy, OH 45373, 937-667-8590, njhenn@voyager.net.



BUNNY carved in 1970.



JACKPOT carved in 2005.

tips from Bruce

CLEAN UP YOUR CUTS

Remove all of the fuzzy wood—what I call wood boogers—from your cuts. After you finish your carving, take one last look over the entire piece to make sure there are no wood boogers and your cuts are clean.

SAFETY FIRST

Always wear a carving glove and keep your tools sharp. Carve as often as you can. It may be for 15-20 minutes, or it may be for 2-4 hours. The more often you carve, the more comfortable you will be with your carving tools. That will translate into safer carving.



DENNIS THORNTON

Car crash leads to artistic discovery

"Let me tell you how I accidentally became a wood carver. In 1993, while I was handling an investigation with the Sheriff's office, I was in a head-on car accident. The injuries I received put me out of work for almost two years. It was during this time that a friend suggested I try my hand at woodcarving."

"I took classes at the American Woodcarving School, and it didn't take me long to get hooked. I instantly fell in love with caricature carving because of the stories I could create

and tell about the carvings. When I developed enough confidence, I entered my first show and competition. There were five carvings in the category I entered, and when the judging was done, four prizes were awarded—I was not one of the recipients. That day I learned one of the biggest lessons in my artistic life: you can never work hard enough on your journey.

"So many people have helped me to become the carver I am today. My style has been strongly influenced by two very good friends: Peter Ortel and Marv Kaisersatt."

Dennis Thornton was elected into the CCA in 2001. That same year he retired after 32 years of service in the Rockland County Sheriff's Office. Dennis moved to central New York with his wife, Susan. Now the pair can be found in their personal studio where Dennis carves while Susan paints. Contact Dennis at Splatters@hotmail.com or www.SplintersandSplatters.com, 607-895-6311.



DRIVEWAY ACE carved in 1995.

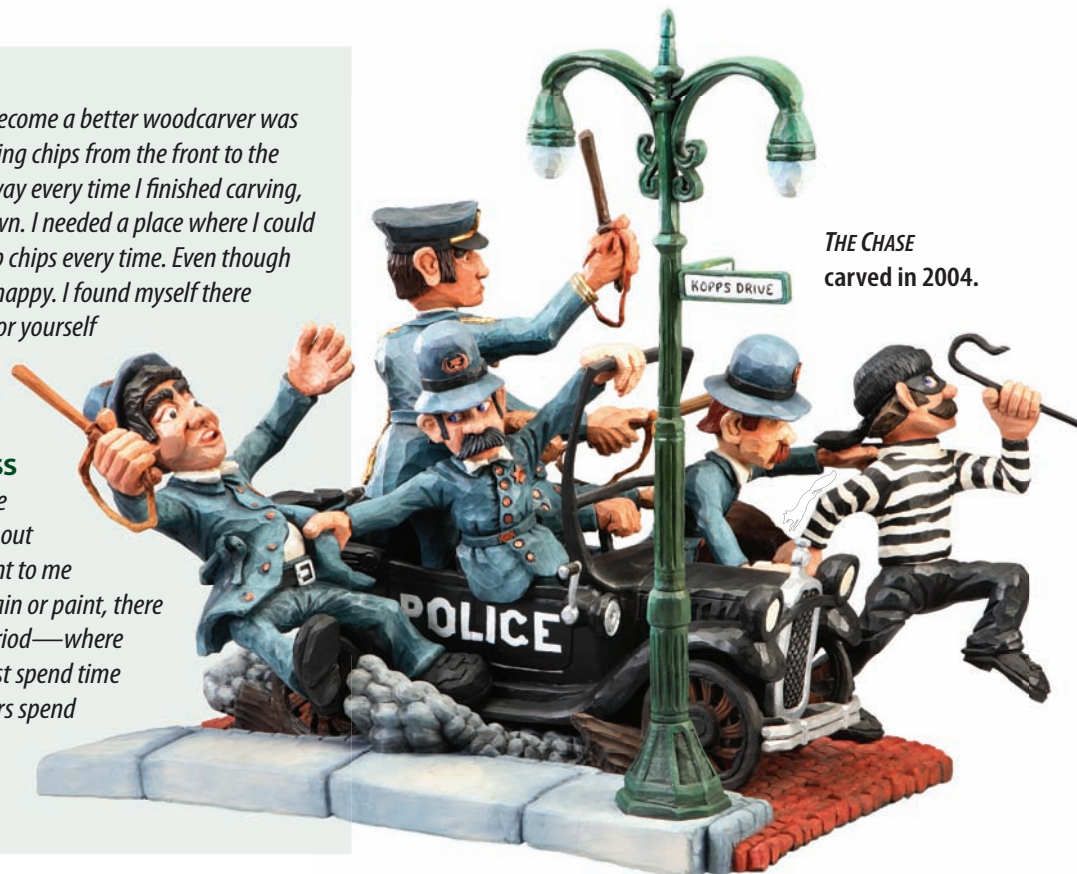
tips from Dennis

CREATE YOUR OWN SPACE

One of the biggest things that helped me become a better woodcarver was to create my own space. After years of leaving chips from the front to the back door and having to put everything away every time I finished carving, I decided I needed a place I could call my own. I needed a place where I could leave my tools out and not have to clean up chips every time. Even though I initially ended up in the basement, I was happy. I found myself there every extra minute I had. Making a space for yourself will create an atmosphere of enjoyment for you and your woodcarving.

CARVING IS ONLY HALF THE PROCESS

Woodcarving is only one half of this art; the other half is finishing the carving. Figuring out how to finish the piece became as important to me as the carving process. Whether you use stain or paint, there is a learning process—a trial and error period—where you find what works for you. Then you must spend time perfecting it. Many times I have seen carvers spend months carving a piece and only spend an hour painting it. Learning more about finishing will pay off in the end.



THE CHASE carved in 2004.



HARLEY SCHMITGEN

Sandblasting job sparks love of carving

"As a young man—18-years-old and interested in art—I was working in a monument shop, designing and sandblasting designs into granite for gravestones. One day I decided to try sandblasting wood. It took some practice, but I eventually learned to shape and carve flowers, using sand and air.

"I spent the next couple of years carving on the side while working

at the monument shop. In 1970, I exhibited my flowers at a woodcarving show in Minneapolis, MN. My flowers were a hit! During the show I was introduced to woodcarving with knives and chisels. I never went back to carving wood with a sandblaster.

"I have tried many different styles of carving. At first, I carved caricature cowboy busts and some Santas. My interests evolved, and now I carve in a semi-realistic style in 3"-thick wood, some in-the-round work, and the 2"-thick relief carvings I've been doing for years.

"I've been teaching woodcarving seminars since the early '80s. In 2001, I met a woodcarver named Midge; she became my wife and we began our woodcarving adventures together.

"My goal is to take woodcarving to an art form, creating pieces that can be shown in galleries and displayed in corporate offices—not just seen as a craft. I continue to try new avenues of carving and new finishes. I'm always learning, and that keeps it exciting."

Harley Schmitgen was elected into the CCA in 1993. He owns and operates a monument design business in Blue Earth, MN, with his wife, Midge. The pair also teach several classes a year around the country. For more information on their classes, contact them at 507-526-2777 or visit www.harleyandmidgewoodcarving.com.



A Santa carved in 1971.



CHRISTMAS WISH carved in 2007.

tips from Harley

REFERENCE MATERIAL

Make sure that you know your subject. Study all the information you can get on it. Don't rely on others' artwork; it may not be correct. Even if you are carving a caricature, you can't exaggerate something unless you know what it really looks like.

PRACTICE

Work with clay; it helps you to be creative. You will make mistakes, but mistakes in clay are easy to fix. Keep practicing and learning by taking seminars from different teachers, and you will soon develop a style of your own.



JACK PRICE

Small carvings make a big impact

"My carving life began in 1975 when I walked into a shopping mall and saw 50 to 60 tables of woodcarvings on display. It was an awesome experience and I decided then and there to learn how to carve."

"My new interest provided many obstacles. Supplies were hard to come by. I scrounged for scraps of carveable wood, found one instruction book, modified some pocket knives, and started carving small critters. My carvings were all small because my wood was small. The ray of sunshine in my quest to gain carving knowledge

was Claude Bolton. He started a local club that had no dues, no officers, and no program; we all just soaked up knowledge from Claude.

"The next year when the mall show was held, I had a table. Unfortunately, my pitiful little critters were positioned between Claude's imposing display and the spectacular caricature carvings of Tex Haase. I was largely ignored."

"After a few classes with Harold Enlow, I began carving human-figure caricatures. I saw some small characters on display in a shop in Branson, MO, carved a few, and found they sold like hotcakes. I had found my niche."

"As my small characters became more popular, someone suggested that I write a book on the subject. With Claude's help, I wrote and published Carving Compact Characters. Later, I wrote 50 Character Patterns for Woodcarvers and Carving Small Characters. The first two books are now out of print."

"Woodcarving has been a huge part of my life. I am very proud that over the years I have introduced many people to this wonderful hobby. I even introduced the talented Dave Dunham to woodcarving. About a year later, I was taking lessons from him. I have been a charter or a founding member of several carving clubs, and I have acquired an abundant number of friends, some of whom are as dear to me as family."

Jack Price is a founding member of the CCA. He served as treasurer for ten years, and is currently an emeritus member. A veteran of World War II, Jack is a retired public school administrator and the author of three carving books. He lives in Cleburne, TX, and travels around the country showing off his carvings and sharing his knowledge. Contact Jack at 1518 Westhill Terrace, Cleburne, TX 76031, 817-641-0588.

GRAMPAW carved in 1975.



AL FREDO carved in 2007.



tips from Jack

BEGINNER TOOL BUYING

Buy tools that are already sharp, and then learn to keep them that way. Many new carvers become discouraged when they try to carve with dull tools, and they give up. Sharp tools and a carving glove are two essentials for beginner carvers.

LEARN FROM YOUR MISTAKES

Do not be discouraged by mistakes. Each faux pas teaches a lesson that hopefully, will prevent you from making the same mistake again. Having a box full of three-legged animals or unsatisfactory carvings is not a bad thing.

Serpentine Walking Stick

Staff and realistic snake are carved from a single piece of wood

By David Stehly



This corn snake walking stick is perfect for long summer hikes.

Many carvers approach this type of project using a vine wrapped branch or twisted root, but I sculpt the snake from an ordinary log. This allows the shape and contour of the snake to be planned for maximum realism, instead of dictated by the twists of the wood.

This walking stick features a colorful corn snake, also called a red rat snake. The corn snake ranges from New Jersey south to Florida, and as far west as Louisiana and Kentucky. It is a favorite pet because of its color and gentle disposition. The distinct markings make it easy to achieve a realistic-looking snake. I use various reptile field manuals available at your local library as well as Google images for reference photos.

Carving the snake cane

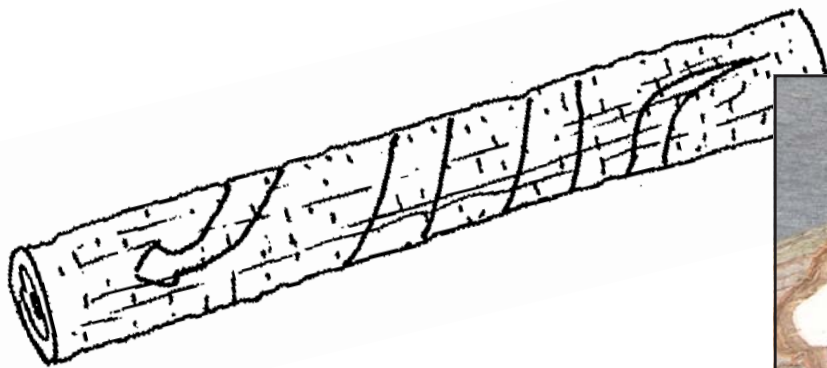
Start with a straight, even-grained log that is 4" to 5" in diameter and 4½' to 5' long. Choose a log from the trunk of the tree where the diameter is similar the entire length of the piece; logs tend to taper when you get above the trunk area. I chose a bigtooth aspen log harvested in the spring of 2007. Coat the ends of the piece with wax to keep it from checking. For woods such as linden or tulip poplar, you can start carving after a few days of drying. To dry the wood slowly and prevent it from cracking while you carve, put the log in a plastic bag between carving sessions. When you're ready to start carving the details, the wood should be dry enough that you won't need the bag.

Examine the log and note any irregularities in the bark structure that may indicate underlying imperfections in the wood. Avoid including these areas in the body of the snake. I hold the cane with a bench vise and padded, V-shaped block while I carve. Use whatever method works best for you, but make sure the log is held securely.



1

Draw landmarks onto the blank. Draw in an oversized head 10" from the thick end of the log. Make the neck 1" wide. Mark the beginning of the first turn 8" down from the snout. Wrap a strip of masking tape around the log as the centerline of the snake. On the same side as the head, leave 6" of straight wood at the end for the tail. The tail tapers from ¾" wide down to a point at the tip. Do not make the turn into the tail too sharp.



2

Sketch in the coils. Use the masking tape as a centerline and draw 1½"-long lines perpendicular to the tape at 4" to 6" intervals for the snake's body. Start at the first turn and keep the width consistent for an additional 12". Taper the body from 1½" down to the ¾" width at the base of the tail. Sketch in the coils between the width lines, using the drawing as a guide. The carved snake will be slightly smaller than the marks when finished.



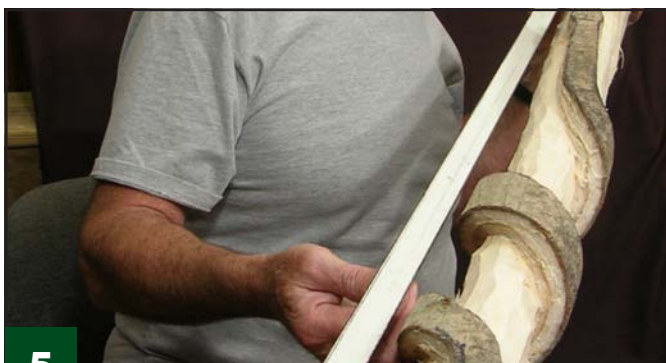
3

Make a stop cut around the snake. Use a straight chisel and a mallet. Cut through the bark and ⅛" into the sapwood along the entire length of the snake. Using a 1" #4 gouge, start your cut about 2" out, and carve up to the stop cut. Carve along the top of the log first, then flip the log and carve the groove along the bottom side. This groove outlines the snake and gives you an edge to guide your chisel as you increase the depth of the stop cuts.



4

Remove the excess wood. Use a ½" and 1"-wide single-bevel chisel to deepen the stop cuts by ¼". Position the flat side of the chisel against the snake to avoid cutting at an angle. The sides of the snake must be parallel. After making the stop cut, carve up to it with a wide, shallow gouge to shape the shaft. Be careful cutting the straight sections of the neck and tail; the stop cuts are with the grain and the wood may split if you cut too deeply.



5

Continue carving the shaft. Think of this as peeling an onion: a systematic removal of layers down to the final shaft diameter. Continue making stop cuts and removing ¼" of wood, working down one side, then flipping the cane to work the opposite side. Reduce the shaft above the head and below the tail as well. Use a straight edge to check the diameter and ensure you are removing wood evenly. Reduce the shaft to 2½" in diameter.



6

Shape the shaft. Leave 2" of wood at the top of the cane for the ball grip and reduce the remainder of the shaft to its final diameter of 1½". Use a V-tool to make stop cuts to prevent the cuts from going too deep and damaging the shaft. Continue removing layers in ¼" increments. The snake should be 1½" above the surface of the shaft, with the sides of the snake parallel. Make sure the shaft is aligned from the ball the whole way to the tip.

WALKING STICK: CARVING THE SNAKE



7

Lower the head and tail. Begin just above the first turn and use a shallow gouge to taper the thickness of the head and first 6" of neck down to $\frac{3}{4}$ " thick. Keep the top of the snake flat; the rounding will follow. Create a gentle taper from about 12" above the tip down to the end of the tail. The tip of the tail should be $\frac{1}{8}$ " thick. Keep the top of the tail flat; it's easier to create a smooth transition if you round everything at the same time.



8

Round the snake. Begin at the lower side of the first turn. Use a 1" #4 gouge. Start at the midline and make shallow cuts with the grain to remove $\frac{1}{2}$ " of wood. Remember that you are rounding, not angling. Round the other side, using the same technique. Go back and make a cut across the grain on the edge of the body. Turn the carving as necessary, using the same methods to carve up to the straight stretch near the head and tail.



9

Smooth the snake's body. Use your tools of choice to smooth away the tool marks and round the straight portions of the neck and tail. Do not shape the head at this time. I use a knife, Surform® rasp, belt sander, and a sanding drum in my rotary power carver. You could also sand the piece by hand. The wood should be dry enough that it doesn't clog the sandpaper. Start with 80-grit sandpaper and finish with 120-grit sandpaper or higher.



10

Undercut the snake. Use a knife to make a stop cut straight across the shaft under the body of the snake, as if you are slicing the snake off the shaft. Hold the knife at an angle alongside the body of the snake and cut to the stop cut to remove a chip. The depth of the stop cut doesn't matter since it is under the snake's body, but the removal cut is aimed at the shaft. If the removal cuts are too deep, the marks in the shaft are difficult to remove.



11

Shape the head. Use a combination of detail-carving knives and a sanding drum in a rotary power carver. Shape the head, using the pattern as a guide. Finish sanding with 120-grit or finer sandpaper. The head must be smooth, or it will be difficult to sketch in and shape the head scales. Use a pencil to mark a centerline on the snake's head.



12

Add the snake's eyes. To mark the position for the eyes, draw a line perpendicular to the centerline, $\frac{1}{3}$ of the distance from the snout to the neck. Drill 7mm holes about 4mm deep for the snake's eyes. Use the pattern as a guide. Secure the eyes in place with polyester casting resin or epoxy. I use a dot of putty to attach the eye to a nail for easy insertion.



WALKING STICK: ADDING THE SCALES



13

Draw in the head scales (plates). The nine head plates are shaped differently from the scales on the rest of the snake's body. Draw in the supraocular plates centered over the eyes, using the pattern as a guide. Then sketch in the remaining seven plates. Define the plates by using a woodburning pen at a low setting to make a fine line over the pencil lines. Burn the line directly over the eye a bit deeper than the other lines.



14

Detail the top of the head. Remove a small amount of wood around the top of the eye to make the supraocular plate extend out over the eye. Round the edges of the head plates with a detail knife. The outside edges of the supraoculars, the internasals, and the prefrontal plates, will end just over the edge of the outside surface of the head. The front edges of the parietal plates extend out over the outside surface of the head.



15

Finish detailing the head. Sketch in the mouth line and nostrils. Turn up the woodburner and burn in these features. Sketch in the scales on both sides of the head, starting at the rostral plate. Turn down the heat on the woodburner. Work in stages, sketching, burning and rounding the scales in sets of three or four on one side. Repeat the same scales on the other side to complete the head scales.



16

Practice carving scales. Press a #3 Speedball V-gouge linoleum carving tool into scrap wood. Make a stop cut on each side of the scale, then cut up to the stop cuts, undercutting slightly. The scale pattern is similar to a brick wall; center each scale between the grooves of the scales in the preceding row. Alternate the pressure you apply on the gouge to make different sizes. Carve several practice rows. Each scale requires five cuts.



17

Carve the remaining head scales. Sketch in a guideline for the row of small scales behind the parietal plates. The row runs perpendicular to the centerline. Work forward to fill in any missing scales, such as the area below the mouth. Return to the row of scales on the top of the head and add another row, increasing the size of the scale slightly. Continue adding rows of scales, increasing the size until you are using the full V-gouge at the snake's neck.



18

Work your way down the body. Work diagonally across the snake's body; if you work horizontally, the scales on the outside of the curve will get ahead of those on the inside of the curve. Work in small sections, outlining then defining the scales, using the same technique you practiced in step 16. Keep the axis of each scale aligned with the axis of the snake's body. Slight alignment errors disappear as long as each scale is defined.



19

Finish the scales and shaft. Use the full V-gouge to outline the scales until you reach the straight portion of the tail. Then gradually reduce the size until you reach the end of the tail. Remove any tool marks from the shaft with a knife. Finish shaping the ball grip. Remove any wood damaged by the vise. Carve or burn your signature into the shaft. Insert a screw hook into the center of the bottom of the shaft to hang the stick for finishing.

WALKING STICK: PAINTING THE SNAKE

Painting the corn snake

The painting on this carving is much easier than it looks. Reference photos are readily available online. Try a google image search or sites such as www.freesnake.com and www.gotpetsonline.com. Look for photos showing the snake from various angles.

Start by sealing and basecoating the carving. Stain the shaft if desired. Apply natural Minwax wood finish to the body and the shaft to seal the carving. Dilute the paint with acrylic mixing medium to the consistency of skim milk; apply several coats until the colors are even. Paint the mouth area with titanium white. Paint the remainder of the body raw sienna. Use the pattern to sketch in the head markings with a pencil. Paint the head markings with burnt umber.



20

Paint the body markings. Use burnt umber. Small variations in the size and shape add to the realism. The blotches on the back are 1 1/4" long with 3/4" of space between them. The side blotches are much smaller and are located halfway between the back blotches. About three quarters of the way down the snake, begin reducing the size of the blotches and the space between them. The side blotches disappear 3" to 4" from the tip of the tail.



21

Add the details. The black markings around the mouth line, as well as the black outlines of the head markings and blotches are very irregular lines and generally follow the scale edges. Use a fine brush, such as a #3/0, and a light dabbing motion to prevent the outline from looking like a stripe. Refer often to the detail photos and your reference photos.



22

Finish the carving. Apply a coat of one part Ebony Minwax wood finish thinned with three parts paint thinner to emphasize the scales and tone down the paint. When dry, apply two coats of satin varnish. Allow the varnish to dry, and rub paste wax on the carving with 0000 steel wool. Let the wax dry, and polish with a soft cloth. Unscrew the hook and put the tip on the shaft.

MATERIALS:

4" to 5"-diameter x 4½' to 5'-long log of choice (I use aspen)

Marker pen

Acrylic paints: raw sienna, burnt umber, titanium white, black

7mm brown glass eyes

Satin varnish of choice

Acrylic mixing medium

Minwax Wood Finish, natural 209

Polyester casting resin, epoxy, or suitable glue to secure eyes

Adhesive putty and nail (to place eyes in position)

Minwax Wood Finish, ebony 2718

Paint thinner

Paste wax

0000 steel wool

Sandpaper, 80, 120, & 220 grits

Black rubber furniture tip

TOOLS:

Mallet

1" #4 shallow gouge

V-tool of choice

Detail knives

½" and 1"-wide straight chisels

4'-long straight edge

Vise or clamping system of choice

Drill with 7mm-diameter eye drill or Forstner bit

Woodburner with pen of choice

#3 Speedball linoleum gouge

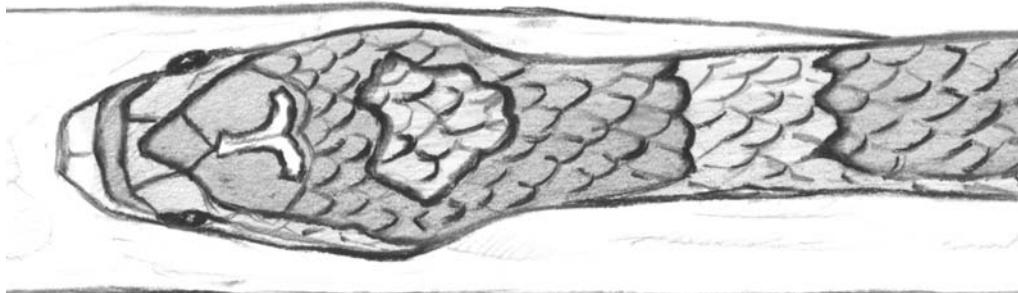
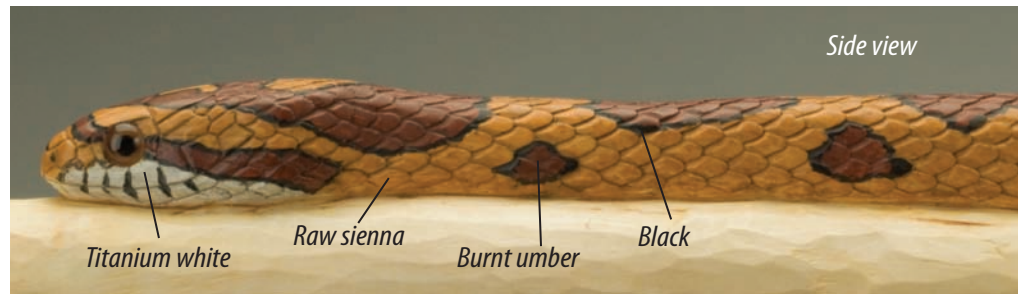
Assorted brushes for acrylics and stain

Varnish brush

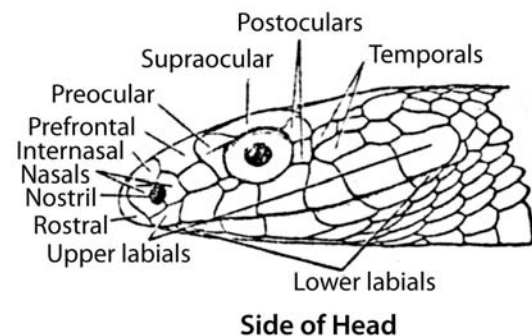
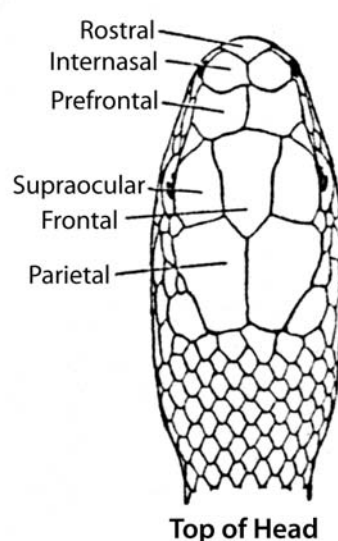
Flexible ruler

Surform® plane or belt sander

Sanding drum for rotary power carver



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ONLINE BONUS

To view a gallery of David's carved canes, visit our website.
woodcarvingillustrated.com



About the Author

On backpacking trips as a young man, David Stehly of Bethlehem, PA, would whittle on freshly-cut walking sticks. In the early 1970s, he kept a stick and continued using it and carving it. That stick, carved end-to-end and labeled "Number 1," was the beginning of a lifelong hobby. Since then he has carved more than 1,900 walking sticks. David began a study of snakes and now includes twenty-two different species on his canes. For more of his work, visit www.artsticks.com.

Rugged Bear Bench

**Rustic carving
highlights sturdy
children's furniture**

By Jeffrey Cooper



© 2008, Bill Truslow

This delightfully playful bench is sure to brighten any family room. The sturdy box construction provides a stable foundation for years of creative play.

The piece is made in two stages; one builds up the structure, and the other removes waste to produce the final form. It's actually a simple process combining woodworking and carving skills. The end result is a functional piece of furniture that will be handed down for generations to come.

I'm often asked if I make my pieces from one large log, but this would be impossible for two reasons: a large log would check and split, and the legs would be weak since the grain runs perpendicular to the length. The strongest construction design I've found is an end-grain plug construction for the core of the body with the legs attached to the core with mortise and tenon joints. "End-grain plug" means making a box with all of the grain going in the same direction. This minimizes the risk of checking as the piece ages.

When creating a project in this two phase fashion, the additive process is the more critical from the artistic point of view. Once the structure is assembled, you are limited to carving what you've already built. Therefore, you need to carefully plan how you are going to build the blank.

Once the blank is constructed, it's time to carve. I have a primitive, somewhat naive carving style. I'm not looking for realism. From a carving point of view,

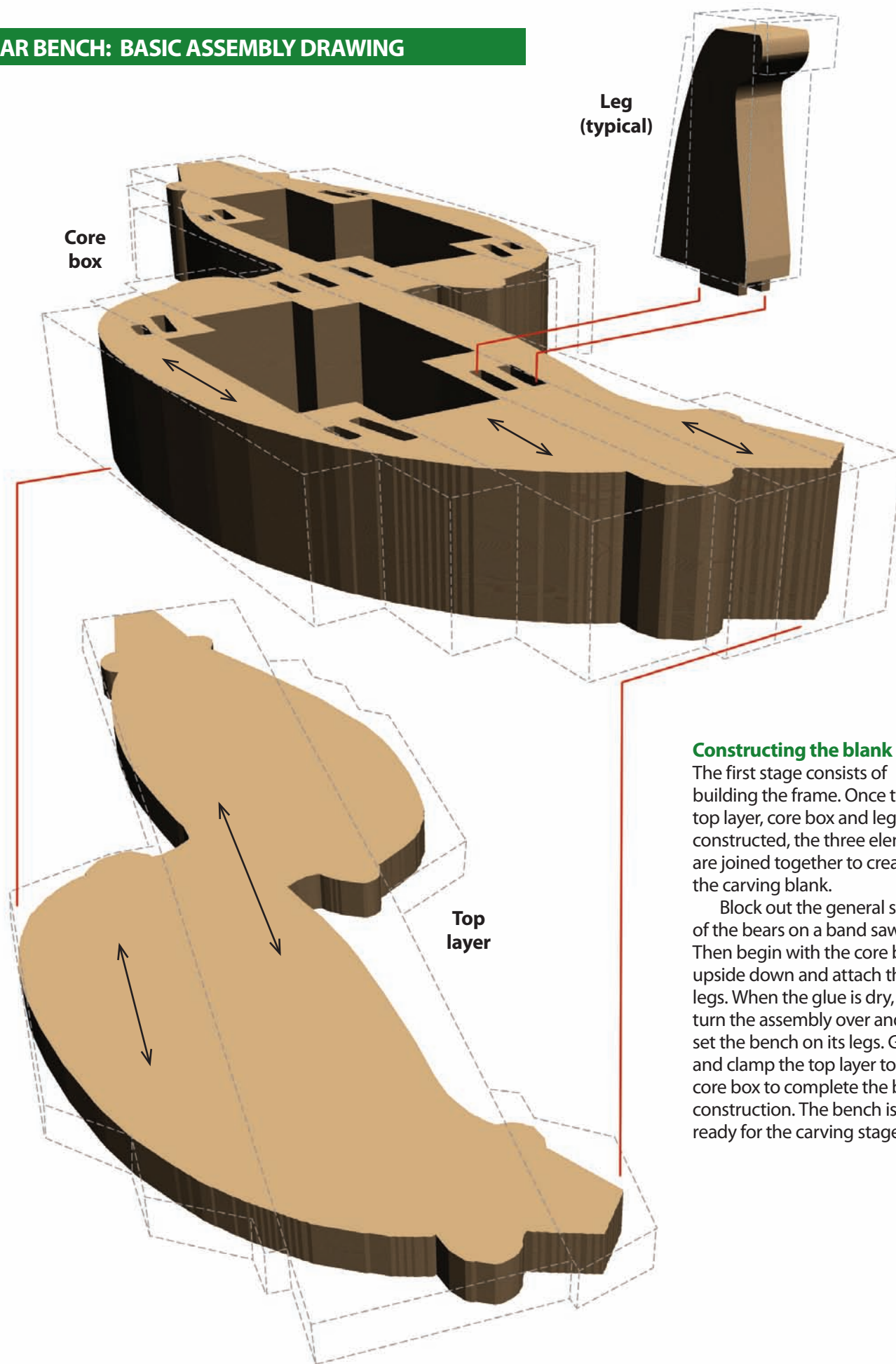


**These curious bears are built to
withstand generations of serious use.**

this makes things easier for me since I can interpret what I see and carve in a representational way. I can make even the meanest creature look friendly. I've made several hippo love seat benches, and just by giving the giant maw an upturned corner and raising the eyebrows, I can make anyone smile.

The first step to carving is to bring the piece to a stage where the general shape of the bears is apparent, but everything is chunky and crude. The next stage of sculpting is fixing the lines. A line is formed where two surfaces meet; in this bench, it is where curved surfaces make curved lines. By controlling the lines, we control the shadows, and that's how the bears will come alive. The lines must be fluid, and must start and end at an intersection with another line.

BEAR BENCH: BASIC ASSEMBLY DRAWING



Constructing the blank

The first stage consists of building the frame. Once the top layer, core box and legs are constructed, the three elements are joined together to create the carving blank.

Block out the general shape of the bears on a band saw. Then begin with the core box upside down and attach the legs. When the glue is dry, turn the assembly over and set the bench on its legs. Glue and clamp the top layer to the core box to complete the basic construction. The bench is now ready for the carving stage.

BEAR BENCH: BUILDING THE FRAME

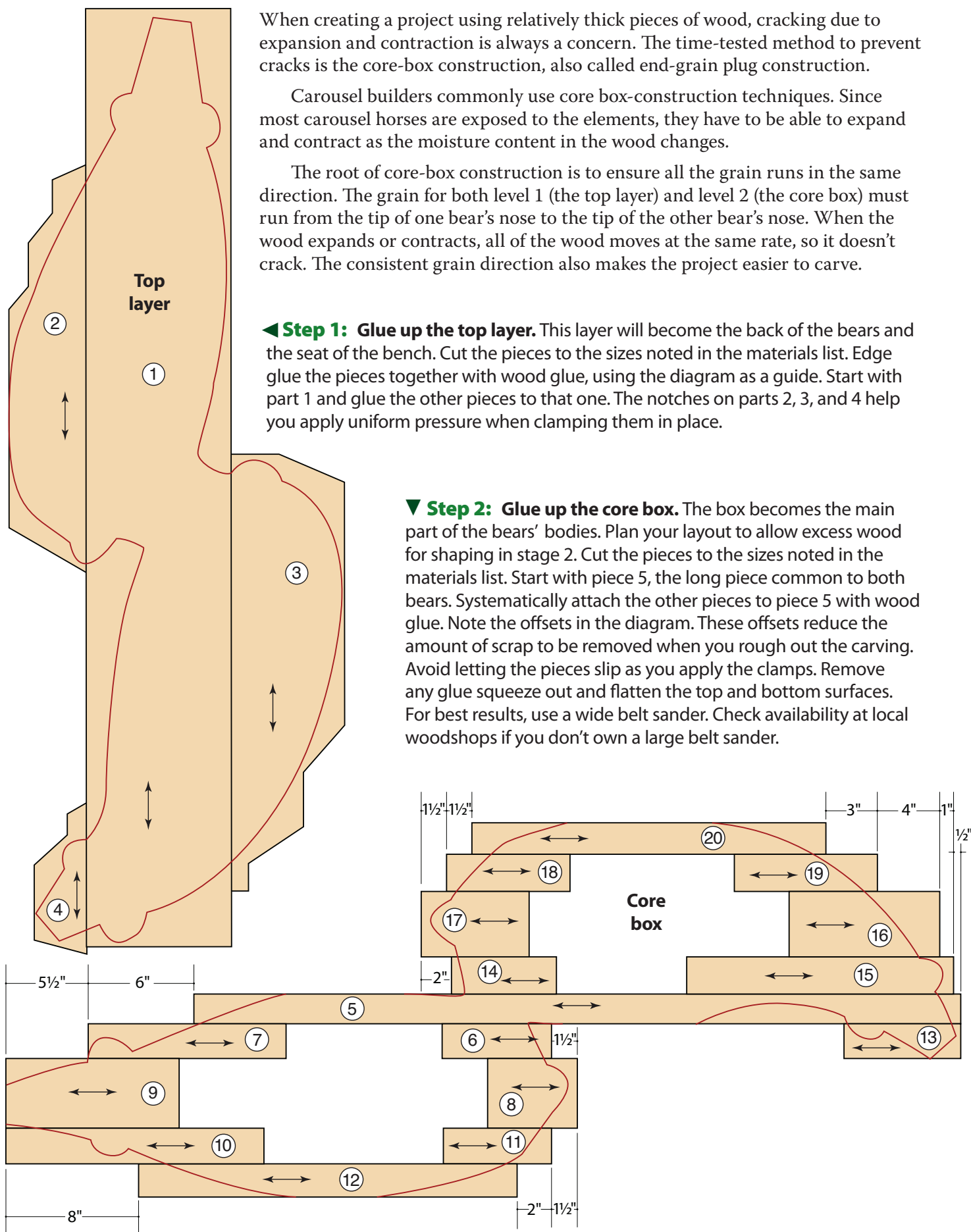
When creating a project using relatively thick pieces of wood, cracking due to expansion and contraction is always a concern. The time-tested method to prevent cracks is the core-box construction, also called end-grain plug construction.

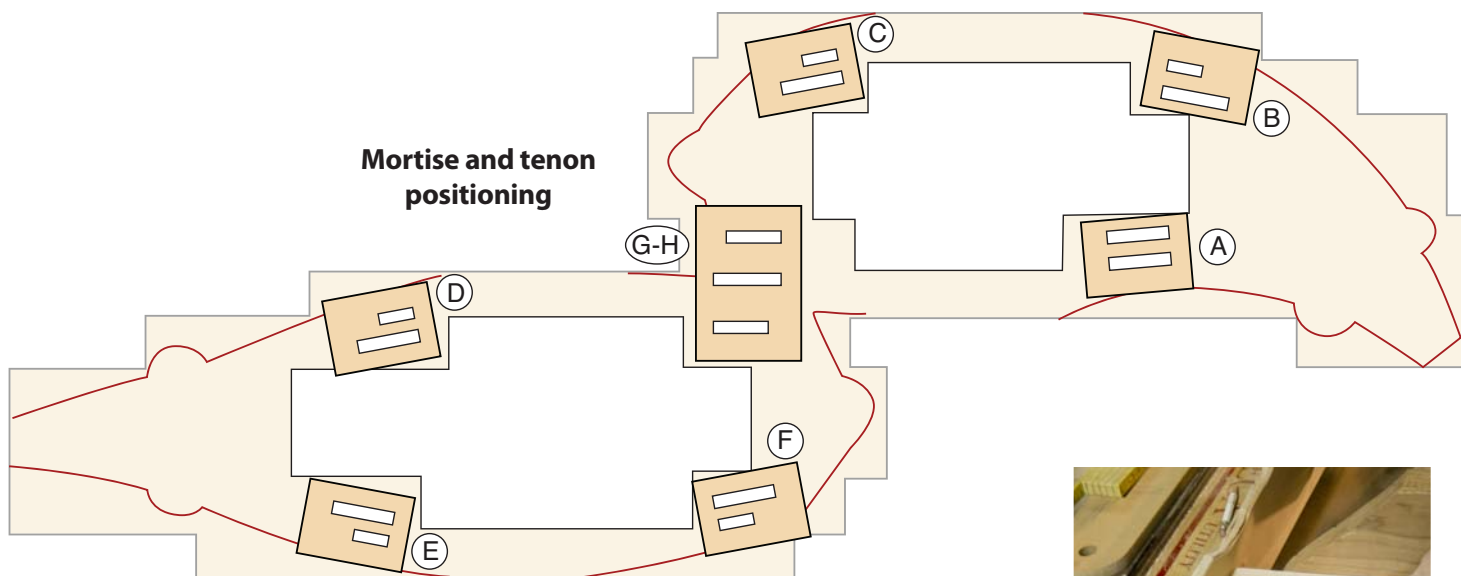
Carousel builders commonly use core box-construction techniques. Since most carousel horses are exposed to the elements, they have to be able to expand and contract as the moisture content in the wood changes.

The root of core-box construction is to ensure all the grain runs in the same direction. The grain for both level 1 (the top layer) and level 2 (the core box) must run from the tip of one bear's nose to the tip of the other bear's nose. When the wood expands or contracts, all of the wood moves at the same rate, so it doesn't crack. The consistent grain direction also makes the project easier to carve.

◀ **Step 1: Glue up the top layer.** This layer will become the back of the bears and the seat of the bench. Cut the pieces to the sizes noted in the materials list. Edge glue the pieces together with wood glue, using the diagram as a guide. Start with part 1 and glue the other pieces to that one. The notches on parts 2, 3, and 4 help you apply uniform pressure when clamping them in place.

▼ **Step 2: Glue up the core box.** The box becomes the main part of the bears' bodies. Plan your layout to allow excess wood for shaping in stage 2. Cut the pieces to the sizes noted in the materials list. Start with piece 5, the long piece common to both bears. Systematically attach the other pieces to piece 5 with wood glue. Note the offsets in the diagram. These offsets reduce the amount of scrap to be removed when you rough out the carving. Avoid letting the pieces slip as you apply the clamps. Remove any glue squeeze out and flatten the top and bottom surfaces. For best results, use a wide belt sander. Check availability at local woodshops if you don't own a large belt sander.





▲ Step 3: Cut the mortises. Mark the locations of the leg mortises, using the diagram as a guide. If you've altered the pattern at all, use your best judgement to locate the mortises in the thicker areas of the box. For additional strength, I use two thin mortises instead of one large one. I built a jig to cut the mortises with a router (see the diagram below). It is possible to rough out the holes with a drill. Clean out the holes and square off the edges using a bench chisel that matches the thickness of the tenon. For the strongest possible joint, keep the bottom surface flat and the corners square.



Router mortise jig

	— 2" —		— 2½" —	
	— 3¼" —		— 3¼" —	
	— 2" —		— 3¼" —	

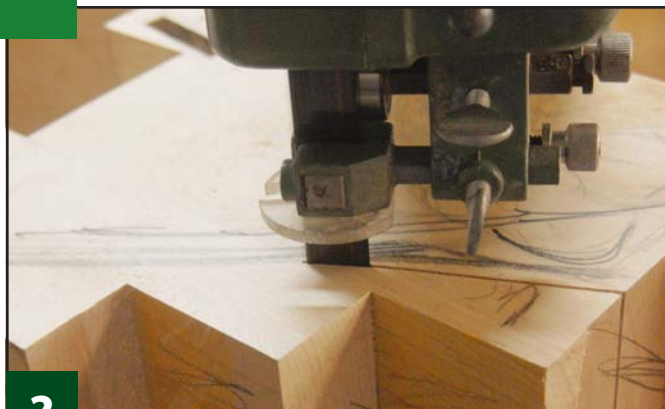
▲ Step 4: Cut the tenons. Set the table saw to cut the thickness of the tenons. I use the two outside parts of a stacked dado blade so I can cut the entire tenon in one pass, but you can also use a traditional blade and make two cuts. Use the diagram and jig to lay out the tenons, matching the mortises cut in the core. Cross cut along the bottom of the tenons to shape the shoulders. Remove the waste from between the tenons and from both ends with a chisel. Test fit the tenons into the mortises and carefully shave them down until they fit tightly. Don't make them too snug; the tenons should slide into the mortises easily. Since they are double tenons, there is plenty of surface area to make a good glue joint.

BEAR BENCH: SHAPING THE BEARS



1

Shape the feet and legs. Refer to the diagrams on page 44. Cut the materials to size, and glue the toes to the legs. Shape the feet with a chain saw disc in an angle grinder, and smooth them with a rasp. Carve a line between the foot and ankle with a V-tool. Use the V-tool to shape the claws, and smooth them with a small gouge. Smooth the legs and feet with a #3 gouge.



2

Cut the core box to shape. Sketch in the shape of the bears and cut outside the lines using a band saw with a large blade. The core can be heavy, so you may need an assistant to help you move it and to help you guide the block around on the band saw. Trace the shape of the core onto the top layer. Cut just outside the lines with the band saw to remove the waste from the top layer.



3

Glue the pieces together. Place the core box upside down and dry fit the legs. Let the corner overhang the bench and glue and clamp the legs in place. Glue and clamp the thigh pieces in place. Spread Unibond 800 on the top of the core box with a toothed trowel. Position the top layer on the core box and clamp it in place. Make sure the glue squeezes out evenly around the joint.



4

Remove the sharp corners. Make a series of cuts across the grain with a saw—I use a chain saw disc. Remove the waste between the cuts with a gouge. Use the same technique to rough out the area under the chin. Use a Surform® rasp plane followed by a coarse sanding disc to remove the gouge marks. Smooth the surface enough to sketch in the major landmarks.



5

Rough in the face. Remove the wood near the ears to make them stand out. Remove wood from beside the nose to create eye sockets. Locate the tip of the nose and carve the mouth. Check the proportions of the face. Line your thumbs up with the centerline and check the symmetry of the eyes with your index fingers. Move your thumbs up the centerline to check the symmetry of the ears.



6

Carve the shoulders. The straight lines denote areas where two planes intersect. Use a #3 gouge or a Surform plane to remove the shaded area between the lines. The ridges at these lines show how the shadows will fall on the carving. The areas where you use the Surform plane will be smoothed later, but the gouged areas shouldn't need to be smoothed if you use a sharp tool.

BEAR BENCH: FIXING THE LINES



7

Shape the legs. Notice that when I draw a line from the side and from the front, the lines do not match up. Carve the side view line first, and draw back in the front view line. Then carve in the front view line, and redraw the side view. You may need to repeat the process several times until the guidelines merge, creating a form that is pleasing from the front and the side.



8

Sketch in the main body lines. The surface from the back of the ears connects to the shoulders. The cheeks also attach to the shoulders. The arched eyebrows connect with the jowl area. Taper the jaw to tuck it under the muzzle. The shoulders and hips create slight humps. Leave the backs flat for the seat. The hams merge with the tail, which is raised from the butt.



9

Shape the areas between the lines. I use a Kunz radius spokeshave, which is rounded in both directions. Keep the tool sharp, and pay attention to the grain direction to prevent tear out. Clean up any remaining rough areas with a 1" #3 gouge. Use a V-tool to clean up the area where the bears' butts meet. Touch up the surface lightly with a Klingspor soft foam sanding pad.



10

Finish the eyes. Apply black aniline dye to the eyes, inside the ears, and the nose. Seal them with shellac or lacquer to protect them from the white stain applied in a later step. After the sealer is dry, shape the area around the eye and remove any unwanted black dye. I use a skewed palm gouge to remove the black and go back with a knife to remove any fuzz. Do not mar the eye itself.



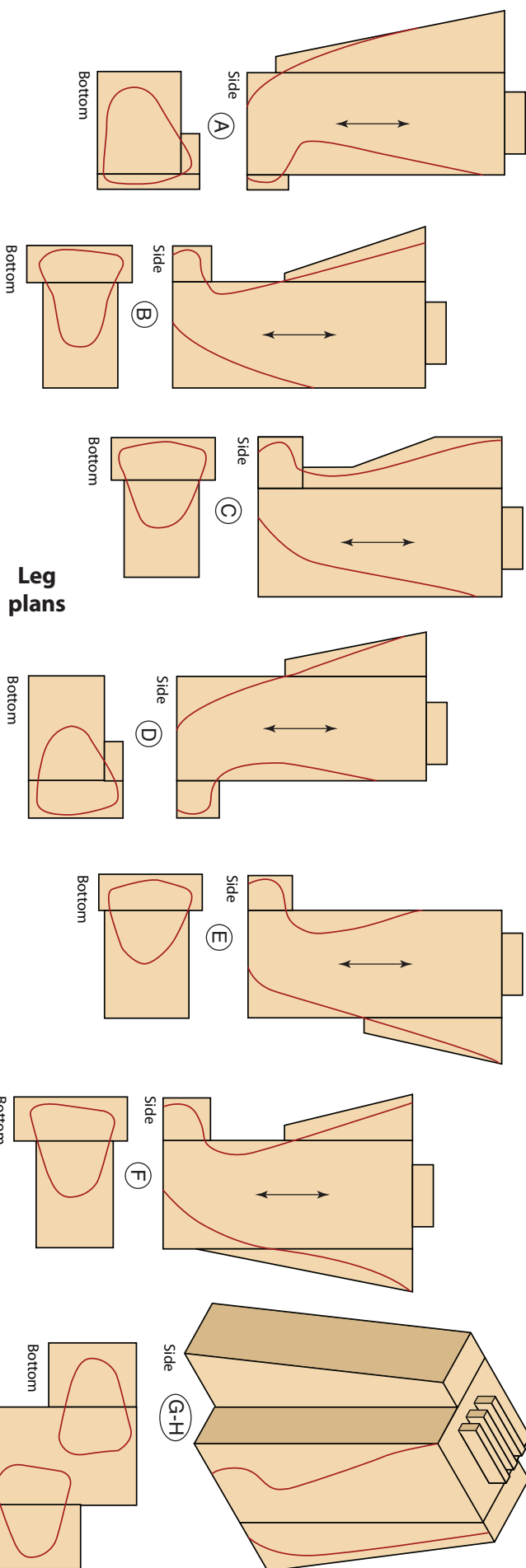
11

Sand the muzzle smooth. Since the bear's fur is short on the muzzle, it looks better if the area is smooth. Use a random orbit sander to smooth the surface and remove any black marks. Leave the black on the tip of the nose and work to create a transition between the sanded surface and the tooled surface.



12

Finish the carving. Remove any remaining lines. Use a 1/2" and 3/4" #3 gouge to clean up the tail and butt, and smooth the legs and sides with the spokeshave. Apply a white pickling stain to the bear and wipe the stain off the black areas. Apply a durable clear finish after the stain dries. I spray on a Duravar catalyzed lacquer.



Leg
plans

MATERIALS:

- 2" x 9" x 56" maple or wood of choice (1)
- 2" x 5" x 24" maple or wood of choice (2)
- 2" x 7" x 26" maple or wood of choice (3)
- 2" x 5" x 8" maple or wood of choice (4)
- 2" x 6" x 45" maple or wood of choice (5)
- 2" x 6" x 7" maple or wood of choice (6)
- 2" x 6" x 12" maple or wood of choice (7)
- 4" x 6" x 6" maple or wood of choice (8)
- 4" x 6" x 10½" maple or wood of choice (9)
- 2" x 6" x 16" maple or wood of choice (10)
- 2" x 6" x 7" maple or wood of choice (11)
- 2" x 6" x 23" maple or wood of choice (12)
- 2" x 6" x 7" maple or wood of choice (13)
- 2" x 6" x 7" maple or wood of choice (14)
- 2" x 6" x 16" maple or wood of choice (15)
- 4" x 6" x 9" maple or wood of choice (16)
- 4" x 6" x 6½" maple or wood of choice (17)
- 2" x 6" x 7" maple or wood of choice (18)
- 2" x 6" x 8½" maple or wood of choice (19)
- 2" x 6" x 21" maple or wood of choice (20)
- 3 each 4" x 4" x 11" maple or wood of choice (single leg base pieces)
- Assorted scraps to glue onto legs for toes and thighs
- 4" x 8" x 11" maple or wood of choice (double leg)

Black aniline dye

White pickling stain

Clear finish of choice
(I use catalyzed lacquer)

Wood glue

Unibond 800 urea resin glue
(optional)

Assorted grits of sandpaper

TOOLS:

Assorted clamps

Saw of choice (to cut tenons)

Router and mortise jig

Carpenter's chisel
(to clean up mortises)

Angle grinder with chain saw
disc and coarse sanding disc

1", ¾", and ½" #3 gouges

Assorted chisels and gouges of choice

Surform® rasp plane

Spokeshave of choice (I use a Kunz radius spokeshave)

V-tool of choice

Klingspor sanding pad

Random orbit sander

Skewed palm gouge

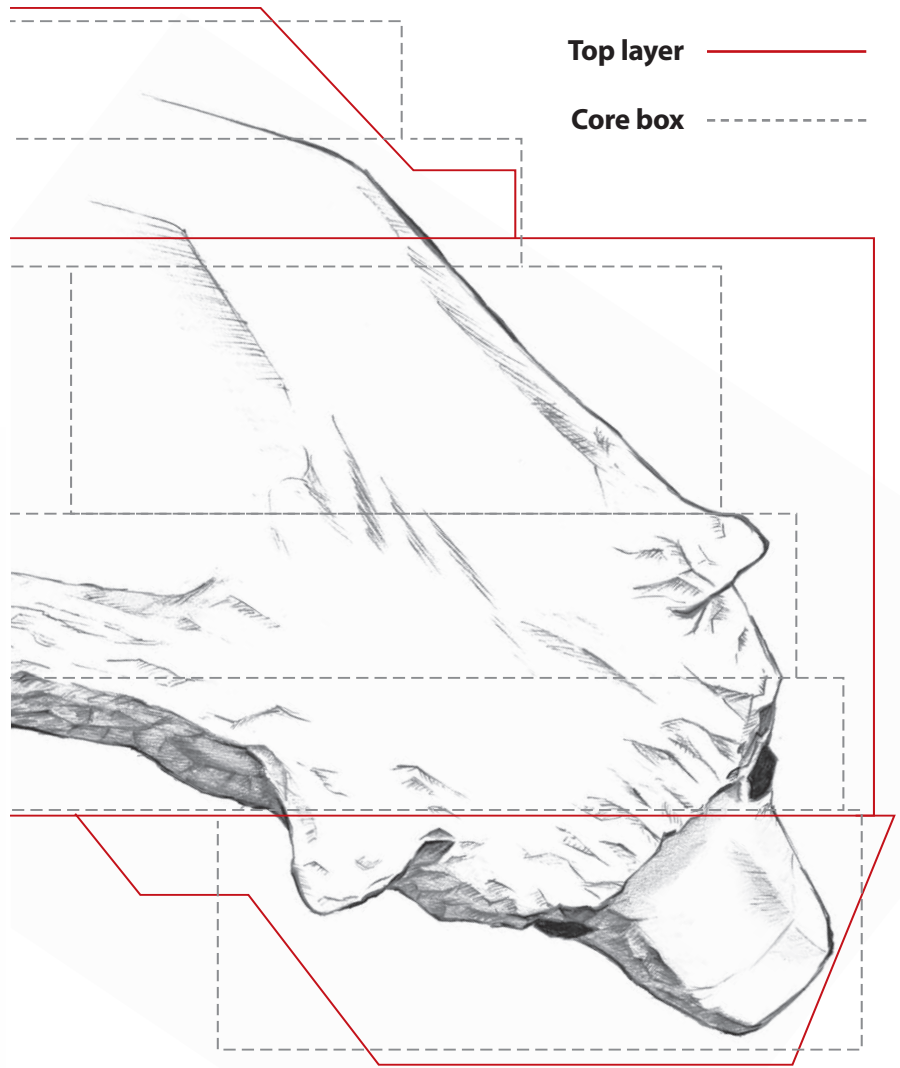
Assorted brushes to apply finish

NOTE: I buy rough-sawn lumber so I can keep as much of the original thickness as possible. Rough sawn lumber is usually sold in quarters (8/4 = 2" thick). Dimensions have been converted to the standard measurements for your convenience. By using rough sawn lumber, most of my pieces end up 1⅞" thick, rather than the standard 1½" thick. Surfacing the wood myself also ensures that the wood is flat. Assemble the core box promptly after surfacing, while the stock is flat, to promote strong joints.



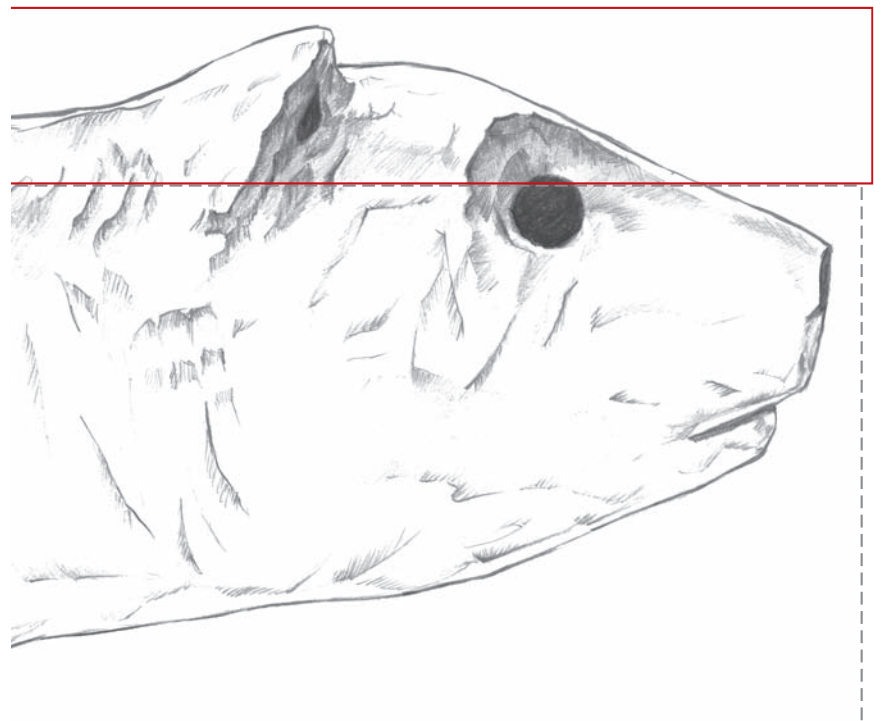
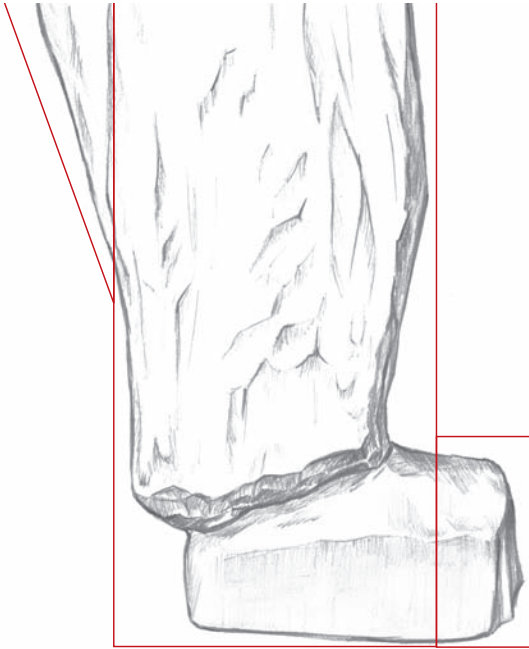
About the Author

Jeffrey Cooper, of Portsmouth, NH, started carving at a young age, but it wasn't until the birth of his daughter in 1988 that he incorporated his interest in carving into furniture. Now his work is on display in libraries, hospitals, and galleries around the country. For more of his work, visit www.cooperwoodsculptor.com/.



Top layer

Core box



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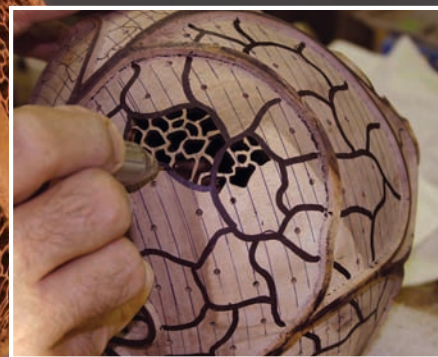
Carving on Turning

Modern woodturning masters embellish their work with carving

The popularity of artistic woodturning has skyrocketed in the past decade. The modern masters featured in this article have combined turning with carving to create stunning compositions, of which the beautifully turned shape is only the beginning.



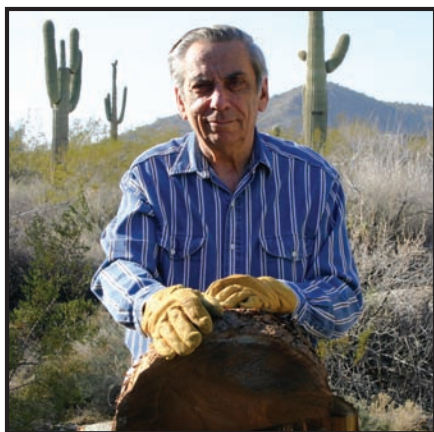
LEAF FORM, 2005. African Sumac; 8" x 8". Paul excavates between the leafy veins using a power-carving tool.



"The majority of time is spent on carving, piercing, and texturing."



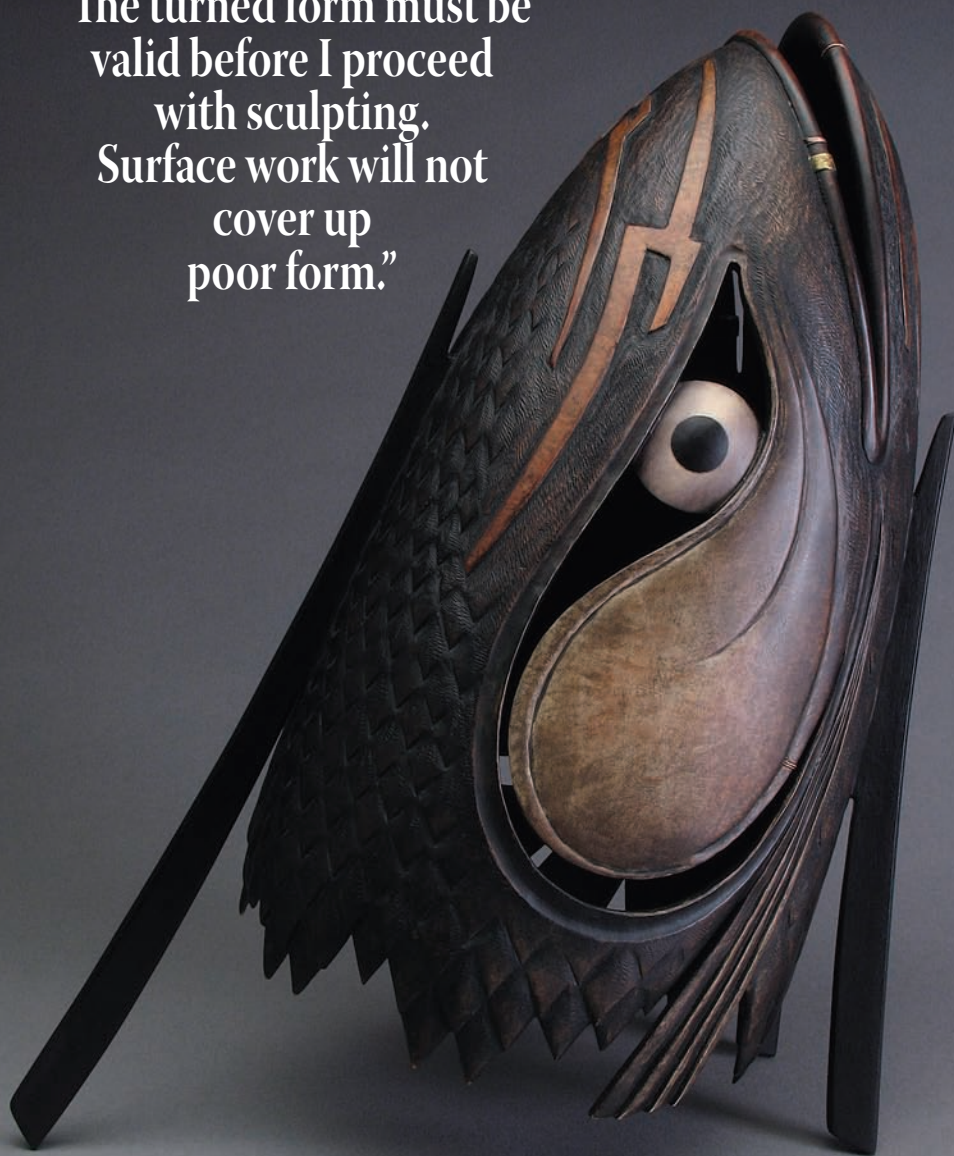
DE LA MER (OF THE SEA), 2007. African sumac, 9" high x 11¼" diameter.



J. Paul Fennell: Infinite piercing

Scottsdale, AZ native J. Paul Fennell started turning in the 1970s. His first project was turning legs for a table, but he immediately recognized the potential of the lathe as a way to produce very expressive work. A self-taught woodturner, he was introduced to the world of artistic turning in the 1980s. Although Paul had a life-long reverence for wood, those demonstrations confirmed that woodturning would become an important part of his life.

“The turned form must be valid before I proceed with sculpting. Surface work will not cover up poor form.”



INCARNATION OF THE SALMON KING, 2006.

Sycamore, ebony, brass, copper wire, pigment;
dye; 14¼" high x 11" wide x 7" deep.

SPIRIT WHITES (ON SKY BLUE PALE), 2006.
Maple, bleached, pigmented;
10¼" high x 9" diameter.

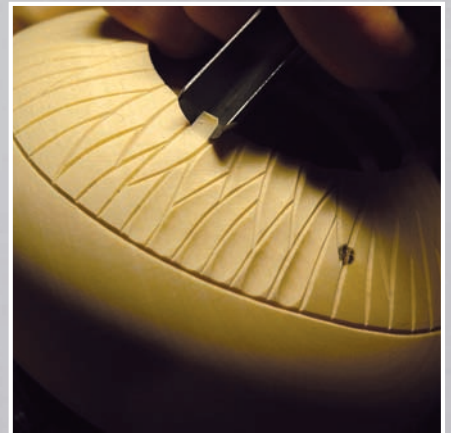


Ron Layport: Turning is the basis

Ron Layport commits a great deal of time to carving, yet he considers turning to be the basis of all of his work. The Pittsburgh, PA resident started out creating one-of-a-kind furniture. He became interested in turning when he wanted to learn to make round legs and feet. Ron took a weekend workshop on turning with David Ellsworth. He learned to turn a bowl and a hollow form, and never quite got to the table leg. Ron fell in love with artistic turning, and two decades later, it remains an integral part of his work.

“The challenge is to keep reinterpreting the forms.”

Untitled, 2006. Holly; 6" diameter. The wet wood yields easily to a sharp gouge and careful hands.



Untitled, 2006. Ebonized oak; 13" high x 7½" diameter.



Liam Flynn: Plain wood grain emphasizes the form

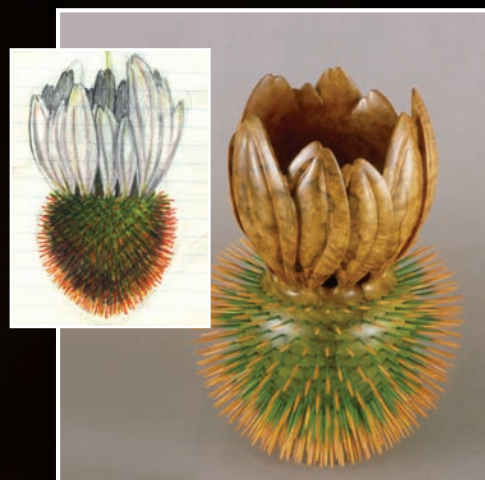
Irish woodturner Liam Flynn was introduced to the world of artistic turning in 1982 after buying John Makepeace's *The Woodwork Book*, which inspired him to try turning. Woodturning has a venerable history in Ireland. The trend of surface decoration is a relatively recent event, which arose when artists were trying to distinguish their work from the mass of look-alikes. Liam dislikes stunning wood grain and prefers a plain canvas. When he decorates the surface of his vessels, it serves to emphasize the simple qualities of his elegant forms.

**"When I create my vessels,
I look to the lathe only as a
basis for my carving."**



AFRICAN FERN BASKET, 2004.
Redwood; 14" high x 13" diameter.

Ron records ideas for carvings in a sketchbook. *ECHINACEA*, 1992. Dogwood burl and maple; 12½" high x 8½" diameter.



coming soon!



L'ÉCOULEMENT DU CIEL VERS LA MER (THE FLOW OF SKY TO SEA), 2007. Cherry, dyed silver leaf, acrylic, blue fluorite; 4" diameter x 2½" deep by Jacques Vesery. Jacques will be demonstrating his carving and texturing techniques in a future issue of WCI.



Ron Fleming: Start with a sketch

Ron Fleming lives in Tulsa, OK, surrounded by nature, which is the biggest influence on his work. His first career was as a professional illustrator and most of his work today begins as a sketch. For Ron, woodturning is a natural way to combine his capabilities as an artist and a craftsman.

further reading

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Color Guard

Suggest form and flow with a basic relief carving honoring the armed forces

*By Mary-Ann Jack-Bleach
Photos by Dennis Moor*

Suggesting a three-dimensional form in thin wood can be difficult. Establishing correct proportions is key to creating the illusion. Don't carve the outside edges until the main carving is complete. This promotes a smoother transition and adds to the illusion of depth and dimension.

I designed this carving to accompany a display of my father's World War II medals. The carving is inspired by those who take care of us on a daily basis in law enforcement, fire and rescue, and the military, saving lives, and even sacrificing their own lives in the course of duty.

Bernie Scheid, a constable in the London, ON, Police Force, who also served in the Canadian military, was my model for this carving. Bernie served full-time in the military from 1983 to 1994 and remains a reservist with the London's First Hussars.

I took photographs, including close-ups of his shoes, cap, and uniform, as Bernie simulated the stance. This carving depicts a London, ON, police officer, but you can customize the design. An alternate pattern depicting a woman in uniform is included. Use reference photos to change the uniform and flag design as desired.

The design is reasonably easy-to-carve, and doesn't require facial details, which can be difficult for novice carvers to execute.



1 Prepare the blank. Transfer the pattern to the blank. Cut the outline on a band saw, and attach it to ½"-thick plywood with three 1"-long screws from the back. Position the screws where you will not carve deeper than ¼". Measure and mark the location of the screws with red dots on the blank. Attach the plywood to a carving vise.

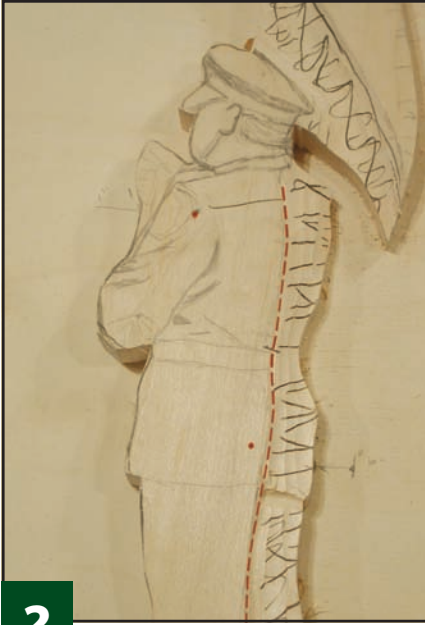
tips

ROUGHING OUT

While carving, avoid getting so involved in the folds and creases that you remove too much wood. Remember there are body parts under the uniform. A way to eliminate this risk is to leave an uncarved edge of ⅜" to ½" around the entire carving where it meets the plywood. Only carve this edge during the final stages.

REFERENCE MATERIAL

Researching the subject matter while designing a carving is critical. I gained insight into my subject matter by taking the photographs myself, and by talking to someone who has expert knowledge of different uniforms.



2

Rough out the right side.

Mark the wood to be removed from the right side of the figure and inside the fold of the flag above the cap. The line indicates the midline of his back. Work from the center of the back down to the edge. Remove up to 1/4" of the wood near the edge with a 12mm #3 gouge.



3

Rough out the right leg.

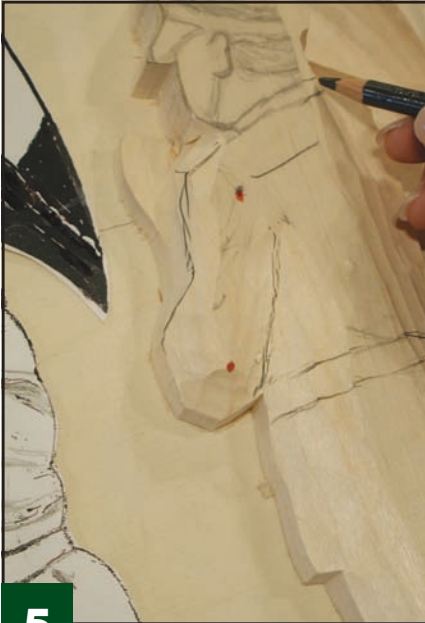
Use a 3mm #11 gouge to make a stop cut below the jacket. Divide the legs, using a 5 to 7mm #11 gouge or a large 90° V-tool held at a right angle to the wood surface. Remove about 1/4" from the right leg with a 20mm #9 gouge. Smooth the leg with a 12mm #3 gouge.



4

Start shaping the left side.

Shade and carve the hand lower than the shoulder. Shape the back of the arm and torso with a 10mm #11 gouge. Mark the high point of the left elbow joint with a dot and remove wood from below and to the sides of the dot to simulate taunt fabric around the elbow.



5

Continue shaping the left side.

Use a 12mm #3 gouge. Leave the wood about 1/2" thick on the edge. Shape the left arm, keeping the right hand lower than the arm for proper depth and proportion. Shape the jacket from the midline of the hip down to the front edge. Redraw the collar details.



6

Carve the flag.

Due to the grain direction, it is easier to turn the carving around to carve the deep fold in the flag. Use a 35mm #7 gouge. Use the pattern as a guide. Round the flag edges with a 12mm #3 gouge. Do not carve the top pole detail; we will be adding a dowel to the top in step 14.



7

Locate the landmarks on the head.

Mark the highest aspect of the hat and head with a prominent line, and do not carve on this line. The side of the left ear is the highest part of the face—treat it with care. Using a 4mm #11 gouge, carve behind the jaw and ear, and above the collar.

COLOR GUARD: SHAPING THE FACE



8

Rough shape the cap and

face. Carve under the brim of the cap. Separate the hat from the hair with a 3mm #11 gouge. Carve from the front of the ear towards the nose with a 12mm #3 gouge. Separate the chin from the shoulder. Round the hat and hair. Start behind the ear and work back.



9

Continue shaping the cap.

Redraw the lines on the hat and mark the hairline and beard. Carve the top of the cap down towards the back where it meets the flag. The final shaping of the top of the cap will be done when the head is finalized. Carve underneath the collar with a 3mm #11 gouge.



10

Finish roughing out the face.

Undercut the peak of the cap. Shape the right shoulder and collar area. Define the area behind the jaw and ear, using a 10mm #9 gouge. Clean up the neck area by carving lightly towards the jaw. Now is the time to remove any rough cuts under the jaw. Draw on the face profile.



11

Shape the left shoulder.

Finish shaping the left shoulder. Use a 12mm #3 gouge; I use a fishtail. Pay particular attention to the area where the shoulder covers the hand. Much of the perspective of the carving depends on getting the angles correct in this area. Then sketch in the hand details.



12

Carve the hand and clothing

folds. Use a 3mm and a 5mm #11 gouge. The deeper folds are on the right and do not cross the midline of the back. Light folds cross the midline as the fabric stretches across the back. Carve the hand details with a 3mm #11 gouge and a knife.

COLOR GUARD: ADDING FINAL DETAILS



13

Shape the legs and shoes.

Draw in the folds in the pants and shoe details, using the pattern as a guide. Then carve them with a 3mm #11 gouge and a 7mm #11 gouge. A V-tool will make sharp creases. The gouges create more realistic drapes and folds, which resemble the folds of stiff dress pants.



14

Add the flag pole.

The pole is made up of three parts. Use a ruler for proper alignment. Drill holes for the dowel with a #8 drill bit. It goes into the bottom of the flag 1" and into the top of the hand, and top of the flag 1/4". Carve a groove in the elbow and under the fingers. Cut the dowel pieces to fit.



15

Finish shaping the face and

flag. Use caution when shaping the ear; if it looks like the side view of an ear, it's incongruent with the 3/4 view of the carving. Shape and add rough texture to the beard and hair with a 3mm #11 gouge. Finish shaping the cap. Smooth the flag with a 12mm #3 gouge.



16

Add the details.

Smooth and sand the cloth areas with 180-grit nail files and fine sandpaper. Carved fabric looks better if it's been sanded. As the person wears gloves, do not add details to the fingers. Add the final texture to the hair and beard with a V-tool. Clean up your cuts and any fuzzy wood grain.



17

Shape the edges of the

carving. Recall that we left the wood 1/2" thick on the edges. Remove the carving from the plywood and carve the flat edges to flow with the folds and shape of the body and clothing. Note the left shoe is carved in side profile as his left foot is bent outwards a little.



18

Continue shaping the edges.

Continue to taper and shape the edge of the carving, following the folds and shapes. This transforms the carving from one with stiff, straight edges to one with an outline that has movement. It makes the figure come alive. Glue the flag pole dowels in place.



Finishing and Painting

Saturate the finished carving with boiled linseed oil thinned with a little mineral spirits. A second coat of the oil is optional, but improves the sealing process. When the sealing coat is dry, spray it with a clear quick-drying lacquer. To emphasise shadows or details, apply a thin wash of burnt sienna acrylic paint mixed with water before painting the carving. Then apply your colors of choice. When dry, spray the carving with clear, quick-drying lacquer. *Caution: boiled linseed oil is flammable. Dispose of all oil-soaked rags properly.*

materials & tools

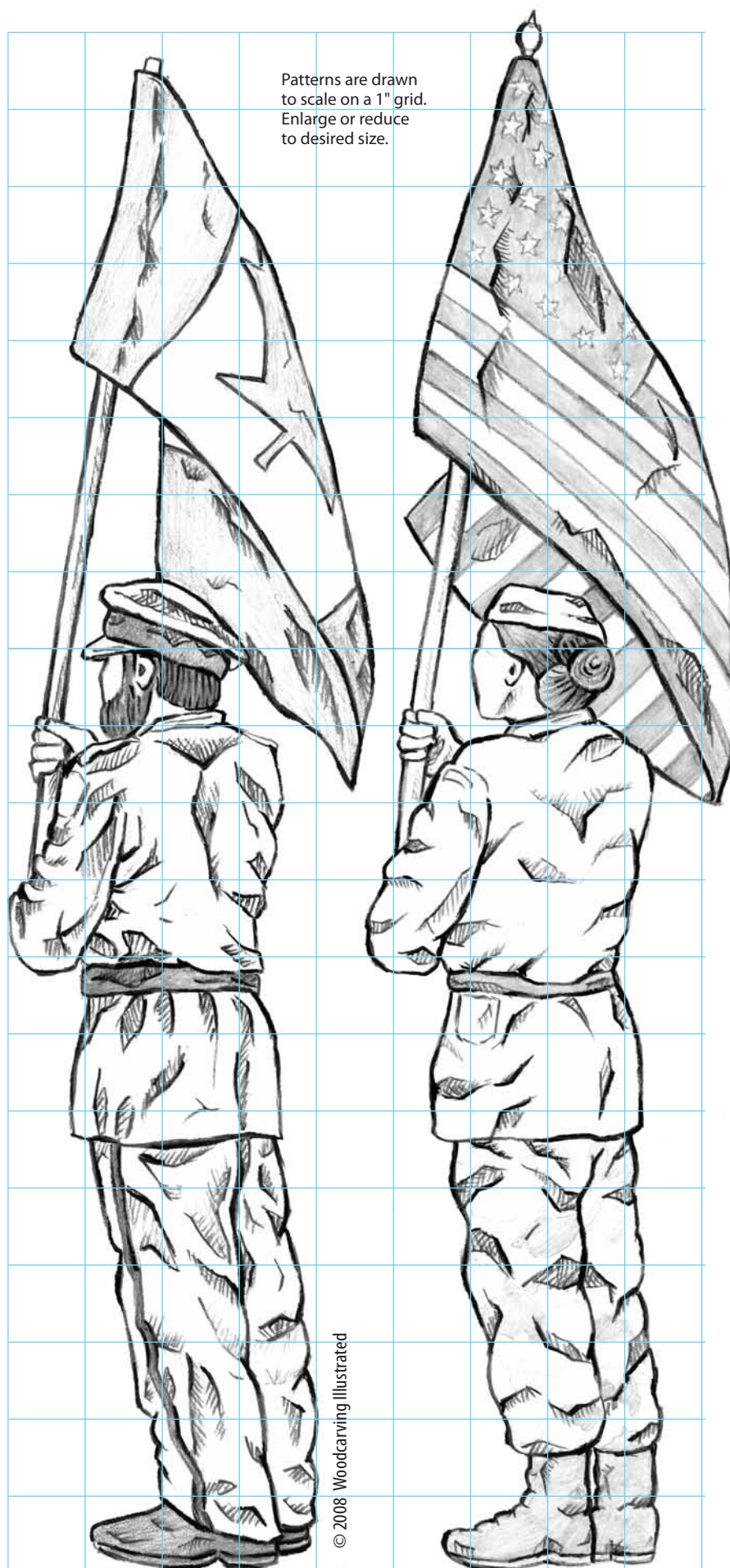
MATERIALS:

$\frac{3}{4}$ " x 5" x 20" basswood
 $\frac{1}{2}$ "-thick plywood
 (larger than carving,
 to hold the blank
 while carving)
 3 each #8 x 1" wood
 screws (to secure
 the carving)
 $\frac{3}{16}$ "-diameter x 12"
 dowel (flag pole)
 Nail files (180-grit
 or higher)
 Assorted grits of
 sandpaper
 Boiled linseed oil
 Mineral spirits
 Quick-dry, clear
 spray lacquer
 Acrylic paints of choice

TOOLS:

Pencil, ruler, and
 white eraser.
 Heavy duty carving
 support vise
 Drill and #8 bit
 Detail knife of choice
 Paint brushes
 12mm #3 gouge
 (fishtail optional)
 35mm #7 gouge
 (optional, can use
 smaller tools)
 #9 gouges: 10mm
 and 20mm
 #11 gouges: 3mm,
 4mm, 5mm, 7mm,
 and 10mm
 Small V-tool
 90° V-tool (optional)

Patterns are drawn
 to scale on a 1" grid.
 Enlarge or reduce
 to desired size.



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Shallow Relief Gallery

Before branching out into other carving styles, Mary-Ann Jack-Bleach specialized in relief carving. She has mastered the art of creating depth and dimension in a shallow piece of wood.

Gallery photography by Gail Verweel



Carved from Jelutong, this decorative clock is 30" tall and 18" wide.

A portrait of a fisherman, carved from 3"-thick basswood, demonstrates the depth that can be achieved in a thin relief carving.



Mary-Ann uses this cottonwood bark Santa as a class project.



About the Author

Mary-Ann Jack-Bleach taught herself to relief carve in 1979. In late 1987, she was recruited from South Africa to work in Canada as an occupational therapist. From the early 1990s, she started exploring different forms of carving and has become an award-winning woodcarver, teacher, and judge. Her carvings can be found in collections throughout the world. Mary-Ann teaches from her home-based studio in London, ON, and can be contacted at mableach@execulink.com.

Basic Relief Techniques



The three stages of simple relief carving:

- 1. Lowering, leveling, and finishing off the background within and around a subject.*
- 2. Outlining the subject accurately or "setting in," so we end up with a raised subject that looks "cut out."*
- 3. Modeling or shaping the subject itself.*

In this project we will only be focusing on stages 1 and 2.

Learn the fundamentals of carving in low relief

By Chris Pye

This design gives you the opportunity to practice low-relief carving. The technique is the same whether you are carving kanji characters, traditional letters, or pictorial designs. These kanji characters look interesting, and the shapes teach you how to set-in and ground a low-relief carving.

In “low relief” the depth is shallow and the carving feels quite light. The depth between the top of the letters and the background is $\frac{1}{8}$ " to $\frac{3}{16}$ ". In traditional carving, the background is often simply called the “ground,” and establishing it is called “grounding” or “grounding out.”

Grounds can be “open” (approached easily from the side) or “closed” (areas surrounded by wood that are trickier to get at). Carvers need to be able to deal competently with both instances.



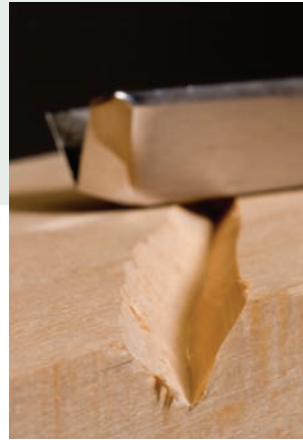
The same relief techniques are used to carve traditional letters, such as this “D.”

Design

I want to emphasise that the technique demonstrated is entirely independent of the subject. I chose this design to provide practice in important and fundamental carving techniques, but the design could be anything that works in relief as a silhouette—any letter, of any style (from Hebrew to Arabic); single (monograms) or grouped (a house sign, blocks of text); and even flowers, fish, or geometric patterns.

CUTTING DIAGONALLY

When cutting diagonally across the wood fibers, one side of the V-tool or veiner cuts with the grain, and the other side cuts against the grain. Put the “good” or smooth side of the groove next to the subject and the rough side to the waste at all times.



Feel free to work with an alternate design; the method of carving will be the same.

This design is an example of “kanji,” a form of Japanese writing or script. I chose two kanji characters that make one word: “Mu-Shin,” and because Japanese is read from top to bottom, I’ve put them one above the other.

“Mu-shin” is a wonderful concept that arises out of Zen, for which there is no exact equivalent in English. It can be translated as “empty-mind” or “no-mind,” meaning a mind that is empty, but has infinite capacity and potential. The concept is readily found in the “mind like water” business concept. To give the kanji a context—and to provide more valuable carving practice—I added a pattern of water flowing around a stone.

You need a neat accurate outline of your subject, whatever you choose. Make your lines—what will be the outline of the subject—clean, simple, and flowing. They should be quite large, and without a lot of fussy details.

I enlarged the kanji on my computer and printed the design on vellum, or transparent paper. The transparent paper allows me to orient the designs with the grain.

Keep the strength of the wood fibers (the grain) in mind. Short fibers are weak and prone to breaking off, so check your design, and adjust it for strength.

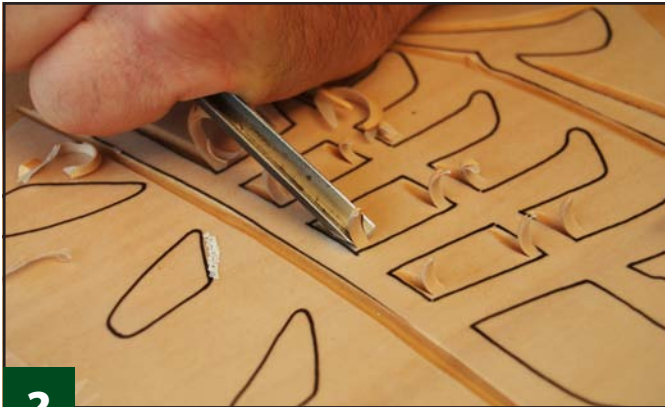
A tight-grained wood such as oak, lime, basswood, or mahogany is ideal, but any unfigured, carveable wood will work. Because the design reads vertically, I have the grain orientated this way too. Western lettering looks better with the grain horizontal. Since the carving is quite shallow, you need only use a board $\frac{3}{4}$ " to 1"-thick.

BASIC RELIEF: REMOVING THE BACKGROUND



1

Transfer the pattern to the wood. Trace the design on the wood or use temporary-bond spray adhesive to attach the pattern. Draw a line $\frac{1}{8}$ " to $\frac{3}{16}$ " down from the surface on the outside edge the whole way around the blank, using a ruler or a marking gauge. This will be the deepest area of the carving.



2

Outline the subject. Hold a V-tool in the low-angle grip, and carve a trench on the waste side of the line around each element, using smooth, flowing lines. This is called "lining in," and acts as a stop cut. Don't go deeper than your proposed background. Ignore the little details; we will deal with these later.



3

Lower the open areas. Lower the background by hand instead of using a router. Hold a wide, medium gouge (#6 or #7) in a low-angle grip, and carve across the grain from the outside inward. Keep the corners of the gouge clear of the wood and make long running cuts. Do not run the gouge into the elements.



4

Remove the waste in the tight areas. Take care that you do not go below the depth of the V-tool cut. Use narrower gouges on the enclosed areas—just do the best you can here; it's easier to deal with them as units later. Use the gouge to "line in" around the stream, thus protecting it for now.



5

Level the background. Use relatively flat gouges, such as a Sheffield #3 or Pfiel #2. Use the largest gouge possible and make sure your tools are sharp. Slice across the grain using the low-angle grip. Remove the ridges and any torn grain before moving to the next area. Level the closed grounds as much as possible. Stay away from the characters at this point.

BASIC RELIEF: "SETTING IN" THE SUBJECT



6

Outline the curves. Hold the gouge that matches the curve of the element in the high-angle grip. Push the gouge down towards the background at a slight angle so the wall slopes out. Ease the tool out and continue around the curve. Use the same tool on as many areas as possible before switching gouges. Use a skew chisel to make stop cuts wherever the pieces end at a corner.



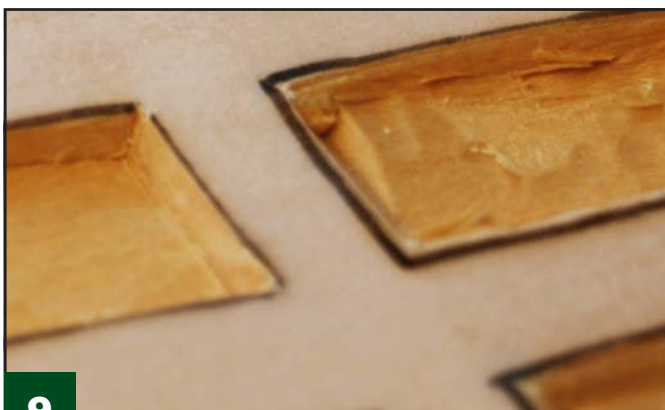
7

Slice the long, smooth curves. Use your flattest gouges, sweeps #3 to #4. Hold the gouge in the high-angle grip, and push the gouge along with your thumb. Treat the cutting edge of the gouge like a knife — the trailing corner is the point. Keep the leading corner of the gouge clear of the wood. Feel your way through the curves. Use smaller gouges for the closed areas.



8

Finish off the open background. Use flat gouges and finish the ground up to the subject. Create a smooth wall, slightly sloping out, with a clean junction where it meets the background. Creating a clean junction is a fundamental skill to acquire. Deal with the larger areas first; then move on to the difficult areas. Use a variety of tool widths to get between the elements.



9

Finish off the closed backgrounds. Smoothing off closed grounds and cleaning into tight corners can be a major challenge, but there are some tools that really help (see Special Tools). In this area, I use a "grounder;" this is a short-bent, flat gouge. It works well in some places, but I often find myself reaching for a short-bent, left-hand or right-hand skew.



10

Clean up the subject areas. Peel off the pattern and remove any adhesive residue with a flat sanding block equipped with fine sandpaper. After sanding, check the surface edges of the elements to make sure you have clean, neat lines. If you use a stronger adhesive, you may need to soak the pattern with a bit of mineral spirits to remove all of the adhesive and residue.

BASIC RELIEF: CARVING THE WATER



11

Rough-carve the stream. Carve the recess for the pebble, but do not glue the pebble in place yet. Carve the grooves that represent the water with a deep gouge. When you cut diagonally across the wood, one side of the gouge will cut with the grain, and the other will cut against it (see Tip). Since there is no “waste side” in the grooves, cut each half of the groove separately.



12

Finish the stream. Reverse the direction of the cut for each side of the groove, cutting with the grain to prevent the ridge from crumbling. Flow the stream around the pebble. Keep the lines parallel and uniform. Rather than leaving a hard line, merge the half grooves that define the outside ridges of the stream with the background. Glue the pebble in place with 2-part epoxy glue.

Finishing notes

I finish the wood with a matte acrylic varnish, the sort used to finish oil paintings, which gives the surface a light sheen. A simple beeswax polish would also look good.

Final Word on the Design

It's always good to critique your work. Despite this being an excellent practice piece for setting in, I'm not sure whether the pebble lying on a vertical surface really works, as it defies both logic and gravity. It also seems a little too dominant in the design. A smaller, flatter pebble would feel lighter, and would be less dominant and more balanced.

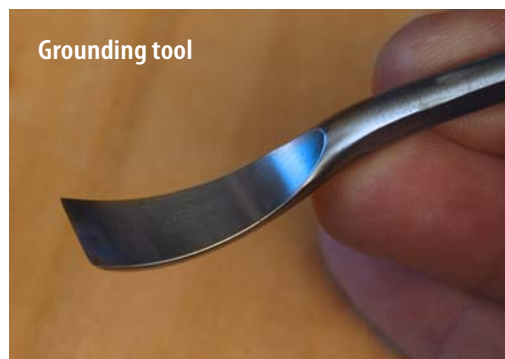
Painting the surfaces of the kanji would strengthen these elements, and setting the whole piece in a deep, box-like frame would take away some of the pebble's isolated dominance.

Special Tools



Skew chisels

Skew chisels, both straight and short-bent (spoon), get into tight angles and corners where square-ended grounders won't reach. Short-bent skews come in pairs, each cutting either to the left or right.



Grounding tool

Grounders' or grounding tools are short-bent (spoon) flat gouges or sometimes short-bent chisels. These tools will get into tight areas where straight gouges catch on the top edges of the recess and are essential for enclosed grounds. It's a good idea to have a selection of widths.

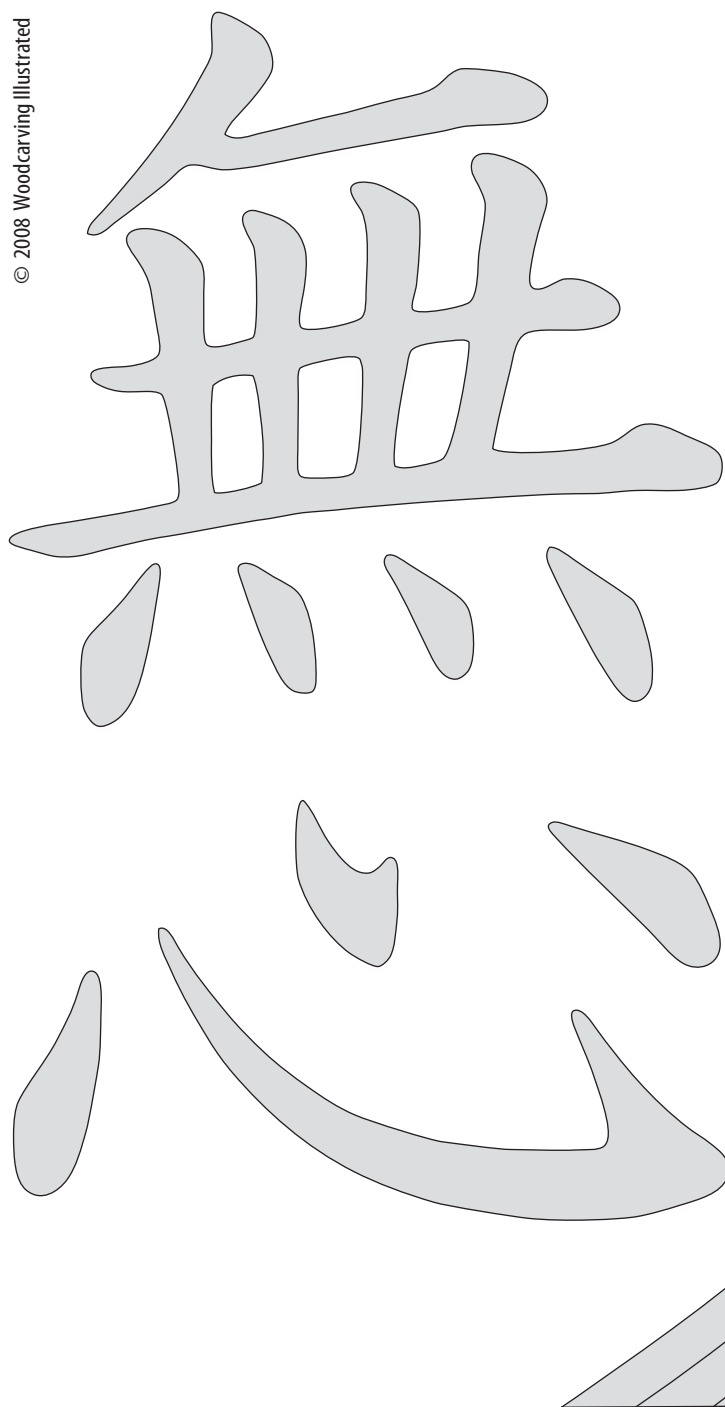
materials & tools

MATERIALS:

1" x 9½" x 17½" basswood or wood of choice
Temporary-bond spray adhesive
Vellum or tracing paper
Pebble of choice
2-part epoxy glue
Mineral spirits (optional)
Matte acrylic varnish or beeswax polish

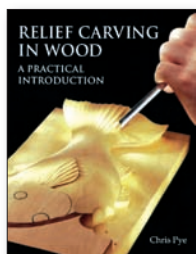
TOOLS:

Ruler or marking gauge
⅜" 60° V-tool
⅜" skew chisel
#3 gouges: a variety from ¼" to ¾"
#6 or #7 gouges: a variety from ¼" to ¾"
#8 or #9 gouges: a variety from ¼" to ½"
Assorted short-bent gouges and skews (essentially, whatever you have)



About the Author

Chris Pye is a master woodcarver, instructor, and author. He has written several books and offers one-on-one instruction at his home studio in Hereford, England. He also maintains a monthly e-mail newsletter and website at www.chrispye-woodcarving.com.



further reading

For a full lesson in relief carving, see *Relief Carving in Wood: A Practical Introduction*. Available for \$19.95 + \$3.50 s&h from Fox Chapel Publishing, 717-560-4703, www.foxchapelpublishing.com, or from your local supplier.

A Beginner's Guide to Woodcarving

Tools of the Trade
Issue 36

Tuning Your Tools
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Setting Up Shop
Issue 38

Tool Control
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Basic Cuts
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Simple Carved Moldings
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Line Carving: Three Simple Styles
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Basic Relief Techniques
Issue 43

Chris Pye's continuing article series has reached its eighth installment. WCI back issues are available. Contact 800-457-9112 or www.woodcarvingillustrated.com.

Paint Primer

Essential knowledge for a professional finish

By Vicki Rhodes

You've spent months getting each carved detail just right. Now it's time to finish the piece and bring it to life with color.

Many carvers find themselves hesitant to take the next step. To develop a suitable comfort level, you need to spend equal time learning and practicing both carving and finishing techniques.

In the last issue we covered paintbrush basics. Future articles in the series will cover setting up your palette and specific painting techniques, but before we move forward, it is important to understand the actual medium we'll be working with. There are a multitude of types and brands of paint available. The product you choose should be safe, durable, lightfast, and flexible. You also want to pay attention to the product's drying properties.

Paint Composition

Paint consists of the pigment and the binder, or glue, that holds it together. The binder used determines whether the product is oil, alkyd, or acrylic paint. The binders and pigments determine the effect and performance properties of the paint.

Artist Colors

Select paint that is artists' quality. The initial price may be higher than craft paints of the same color, but the coverage and quality make it worth it. Think of your paint just like you do your wood or tools—purchase the best you can afford. Check the label to make sure the colors have been tested for lightfastness.

The American Society

Invest in artists' quality paint.

(ASTM) seal guarantees the color will not fade over time. Inferior paint may begin to fade within weeks of application.



Brand Selection

Many brands have samplers of small tubes as an introduction to their products. Additional colors may be added as needed. Check out the availability and versatility of different brands. Choosing a brand of paint is often a personal preference, similar to choosing a brand of tools. Using a limited palette and products is a good way to minimize cost and space. This will also help you to quickly learn the characteristics of using and mixing colors.

Understanding the Label

Colors may have the same name, but they can vary greatly from brand to brand. There is a universal key for pigment names that is standard across the industry. Artists' quality paints list these notations on the package.

Examples are shown from the labels of Jo

Sonja's Artists' Colours tubes. The color name is Orange as listed on the label. The pigment used is PO.73 which is Pigment Orange 73. That means a single pigment



Mediums

Use	Jo Sonja's Artists' Colours	Cryla Heavy Bodied Acrylics	Golden Heavy Bodied Acrylics	Liquitex Heavy Bodied Acrylics
For surface preparation, increases maximum adhesion	All Purpose Sealer	No equivalent	GAC 500 200 1:1 mixed with color	Glazing Medium
A light sealer for surface preparation or to seal between layers of paint	Clear Glaze Medium	Cryla Glaze Medium (Matte)	Fluid Matte Medium	Glazing Medium plus Slow Dry Fluid Retarder 3:1*
A light sealer containing a drying-time extender that dries matte	Magic Mix	Cryla Glaze Medium and Gel Retarder 3:1*	Acrylic Glazing Liquid Satin	Slow Dry Fluid Retarder*
Delays the drying time of acrylic colors	Retarder Medium	Cryla Gel Retarder	No equivalent	Matte Medium
Non-yellowing, indoor/outdoor protective coating	Matte Polyurethane Water-Based Varnish	Cryla Acrylic Varnish (Matte)	Polymer Varnish Matte	No equivalent

*Add or reduce for desired open time

is used to make that color. Another color, Skin Tone Base, lists PW.6, PY.42, and PBr.7. In this color, three pigments are combined to create the color; Pigment White 6, Pigment Yellow 42, and Pigment Brown 7. Understanding how to read the labels will allow you to make comparable color choices across brands. A reference chart comparing various brands is available online.

Paint Coverage

Paint's opacity refers to the coverage. Opaque colors cover best, transparent colors allow the background to show through, and semi-transparent colors are in between. For solid coverage, choose opaque colors. For stains or glazes, transparent or semi-transparent colors are the best choice. Opacity can be altered by diluting the paint with a medium.



There are a variety of mediums available to enhance the performance of your paint.

Mediums

Each of the brands include a range of mediums to complement the paint performance. Make certain the paint you choose has a range of mediums to suit your needs. The technique you prefer will determine the medium you select for your project. Always test products and techniques on a sample before applying them to your carving. Use care when mixing different brands; they may not be compatible.

ONLINE BONUS

Handy reference chart compares colors across popular brands

woodcarvingillustrated.com



About the Author

Vicki Rhodes is the author of numerous articles and three books; Creative Possibilities is her most recent. Future WCI articles will cover specific painting techniques for carvers. Feedback may be sent to vrhodes@frontiernet.net.

Goat of Many Colors



The tilted head and colorful paint scheme add nostalgic charm.

Charming folk-art design is easy to carve

By Larry Koosed
Photography by Greg Heisey

This whimsical goat is full of personality. For beginners, the rough, folk-art style of carving and painting masks inconsistencies in execution. Experienced carvers can complete the project quickly and build an entire herd ready for gift giving or craft show inventory.

The loose style of painting and large, deliberate cuts are what give the project its distinctive style. As a production carver, I remove wood quickly, and the flat planes created by this method enhance the folk-art look of the piece. The random splotches of

color allow you to finish the piece quickly without a lot of attention to detail.

Start by transferring the patterns to the blanks. The legs, head, ears, and horns are all carved separately and glued in place for strength and easier carving. Cut outside the lines with a band saw to remove the majority of the waste wood.

CA GLUE AS A CLAMP

tips

For areas that are difficult to clamp, such as the head, add a few drops of cyanoacrylate (CA) glue to hold the piece in place while the wood or hot glue dries.



1

Rough out the goat's body. I use a spiral-cutting tool to make stop cuts between the legs, around the tail, and where the legs meet the torso. Carve down to the stop cuts with your chisel of choice. I use an offset, single-bevel cabinetmaker's chisel.



2

Rough out the legs. Clamp the goat down and use a mallet and your chisel of choice. I prefer a single-bevel cabinetmaker's chisel, which gives me the large, flat cuts that define my overall carving style. Drill the holes for the leg dowels.



3

Round the neck and belly. Use a knife to remove the sharp corners and begin rounding the elements into each other. Round the neck down into the front legs and round the back. Do not carve the flat area where the head will be glued to the neck.



4

Shape the back and tail. Continue rounding the back down into the sides. Then round the rump. Make a stop cut around the tail and carefully reduce the tail to its final thickness. Be careful, because the grain makes the tail fragile.



5

Taper the head and face. Use a carving knife to remove the sharp corners and taper the snout area. Create a slightly flatter profile on the top for the ears and horns. Keep the head and neck joint areas flat; the flatter the wood, the better the glue joint.



6

Glue the feet and head in place. I use commercial-grade hot glue, because it sets up quickly and I can get back to carving. Wood glue will work, but it takes longer to dry. Drill matching holes into the lower legs and use dowels to reinforce the joint.



FOLK-ART GOAT: BLENDING THE ADD-ONS



7

Finish shaping the head and neck. Use a knife to smooth the transition between the head and neck. This will also remove any glue that squeezed out. Drill $\frac{1}{8}$ "-diameter holes for the horns and $\frac{1}{16}$ "-diameter holes for the ear wires.



8

Finish shaping the legs and hooves. Use a knife to smooth the transition. Be careful: the grain changes direction where the upper legs and the lower legs meet. Keep the hooves flat on the bottom so the carving stands properly.



9

Shape the ears, horns, and face. Use a knife. The horns are slightly curved. Leave extra wood to grasp while you shape the ears, then cut them free, drill a $\frac{1}{16}$ "-diameter hole, and insert the wire. Stop cut around the eye and round the eyeball. Carve the nose and mouth grooves.



10

Apply the base coat. Use undiluted antique ivory for the top of the head, neck, belly, and hind end. The lower legs and feet are light ivory. Mix black and light ivory for the rest of the goat. Don't worry about exact lines; the "loose" paint job adds to this carving's charm.



11

Paint the spots. Mix a light brown color and add a few splotches to different areas of the goat. Mix a slightly darker brown and add more splotches. Random splotches look best. Fill the rest with black, leaving the belly and top of the head ivory.



12

Add the details. Paint the ears using the same splotching technique. Paint the eyes antique white, and allow them to dry. Paint over the white with black, allowing a small crescent of white to remain. When dry, add a small highlight of white paint.



13

Finish the carving. Paint the horns light brown and allow them to dry. Use black to highlight the nose and mouth grooves. Glue the ears and horns in place with wood glue. Attach a bit of cotton fluff to the bottom of the chin with wood glue.

materials & tools

MATERIALS:

I use jelutong for my carvings, but basswood will also work
 3¼" x 5¼" x 8½" (body)
 1¼" x 1¾" x 2½" (head)
 4 each ¾" x 1" x 2½" (legs)
 2 each ¼" x ½" x 2" (horns)
 2 each ½" x ½" x 2" (ears)
 Glue of choice (to attach head and legs)
 Wood glue (to attach ears, horns, and cotton fluff)
 4 each ⅛"-diameter x 1"-long dowels (to attach legs)
 Assorted colors of acrylic paint. (I use antique ivory, light ivory, black, and several shades of brown.)
 Cyanoacrylate (CA) glue (optional)

2 each 16-gauge x 1" wire (to attach ears)

TOOLS:

Roughing out tools of choice. (I use a spiral cutter, offset cabinetmaker's chisel, and a single-bevel cabinetmaker's chisel)
 Mallet
 Commercial-grade hot glue gun and glue (optional)
 Knife of choice (I use a mill knife)
 Assorted paintbrushes of choice
 Drill with ⅛"- and ⅙"-diameter drill bits

FIXING A PAINTING ERROR tips

Carve away the paint with a sharp knife for a quick and easy correction.

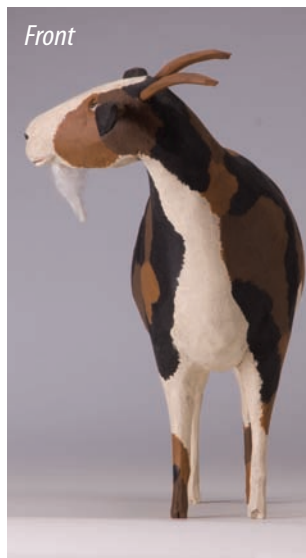


About the Author

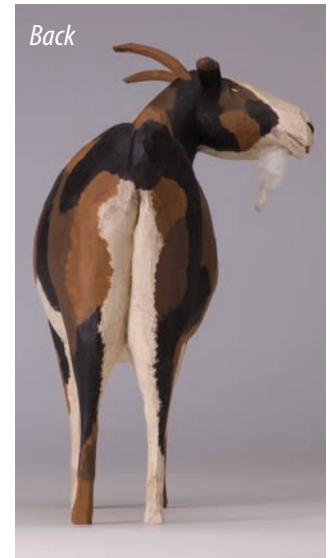
Larry Koosed has been carving for a living since 1976. He sold his pieces wholesale until 1999. Then he started selling his work retail and wholesale. Larry lives in Perrysburg, OH, with his wife, Paige. For more of his work, visit www.koosed.com.



Front



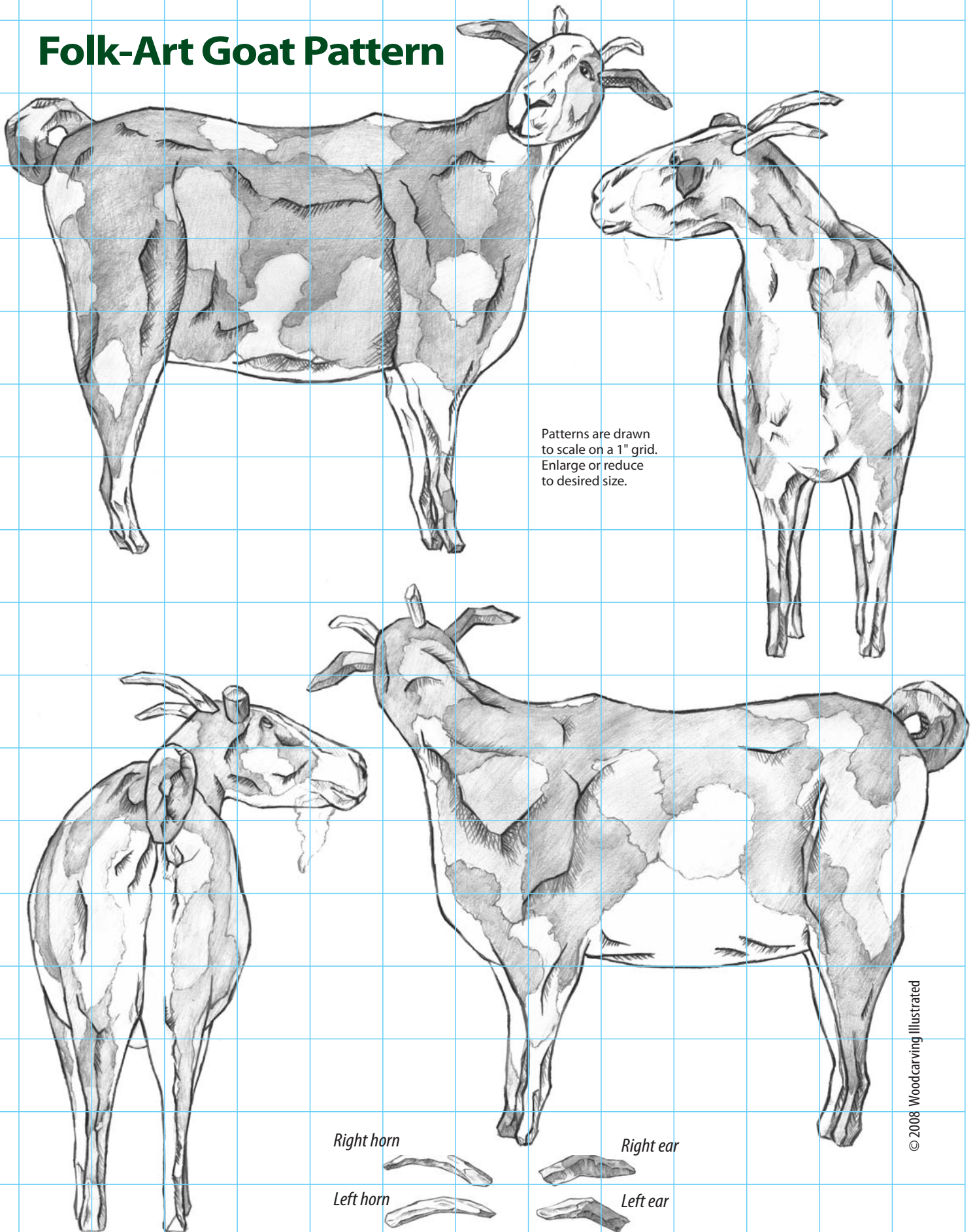
Back



Left



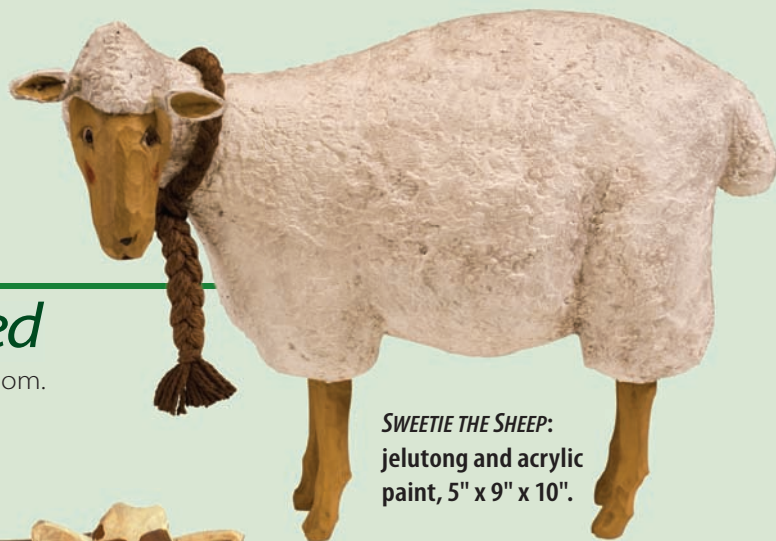
Folk-Art Goat Pattern



Folk-Art Gallery

by Larry Koosed

For more of Larry's work, visit www.koosed.com.



SWEETIE THE SHEEP:
jelutong and acrylic
paint, 5" x 9" x 10".



BESSIE: jelutong
and acrylic paint,
5" x 8" x 12".



SITTING PIG: jelutong
and acrylic paint,
2" x 4" x 5½".



BUSTER THE BULL:
jelutong and acrylic
paints, 4" x 8" x 13".

Woodland Treasures

The artistic carvings of Geoff King

By Kathleen Ryan

Perhaps it's the gypsy in him that allows Geoff King to come up with so many new and exciting carved-wood jewelry designs, each bearing his distinctive medieval flair. Or maybe it's his passionate love of nature. Whatever the reason, Geoff has become one of the world's leading artists of carved jewelry.

The roots of this woodcarver sink deep into Celtic soil. Geoff's father came from a gypsy family who settled in England just before he was born. A nature and animal lover, Geoff entered London University at the age of 18 as a zoology major, hoping to become a nature reserve warden. But he dropped out after two years when he realized the course had more to do with the insides of animals than their habitat, ecology, or behavior.

In 1985, he established "Geoff King's Original Wooden Toys" in Somerset, England, earning a basket full of awards for his original designs and fine craftsmanship. He taught himself to carve in 1988, and spent the next six years making furniture, turning wood, and carving. When not working with wood, Geoff grew it.

"I started growing trees and vegetables until our small garden was completely full," he said. "We needed more land, but land in Somerset was very expensive."

So Geoff, his wife Fiona, and son Robert headed for the Scottish highlands. There they bought a 150 year-old farm house with thick stone walls sitting on two acres of lush land. Geoff eventually turned their two acres into an organic woodland garden that he playfully calls his "oasis in a desert of sheep."

Geoff suffered a series of illnesses that left him unable to work for a long period of time. Getting back to work slowly, Geoff tackled small carving projects,

such as kilt pins, jewelry, and combs. Geoff found he loved this work so much that he stuck with it.

"I am positively a passionate tree lover, so I never use new rainforest or tropical timbers," Geoff explained. "My wood is mostly British hardwoods and comes either from the off-cuts of furniture makers or musical instrument makers, from garden ornamental trees thinned in maintenance, or from re-used, recycled sources.

"I am hugely inspired by nature and often see shapes in natural forms which influence my designs," Geoff said.

Geoff's Woodland Creations are sold around the world via the Internet. A visit to his website reveals a treasure trove of jewelry and accent pieces. But his favorite thing to do is get out into nature and sell his creations at local shows.



ELVEN TREE,
1" x 3½", English walnut.



DRAGON COIL BROOCH,
3" x 2", English yew.

Jewelry



TREASURE DRAGON, $\frac{3}{4}$ " x $2\frac{1}{2}$ " x $4\frac{3}{4}$ ",
Scottish brown oak with Baltic Amber.



GEM-ENTWINED BROOCH,
 $1\frac{1}{4}$ " x $2\frac{1}{8}$ ", English yew
accented with amethyst.



LIZARD, $1\frac{1}{4}$ " x $2\frac{1}{8}$ ",
English walnut.



PENTICOIL, 2"-diameter,
English walnut.

What is Bogwood?

Geoff King often uses bogwood for his special jewelry pieces. Bogwood is cut from trees that once grew in the moist soil of a bog or wetland. Trees growing in such conditions suffer from lack of nutrients so their growth rings are much narrower than the rings found in the same species growing under more favorable conditions.

When a tree dies and falls into a bog, the highly acidic soil and water, caused by decaying plant life, soften and preserve the wood for hundreds, even thousands of years. The distinctive tan color of bogwood results from high amounts of organic matter in the bog. The tree's submersion also leads to deposit of tiny grains of silica, which can be seen as white flecks. Bogwood is excellent for carving.

Over the past 500 years, the bogs have slowly been drained away. As the land dries up and shrinks, it forces buried bogwood to the surface. Geoff's bogwood was discovered this way.

"My roommate came across a farmer trying to burn some bogwood that got tangled in his plow," he said. Recognizing its potential value, Geoff sent a sample to The Queen's University School of Geosciences in Belfast, Ireland, for analysis. They dated the tree back to 2,976 B.C.—nearly 5,000 years old.

For more information on the history and formation of natural bogs, visit <http://tinyurl.com/7acuc>.

This dragon brooch, carved from ancient bogwood, comes with a letter of authenticity from the Queen's University of Geosciences, verifying the age of the wood.



Carving a Knotwork Brooch

By Geoff King



This beautiful brooch is easy to carve and can be completed in just four hours. I used yew wood for this project. Yew has a lovely color and grain pattern, and it's tough enough to support the detail. Any close-grained hardwood would work just as well.

To get started, use graphite paper and a stylus to trace the pattern onto a piece of $\frac{3}{8}$ "-thick wood. Apply the oil finish after the carving is complete and the pin back is secured. Be sure the pin is secured first; the epoxy will not stick to an oily surface. Let the brooch soak overnight in a container filled with tung oil.



1

Cut the spaces. Drill a $\frac{1}{16}$ "-diameter blade-entry hole in each negative space. Feed a #2 scroll saw blade through the holes and cut the frets.



2

Cut the perimeter. Cut along the outside line, then smooth all the edges with a small jeweler's file. Be careful not to create any gouges or irregularities.



3

Outline the crossover points. Mark the areas where the knotwork passes over or under another section. Make vertical cuts on these lines with a gouge.



4

Define the crossovers. Shave wood from the outside edges inward, up to the stop cuts at each of the crossover points made in step 3. Do not cut beyond the stop cuts.



5

Round the inner and outer edges. Use a detail knife to create smooth, round edges on the whole piece.



6

Remove the knife marks. Use a small file to smooth the edges. A small riffler works well in the corners.



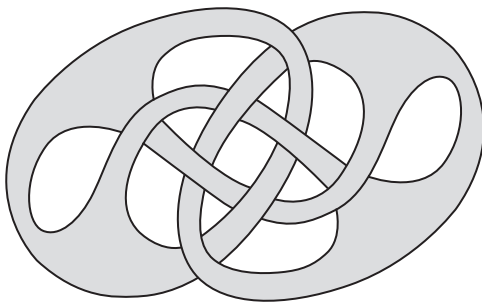
7

Finish smoothing the brooch. Sand the entire piece with 240-grit silicon carbide sandpaper. Then rub the piece down with extra-fine synthetic steel wool.



8

Attach the pin brackets. Score the back of both pin brackets and the wood where the brackets will be located. Use 5-minute epoxy to attach the brackets.



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materials & tools

MATERIALS:

3/8" x 2" x 2 1/2" yew or close-grained hardwood of choice
Graphite paper
Silicon carbide sandpaper, 240 grit
Extra fine synthetic steel wool
2-part, 5-minute epoxy
Sterling or silver-plated brooch pin (available from jewelry suppliers)
Tung oil or oil finish of choice

TOOLS:

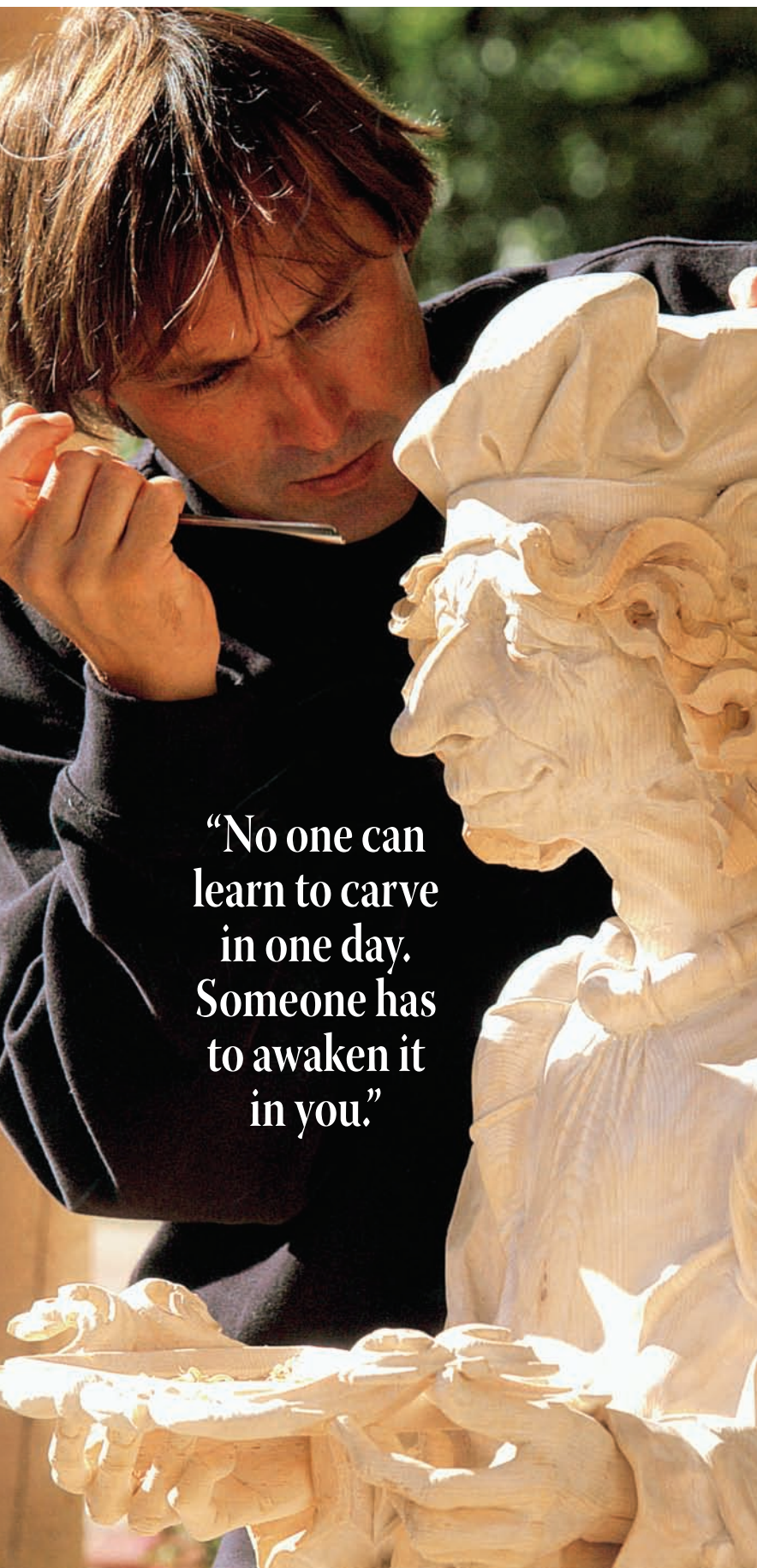
Stylus, pen or pencil
Drill press with 1/16"-diameter drill bit
Scroll saw with #2 blade
1/4" #3 fishtail gouge
Detail knife of choice (I use a Flexcut)
Small metal file
Small, fine, triangular riffler



About the Artist

Geoff King's finely-carved jewelry and accessories also come as one-of-a-kind, custom made pieces. His finished jewelry ranges between \$30 and \$400. For more samples of his work, visit his website at www.woodlandtreasures.co.uk/.

Awakening a Passion



"No one can learn to carve in one day. Someone has to awaken it in you."



The work of professional Austrian carver Helli Mayr

Helli, at age seven, in his father's shop.

Helmut "Helli" Mayr started carving at the age of six, working in his dad's shop. The time spent with his father, a hobby carver, set him up for a life of carving.

"No one can learn to carve in one day," Helli said. "Someone has to awaken it in you. For me, that was my dad."

"What I remember most about the time I spent with dad in his workshop were his rules about safety," Helli added. "He was always saying 'two hands on the tool' and 'carve away from your body.'"

His father's encouragement made a lasting impact on Helli—he has devoted his entire life to carving.

Helli took the first step to becoming a professional carver at age 14, when he went to a stone and wood carving school in nearby Innsbruck. He eventually earned his master's degree in art. His first job entailed restoring woodcarvings at the Castle Schloss Nymphenburg in Munich, Germany. While he still does restorations, Helli shifted his focus to original carvings. For Helli, carving is more than just a way to make a living.

"I need the compliments about my work more than the money," he said with a bit of a laugh. "Even if I had a lot of money, I wouldn't do very much different."

Compliments on his work are not hard to come by. Most of Helli's sculptures, such as his favorite carving of St. Christopher, are in private homes, and range from 4"-tall pieces to more elaborate work like the carved furniture done for the Swarovski

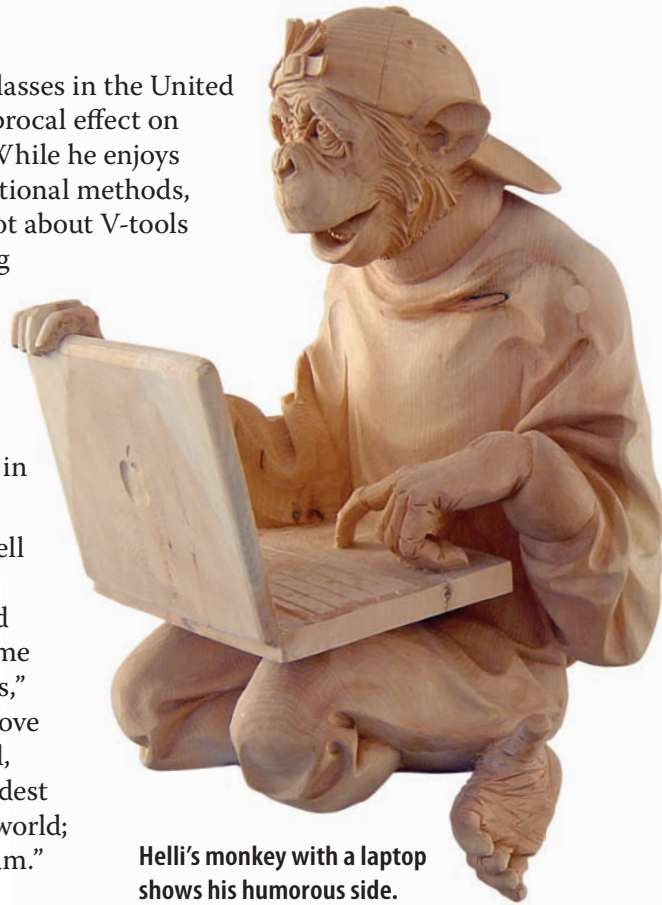
(crystal) family. While working for the Bavarian Restoring Company, Helli carved 12 life-size statues of the apostles. The pieces, after being painted in Germany, are now on display at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Wausau, WI.

Following in his father's footsteps, Helli loves sharing his knowledge about carving. His first book on carving, *Krippenfiguren Schnitzen*, features nativity scenes and is written in German. Unfortunately, an English translation is not currently available. Helli, who is now the same age his father was when Helli started carving, seeks to inspire new carvers. He is a popular carving instructor in the United States as well as his hometown of Mutters, Austria. He travels to the United States twice a year, and teaches several classes during each visit.

Helli teaches traditional Tyrolian (Austrian) carving techniques during his classes—that means no knives or V-tools. Students are taught to sharpen, and are then given a blank cut from Austrian stone pine. Most finish the carving by the end of class.

The carving classes in the United States have a reciprocal effect on Helli's carvings. While he enjoys teaching the traditional methods, he has learned a lot about V-tools and power carving techniques. Now he experiments with various tools including chain saws and V-tools, which aren't used in Tyrolian carving.

"I love the smell of the wood, and I love to touch and see something come to life in my hands," Helli said. "I just love my work. After all, sculpting is the oldest profession in the world; God sculpted Adam."



Helli's monkey with a laptop shows his humorous side.

tips from Helli

■ Use a skew chisel instead of a knife. Not only is it safer because you can keep both hands on the tool, but the angle of the skew chisel also ensures a slicing action when you carve. The slicing action produces diamond-like facets that reflect light and bring the carving to life.

■ Use "S" curves to bring movement to the carving. For example, if a statue is standing with both legs straight, it looks static. But if you carve a slight bend in the knees, producing an "S" curve, it brings life into the carving.

■ Remove the wings or corners from your gouges, shaping them like a fingernail. The rounded nose of the gouge cuts right up to the stop cut. Without the corners, the gouge slices through the wood similar to a skew chisel.



Helli rounds the corners of his gouges for maximum performance.

Part of a private collection in Austria, **ST. CHRISTOPHER** is Helli's favorite carving.



About the Artist

Helli Mayr lives in Mutters, Austria and regularly teaches classes in the United States. To enroll in a class with Helli, contact his agent, Shirley Dashner, at 920-725-4421, sdashner@sbcglobal.net.

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5-Minute

Wizard

Beginner project is a quick and easy introduction to woodcarving

By Tom Hinds

When teaching woodcarving to beginners, it's important to provide a project students can successfully complete in a single class. A simple project gives them a sense of accomplishment and encourages them to continue.

The five-minute wizard is a perfect project for teaching basic carving skills and is also well suited for demonstration purposes. I display carvings at gift shops, festivals, and art fairs; I whittle or carve whenever I get the chance. The actual act of carving will draw onlookers to your booth. The five-minute wizard is a simple project that can be given away to spectators. Children especially enjoy receiving a souvenir. I normally carve the wizards while I'm at the event, then take them home and paint them. The painted ones are given away to onlookers while I carve a supply for the next event.

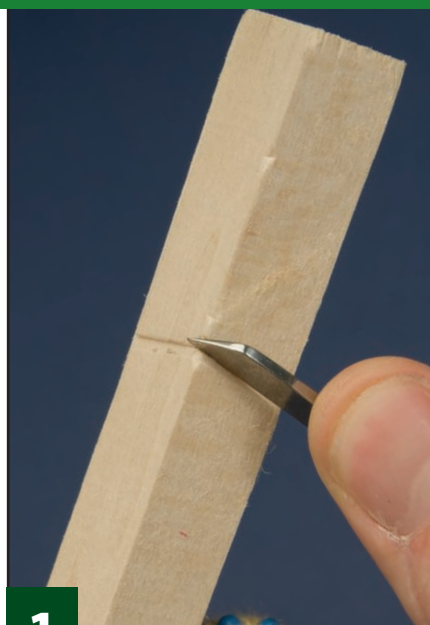
It may take a bit longer to make your first few wizards, but once you have the steps down, you'll be completing them in about five minutes and can quickly carve a large supply. In addition to drawing attention at public events, they make wonderful little gifts for random acts of kindness. Leave one along with your tip at the local restaurant or give one to your favorite cashier. You can also attach a pin back or turn them into key chains.

Rather than presenting a step-by-step plan for carving a single wizard, we'll be creating a study stick. With this method, several things are accomplished: you have a study stick for future reference, you have a useful tool for teaching others, the repetition enables you to practice the steps multiple times, and it lets you try out different looks for your wizard.

Use a pencil to divide a 24"-long triangular stock into 4"-long segments. Number each of the segments (1 through 6). Make sure your knife is sharp and strop as necessary throughout the carving process.

This simple wizard is ideal for teaching or demonstrations.

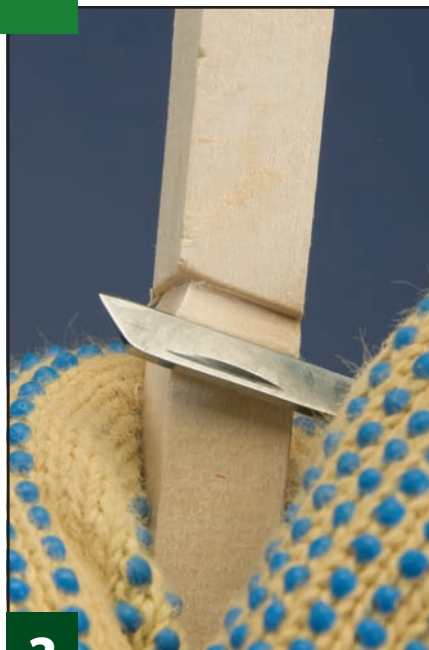




1

Outline the bottom of the hat.

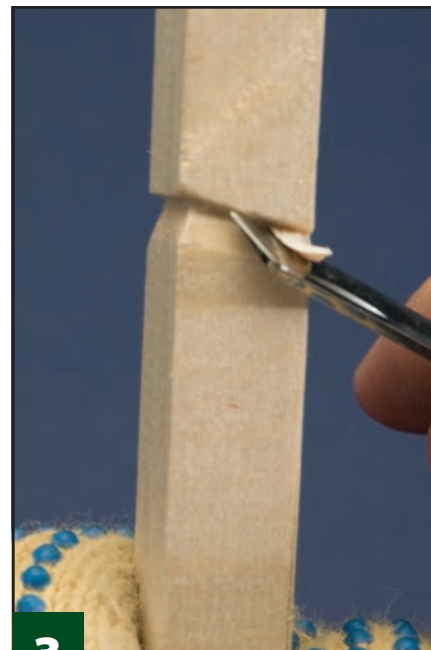
Make a mark on the corner, $2\frac{1}{2}$ " up from the bottom of segment 1. Draw angled lines from the mark out to the edge of the blank. Make $\frac{1}{8}$ "-deep stop cuts along these lines with a carving knife.



2

Relieve the face up to the hat.

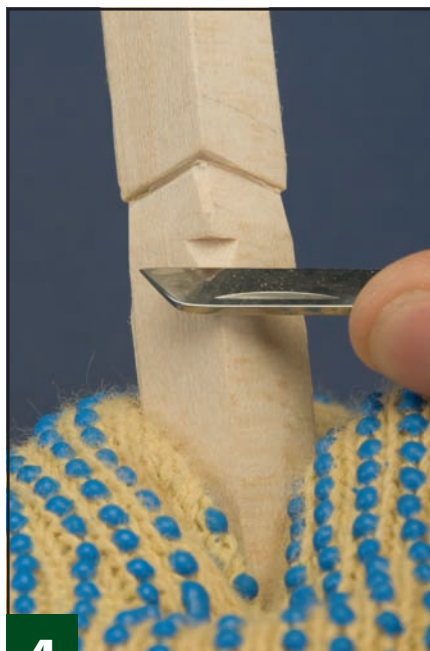
Move to segment 2 and repeat step 1. Start a slicing cut $\frac{1}{4}$ " down from the stop cut on each of the flat surfaces. Cut up to the stop cuts to create the surface for the eye sockets and cheeks.



3

Shape the face.

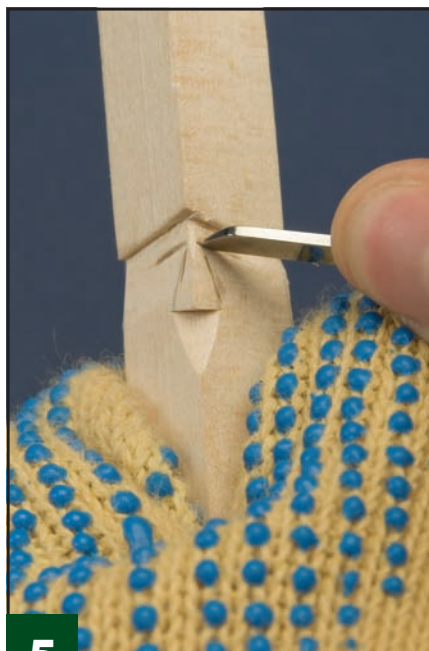
Move to segment 3 and repeat steps 1 and 2. Position the blade on the outside corner of the blank $\frac{1}{4}$ " down from the stop cut. Cut up to the stop cut to remove about $\frac{3}{16}$ " from both sides of the face.



4

Define the bottom of the nose.

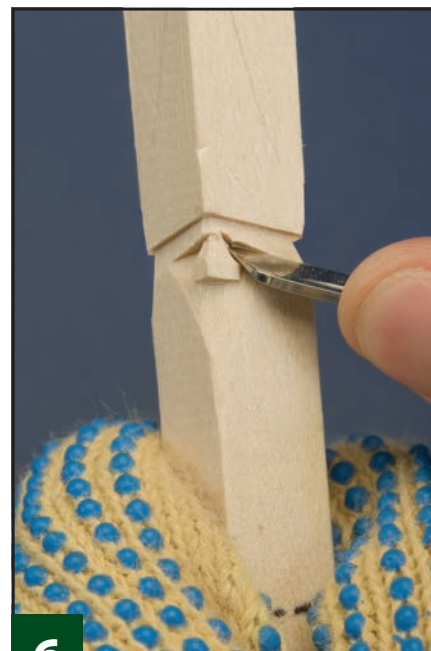
Move to segment 4 and repeat steps 1 to 3. Make a deep stop cut on the front corner, $\frac{1}{2}$ " to $\frac{3}{4}$ " down from the bottom of the hat. Cut up to the stop cut from below to separate the bottom of the nose from the mouth and chin.



5

Outline the nose and eyes.

Repeat steps 1 to 4 on segment 5. Draw in the nose and top of the eyes. Starting at the inside corner of the eye, plunge the knife tip in and cut to the bottom of the nose. Start at the inside corner, and make a stop cut for each eye.



6

Shape the nose and cheeks.

Using the knife tip, cut up to the stop cuts made in step 5 and remove a chip from each side of the nose. The deep area where the cuts intersect will be the eye socket. Remove the corners on the bottom of the nose.

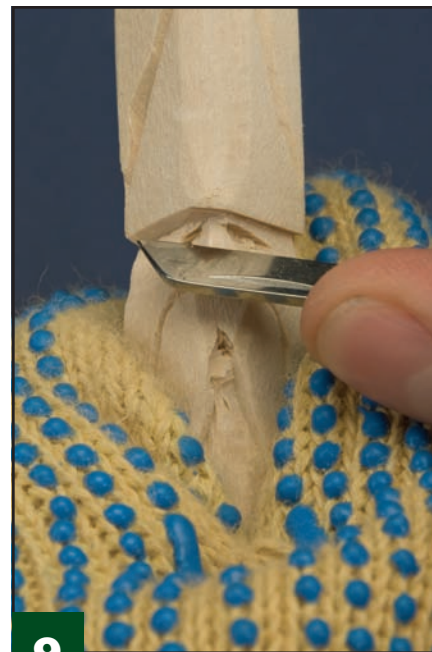
WIZARD: ADDING DETAILS



7 Outline the mustache. Repeat steps 1 to 6 on segment 6. Draw in the hat, mustache, and beard. Angle the knife blade toward the mustache and make a stop cut around the mustache. Cut down towards the stop cut to separate the cheeks from the mustache.



8 Shape the beard. Cut up to the stop cuts under the mustache. Cut along the beard outline to finish shaping the beard. Go back with the tip of the knife or a small V-tool and add hair lines and texture to the beard and mustache if desired.



9 Shape the nose. Give the tip of the nose a rounded or pointed shape. Then shave down the top to create the bridge of the nose. Cut up from the tip of the nose and free the chip by carving down from the eyebrows. Carve in small semi-circles for the eyes.



10 Shape the hat. Use your thumb to push the back of the knife blade and roll the blade back toward you as you cut the hat to a point. You can make the hat long and pointed, squashed down, or even folded at the top. Use your imagination and make it your own.

Finishing Notes

I use acrylic paints to finish the wizards. You can paint them with your own color scheme or leave them natural. Whatever you decide, be sure to erase, carve, or sand away the pencil marks. These marks will often show through layers of paint.

materials & tools

MATERIALS:

$\frac{3}{4}$ " x $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 24" basswood ripped in half
(Makes two blanks. See tip on page 10 for cutting triangular stock.)

Acrylic paints of choice (optional)

TOOLS:

Pencil

Knife of choice (I use a pocket knife)

Carving glove and thumb guard

Strop

Small V-tool (optional)

Small paint brushes (optional)

BLADE CONTROL

tips

For maximum control, position your thumb on the back of the knife blade and use it to push the blade where you want it to go.



About the Author

Tom Hinde started whittling and carving three years ago. Now retired from a career in technical training development at Ohio State University, Tom lives outside Delaware, OH with his wife of 46 years. He carves Noah's arks, Christmas ornaments, wizards, and gnomes.

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Electronic Saloon Clock

Steer heads in place of numerals on the clock face and whiskey bottles seen through the saloon windows are just a few of the details that make up the *LONG HORN SALOON*.



Detailed caricature scene is brought to life with recorded voices and chiming gun shots

By Jack A. Boggio

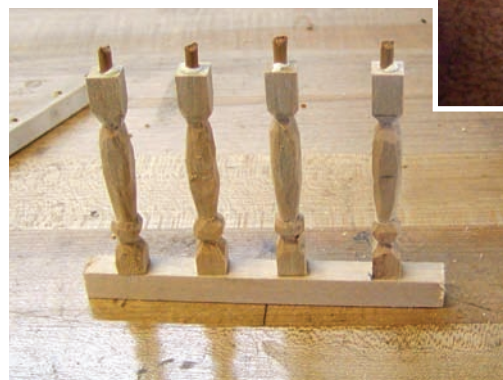
In addition to woodcarving, I've always been a bit of a gadget guy. The *LONG HORN SALOON*, a detailed shoot out scene with a working clock, provided a perfect way to combine electronics with woodcarving to create a functional showpiece.

The clock is connected to an electronics board with sound modules to mark the hour. Each hour is marked with recorded dialogue. For example, "It's seven o'clock Spade. I should be home eatin' something. Now throw yer guns down and give up," which is followed by gunshots counting out the hours instead of the traditional chimes. Each 15 minute interval is tracked by the sheriff, "You there, inside the Long Horn, it's half past the hour. Come on out and let's have a look at ya!"

The saloon clock started out as a computer drawing with each element planned to scale. Everything is hand carved—from the shingles



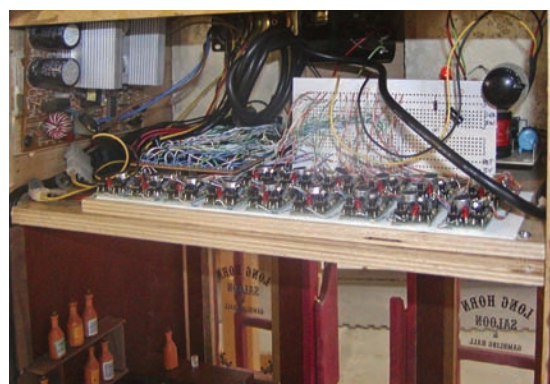
With the back wall removed, we get a behind-the-scenes look at bad guy hiding behind a table in the barroom.



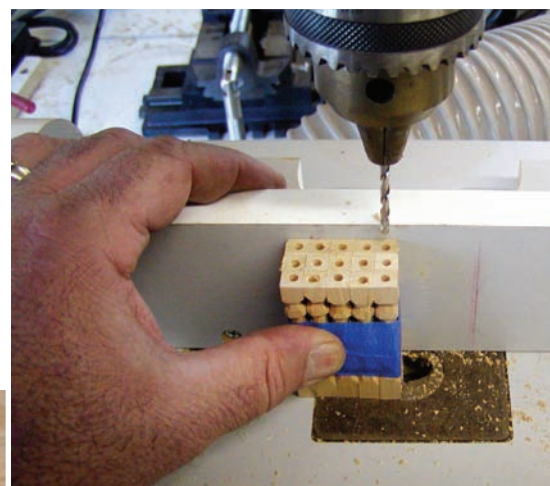
on the roof to the whiskey bottle on the bar. Strips of black cherry simulate the look of hardwood floors. The windows are made from clear, overhead transparency plastic.

For the main structural elements (the walls and roof), a coat of dark walnut oil stain, followed by a coat of white oak water-based stain, produces a grey, aged look. Acrylic paints bring the other elements to life. I use mirrors on the inside wall of the saloon and position half tables up against the mirrors to add depth to the barroom.

As the project progressed, additional elements, such as the barrel and dog behind the sheriff, were added. In all, the *LONG HORN SALOON* took 2½ months and nearly 150 hours to complete. With my new creation, I can tell time based on who is saying what. It's a constant source of entertainment for visitors and family members alike.



The complex electronics housed in the attic include a number of sound modules, two power supplies, and a clock and chime mechanism.



After carving each baluster from ¼"-thick stock, Jack taped them together for easy drilling and added ⅛"-diameter dowels to attach them to the railings (left).



About the Author

Jack Boggio lives in Fallbrook, CA. He started carving in 1996, and fell in love with caricature cowboys.

After retiring from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department in 2000, he took three years off before starting a construction business.

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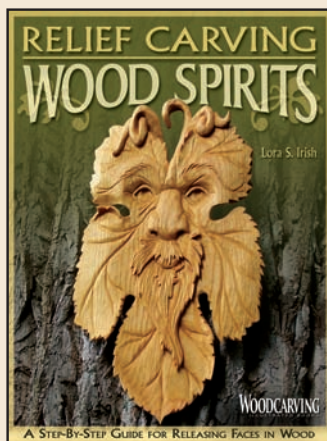
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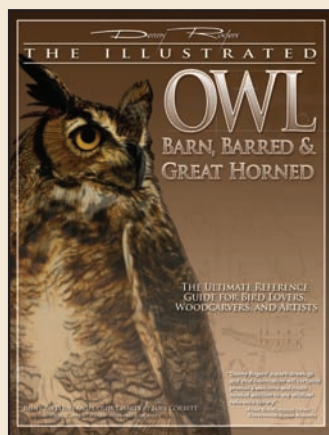


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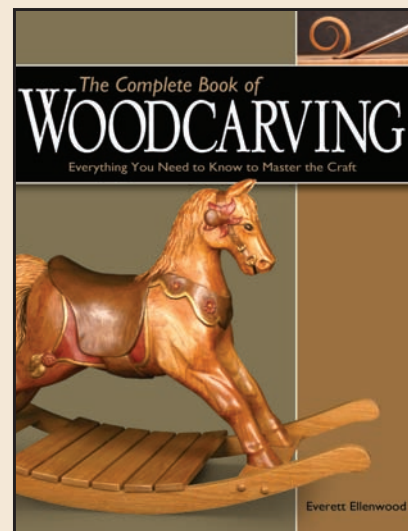


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Woodcarving Illustrated publishes a general listing of carving shows in each issue. If you would like your show listed in our Calendar of Events, please send the following information to Duncan@FoxChapelPublishing.com:

- Name of event
 - Date(s)
 - Location (including city, state, address and building name if applicable)
 - Hours for each day of show
 - Admission
 - Contact information
- Submission deadline for the Fall Issue is June 1, 2008.

■ MAY

May 10: WASHINGTON. Capitol Woodcarvers' Show, OLYMPIA (Olympia Community Center, 222 N. Columbia St.). Sat. 9am-5:30pm. Free adm. Contact Paul Kressin, 360-352-5411.

May 17-18: ILLINOIS. Corn Belt Carving Club's "Sculptures in Wood" woodcarving show and sale, BLOOMINGTON (Challenger Learning Center, 2901 E. Empire). Sat. 9am-5pm & Sun. noon-5pm. Adm. \$2, children under 12 free. Contact Mike Hartzler, 309-662-4276, www.cornbeltcarving.org.

May 17-18: TENNESSEE. Evergreene Woodcarvers Annual Show & Competition, GREENEVILLE (First Presbyterian Church, 110 N. Main St.). Sat. & Sun. 12-5pm. Free adm. Contact Dennis Stubbs, 423-638-7417.

May 23-26: RHODE ISLAND. 2008 Caricature Carvers of America Carve Along East, sponsored by the Mystic Carvers Club, WEST GREENWICH (Alton B. Jones Annex of University of Rhode Island). Seminars with several CCA members. Package price \$340. Contact Paul Maccio, 203-468-7924, halstonpm@aol.com.

May 24-25: BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA. Richmond Carving Society Woodcarving Show, RICHMOND (Steveston Community Center, 4111 Moncton St.). Sat. noon-5pm & Sun. 10am-4pm. Adm. \$4, seniors \$3, under 12 free. Contact Len Sawyer, 604-266-3913, www.richmondcarvers.ca.

May 24-26: IDAHO. PNCCS Woodcarvers Jamboree, TWIN FALLS (College of Southern Idaho Campus). Assorted carving classes. Contact Cleve Taylor, 208-322-1463, clevetaylor@msn.com.

May 24-Jun 1: SASKATCHEWAN, CANADA. Saskatchewan Woodworker's Guild's Wood Show, Wood '08 SASKATOON (Galleria Building, University of Saskatchewan Campus). Sat.-Sat. 11am-9pm & Sun. 11am-4pm. Free adm. www.saskwoodguild.ca.

■ JUNE

Jun 1-6: MISSOURI. Woodcarving Rendezvous, BRANSON (Compton Ridge Campground Convention Center). Contact Ed Zinger, 913-397-6992, www.woodcarvingrendezvous.com.

Jun 2-13: ARKANSAS. War Eagle Fair woodcarving seminar, HINDSVILLE (11036 High Sky Inn Rd.). Contact Shirley Sutton, 479-789-5398, www.wareaglefair.com.

Jun 5-8: WASHINGTON. Tri-Cities Woodcarvers Rendezvous, KENNEWICK (Benton County Fairgrounds, East 10th Ave.). Contact Kim Rust, 509-586-4175, mkimber@charter.net.

Jun 7: CONNECTICUT. Connecticut Woodcarvers Show & Sale, BRISTOL (New England Carousel Museum, 95 Riverside Ave., Rt. 72). Sat. 10am-4pm. Contact Ernest A. Hill, 60-663-1274, ErnestH746@aol.com.

Jun 11-14: MICHIGAN. Wood Carvers Roundup, EVART (Osceola County Fairgrounds, 101 Recreation Ave.). Wed.-Sat. 8am-4pm. Free adm. Contact Sandy Holder, 231-734-5125, www.evartroundup.com.

Jun 13-15: WASHINGTON. Spokane Carver's Annual Rendezvous, SPOKANE (Spokane KOA campground). Contact Gloria Strandquist, 509-924-1186.

Jun 14-15: NEBRASKA. North Platte Woodcarver's Club "Artistry in Wood" Show and Sale, NORTH PLATTE (Quality Inn and the Sandhills Convention Center). Contact Ron Meyer, 308-534-5136, rcdmeyer@charter.net.

Jun 15-20: MICHIGAN. Creative Woodcarving Seminar, EVART (Oceola County Fairgrounds). Contact Floyd Rhadigan, 734-649-3259, rhads@verizon.net.

Jun 20-22: BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA. Okanagan Valley Woodcarvers "Carve-a-Long" JOE RICH (Darley Retreat). Registration fee \$20, \$35 per couple, plus additional campground fee. Contact and RSVP: Dennis Hudson, 250-767-6166, dnnshudson@aol.com.

Jun 21-22: WISCONSIN. Lloyd Thrune Wood Carving Show & Competition, COON VALLEY (Norskedalen Norweigan Heritage Center, Highway Pl). Contact Tom Ladwig, 608-582-4353.

Jun 21-24: IOWA. Davenport Affiliated Woodcarvers International Woodcarvers Congress Competition & Show, BETTENDORF (Mississippi Valley Fairgrounds). Thurs.-Sat. 10am-5pm & Sun. 10am-4pm. Contact Carol or Larry Yudis, 563-359-9684 (days), 563-355-3787 (evenings), www.awcltd.org.

Jun 27-29: NORTH DAKOTA. Wahpeton Carving Weekend, WAHPETON (North Dakota State College of Science). Contact Reuben Brownlee, 701-642-3532.

Jun 28-Jul 6: PENNSYLVANIA. Kutztown German Festival, KUTZTOWN (Kutztown Fairgrounds, Rt. 222). 9am-6pm. \$12 adm, \$11 seniors, children under 12 free. Contact 610-683-1537, www.kutztownfestival.com.

■ JULY

Jul 4: MINNESOTA. Minowa Woodcarvers Show & Sale, HARMONY (Slim's Woodshed, 160 1st St. NW). 10am-5pm. Contact Stanley Maroushek, 877-886-3114, Slims_ws@means.net.

Jul 5: CONNECTICUT. 27th Annual Woodcarver's Day, MYSTIC (Olde Mistick Village, Apple Orchard). Sat. 9:30am-5pm. Rain date Jul. 6. Free adm. Contact Warren J. Blessing Jr., 860-742-3253, warren@ctvalleywc.com.

Jul 11-12: OKLAHOMA. Eastern Oklahoma Woodcarvers Show & Sale, TULSA. Contact Flo Hancock, 918-261-2827, www.eowca.com.

Jul 12: COLORADO. Creede Woodcarvers Rendezvous. Contact Karen Oquin, 303-940-3505, www.creedewoodcarvers.com.

Jul 12-13: PENNSYLVANIA. Annual Woodcarving Competition and Sale, COOKSBURG (Cook Forest Sawmill Center for the Arts). Sat. 11am-5pm & Sun. 11am-4pm. Contact 814-927-6655, sawmill@pennswoods.net.

Jul 12-13: PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND, CANADA. PEI Woodcarving Competition and Show, STRATFORD (Stratford Town Hall, Shakespeare Drive). Sat. & Sun. 10am-5pm. Free adm. Contact www.carvingpei.ca/.

July 12-13: MASSACHUSETTS. Artisans in Wood-Show and Sale, CHATHAM. (Creative Arts Center, 154 Crowell Rd.). Outstanding carvers of Cape Cod including Eric Kaiser, June Noll, Sheila Bowen, Steve Weaver, Mike McCarthy. 10am-4pm. Adm. Free. Contact Joe Ruff, 508-790-7824, sildoc27@verizon.net.

Jul 18-20: NEW YORK. Decoy & Wildlife Art Show, CLAYTON (Recreation Park Arena). Fri. & Sat. 9am-6pm & Sun. 10am-4pm. \$5 adm., children under 16 \$3. Contact Thousands Islands Museum, 315-686-5794, www.timuseum.org.

Jul 19-20: MAINE. Maine Coast Carving & Art Competition sponsored by the Penobscot Bay Carvers and Artists Association, BELFAST (Boathouse, Front St.). Sat. 9am-5pm & Sun. 10am-4pm. Contact Ellen, 207-338-5363, nwoos@gwi.net.

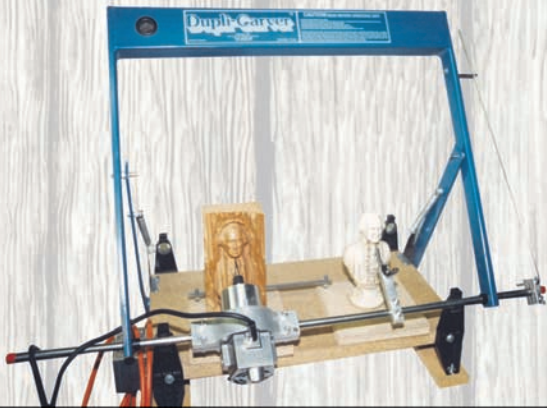
Jul 19-20: INDIANA. Eastern Woodland Carvers Club Annual Show, CONVERSE (Borderman Park Gym, Highway 18). Contact Tom Brown, 765-395-3461, suziq@com.teck.com.

Jul 20-23: PENNSYLVANIA. Northeast Woodcarvers Roundup, HONESDALE (Cherry Ridge Campsites and Lodging). 26 free workshops. Contact George Reinfried, 717-299-9921, gareinfried2@verizon.net.

Jul 20-25: NEBRASKA. Burke Western & Wildlife Art Workshop, CRETE (Doane College). Contact Warren J. Blessing Jr., 860-742-3253, warren@ctvalleywc.com.

(Continued on page 88)

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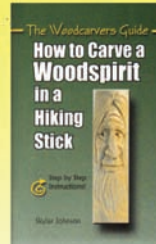
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(Continued from page 86)

Jul 26: MINNESOTA. Blackduck Wood Carving Festival, BLACKDUCK (Wayside Park). 9am-4pm, free adm. Contact Rob Stomberg, 218-835-4949.

Jul 26: WASHINGTON. Pacific Northwest Wood Artisans Show and Sale, SEQUIM (Sequim Prairie Garden Club, 387 S. Washington St.). Sat. 9am-3pm. Free adm. Contact Ann Grover, 360-691-7885, www.woodartisans.net.

Jul 26-29: WASHINGTON. Quilceda Carvers Spit & Whittle, BURLINGTON (Fridays Creek Campgrounds). Contact Ron Randles, 360-659-2769, www.quilcedacarvers.com.

■ AUGUST

Aug 8-10: NEW BRUNSWICK, CANADA. New Brunswick Wood Carving Competition and Show, ST. ANDREWS (W.C. O'Neil Arena). Sat. 10am-5pm & Sun. 10am-4pm. Free adm. Contact www.nbwccs.ca.

Aug 15-24: SOUTH DAKOTA. Central State Fair Woodcarving Competition sponsored by the Hay Camp Woodcarvers Club, RAPID CITY (Central States Fairgrounds). Contact Jim Weets, 605-348-5634, rush-more@juno.com.

Aug 16: ILLINOIS. Blackhawk Woodcarvers Annual Show and Competition, ROCKFORD (Tebala Shrine Temple, 7910 Newburg, Rd.). 9:30am-4:30pm. \$3 adm., children under 12 free. Contact Bob Hallstrom, 815-963-1326.

Aug 16-17: BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA. Shuswap Carvers & Woodworkers Show and Sale, SORRENTO (Memorial Hall, 1148 Passchendaele Road). Contact shuswapwoodshow@hotmail.com, use "wood show" in subject line.

Aug 23: MASSACHUSETTS. John LaForest Bird Carving Contest, MARSHFIELD (Marshfield Fair). 11am-5pm. There is a \$10 adm. fee for the fair. Contact Kevin Dunn, 781-837-3786, kdunn603@comcast.net.

Aug 30: OHIO. The Merry-Go-Round Museum's annual woodcarving show, SANDUSKY (Merry-Go-Round Museum).

10am-5pm. Free adm. Contact the museum at 419-626-6111, www.merrygoroundmuseum.org.

Aug 30-31: ILLINOIS. Sangamon Valley Woodcarvers Show, SPRINGFIELD (Illinois State Fairgrounds, Illinois Building). Sat. 10am-5pm & Sun. 10am-4pm, Adm. \$2, Contact Lee or Betty Legg, 217-546-8792, www.svwoodcarvers.org.

Aug 30-31: WEST VIRGINIA. Oglebay Woodcarvers Guild, Show & Sale, WHEELING (Oglebay Park, off I-70 in Rt. 88). 10am-5pm, free adm. Contact Clark Adams, clark@unimaxsystems.com.

Aug 30-31: VIRGINIA. Chincoteague Island Decoy & Art Festival, CHINCOTEAGUE ISLAND (Chincoteague Community Center, 6155 Community Drive). Sat. 9am-5pm & Sun. 10am-4pm. \$3 adm., \$5 weekend pass. Contact Cindy and John Walls, 410-546-1635.

■ SEPTEMBER

Sep 5-7: MICHIGAN. "Spit n' Whittle" Weekend, EVART (Osceola County 4H-FFA Fairgrounds). Contact Sandy, 231-734-5125, www.evartroundup.com.

Sep 6-7: OHIO. Shelby Woodcarvers Guild Wood Art Show, SIDNEY (Shelby County Job and Family Service Building, 227 South Ohio St.). Sat. 10am-6pm & Sun. 12-5pm. Free adm. Contact Jim Foster, 937-773-8820.

Sep 13: MISSOURI. West County Woodcarvers of St. Louis Show and Sale, BALLWIN (Salem United Methodist Church, 14825 Manchester Rd.). 10am-4pm. Free adm. Contact Art LaTurno, 314-481-3419.

Sep 13-14: RHODE ISLAND. Annual Raptor Event sponsored by the Audubon Society of Rhode Island, BRISTON (Environmental Education Center, 1401 Hope St.). 10am-4pm. Contact 401-245-7500, eec@asri.org.

Sep 15-19: ILLINOIS. Gathering of Woodcarvers (GOW) 2008, SANDWICH (Sandwich Fairgrounds). Contact Joe Dilleat, 815-498-9290, www.camperjohn.com/GOW.

Sep 19-20: WASHINGTON. Lower Columbia Woodcarvers Show, LONGVIEW (Cowlitz Regional

Conference Center). Sat. 10am-5pm & Sun. 10am-4pm. Free adm. Contact Angie Buck, 360-295-3661, anjobuck@earthlink.net.

Sep 20: WISCONSIN. Rock River Valley Carvers of Wisconsin Show and Sale, JANESVILLE (Craig Center, Rock County 4-H Fairgrounds, 1301 Craid Ave.). 10am-4pm. Donation. Contact Donna Kjendlie, 608-363-0554, www.rockrivervalleycarvers.com.

Sep 20: ILLINOIS. Carving Fair, SANDWICH (Fox Falley Community Center). 10am-4pm. Free adm. Contact Gene Westerburg, 815-786-1890, birdcarvergene@aol.com.

Sep 20-21: OHIO. Wilderness Center Woodcarvers' Show, WILMOT (Wilderness Center Interpretative Building, West of Wilmot, off Rt. 250). Sat. 9am-4:30pm & Sun. 1pm-4:30pm, Free adm. Contact Robert Hawes, 330-359-5235.

Sep 20-21: PENNSYLVANIA. 22nd Annual Middle Creek Wildfowl Show, hosted by Penn. Game Commission, Susquehanna River Waterfowlers Assoc. and Wildlands Conservancy, KLEINFELTERSVILLE (Middle Creek Visitors Center). 9am-5pm, Free adm. Contact Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area, 717-733-1512.

Sep 20-21: ALBERTA, CANADA. International Decoy Carving Competition and Show, CALGARY (Marlborough Park Community Association, 6021 Madigan Drive NE). Sat. 10am-5pm & Sun. 10am-4pm. Contact Tom Inkster, 403-286-4229.

Sep 20-21: COLORADO. Woodcarving Show and Sale, LOVELAND (Ranch-Larimer County Fairgrounds and Events Center). Sat. 11am-6pm & Sun. 9am-4pm. \$3 adm. Contact Rich Roberts, 970-407-8523, r-c-roberts@msn.com.

Sep 20-21: CALIFORNIA. Central Coast Woodcarvers Show, CAYUCOS (Cayucos Vet's Hall). Sat. 10am-5pm & Sun. 10am-4pm. \$2 adm., children under 12 free. Contact Ed Zirbel, 805-927-3951, ezandcz@sbcglobal.net.

Sep 20-21: CALIFORNIA. Tri-Valley Wood Carvers Annual Show, PLEASANTON (Veterans Memorial Building). Contact www.tri-valleycarvers.com.

Sep 21: NEW YORK. Woodcarvers of Queens Show and Competition, QUEENS (Queens County Farm Museum). 10am-6pm. Advanced registration required. Contact George, 718-544-0265, woodcarvingnyc.com.

Sep 26-27: ONTARIO, CANADA. Kawartha Carving Competition, BOBCAYGEON (Bobcaygeon Arena in fairgrounds). Fri. 9am-10pm & Sat. 8am-5pm. \$8 adm. Adults, \$2 children 13 and under. Contact www.kawarthacarving.com.petitino.com.

Sep 26-27: TEXAS. Texas Woodcarvers Show & Sale, FREDERICKSBURG (Gillespie County Fairgrounds). Contact Bill Bang, www.texaswoodcarversguild.com.

Sep 26-28: PENNSYLVANIA. Fall Carve In sponsored by the Cherry Ridge Carvers HONESDALE (Cherry Ridge Campground). Contact Bob Muller, 570-448-9017, rmuller@nep.net.

Sep 27-28: OHIO. Great Lake Wood Carvers Show, Art in Wood, STRONGSVILLE (Walter F. Ehrnfelt Senior Center, 18100 Royalton Rd.). Sat 10am-5pm & Sun. 10am-4pm, Free adm. Contact Stan Stary, Jr., 216-661-8142, stary2@adelphia.net.

Sep 28: MICHIGAN. Tri City Wood Carving and Art Show, SAGINAW (Bay Valley Royal Troon Ballroom, 2470 Old Bridge Road, just west of I-75 off ramp Exit 160). 10am-4pm, Adm. \$3, children under 12 free. Contact David Arndt, 989-793-3520, dwarndt73@aol.com.

■ OCTOBER

Oct 3-5: WASHINGTON. Annual Artistry in Wood Show & Sale, SPOKANE (Spokane Community College, Building 6). Contact www.spokanecarvers.com.

Oct 10-11: UTAH. Utah Valley Woodcarver's Show, SPANISH FORK (VFW Building, 400 North Main St.). Fri. 10am-8pm & Sat. 10am-4pm. Contact PJ Peery, 801-373-4049, pj@treelineusa.com.

(Continued on page 90)

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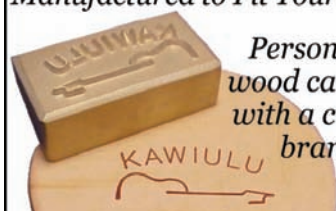
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(Continued from page 88)

Oct 10-11: MARYLAND. Chesapeake Wildfowl Expo, SALISBURY (Ward Museum, 909 S. Schumaker Dr.). Free adm. Contact the museum, 410-742-4988, www.wardmuseum.org.

Oct 10-13: RHODE ISLAND. Woodcarver's Retreat in New England, WEST GREENWICH (University of Rhode Island, 401 Victory Highway). Contact Jim O'Dea, 715-775-3437, www.geocities.com/soho/studios/6186.

Oct 11: WISCONSIN. Badger State Carvers of Milwaukee's 40th Annual Fall Carving Show, WEST ALLIS (St. Augustine Church Hall, 2025 S. 67th St.). Sat. 10am-4pm. Contact Steve Klein, 414-321-5298, klein@juno.com.

Oct 11-12: OHIO. Cincinnati Carvers Guild Woodcarving Competition and Show, CINCINNATI (Joy Community Church, 5000 North Bend Rd.). Sat. 10am-5pm & Sun. 12-5pm. Adm. \$4, under 12, and scouts or military personnel in uniform free. Contact John Broughton, 859-431-5045, Johnjbroughton@msn.com.

Oct 11-12: NORTH DAKOTA. 39th Annual Flickertail Woodcarving Show, BISMARCK. Contact Frank Koch, 701-255-0280, fkoch@bis.midco.net.

Oct 11-12: COLORADO. Colorado Carver's Club 34th Annual Show, Competition and Sale, GOLDEN (Jefferson County Fairgrounds, West 6th Ave & Indiana St.). Adm. \$2, children 12 & under free. Contact James Ford, 303-368-1282, oraanna@msn.com.

Oct 18: KENTUCKY. River Valley Wood Carvers 3rd Open House, TAYLOR MILL, (Hilltop Church of Christ, 5300 Taylor Mill Road). Contact Jim Cable, rivervalleywoodcarvers.org.

Oct 18-19: CALIFORNIA. Orange County Woodcarving and Art Show, TUSTIN (Tustin Senior Center, 200 S. "C" St.). Sat. 9am-5pm & Sun. 10am-4pm. Contact wannabecarver@att.net.

Oct 18-19: RHODE ISLAND. Annual Audubon Society bird and Wildlife Carving Exposition, BRISTOL (Environmental Education Center, 1401 Hope St.). 10am-4pm. Contact the Audubon Society at 401-245-7500, www.asri.org.

Oct 18-19: OREGON. McKenzie Carvers Annual Woodcarving Show and Sale, EUGENE (Oakway Center). Contact Lois Padgett, 541-747-6897.

Oct 18-19: OKLAHOMA. Annual Artistry in Wood Show and Sale presented by Oklahoma City Woodcarvers Club, OKLAHOMA CITY (State Fairgrounds, Centennial Building). Contact www.OKCarver.org.

Oct 19: MICHIGAN. Annual Show and Competition sponsored by the Wood Carving Guild of Frankenmuth Michigan, FRANKENMUTH (High School, 525 East Genesee St.). Contact 989-777-5387, www.woodcarvers.biz.

Oct 24-26: SASKATCHEWAN, CANADA. Reflections of Nature 18th Annual Wildlife Art Competition, Show and Sale presented by Saskatchewan Wildlife Art Assn., SASKATOON (Saskatoon Exhibition Grounds, Wheatland Building). Contact Bob Drury, 306-382-3155, www.saskwildlifeart.com.

Oct 25-26: ONTARIO, CANADA. Ontario Wood Carver Association 29th Annual Competition and Show, TORONTO (Black Creek Pioneer Village, 1000 Murry Ross Parkway). Sat. & Sun. 10am-4pm. Contact Emma Perlaky, 905-764-3859, www.ontariowoodcarvers.com.

Oct 26: WISCONSIN. Annual Woodcarvers/Wood Turners Show and Sale sponsored by the Capital Area Carvers of Wisconsin and the Badger Woodturners, MADISON (Olbrich Botanical Gardens, 3330 Atwood Ave). Contact Manny Voeltz, 608-241-1188, www.madison.com/com.munities/madcarvers/index.php.

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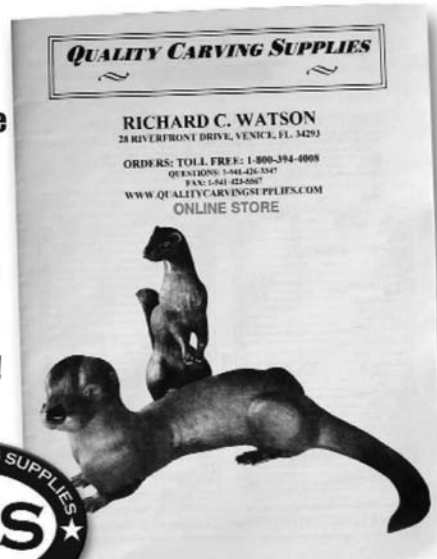
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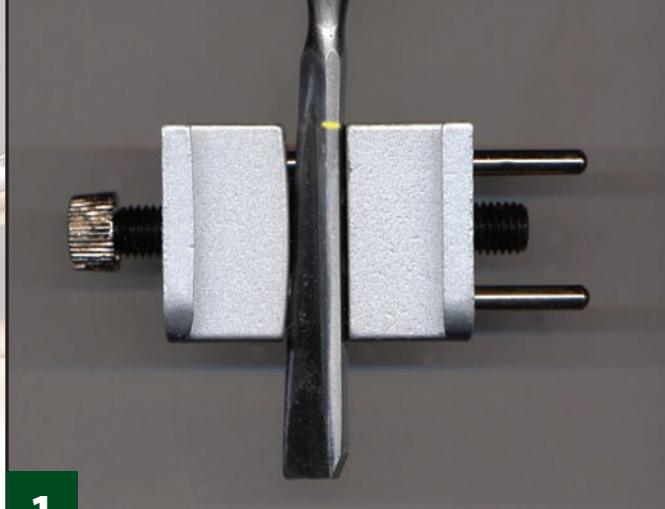
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Sharpening V-tools

Handy jig makes it easy to get a perfect edge

By John English

Sharpening V-tools can be challenging. *WCI* Holiday 2007 (issue #41) presented a simple technique for sharpening V-tools freehand. Many experts recommend learning to sharpen without the aid of power or jigs, but sometimes we need a bit of help. An inexpensive guide like this makes it easy to sharpen tools consistently. Look for a jig that clamps the tool from the sides rather than from the top. Jigs similar to the one featured in this demonstration are available at most woodworking supply stores. The prices range from \$11.95 to \$17.95.



1

Establish the bevel. Lock the V-tool in place with the flat side of the V-tool against the flat edge of the jig. Set the jig for a 20° bevel and mark the end of the guide on the V-tool. Work one side on a coarse diamond stone, then flip the jig around and lock the opposite side in place, aligning the jig with the mark on the tool. Work both faces equally. Feel for a burr to form the whole way across both edges, then use a small diamond file to remove it.



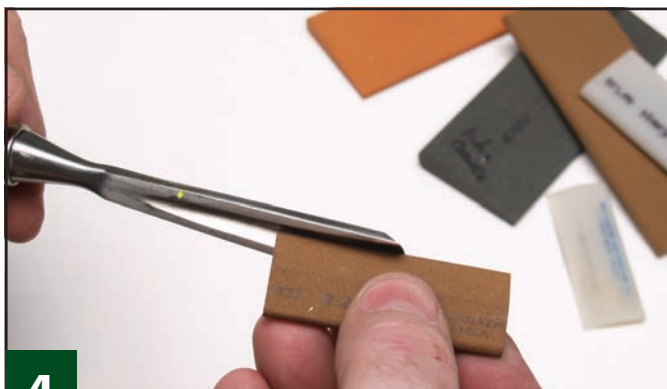
2

Refine the bevel. Keep the tool in the jig and switch to a 1,000-grit water stone or the equivalent. You can see the mark I made on the tool to help me place the tool in the jig at exactly the same spot after switching to the other face. Work both sides equally; count the number of strokes made on one side and make the same number on the other side. Form and remove a finer burr.



3

Polish the bevel. Switch to an 8,000-grit abrasive. This fine stone will polish the bevel and remove most of the scratches from the coarser abrasives. Work both outside faces to raise a final burr. Notice the small tail, or hook, that forms where the two walls of the V-tool meet. The tail is the accumulation of the two burrs and it needs to be removed for the tool to cut properly.



4

Remove the final burrs. Remove the tool from the jig and roll it lightly back and forth on the 8,000-grit stone to remove the tail. Use small slipstones to remove the final burrs. Strop all four faces (bevels and backs) on a leather strop, and test the sharpness of the tool by carving a shallow groove across the grain of some pine. It should cut cleanly without tearing any of the grain.



About the Author

John has been working with wood since the early 1980s. He is a contributing editor to *Woodcraft Magazine* and a former editor of *Woodworker's Journal*. He is the author of numerous articles in various other magazines, and publishes *Woodezine*, an online magazine for woodworkers. To see his work, visit www.JohnFEnglish.com.

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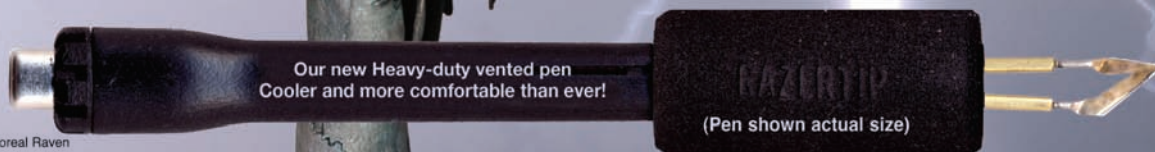
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Sharpening

Start with Hand Sharpening

Experts recommend you learn to hand sharpen before you sharpen with power. While they admit that you can get an equally good edge regardless of the method, experts agree that you can ruin a tool a lot faster by power sharpening than by hand sharpening.

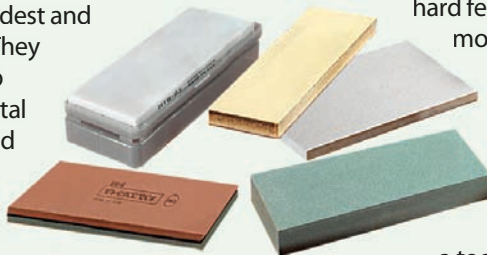
Sharpening on a Budget

An economical alternative to expensive sharpening stones is sandpaper. Often referred to as the "Scary Sharp" method, carvers attach fine grits of sandpaper, usually used for sanding automotive finishes, to a flat surface. When the sandpaper wears out, pull it off the flat surface and replace it with a fresh piece.



Stone Durability

Sharpening stones range from soft to nearly indestructible. With water stones, the softest type of sharpening stone, you are constantly exposing new abrasive, which can speed up sharpening. The downside is that it is easy to wear a groove into a water stone. Oilstones are more durable, but still cup or groove over time. A lubricant, such as oil, is needed to keep tiny bits of metal from clogging the abrasive surface. Diamond and ceramic stones are the hardest and most expensive. They are difficult to cup or groove and metal bits can be cleaned off with soap and water.



Extra, Extra, Read All About It

Lora S. Irish suggests making a few passes across a piece of newspaper after stropping your tools. The newspaper ink is just abrasive enough to add a fine polish to the sharp edges.



Shop-Made Power Sharpener

The simplest power sharpener is a sanding disk mandrel chucked in a drill. Clamp the drill to your workbench, and work your way up through the sandpaper grits to shape your edge. You can even use contact cement to attach a piece of leather to an extra mandrel for power stropping. Sanding disk mandrel kits normally cost less than \$10. The drill usually turns slow enough that it won't overheat the tool and ruin the temper.

Buffing Wheels

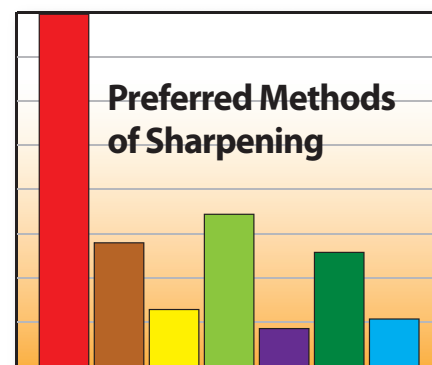
There is a lot of contention over the use of buffing wheels. Some carvers use them as a quick touch up, but others claim the only thing they are good for is rounding over an edge, which requires you to resharpen the tool. Buffing wheels are usually either soft cloth or hard felt. Hard felt, while more expensive, is less likely to round over tool edges.

Testing an Edge

Every carver tests the sharpness of a tool using a different method. Some try to make a slice in a hanging piece of newspaper or paper towel. Others try to shave a bit of hair off their arm. Some carvers cut across the end grain of a piece of wood. A clean, whistling cut indicates a sharp tool.

Choosing Stropping and Polishing Compounds

The three main choices are red, green and yellow (or gold). Yellow and gold are the most aggressive. Red is the finest. Green compounds are somewhere in the middle. If you want a quick stropping, use the yellow or gold. For the most polished edge, use red.



Power Sharpening	40%
Wet/Water Stones	14%
Sandpaper/Scary Sharp	6%
Oil Stones	17%
Other/Shop Made	4%
Diamond Stones	13%
Ceramic Stones	6%

Chart based on polled responses from www.woodcarvingillustrated.com.

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Invented For Professionals,
Yet Easy Enough For A Novice.

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- Knives
- Scissors
- Axes
- Plane Irons
- Draw Knives
- All Size Drill Bits
- V-Tools
- Carving and Lathe Tools
- Carbide Router Bits
- Wood Carvings
- Lawn Mower Blades

* Larger 5" Ninja Backpad broadens the capacity.

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- FAST & EASY - Produce Razor Sharp Edges In Minutes!
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