

10 Patterns for Handcarved Gifts

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HOW-TO MAGAZINE FOR CARVERS

ILLUSTRATED

HOLIDAY 2008
ISSUE 45

A Fox
Chapel Publication

41 Santas

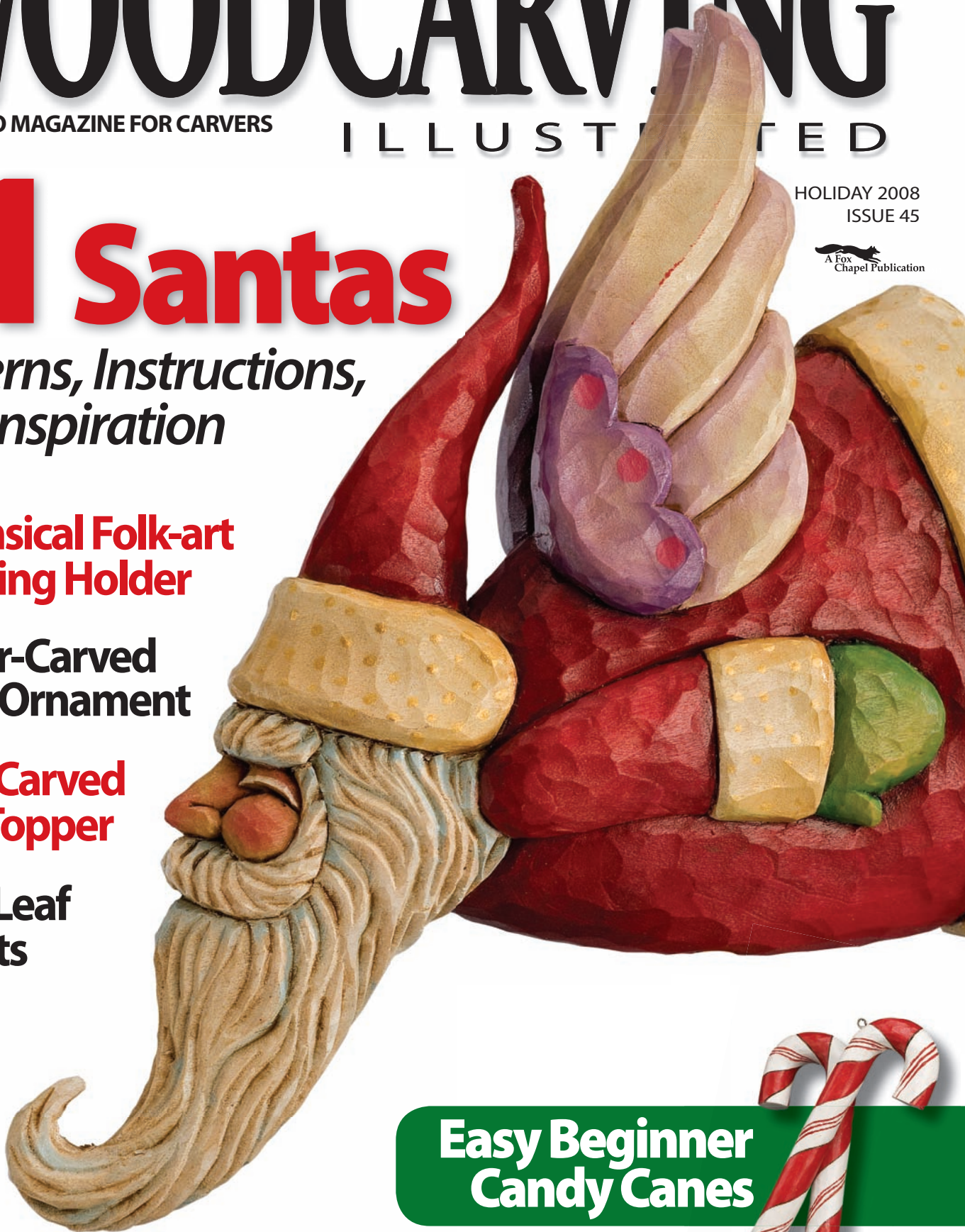
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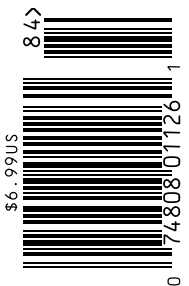
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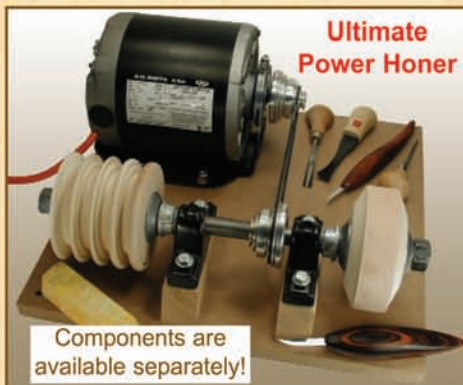
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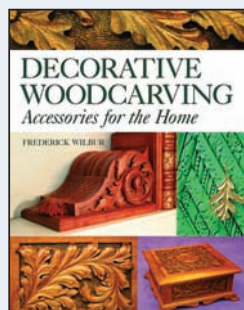


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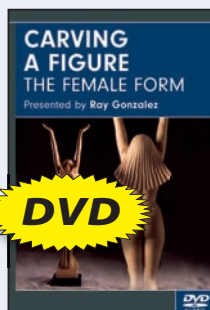
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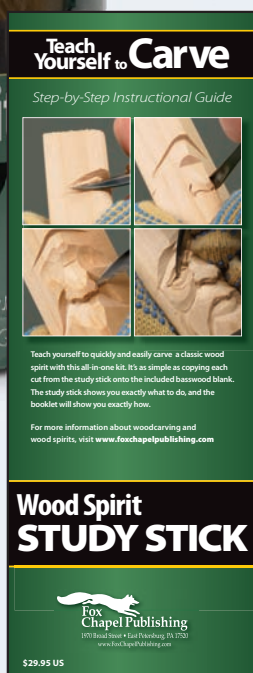
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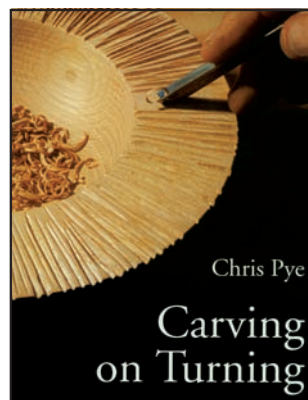
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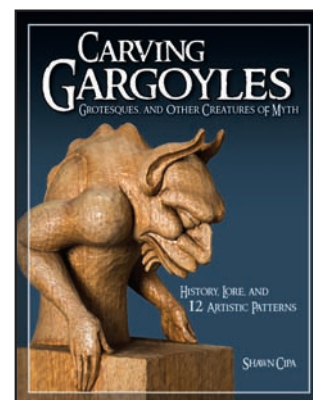
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The weighted base lets this Santa hold a stocking stuffed with Christmas goodies.



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Lovespoon Pattern Download

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From couch potato to sweet potato

My son Alex tends to be a couch potato. Although he does spend a considerable amount of time outside, knocking around in the woods or throwing ball, he spends way too much time in front of the television. I found Jim Calder's technique of teaching kids to carve using sweet potatoes (WCI Fall 2008, Issue #44) very inspiring. As soon as I read the article, I knew I wanted to introduce sweet potato carving to Alex.

Alex and I have carved soap and tried our hand at chip carving. Being a nine-year-old boy, he loses interest quickly. I was hoping we could finish the potatoes without him getting too bored.

I bought Alex his first pocket knife for Cub Scouts last year. The leaders taught the boys about safety and sharpening, and they carved a bear from paraffin wax.

Armed with two sweet potatoes, we sat down at the kitchen table. I pulled out the last issue and Alex and I read over the article. "What are we going to carve?" Alex asked.

"I thought we would carve the face, like in the article," was my response. In typical Alex fashion, he had another idea.

"You always carve faces. Let's do something else," Alex said. Well, I don't think I've ever carved a face in my life, but if he didn't want to carve a face I wasn't going to force him. He decided his potato would become a wolf.

Using an actual knife to carve something you would be holding in your hand was a bit intimidating. I don't do well around blood. I reminded him to always carve away from his body and keep his fingers out of the way. He actually did very well! I carved a face, following Jim's instructions, and Alex carved a howling wolf. It was a great way to pass two hours, just Alex and mom, sitting at the table with slivers of sweet potatoes falling on the floor. Best of all, there was no blood.

When we finished, Alex took the sweet potato wolf up to his room. He is eager to see if the wolf will actually resemble wood when it dries. I'm not sure how long you can keep a sweet potato in your bedroom without attracting bugs, but I'm willing to find out. Seeing that smile on his face is worth a few bugs any day.



Carving sweet potatoes is a fun way to let kids be creative.

Shannon Flowers
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FoxChapelPublishing.com

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A woodcarver's portrait, likely Judy Gale Roberts, is shown on the left. To the right is a yellow Guinevere sanding machine with a black hose and a red sanding block. Below the machine is a small container of Guinevere Organic Oil Based Wax and a black sanding block. The text 'Your Vision. Our Tools.' is prominently displayed at the top right.

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Looking for a Chair to Carve



Embellished chair
inspires a new carver.

I am definitely a newbie at carving, having only a few projects under my belt. I just wanted to comment on Dennis Zongker's article, "Carving a New Life for Old Furniture," which appeared in *WCI* Fall 2008 (Issue 44). His article makes me want to go find a chair! Hopefully, mine will be something softer than old white oak. The article got me excited about carving something, and I wanted to say thanks for this inspiring feature.

I looked at Dennis' Website, and I am glad he can tone it down and give us rookies something less intimidating to cut our teeth on. His step-by-step illustrations and directions make me believe that I can do this. He strikes me as someone who could challenge readers to expand their abilities at many skill levels.

John Moore
Powell, Wyo.

Enamored with Quick-Carve Wizards

Thank you for the excellent article "5-Minute Wizard," which appeared in *WCI* Summer 2008 (Issue 43). I am a novice carver. I have some tools and wood, but I have been so intimidated I have hardly tried anything. The article inspired me to get going and try something. I followed the excellent step-by-step article and produced my first wizard in about three hours. I doubt I will ever meet the 5-minute level, but I am thrilled that I finally got started. My first project was such an encouragement.

I am just 67 and starting this new hobby. I am mostly fascinated with wizard-type faces and am working on finding information on tree bark panels and things for walking sticks.

Kurt Jarvis
Saratoga Springs, Utah



Fox Hunt

I just got new reading glasses and went through the magazine in earnest determined to find the fox. I was halfway through the third pass when I read that the fox hunt was off. I was starting to think that my eyes had bought the farm.

Not to worry, the magazine is great anyway. While I am not a fan of all types of carving, there is enough meat in the issue to keep me interested. The editorial mentioned that some people complain about not addressing their particular form of carving enough, and that is unfortunate. I guess that carving is so addictive that one cannot get enough. People will just have to be open to new ideas and try something different.

Richard Gagnon
Knowlton, Que., Canada



EDITOR'S NOTE:

It seems that pesky little fox went on vacation and didn't tell anyone!

*We neglected to hide the fox in *WCI* fall 2008 (Issue 44). A number of circumstances contributed to the unfortunate incident, but it really boils down to good old-fashioned human error. Please accept our sincere apologies. We promise he is hiding in the pages of this issue.*

We did receive a few false sightings. Alexander Torrance of Spring Lake, Mich., and Mitchell Anderson of Bixby, Okla. are the winners drawn from all entries received.

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 January 1, 2009, to be eligible. *NOTE: If his feet are on the "ground," the contest fox always faces left (other foxes in *WCI* don't count).*

Send your entry to *Woodcarving Illustrated*, Attn: Find the Fox, 1970 Broad St., East Petersburg, PA 17520, or enter online under the contests link at www.woodcarvingillustrated.com.

Saw Whet Owl

Designed by Gordon and Marsha Stiller

The Saw Whet Owl is one of the most common small owls in North America.

The owls are usually 7" to 8" tall, with a 17" to 19" wingspan. Unlike many owls, they do not have ear tufts; their ears sit flat on their heads. Their faces are white and their underbellies are white streaked with brown. The bills are black.

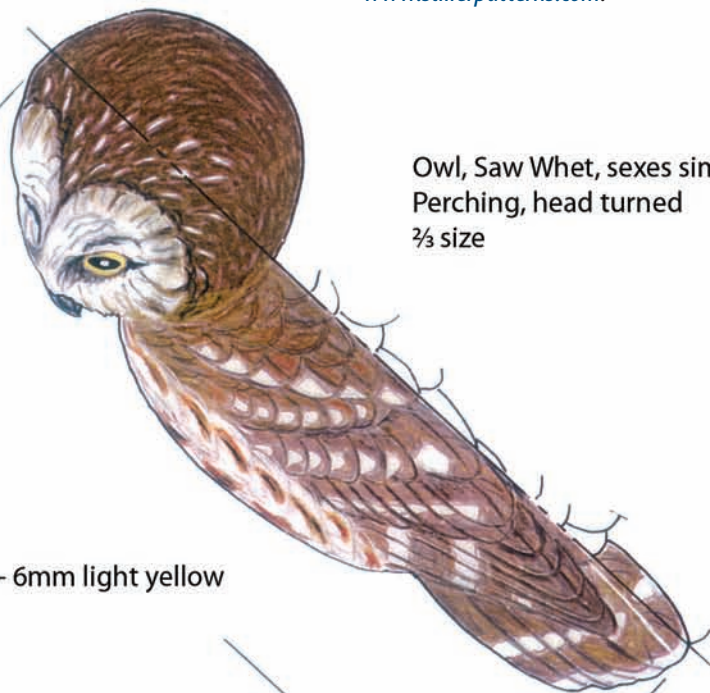
The female is slightly larger than the male, but the colors are identical. The birds weigh between 2 and 5 ounces.



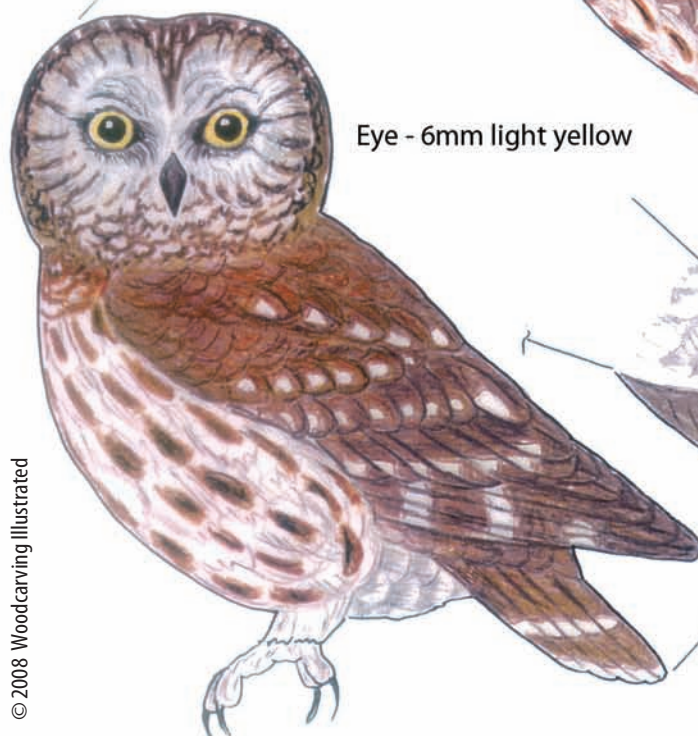
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Owl, Saw Whet, sexes similar
Perching, head turned
 $\frac{2}{3}$ size



Eye - 6mm light yellow



Left



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Making Wishes Come True

It is often said that woodcarvers are among the most caring people in the world. The carving community has once again lived up to that statement by supporting Chipping Away's Christmas tree project.

Dennis "Pop" Moor, president of Chipping Away Inc., announced a need for handcarved Christmas tree ornaments. Pop does volunteer work for The Children's Wish Foundation. Each year, the Children's Wish Foundation unites with the Maycourt Charity in Kitchener/Waterloo, Ont., Canada, to raise funds by raffling fully decorated Christmas trees. A number of area companies and organizations donate an artificial tree decorated in their chosen theme. The donated trees are displayed in the corridor of a shopping mall. Themes range from ice hockey to angels and some trees include gift certificates to local businesses.

Volunteers from Children's Wish Foundation and Maycourt sell raffle tickets. Ticket holders place their stub into a box located in front of the tree they wish to win. More than \$25,000 was raised in 2007, enabling the foundation to make a lot of wishes come true.

Pop felt a tree with handcarved ornaments would be popular and promised to donate one for the 2008 event.

"I knew I could count on carvers to pitch in," Pop said, "and sure enough, they answered the call." Chipping Away announced the need for decorations in their on-line newsletter (www.chippingaway.com). Pop's carving supply business also included a plea for help with mail orders and gift certificates sent to help sponsor carving shows and competitions across the country.

Pop has received more than 300 carved ornaments from individuals and clubs across North America. While this year's tree is full, carved ornaments are already being collected for 2009.



A Christmas tree decorated entirely in handcarved ornaments will be raffled off to benefit The Children's Wish Foundation.

"It's impossible to put into words the gratitude that the kids and their families express when the Children's Wish Foundation steps in to help make their life a little happier," Pop said. "Without the generosity of carvers, we couldn't do it."

If you would like to help with this cause, please carve a decoration of suitable size and weight that will hang nicely on the branch of an artificial tree. Send your carved donation to: Christmas Ornament Donation, c/o Chipping Away Inc, 808 Courtland Avenue East, Kitchener, Ont., Canada N2C 1K3. Send the carving by postal service only. Carvings sent via UPS, FedEx, etc. cannot be accepted.

Arbortech opens North American Office

Arbortech, an Australian manufacturer of power carving tools, has opened a North American office in Massachusetts. Arbortech USA will handle relations with dealers and woodcarvers who use or sell their products in North America. Arbortech produces various carving disks and reciprocating carvers.

Arbortech USA has launched a series of free project plans on their website, www.ArbortechUSA.com. The projects offer step-by-step instructions using the Arbortech power chisel or mini grinder.

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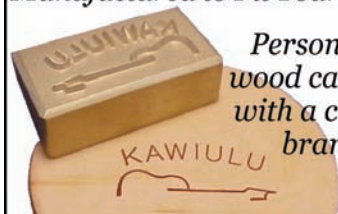
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Shop-made Sanding Bow



From Eric A. Seiffer
North Chili, N.Y.

I made this sanding bow from imitation wood lattice. Home Depot sells the $\frac{1}{4}$ "-thick by $1\frac{1}{4}$ "-wide plastic material, which is a dream to bend. The sanding bow works great to smooth surfaces without changing the overall shape of the piece.

Rip the plastic material down to approximately $1\frac{1}{16}$ "-wide. Dunk the plastic in about 3" of boiling water. Make sure the area you want to bend is submerged in the water. After the plastic is hot, grip it carefully and bend it to shape. I found that an outside angle of about 75° works best. Hold the material under cold water to lock the plastic at the desired angle.

Cut the hand grip from scrap wood. I cut the wood to $1\frac{1}{16}$ " x $1\frac{1}{8}$ " x 6". Cut off the ends at a 70° angle. Glue the hand grip in the center of the straight section of the plastic. Round the edges of the hand grip.

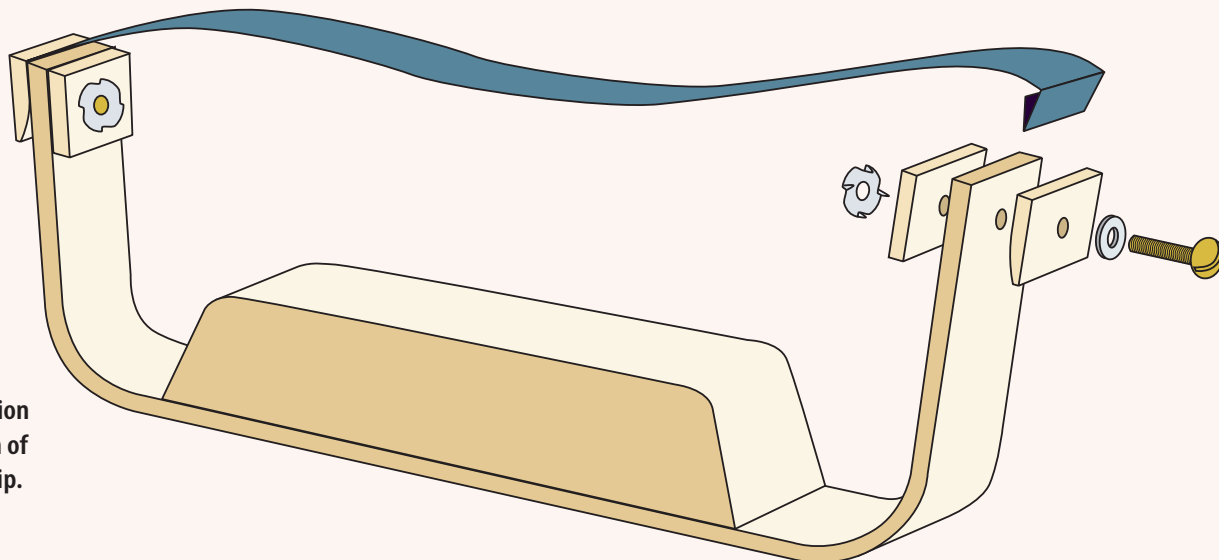
Create clamps to hold the sandpaper strips in place. Cut four pieces of the lattice material to $1\frac{1}{16}$ " x $1\frac{1}{16}$ ". Drill a $\frac{1}{4}$ "-diameter hole through all four pieces. Drill matching holes through the ends of the bow. Attach two #10-32 by $\frac{5}{16}$ "-long tee nuts to two of the square lattice pieces. Glue these scraps to the inside of the bow. Round one end of the other two lattice pieces. Use two #10-32 by 1"-long machine screws to attach the rounded lattice pieces to the outside of the bow.



Shop-made sanding tool is ideal for smoothing curved surfaces.

I use Klingspor gold sanding strips in the bow. Control the tension with the length of the sanding strip. The shorter you make the strip, the higher the tension will be. Cut the strip 1" longer than you want the belt to be. Fold the final $\frac{1}{2}$ " on both ends back upon itself. This fold helps the lattice clamps hold the belt in place. Tighten the machine screws and lattice clamps down on the sanding strip to lock the strip in place.

Klingspor strips are available from Klingspor Corporation, P.O. Box 5069, Hickory, N.C. 28603-5069, www.klingspor.com.



Adjust the tension with the length of the sanding strip.

Easy Painting Stick

From Edward Carey, Baldwin, N.Y.

I make this simple painting stick from scrap wood. The painting stick allows me to access all sides of the carving and keeps my fingers away from the wet finish.

Drill a $\frac{5}{8}$ "-diameter hole in the center of a piece of $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 3" x 3" scrap wood for the base. Make a line $\frac{3}{4}$ " from one end of a piece of $\frac{3}{4}$ " x $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 6" scrap wood for the painting stick. Make a stop cut along the line and carefully carve the end into a $\frac{5}{8}$ "-diameter cylinder. Test the fit of the cylinder into the hole in the base and adjust the cylinder until it fits snugly into the hole.

Cut the end off a 2"-long sheet rock screw. I use a cut-off wheel in my rotary power carver. Drill a $\frac{1}{8}$ "-diameter pilot hole in the square end of the painting stick. Grip the screw with locking pliers and apply a dab of epoxy to the cut-off end of the screw. Position the cut-off end in the pilot hole and turn the screw counterclockwise until the screw is recessed approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ " into the stick. Allow the epoxy to dry.

To use the painting stick, drill a $\frac{1}{8}$ "-diameter pilot hole in the bottom of your carving and carefully screw the painting stick into the pilot hole. When it's time to let the paint dry, slide the stick into the base.



Tips from the Masters

Don't waste time cleaning up rough areas that will be removed later.

(Chris Pye, Page 58)

Experiment with different tools to produce textures in a carving.

(Desiree Hajny, Page 44)

Use centerlines as you carve to keep elements symmetrical.

(Mark Akers, Page 64)



Shop made painting stick speeds up finishing.

TOP TIP in our Spring Issue will win a beginner carving kit from The Woodchip Shop. Send your tip to *Woodcarving Illustrated*, 1970 Broad St., East Petersburg, Pa. 17520, or e-mail Duncan@FoxChapelPublishing.com.



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Editor's Note: Mark Gargac's Olde World Santa (Holiday 2007, Issue 41) inspired lots of folks to carve their own version of Saint Nick. The overwhelming response to Mark's article is the driving force behind this special Santa edition of the Reader Gallery. To view more Santas carved by our readers, log on to the message board at www.woodcarvingillustrated.com.

- **Mark Akers** of Lexington, S.C., carved these Santa and elf ornaments from basswood. The pair are painted with washes of acrylic paint.



- ◄ **Alvin Belflower** of Amarillo, Tex., carved a miniature version of the Santa ornament. The 2"-tall Santa is carved from basswood and finished with linseed oil, acrylic paint washes, and Deft spray lacquer.



- **Lundy Cupp** of Kingston Springs, Tenn., carved this elf and Santa from basswood. The pieces are finished with acrylic paint, boiled linseed oil, satin lacquer, and liquid wax.

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► **Claude Frenner's** version of the Santa ornament is carved from basswood and finished with thin washes of acrylic paint and water-based varnish. Claude lives in Woodbridge, Va.



◄ **John Jussel** of Yankton, S.D., carved this Santa from basswood. He finished it with washes of acrylic paint, boiled linseed oil, Deft spray lacquer, and Watco paste wax finish.

► **Tom Hinde**s of Delaware, Ohio, carved these four small Santas from scraps of basswood. The largest Santa is 1" tall and the smallest is only $\frac{1}{16}$ " tall.



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Guinevere Sanding System



The Guinevere Sanding System by King Arthur Tools claims to be the smallest inflatable sanding drum. What the tool lacks in size it more than makes up for in power.

Many carvers use sanding drums to shape and sand their work. Because you control the inflation of the drums, you control how much the drum flexes. The more the drum flexes, the more it conforms to the contours of the piece and won't change the overall shape of the wood. Increase the inflation of the drum so it flexes less and it will remove more wood.

The Motor Unit

The small motor unit, which looks like a mini-version of a bench grinder, features a powerful ½hp motor. This little motor really packs a punch. Both sides of the motor feature a traditional three-jaw chuck, allowing you to chuck two different shapes of sanding drums or two different grits of sandpaper.

Both chucks rotate downward, which gives you additional control and allows you to easily see how much wood you are removing. The motor rotates at around 3,600rpm. The tool produces a lot of dust, especially when equipped with coarse-grit sanding drums.

The Flexible Shaft

What separates the Guinevere from other sanding drum setups is the optional flexible shaft. Foredom set the standard for flexible shaft machines, but Foredom tools revolve much faster, usually around 18,000rpm. Slower is better when it comes to sanding and polishing. In many cases, sanding at high speeds will clog the sandpaper and burn the wood.

The flexible shaft for the Guinevere attaches to the three-jaw chuck on the right side. The 51"-long flexible shaft bends easily to make the tool easy to use. There are three separate bearings in the shaft assembly (one in the shaft itself, and two in the handpiece), which contribute to the tool's smooth operation.

When testing the shaft, I equipped the 2"-diameter by 4"-long cylinder-shaped drum with 60-grit sandpaper and started sanding the edge of a piece of ¼"-thick oak. In 20 seconds, the tool removed ⅝" of wood. During the time test, I pressed the wood and drum together as hard

as I could and the motor only started to bog down at the 20-second mark. Neither the shaft nor the motor faltered. More importantly, the tool did not burn the wood at all.

The Sanding Drums

The drums are inflated using a small but powerful hand pump.

Usually, a short stroke of the pump is all that is required to create firm pressure in the drum.

King Arthur Tools has created four different drums for the Guinevere. The main kit comes with a 2"-diameter by 4"-long cylinder-shaped drum and a 2"-diameter round-nose drum. Equip one of the drums with coarse-grit sandpaper to remove wood fast and use medium-grit sandpaper on the other drum to add details and remove scratches left from the coarse sandpaper.

I suggest you add the optional dust collector for the flexible shaft if you plan to use it often. The dust collector attaches right to the flexible shaft. A flexible hose connects the collector to a shop vacuum. Even when sanding aggressively with coarse sandpaper, the collector trapped 90% of the dust.

There are also 1"-diameter by 4"-long cylinders and 1"-diameter by 2"-long cylinders available for detail sanding. There is a polishing kit available if you prefer to polish the wood and apply a wax finish.

Summary

The powerful compact Guinevere features a useful combination of fixed sanding and flexible shaft control. It is a serious tool for carvers.

The Guinevere total sanding system, which includes the base motor, flexible shaft, air pump, large cylinder-shaped sanding drum, round-nose sanding drum, abrasive cleaner, and an assortment of sandpaper, retails for \$315 + \$24.90 s&h. The dust collector costs an additional \$38. It is available from King Arthur Tools, 800-942-1300, www.katools.com.

At-a-glance

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- Two three-jaw chucks for easy use
- Variety of shapes and sizes of sanding drums

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Saint Nicholas

Majestic design highlights the historic inspiration for Santa Claus

By Lora S. Irish

This benevolent-looking rendition of Saint Nicholas adds a touch of nostalgia to your holiday decorating. The detailed robe, flowing cloak, and golden accessories are reminiscent of a cathedral statue.

Saint Nicholas makes a stunning relief carving and can be rendered in low relief, high relief or intaglio style (see page 74). Add hooks to the bottom of the plaque to hang Christmas stockings. The design makes a stunning woodburning and can also be transformed to an in-the-round figure.



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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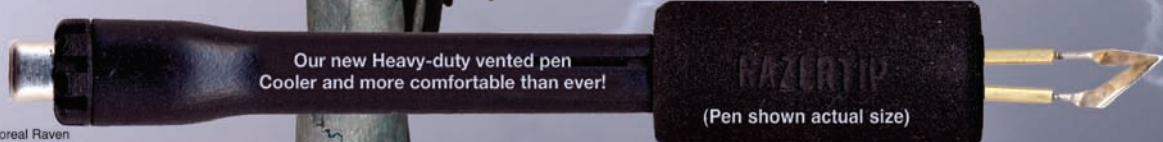
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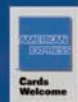
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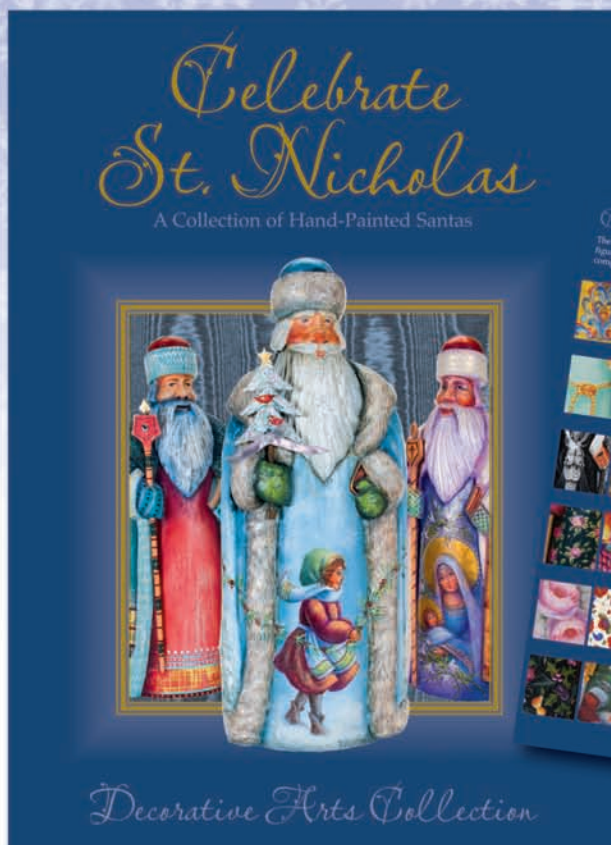
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The Decorative Arts Collection and All American Crafts Publishing proudly present this stunning collection of hand-painted, carved St. Nicholas figurines – each is a celebration of the man of the season. Forty-three St. Nicks are featured – twenty with complete lessons so you can create your own! The fabulous St. Nicks featured in this book began as 14-inch unpainted wooden figurines. Each was meticulously hand-carved in Russia by skilled artisans working in traditional Russian folk style. G. DeBrekht of Russia commissioned these figures specifically for this book to present in this innovative collaboration. Whether painted with realism, strokework, landscapes, or animals, the result is a celebration not only of the legend of St. Nicholas, but also a celebration of the beauty and diversity of decorative painting.

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2008 WOODCARVING ILLUSTRATED Santa Carving Contest

With more than 100 carvings entered in this year's Santa Carving Contest, judging was a difficult task indeed. It's interesting to see how carvers took inspiration from last year's entries. We definitely saw improvement in the pieces from carvers who participate every year.

GRAND PRIZE WINNER: Santa Riding a Snow Kick-board

By Hyung Jun Yong, Osan-Si, Kyonggi-Do, South Korea

Judges Notes: Hyung Jun Yong's Santa wowed the judges with its wonderful facial expression. The carving is highlighted with clean deliberate cuts. The overall design is novel, but believable. Hyung Jun's easy style is reminiscent of early Emil Janel flat-plane carvings. The ability to capture the essence of Santa with minimal cuts is what makes this carving an award winner.

"This is a new generation of Santa Claus who enjoys winter sports, such as skiing, snowboarding, and snow kick-boarding," Hyung Jun said. "I had a family video of my sister-in-law's husband dressed up as Santa giving a snow kick-board to his son. When I watched the video, it inspired me to capture the scene in a carving."

It took Hyung Jun about 60 hours to carve the scene. The entire project is carved from a single block of basswood. Hyung Jun used a number of carving knives and a few gouges to carve the piece.

The scene measures 5" tall by 3" wide by 12" long. Hyung Jun's wife, Joo Hyun-Lim, painted the piece with acrylic paints thinned with varnish. Basswood is not native to Korea, so Hyung Jun imports it from the United States.

In South Korea, Hyung Jun said most Santas look like the classic Coca-Cola Santa. Hyung Jun's design is loosely based on this iconic Santa. Hyung Jun, a sales manager at an industrial coatings company, started carving in 2006.

Flat-plane woodcarving is not popular in South Korea. Historically, Koreans have carved Buddha statues, Korean-style wood spirits, wooden masks, marionettes, and signs. Hyung Jun is eager to introduce flat-plane and other American styles of carving to Korea.



The Grand Prize winner will receive tools and supplies from Arbortech, Chipping Away, Colwood, Foredom, Heinecke Wood Products, and Prox-Tech.

PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD

The People's Choice winner will receive tools and supplies from DMT, Deft, Foredom, Preferred Edge Carving Knives, Turtle Feathers, and The Woodcraft Shop.

Santa's Critters

By David Boone, Burnsville, N.C.

David Boone's elaborate scene captures Santa sharing the joy of Christmas with God's creatures. David's carving received the most votes in *Woodcarving Illustrated's* online People's Choice Award. Nearly 3,800 votes were submitted over a two-week period.

The piece measures 18" tall by 19" wide by 12" deep. David carved the scene from basswood and used acrylic paints to bring Santa and the critters to life.



HONORABLE MENTION



Passing Preflight Inspection

By Sandy Smith, Lakeview, Ark.

Judges Notes: Sandy Smith's overall design is heartwarmingly amusing. The carved scene is sentimental, charming, and cheery. The piece is executed well in terms of carving and painting, and Sandy did a good job of incorporating the base with the main figures.

This is the fourth year in a row that Sandy Smith earned an honorable mention. The piece measures 10½" tall by 9½" wide by 12" long. It is carved from a single piece of basswood and painted using acrylic paints. Sandy modeled Rudolph using reference photos of real deer, but instituted artistic license for his glowing nose. Santa's flight boots are modeled after her husband's Marine Corp pilot boots.



Santa Holding Toys

By Scott Jeffrey, Aloha, Ore.

Judges Notes: Scott Jeffrey's carving appealed to the judges' love of traditional Santas. The judges feel the glossy finish detracts from the overall presentation, but love the carved details, such as the ringlets in the doll's hair and the texturing of Santa's fur trim. Scott did an excellent job of capturing Santa's joyous expression.

Scott Jeffrey carved this piece out of a single block of basswood. The Santa measures 14" tall by 6" wide by 5" deep. It is painted with acrylic paints. Scott's inspiration comes from a Christmas picture book. To work out his design, Scott donned a large parka and Santa hat, and filled his arms with toys and packages, while his wife photographed him from a number of angles.

Honorable Mention prizes have been supplied by Knotts Knives, The Woodchip Shop, Steve Brown Woodcarving, and KV Woodcarving Supplies.

Santa Riding a Rooster

By Ed Pribyl, Round Lake, Ill.

Judges Notes: Ed Pribyl's distressed antique finish complements the folk-art style of this Santa. While the carving does not represent the traditional image usually associated with Santa Claus, the carving has a delightful vintage appeal and succeeds at portraying the spirit of Santa in a non-traditional fashion.

Ed Pribyl's Santa, carved from three pieces of basswood, measures 19" tall by 9" deep by 12" long. The carving is finished using acrylic paints and a distressing process of Ed's own design. The piece is inspired by Ed's love of folk-art roosters and folk-art Santas. It seemed natural for him to combine his two interests in this carving.



The following pages highlight the variety of Santas entered in the contest.

Contest judged by John Kelsey, Bob Duncan, and Shannon Flowers.

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Visit our website to view all the contest entries and contents of the prize packages.

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2008 Santa Carving Contest Highlights



Carol Leavy
Clinton, Iowa



Charlotte Gibbs
Blackshear, Ga.



Daryl Korpela
Oconomowoc, Wis.



David Campbell
Mississauga, Ont., Canada



Don Murray
Missoula, Mont.



Mark Akers
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Keller, Tex.



Richard Keller
Salem, Ohio



Rick Smith
Kalispell, Mont.



Rusty Johnson
Tulsa, Okla.



John Fitts
Lake Wales, Fla.



Walter Marten
Columbus, Mont.



Wayne Shinlever
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Bruce Sovine
Clover, S.C.



Barbara von der Haar
Houston, Tex.



Linda Hughes
Kingwood, Tex.

Contest Announcement!

In an effort to include all of our readers in future contests, we have elected to expand the annual Santa Carving Contest into a general carving contest.

The contest will be held every other year. Deadline for the next WCI Carving Contest will be Dec. 31, 2010. Categories have not been finalized at this time, but will most likely include realistic, caricature, relief, and chip carving. Santa carvers, don't despair, we'll continue to have a dedicated category just for you.

Judging will continue to be based on overall presentation, technical execution, and originality. Details will be published in future issues, but don't let that keep you from getting a head start. Participants may enter multiple carvings.

Feedback and suggestions are welcome. Send to: Carving Contest, 1970 Broad St., East Petersburg, Pa. 17520, or E-mail editors@woodcarvingillustrated.com.



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Woodcarving that Gets Noticed

Team mascots on a large scale promote woodcarving and community pride

By Rex Branson

Making a living with woodcarving can be difficult, but it's a rewarding profession. I found I could use my talents to build awareness for the art of woodcarving and foster community pride at the same time.

My first project of this magnitude was for the Oswego (Kan.) High School. When we unveiled the school's mascot, a 10'-tall Native American chief, the whole school went nuts! The kids were so excited, happy, and proud of their new mascot—this was the most appreciative audience I had ever been exposed to.

My goal with these projects is to teach children about woodcarving and get the art in front of as many

“When we unveiled the school's mascot,... the whole school went nuts!”

people as possible. The mascots also help to build school spirit and unite the local community around a common cause.

I find school mascots receive the highest level of support. My first point of contact is the school principal or superintendent. These officials bring the idea before the school board for approval. After the school board approves the project, the schools send out information to students, parents, and alumni.

Funding the Project

In a perfect world, I would be able to donate all of the materials and time necessary to create the mascots. Unfortunately, that's not usually possible. So I reach out to local communities and businesses for funding, enlist the help of school clubs, and contact the local news media to assist in publicizing the project. One local television station produced periodic segments to update the community on the carved mascot's progress.

The first project is always the hardest. For my first mascot, I asked people to send donations directly to me, but

The Oswego (Kan.) Indian is the first mascot Rex carved.



Branson carves the school mascots from 10'- to 12'-long logs. He uses a chain lift to move the raw materials.

Transporting the completed carving can be a monumental task.



people have a hard time trusting an unknown person. For the Raider, carved for the Burden (Kan.) School District, we set up a Raider fund at a local bank. Donations made to the account should be tracked. Alumni and community businesses donating more than \$100 can be recognized as spirit boosters. Engrave the names of these donors on a plaque and attach it to the carving.

Bringing the Mascot to Life

Most school mascots exist as two-dimensional logos. It's the carver's job to translate the logos or drawings into a 3-D sculpture. Customize the base with school-related carvings, such as symbols for art or drama clubs, sports accessories, or items specific to the local area. I recommend basswood or cottonwood logs for the carving. Once carved, the piece needs to dry for about



The Dexter (Kan.) Cardinal represents Rex's old high school.

a year. Then you can touch up the carved details and apply a good wood sealer. The drying stage is a good time to involve the school's art club. The club can participate in the actual painting or give input on the colors. Once painted, seal the project again, then apply an antiquing finish and a few coats of wax.

From inception to the unveiling typically takes 1½ years, most of which is spent allowing the carved log to dry before finishing. The logistics of moving a 400 to 800 pound carving can be one of the toughest challenges. Contact local heavy equipment companies to see if they will donate their services for recognition as a spirit booster.

Unveiling the Project

The unveiling makes the entire process worthwhile. Notify local media and plan the event during a school assembly to ensure maximum participation. Provide contact information for students interested in learning more about woodcarving. I tell the students how I was introduced to woodworking back when I was in high school. I explain how I never dreamed I could make a living carving wood, and I encourage them to follow their own dreams.



About the Author

Rex Branson is an award-winning carver and popular instructor. He lives in Northeast Oklahoma with his wife, Vickie, another accomplished carver and instructor. Contact him at 918-782-2769.



The Burden (Kan.) Raider was inspired by Yosemite Sam. Rex replaced the blazing guns with a book and a basketball in the carved version.

Preserving a Historic Art Form

Bob Johnson shares his passion for carving fish decoys with students

By Christle A. Johnson

A man with glasses and a red baseball cap is smiling and holding a large, speckled fish vertically. He is also holding a long-handled spear with multiple sharp points. The background is plain white.

Bob Johnson shows off one of the fish he speared using a hand-carved decoy.

Fish decoy carving is a folk art that has been passed down through many generations. For high school students in Brainerd, Minn., it is one of the most sought after art electives—and it's not like traditional art classes.

Bob Johnson of Baxter, Minn, a world champion fish decoy carver, is in his seventh year of teaching fish decoy carving as an art elective at the Brainerd High School. Bob introduces his students to this traditional sporting activity and teaches them the history of the art. Each student in Bob's class creates several working fish decoys.

Spearfishermen have used fish decoys for hundreds of years. The carved decoys draw northern pike and other game fish to holes cut in the ice-covered lakes. Some of the earliest fish decoys used by Native Americans were made from clam shells and deer antlers.

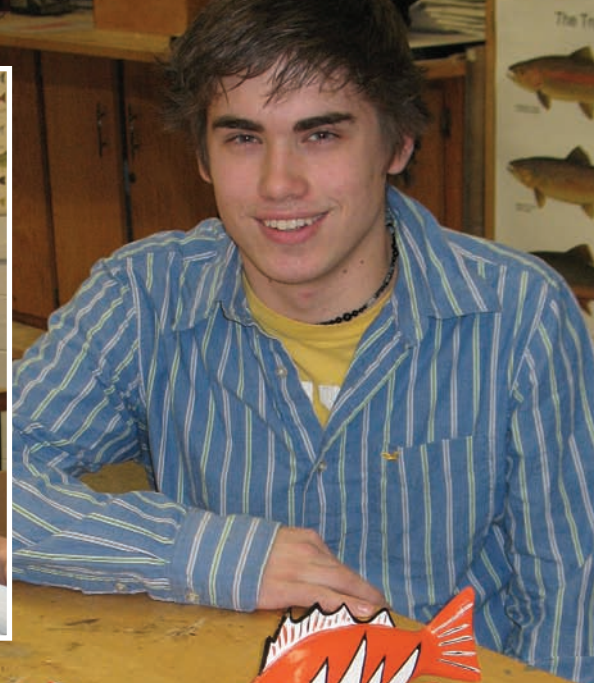
Spearfishermen use darkhouses on the ice. Darkhouses are similar to the fish houses used by winter anglers, but darkhouses have no windows and any cracks are covered to keep the interior dark. The only light comes from a large hole cut in the ice. The fish decoys are attached to a jig stick and dropped into the hole to simulate an injured fish. The decoys attract nearby game fish to the hole, allowing the fisherman to spear them as they investigate the decoy.

Bob's father introduced him to spearfishing when Bob was young. Unfortunately, his father passed away before he was able to teach Bob to carve. Bob carved his first fish decoy at age 14. A self-taught carver, Bob began to carve birds, animals, and characters in the late-1980s. Bob rediscovered his passion for carving fish decoys in the mid-1990s and eventually found

Two men are sitting at a table in a workshop. The man on the left, wearing glasses and a light-colored shirt, is holding a small fish decoy and painting it with a brush. The man on the right, wearing a dark jacket, is looking on. There are various paint containers and tools on the table.

Bob demonstrates painting techniques to Jed Reedy at Brainerd (Minn.) High School.

Ben Nelson uses an airbrush to finish his decoy.



himself participating in various regional and national carving competitions. Bob's talents have earned him more than 250 ribbons, four world-champion awards, and one national-champion award.

Since Bob first began teaching fish decoy carving at the high school, he has introduced the art to more than 300 teenagers. Students design their own patterns, cut the decoy blanks, and shape and carve them. The decoys are then weighted and tested in water. After the carved decoys pass their water test, the students sand and prime the carvings, and then stain or paint them.

"Teaching spearing and fish decoy carving not only helps preserve a declining traditional sporting activity, it also teaches students some regional history and gives them a skill that they can walk away with and fall back into at any time in their lives," Bob said.

As part of the class, students are expected to research the history of spearfishing, including interviewing at least one local spearfisherman. Students design, carve, and paint four fish decoys, including a critter such as a frog or insect. The students also design and carve jig sticks. The decoys are carved from white pine or hardwoods, such as walnut. At the conclusion of each class, Bob treats the students to a field trip. The class spends a day on a local lake, putting their creations to the test.

Bob is proud of the fact that his class attracts many students who would not typically take traditional art classes. Some of Bob's former students have retained their interest in carving and stop in to visit. When asked by a veteran carver how Bob will feel if a student one day tops him in a competition, Bob says, "I'd feel good, because I would know that I did my job well."



Tony Dullum exceeded the four-decoy requirement.

Ashley Bock sands her decoy after adding texture with a woodburner.



About the Author

Christle Johnson, Bob's wife, has been a full-time writer and consultant in the retirement services industry for eight years. Bob and Christle live in Baxter, Minn. Bob will share a tutorial on carving a fish decoy in a future issue of *Woodcarving Illustrated*.

Carved Nativities



Families add new figures to their nativity each year, commissioning pieces to enhance their display.



Exploring the tradition of Krippele Schaun in Tirol, Austria

By Kurt Eberling and Helli Mayr

Residents of Tirol, Austria, take nativity scenes very seriously. In many homes, families rearrange the furniture to make room for large dioramas featuring intricately carved, beautifully painted figures.

Valuable antique carvings are passed down from generation to generation. Each year, new figures are commissioned from local carvers. The new pieces are designed to blend in with the family's existing nativity.

Traditionally, the nativity scene is assembled on December 24, but the manger is left empty. The family gathers for an evening ceremony where they light their Christmas tree. During this ceremony, the infant Jesus is placed in the manger.

After January 6 (Epiphany), families welcome visitors for Krippele Schaun, an annual social gathering where friends and neighbors gather to admire the elaborate nativity scenes.

The nativity is the focal point of the gathering and families discuss new acquisitions. Many visitors can recognize a certain artist's work based on the carving's individual style. Families sometimes receive 20 visitors a day.

Carvers make a good living from the nativity commissions. Most of the figures are carved from local limestone or cembra pine trees. Prices for figures range from \$425 for simple shepherds up to \$1,500 for intricate wise men. Experienced carvers can complete a figure in two days. Some artists pass the carved figure to another artist to paint. Many carvers work on these commission pieces year round.



About the Authors

Helli Mayr is a professional carver from Tirol. The late Kurt Eberling, of Huntington Valley, Pa., was born in Germany, but moved to the U.S. in the 1950s. He worked for Campbell's Soup as a chef and invented Spaghetti-Os.

Chip Carve a Star Tree Topper

**Carve through bleached wood
to highlight chip cavities**

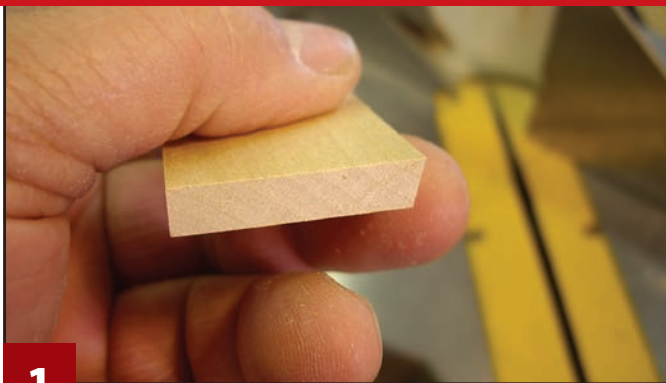
By Roger Strautman

Chip carving is my passion. I'm always looking for creative new ideas. My latest inspiration came from a star on a banner in our church. I designed this chip-carved Christmas tree star based on the star on the banner. I use basswood for the project and bleach the wood before carving. Carving through the bleached wood exposes the unbleached wood in the chip cavities, which provides contrast and highlights the design.

You can make the star two ways. If you are not comfortable cutting compound angles, create the star as a flat design. You can create a flat star with simple miter cuts or by cutting the perimeter of the star from a single piece of wood. A star made from a single piece of wood will be more fragile than one built from mitered panels.

To create the 3-D star featured in this article, you will need to make compound miter cuts. The miter cut is made at an angle across the face of the board. This miter cut is combined with a beveled cut, which is made by tilting the blade on an angle. The miter and bevel cuts are made simultaneously.

CHIP-CARVED STAR: CUTTING THE STOCK



1

Cut the materials for the star. Use a table saw to cut a 15° bevel on one long side of all four ¼" x 1¼" x 24" basswood blanks. Create a gluing jig to make it easier to glue the blanks together. To make the jig, nail two strips of scrap wood 27/16" apart on a flat sheet of scrap wood. These strips will hold the blanks together at the proper angle.



2

Glue the strips together. Apply glue to the beveled side of two strips. Align these strips on the gluing jig with the angled sides against each other. Position a clamp at the joint on both ends and apply a little pressure. Use the same method to glue the other two strips together. After the glue dries, sand both sides of the strips with 220-grit sandpaper.



3

Make the first compound cut. Square all four ends of the glued stock. Tilt the blade of the compound miter saw to 3° and set the saw to cut a 45° miter. Place the square end of the stock against the fence and position the stock so the miter cut ends at the glue joint in the stock. Clamp a piece of scrap wood on the saw table against the side of the blank to act as a second fence. Make this cut on all four ends of the blanks.



4

Make the second compound cut. This cut meets the first cut, creating a point. The four points will form the center of the star. Do not change the settings on the saw. Remove the scrap wood fence. Turn the glued stock 90° and position it against the fence on the miter saw table. Line the stock up so the miter cut starts at the point where the first cut ended.



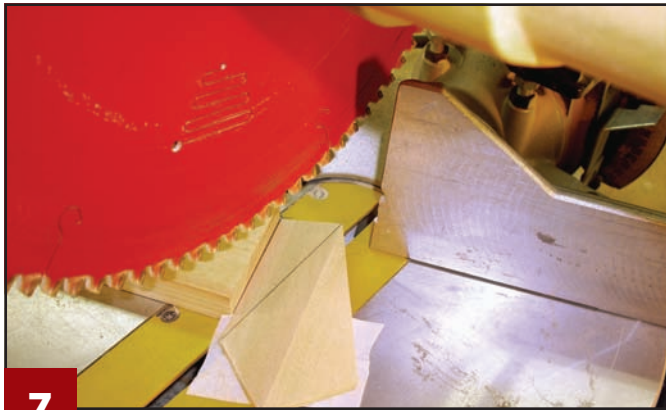
5

Make the first perimeter cut. Leave the blade tilted at the same angle and set the saw to cut a 22½° miter. Position the stock on the saw table with the point you just created against the fence. Line up the blank so the cut runs from the end of the first miter to the center joint. Clamp a piece of scrap wood on the miter saw table as a temporary fence. Only make this cut on three ends.



6

Separate the three short sides. Use a square to draw a line across the strip at the point where the cut made in step 5 intersects with the centerline of the blanks. Square the blade and miter on the miter saw to make this cut or use a table saw. Cut the three sections free from the strips of glued stock. These will become the three short points on the star.



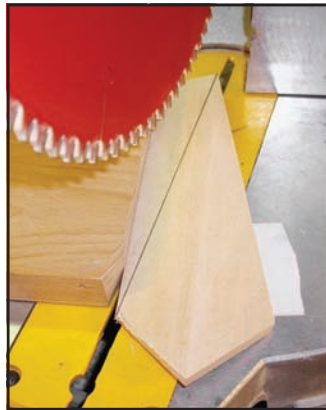
7

Make the second perimeter cut. With the blade tilted to 3° and the saw set to cut a 22½° miter, place the square end against the saw fence. Use scrap wood for a second fence. Because there is no way to safely hold the small stock, secure the section to the saw table with double-sided carpet tape. Complete the cut to finish forming the three short star points.

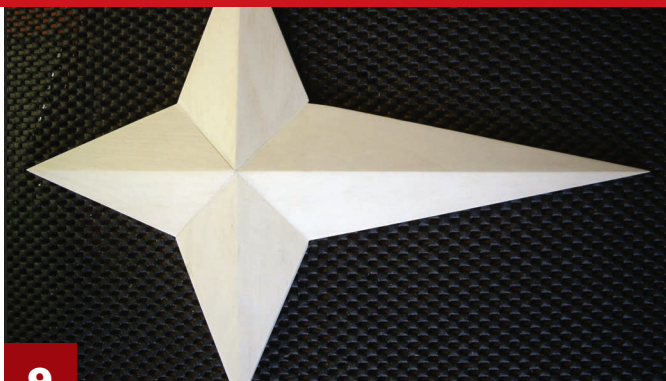


8

Cut the long point of the star. Keep the blade tilted at the same angle, but set the saw to cut a 12° miter. Use the method explained in steps 5 through 7 to cut the long point. Assemble the star. Apply wood glue to two adjacent sides and hold them together for a few minutes until the glue grabs. Attach the other two points, using the same technique.

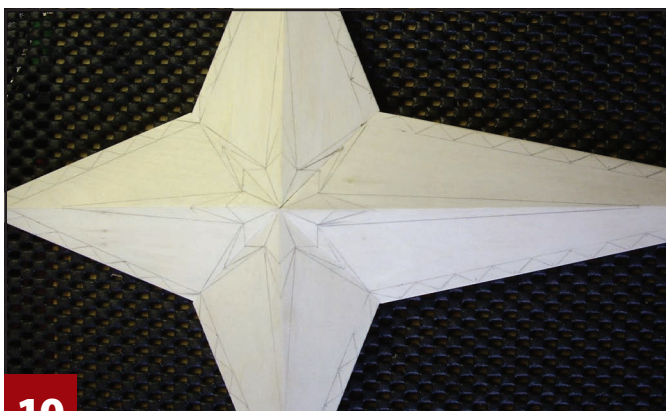


CHIP-CARVED STAR: EMBELLISHING THE SURFACE



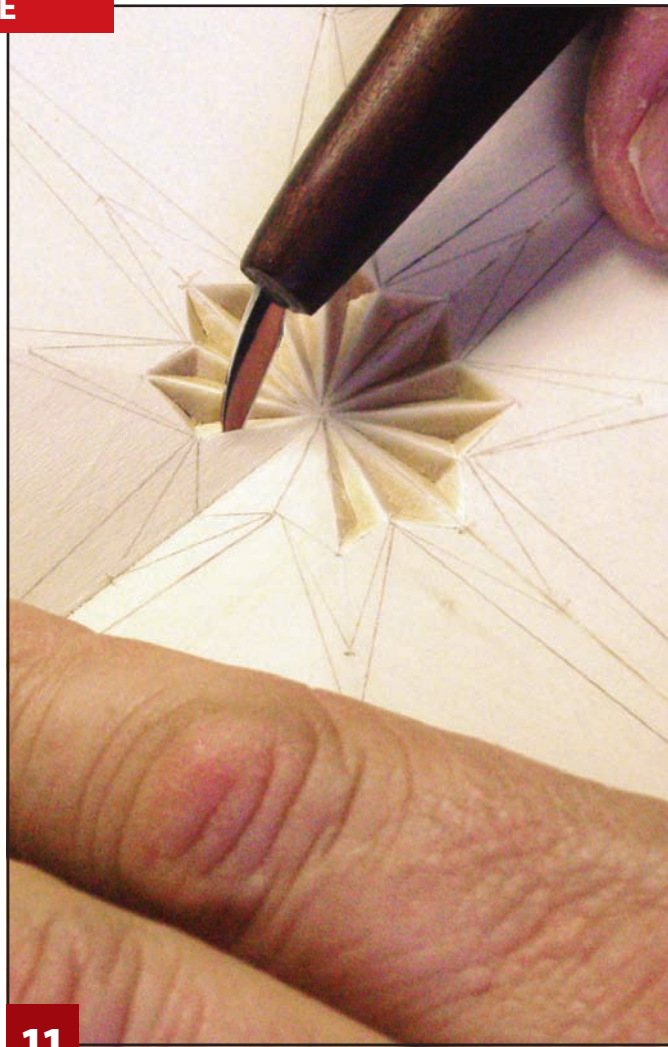
9

Bleach the wood. Allow the glue to dry overnight. Apply wood bleach to both sides of the basswood to turn the wood bright white. Apply a light coat of lacquer to both sides of the star to keep it clean while you carve and make it easier to remove the pencil lines when you are finished.



10

Transfer the pattern to the star. Wash your hands first. The oils in your skin may discolor the wood. Use the pattern provided or create your own design. Use graphite paper to trace the pattern on both sides of the star or draw the pattern with a 5mm mechanical pencil and a flexible ruler.



11

Carve the center design. Pick a spot on the convex side and carve the chips in a counter-clockwise direction. Make the first cut next to the last chip to keep from losing the ridge between the chips. Keep the blade at a consistent angle and carve the chip so the cuts intersect in the center.

CHIP-CARVED STAR: COMPLETING THE CARVING



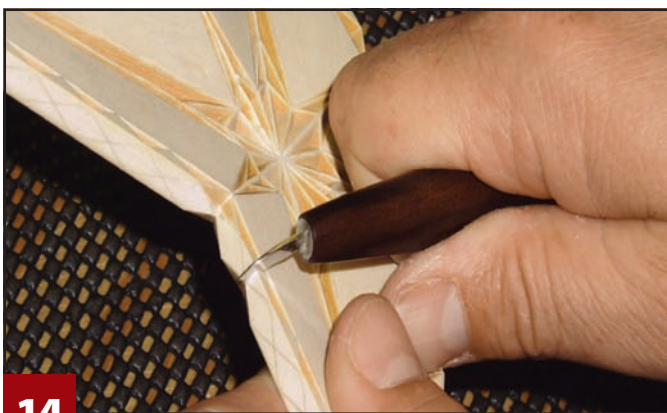
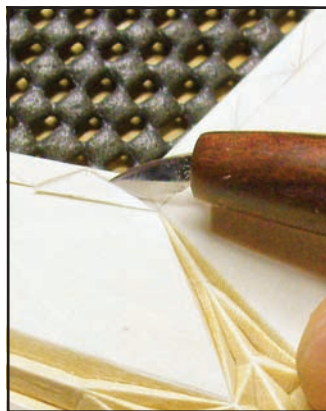
12

Carve the long chips. Work out from the center, again moving in a counter-clockwise direction. Use the same technique explained in step 11 and complete the convex side. Repeat steps 11 and 12 on the concave side. Be careful not to carve the entire way through the star.



13

Carve the flat border. The chips on the border are fragile. Make a running cut along the line parallel to the edge. Work one star point at a time. Cut the first side of the triangle on all the chips along one star point. Go back and cut the second side of the triangle to free the chip. Repeat on the opposite side of the star.



14

Shape the edge of the star. Begin to remove the wood between the chips cut in step 13 by making a stop cut in the middle of the triangle to control the cut. Cut in from both sides toward the stop cut to free the chip. Repeat this step on both sides of the star. Clean up any rough chips and erase any remaining pencil marks.

Topping a Carver's Tree

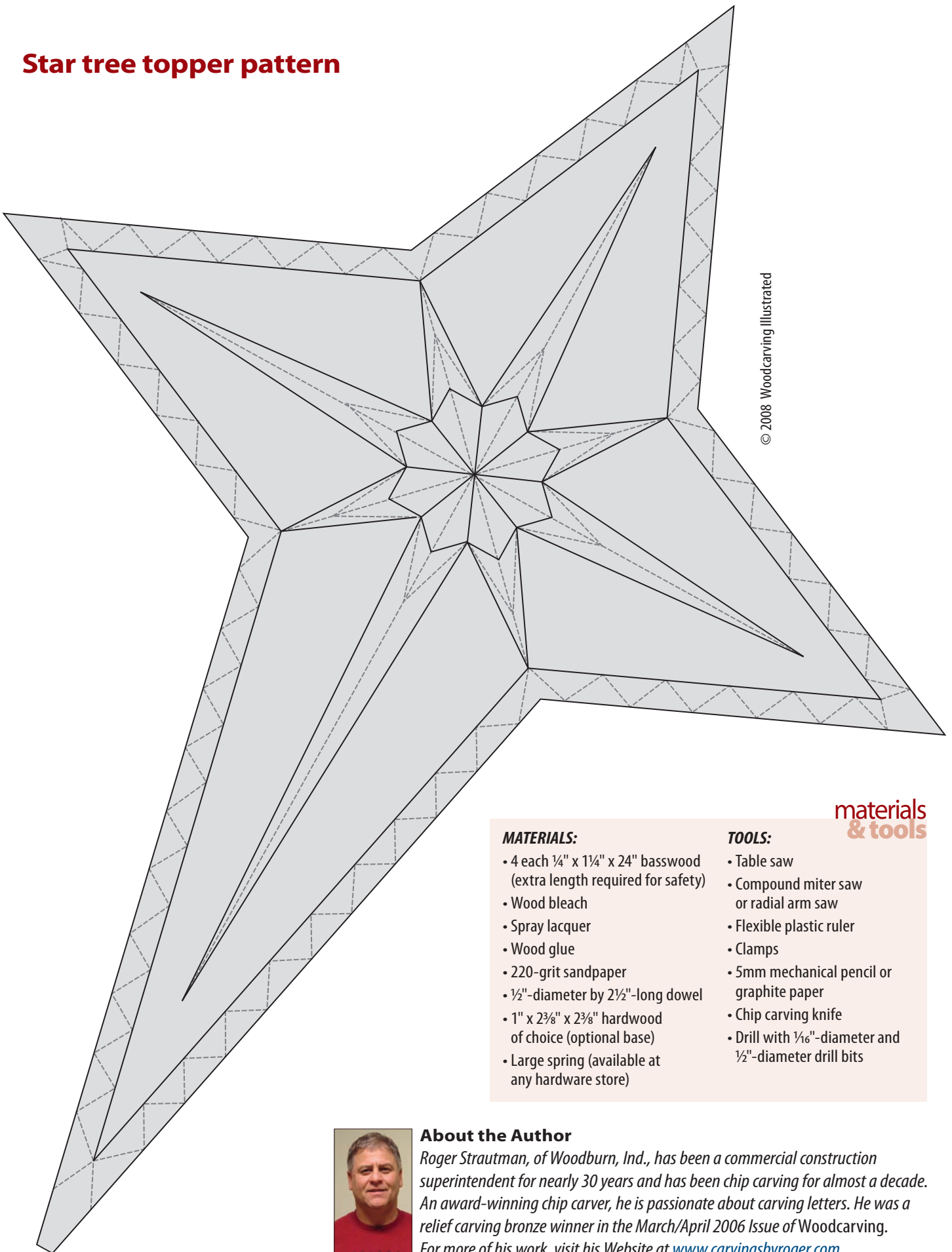
Roger has donated this chip-carved star to be used on a Christmas tree decorated entirely with handcarved ornaments. The tree, sponsored by Chipping Away Inc., will be raffled off to benefit the Children's Wish Foundation. For more information on the program, including how to donate a carved ornament for the tree, see the coverage in News & Notes on page 10.



15

Finish the star. Seal both sides of the star with eight to 10 light coats of lacquer. Drill a small hole in the base of the star. Straighten one end of a large spring and glue the straightened end in the hole. The spring will hold the star in place on the tree. Create a year-round display by gluing a 1/2"-diameter dowel into a hardwood base.

Star tree topper pattern



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materials & tools

MATERIALS:

- 4 each $\frac{1}{4}$ " x $1\frac{1}{4}$ " x 24" basswood (extra length required for safety)
- Wood bleach
- Spray lacquer
- Wood glue
- 220-grit sandpaper
- $\frac{1}{2}$ "-diameter by $2\frac{1}{2}$ "-long dowel
- 1 " x $2\frac{3}{8}$ " x $2\frac{3}{8}$ " hardwood of choice (optional base)
- Large spring (available at any hardware store)

TOOLS:

- Table saw
- Compound miter saw or radial arm saw
- Flexible plastic ruler
- Clamps
- 5mm mechanical pencil or graphite paper
- Chip carving knife
- Drill with $\frac{1}{16}$ "-diameter and $\frac{1}{2}$ "-diameter drill bits



About the Author

Roger Strautman, of Woodburn, Ind., has been a commercial construction superintendent for nearly 30 years and has been chip carving for almost a decade. An award-winning chip carver, he is passionate about carving letters. He was a relief carving bronze winner in the March/April 2006 Issue of Woodcarving. For more of his work, visit his Website at www.carvingsbyroger.com.

Happy Christmas Gnome

Easy beginner character can be carved as Santa's helper or a garden gnome

By Ross Oar



This happy fellow started out as a project in a beginner's carving class. The compact figure is easy to carve, but provides essential practice in carving faces and texturing hair. Intermediate and advanced carvers can quickly carve one as a last-minute present.

You can create any number of variations by changing the hat and color scheme. Turn the figure into a Santa by carving a traditional Santa hat and adding a ball to the top.

Follow the dotted line around the outside of the main pattern when cutting the gnome blank on a band saw. Leave a little extra wood to personalize and modify the carving. The buffer zone also prevents me from amputating the gnome's nose or toes if I slip when cutting with the band saw.

further reading

Carving Wooden Santas, Elves, & Gnomes

By Ross Oar

Woodcarving Illustrated Books presents its latest how-to guide for carving the jolly man in red and his crew of friends—elves, gnomes, reindeer, and much more! Includes more than 20 delightful patterns and two complete step-by-step projects from accomplished carver Ross Oar.

Available for \$16.95 + \$3.50 s&h (parcel post) from Fox Chapel Publishing, www.FoxChapelPublishing.com, 800-457-9112, 1970 Broad Street, East Petersburg, Pa. 17520, or check your local retailer.



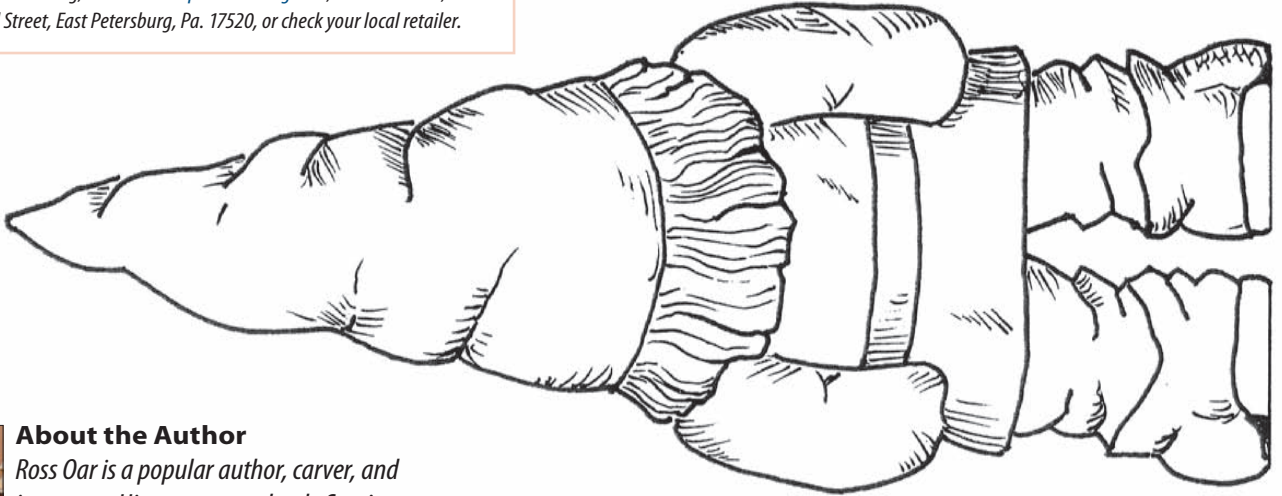
materials & tools

MATERIALS:

- 2¾" x 2½" x 7" basswood block
- Acrylic paints: yellow ochre (hat, pants, and mittens), green (coat, iris), white (hair, beard, mustache, eyebrows, eyes, eye highlight), flesh (exposed skin), light red (lips), burnt umber (boots), black (pupil)

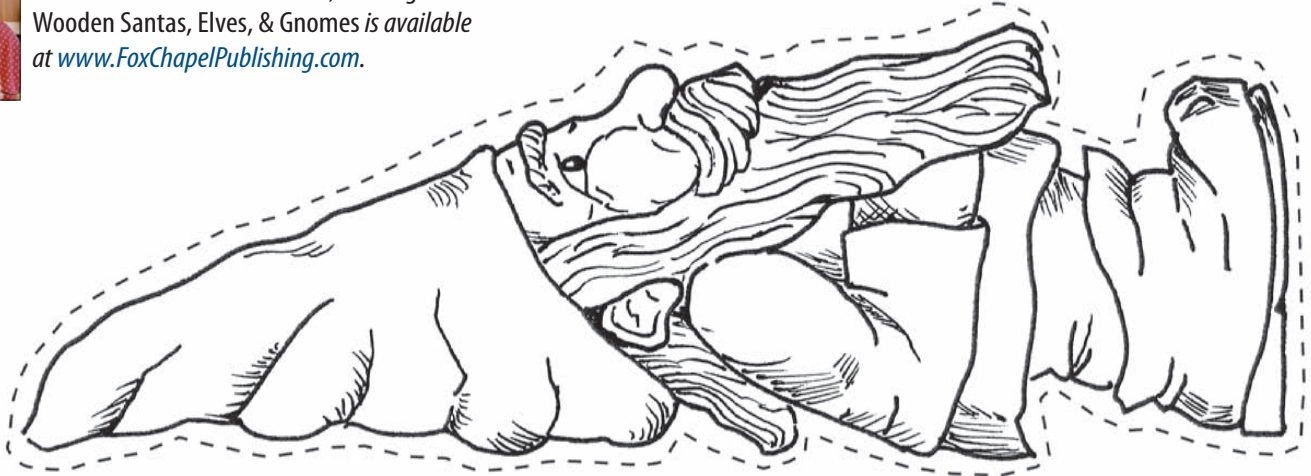
TOOLS:

- Band saw
- Carving knife
- #9 gouges: 2mm, 5mm, 6mm, and 10mm
- 10mm 90° V-tool
- 12mm 90° V-tool
- 8mm 75° V-tool
- ⅝" #3 gouge
- ¼" #5 gouge



About the Author

Ross Oar is a popular author, carver, and instructor. His most recent book, *Carving Wooden Santas, Elves, & Gnomes* is available at www.FoxChapelPublishing.com.



ONLINE BONUS

This pattern available as a downloadable file on our Website.

woodcarvingillustrated.com



First Cuts

Artists chronicle their journeys from beginner to accomplished carver



GARY BATTE

Teaching yourself to carve

"Growing up on a farm in rural central Texas during the 1940s and early 1950s, toys were hard to come by, so I learned to make my own.

In those days,

apples arrived at grocery stores in wooden crates. This wood, along with wood from cedar trees growing on our farm, served as my early carving medium. My projects were carved with a small saw and a pocket knife. My first carving, at age 12, was a canoe made out of cedar. I discovered I loved carving and working with wood.

"Woodcarving later took a back seat to school, sports, my career, and other interests. In 1977, I rediscovered my desire to create from wood after visiting a fantastic carver in Mountain View, Ark. I told my wife, Sue, 'I can do that!' So I went home, bought some tools and Harold Enlow's book, Carving Figure Caricatures in the Ozark Style. I liked caricatures and carved nearly all of the projects in Harold's book. I taught myself

to carve and learned from my mistakes, but I don't recommend it as the most expedient method. Classes from experienced instructors would have helped me develop skills faster, but classes were not widely available in the late-1970s.

"I continue to design and carve caricatures because they are fun and make people smile. Every now and then I carve a realistic piece, but always return to caricatures. For me, carving is enjoyable and is a great stress reliever."

Gary Batte is a founding member of the Caricature Carvers of America (CCA). He retired as Area Conservationist with USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service in 1994. He wrote three caricature carving books and enjoys teaching classes, participating in shows, and doing commissioned carvings. Contact Gary at gabatte@embarqmail.com or 1255 Lydia Street, Stephenville, Tex. 76401, 254-968-8793, .

"Donkey," carved in 1977.



"Therapy," carved in 2004.



tips from Gary

CARVING TOOLS

Buy quality tools and learn proper sharpening techniques. Sharp tools are safer and make carving much more enjoyable. Invest in a good power sharpener and enjoy more carving time!

CARVING COMMUNITY

Take as many classes as possible from a variety of accomplished instructors and practice, practice, practice. You never stop learning. Participate in exhibits and carving shows and enter competitions. Most judged shows have divisions for skill levels from beginner to advanced. You can learn a lot by associating and sharing ideas with other carvers.



STEVE PRESCOTT

Challenge leads to love of carving

"When people ask how I got started in carving I usually respond, 'My mom made me do it.' As moms are prone to do when they feel one of their

offspring is wasting a potential talent, my mom kept encouraging me to try different art forms, even into my mid-30s. I love to draw for my own amusement and pleasure, but I had no formal art training. Mom pushed a newspaper article on carving duck decoys in front of me and challenged me to give it a try. Mom is a painter and Dad is a woodworker, so it was a good fit for me.

"With some birthday money from Mom, I went to the store to get some tools, wood, and a book on carving duck decoys. There were no decoy books, just one called Carving Figure Caricatures in the Ozark Style by Harold Enlow. Just like many other carvers, I started my carving career with 'Rufus,' 'Sadie,' and my first cowboy from that book. I've carved up a small forest since then.

I carved one duck and hated it! Caricatures fit my personality. My hometown is called 'Cowtown,' so it only made sense for me to carve cowboys.

"Once I began carving, I was privileged to be around great caricature carvers like Claude Bolton, Charlie Winstead, and Jack Price. Those three were driving forces in the Fort Worth, Texas, carving community. Charlie and I joked about forming a group to promote caricature carving, because we felt caricatures did not get proper credit. Charlie passed away before the CCA was formed. Claude, Jack, and I were among the founding members of the CCA."

Steve has been carving since 1981. He taught biology and coached football for nearly 30 years, and has taught carving classes since 1987. He is the author of *Cowtown Carving* and *Carving Blockheads*. Steve is a co-founder of the CCA and served as its first president. Steve has been married for more than 30 years to his wife, Pat. Contact Steve at 5930 Plum St., Suite 130, Watauga, Tex. 76148, 817-714-2160, www.cowtowncarving.com.

"Cowboy,"
carved in 1981.



tips from Steve

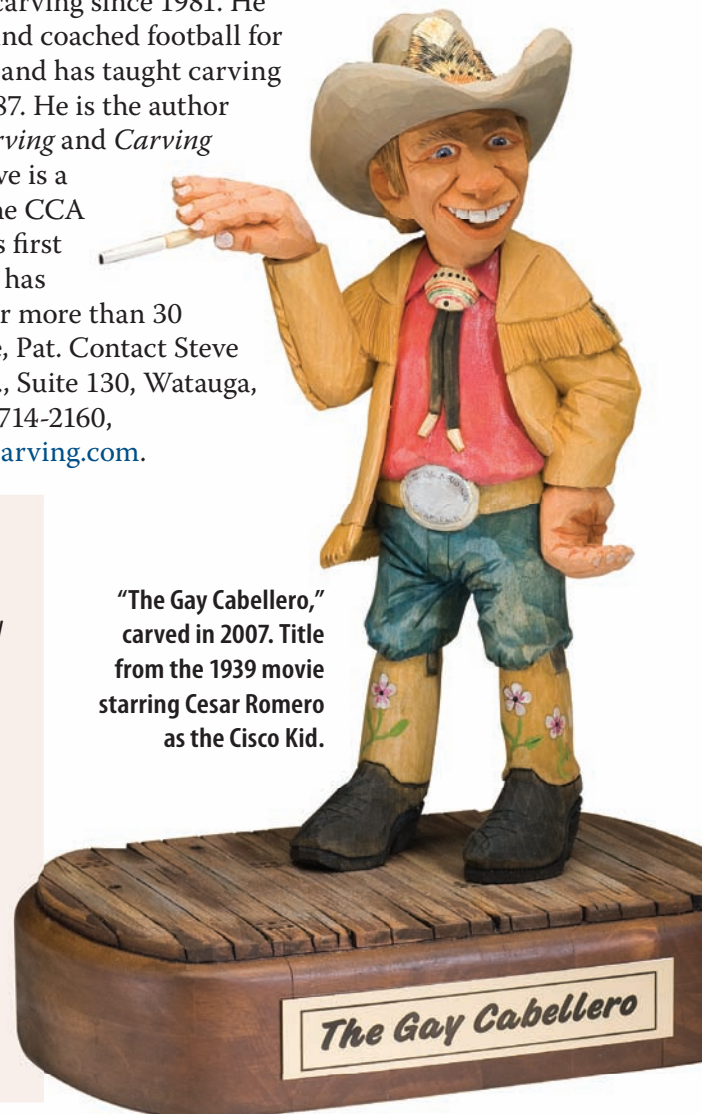
SHARP TOOLS

Nothing is more important to a carver than the ability to sharpen tools effectively. It does not matter how much knowledge, skill or inspiration you have if you are trying to carve with dull tools. Sharpening is difficult and boring work. Practice until you perfect the necessary skills. Don't switch with every new system that comes along. Find a system that suits you and stick with it. Exposed sharp edges of tools are dangerous and can become nicked or dull while loose in your tool box. I use inexpensive recycled styrofoam to make guards for them.

BUY INDIVIDUAL TOOLS

Don't buy tools in sets because some tools invariably will not be used. Buy tools individually as you discover a specific need. Most of us have way too many tools. I have been buying carving tools for 25 years and still buy more tools at every show. I find the longer I carve, the fewer tools I use. New tools come factory sharp, but are rarely carving sharp or tuned for the type of carving you may do. Be prepared to work on the new tools yourself or insist that the retailer sharpen the tools before you purchase them.

"The Gay Cabellero,"
carved in 2007. Title
from the 1939 movie
starring Cesar Romero
as the Cisco Kid.





JOE SCHUMACHER

Learning through community

"I first became interested in caricature carving after watching carvers demonstrate in the early 1970s at Silver Dollar City in Branson,

and brought in many of the other CCA members to teach classes. Participating in these classes helped my carving and increased my ability to see and carve the wacky side of life.

"Seventeen years have gone by, and I have learned a lot. My carving skills have increased, but more importantly, the friends I have made along the way will last long after my abilities fade away."

Mo. I wanted to give woodcarving a try, but I didn't think I had the ability to do it. It wasn't until late-1990, after my wife, Fran, bought me a set of carving tools, a Harold Enlow book, and a piece of wood as a gift for my birthday, that I finally decided to give carving a try.

"I joined some local carving clubs and started carving as much as my schedule allowed. I also started taking as many classes as possible. I found out that I loved to carve humorous caricatures and show them to other people to see them laugh or smile. I was lucky that CCA member Joe Wannamaker belonged to the same local clubs I did. Joe taught many classes locally

Joe became a member of the CCA in Fall 2005. He and his wife, Fran, have been married for 34 years. He retired from Daimler-Chrysler in 2000 after 32 years as an auto worker. He teaches classes all around the country and is available to judge exhibits and shows. Contact Joe at 1838 Hermitage Drive, Imperial, Mo., 63052, 636-464-8385, jfshoes@sbcglobal.net.

tips from Joe

TAKE CLASSES

I have taken nearly 100 classes. If I learn one new carving, sharpening, or painting technique, or pick up one new tip per class, it's worth it. Experiment with the new knowledge in your practice sessions. You will master it faster. You will learn from the other students in the class as well as the teacher. Pass on these new techniques to someone in your club. It will help you remember what you learned and allow you to share your knowledge with others.

DON'T BE AFRAID OF A CHALLENGE

Many carvers are afraid of participating in a competition, a show, or even a whittling contest. Carving with or against better carvers is how you will get better. Carving with the guys in the local club is a great experience, but if you want to get better, you must seek out better carvers. Seeing better carvings always makes me want to try harder and do better. I love whittling contests because they put pressure on you to think fast and use your time efficiently. They encourage creativity and force you to look at things from a different perspective.

"Old Man,"
carved in 1991.



"Mixologist,"
carved in 2006.





DESIREE HAJNY

Learning by teaching

"I had hoped to be an editorial cartoonist. Unfortunately, by the time I had an idea for the event, it was over! But I've always loved to draw."

"I've always been fascinated with art. Sculpting has been a passion for me for the past 25 years. I enjoy working with stone and have dabbled with bronze, but I enjoy wood the most due to the unique challenges you encounter. You never know what you're going to find. Often, the finished piece doesn't resemble what I envisioned when I sketched the original drawing."

"Graduating from college in the late-1970s, I was a high school art teacher in north central Nebraska. With a very limited budget and lack of interest on the part of my students, I came up with some ideas that would perk the students' interest as well as the community's. We did murals around town, metal sculpture outside the building, and tile sculpture in one of the buildings. Then I noticed that many of the boys carried pocket knives on their belts, so I introduced them to wood carving. The students enjoyed carving, and I learned right along with them."

"I carved some of my own pieces and saw an advertisement for a carving show to be held in November 1984. I displayed my work at the show. Seeing what others were doing gave me ideas on how to evolve my own work."

tips from Desiree

EMBRACE FAILURE

Art is the basis of everything made by man. It's the idea and the follow-through on pursuing that idea. Take chances and experiment with your ideas. Don't be afraid of failure. We learn more and become better each time something doesn't work out. It's all part of the process. Reach for more, attempt to get better, and learn as much as you can whether you take classes or experiment on your own. Go to galleries, libraries, and shows, and let yourself be excited about what you see.

EXPERIMENT WITH TEXTURES

Study textures and try to figure out how to emulate them. Sometimes, you can come up with the same type of texture with different tools. For example, a rotary ball can give the same texture as a gouge or a veiner depending on how you apply pressure.

*"Nut Case,"
carved in 1977.*



"I stopped teaching in 1985 to become a stay-at-home mom and to make my artwork a full-time business. Besides carving, I drew T-shirt designs and greeting card designs for a company in Washington, D.C., but I was drawn most to the carving."

"The first several years were tough ones financially, but I stuck to it. I had a strong support system. John and Nancy Burke took me with them to shows in Kansas City and Wichita, and things kind of mushroomed from there."

An emeritus member of the CCA, Desiree has written six books on carving and contributed to seven others. An award-winning carver, she was named the 2003 *Woodcarving Illustrated* Woodcarver of the Year. Besides teaching seminars, Desiree creates and sells carvings, speaks at community groups, judges carving competitions, and designs T-shirts. Contact Desiree at PO Box 191, Blue Hill, Nebr. 68930, 402-756-3832.



*"Sweet Bliss,"
carved in 2008.*

Whimsical Santa Holds Your Christmas Stocking

Delightful folk-art style carving is a functional addition to your holiday décor

By Shawn Cipa

This Santa angel is a charming way to display Christmas stockings. The base is hollowed and weighted with steel shot, providing the stability needed to support a stocking stuffed with holiday cheer. Carve one for each member in your family and personalize them with different paint schemes. Line the Santas up on your mantel for a festive holiday display.

The Santa is carved from 2"-thick stock and combines elements of both in-the-round and relief carving. You can purchase inexpensive steel (or lead) shot at any sporting goods store. The entire project weighs about three pounds when completed, which is more than enough to hold a filled stocking. I suggest not gluing the Santa onto the copper wire mount. This way, you can adjust the position of the Santa once the holder is in place and it comes apart for easy storage in the off-season.

Choose a clear piece of basswood for both ease of carving and painting purposes. Clamp the blank down during the roughing-out stage to provide control and ensure safety. Afterward, the Santa can be held in your hand as you add the details. The chimney base must be clamped in place when you hollow it out.

Stocking Holder: Bending the Wire

The hanger is made from a 15" length of #6 gauge copper ground wire, commonly found in any hardware store. It is roughly $\frac{3}{16}$ " thick. The wire is sturdy but easy to bend. Cut it to length with a hacksaw and grind or hand-file the ragged ends smooth. To achieve the proper shape, you will need good pliers. A machine vise helps to work out the 90° angles. You may need to gently tap the piece with a hammer to keep it flat when lying on its side. The wire is not glued to the base; once it is in position, the steel shot combined with the construction adhesive and base plate will make it solid.

The chimney base is weighted with steel shot for a sturdy display.

STOCKING HOLDER: ROUGHING OUT SANTA



1

Prepare the blanks. Cut the blanks with a band saw. Santa's feet are $\frac{1}{2}$ " thick centered across the width of the blank. Drill $\frac{3}{16}$ "-diameter holes in Santa's belly and the center top of the chimney base using the pattern as a guide. Draw a centerline around the perimeter of the Santa blank.



2

Round the Santa. Clamp the blank securely. I use an ordinary shop clamp gripped in my bench vise. Use a shallow $1\frac{1}{4}$ "-wide gouge to round the head, beard, hat, and front of Santa's body. Work on one side of Santa, carving toward the centerline. Do not cross the centerline.



3

Taper the wing area. Use the same gouge to taper the wing until it is about $\frac{1}{2}$ " from the centerline. Round the robe area behind the wing. Flip the blank and repeat steps 2 and 3 on the opposite side. Draw the wings, arms, and fur trim on the hat and bottom of the robe using the pattern as a guide.



4

Define the elements. With the carving secured, outline the arm, wing, and fur trim on the hat and robe with a $\frac{1}{2}$ "-wide V-tool. Relieve about $\frac{1}{8}$ " of wood around these elements. Draw the feather details on the wing and the fur trim on the sleeve. Flip the carving and repeat the process on the opposite side.



5

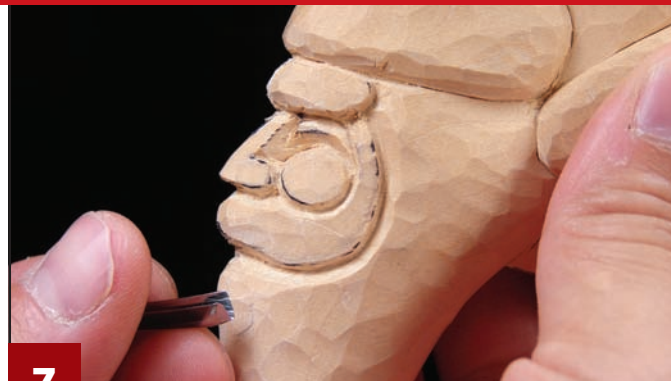
Shape the arm and wing. At this point, I hold the carving in my hand and carve with a knife. Separate and round the feathers in the wing. Round the arm and separate the fur cuff. The cuff should be slightly higher than the arm and mitten. Carve both sides using the same techniques.



6

Shape the face, beard, and hat. Use a carving knife. Remove the saw marks and round the corners of the face, beard, and hat. Taper the hat and beard to a blunt point. The hat trim is slightly higher than the hat. Thin the nose on both sides to form an edge at the centerline.

STOCKING HOLDER: ADDING SANTA'S DETAILS



- 7** **Outline the facial features.** Draw the facial features using the pattern as a guide. Trace along the lines of the facial features with a $\frac{1}{8}$ "-wide V-tool. Outline the features on both sides.



- 8** **Refine the facial features.** Clean up the V-cuts and define the eyebrow, cheek, eyelid, nose, and mustache with a small detail knife. Carve both sides and join the cuts together at the centerline.



- 9** **Add texture to the hair, beard, and mustache.** Use a V-tool or a macaroni tool to carve intersecting grooves on the beard, mustache, and eyebrows. Do not carve straight grooves. These grooves should be curved and flowing.



- 10** **Carve the boots and bottom of the robe.** Use a carving knife to shape the boots. Remove all the saw marks and round the edges on the fur trim at the bottom of the robe. The facets you are creating add to the folk-art feel of the project.



- 11** **Separate the wings.** Cut a deep groove to separate the wings on both the front and back. This will take several cuts. Be careful when cutting behind the fragile tip of the hat. Use a knife to clean up any rough areas on the entire carving. Use a $\frac{1}{2}$ "-wide fishtail gouge for tight spots.

STOCKING HOLDER: CARVING THE CHIMNEY



- 12** **Hollow the chimney.** Clamp the blank upside down and drill five 1"-diameter by 3"-deep holes. Remove the wood between the holes with a shallow 1"-wide gouge and a mallet. Do not carve deeper than 3". The hole doesn't have to be perfect because it will not be visible in the completed carving.

STOCKING HOLDER: FINISHING THE BASE



13

Carve the bricks. Draw the bricks using the pattern as a guide. Trace along the lines with a $\frac{1}{2}$ "-wide V-tool. Refine the bricks with a carving knife. You can see several phases of completion in the photo. Carve all four sides, taking care to align the bricks at the corners.



14

Carve the top. Draw a 2"-diameter circle centered on the $\frac{3}{16}$ "-diameter hole. Stop-cut around the edge of the circle with a knife. Remove a little wood from inside the circle with a $\frac{3}{4}$ "-wide fishtail gouge to simulate a chimney opening. Carve away the saw marks from the top of the chimney.



15

Carve the base of the chimney. Carve away the saw marks, working in approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ " from all of the edges and along all four sides. Use a fishtail gouge. Clean up and slightly round the corners with a knife.



16

Add the hanger and weight. Carve a small trench in the bottom corner of the chimney for the wire. Insert the pre-bent wire hanger, threading it up through the top of the chimney. Pour the shot into the cavity, leaving a $\frac{1}{4}$ "-deep gap.



17

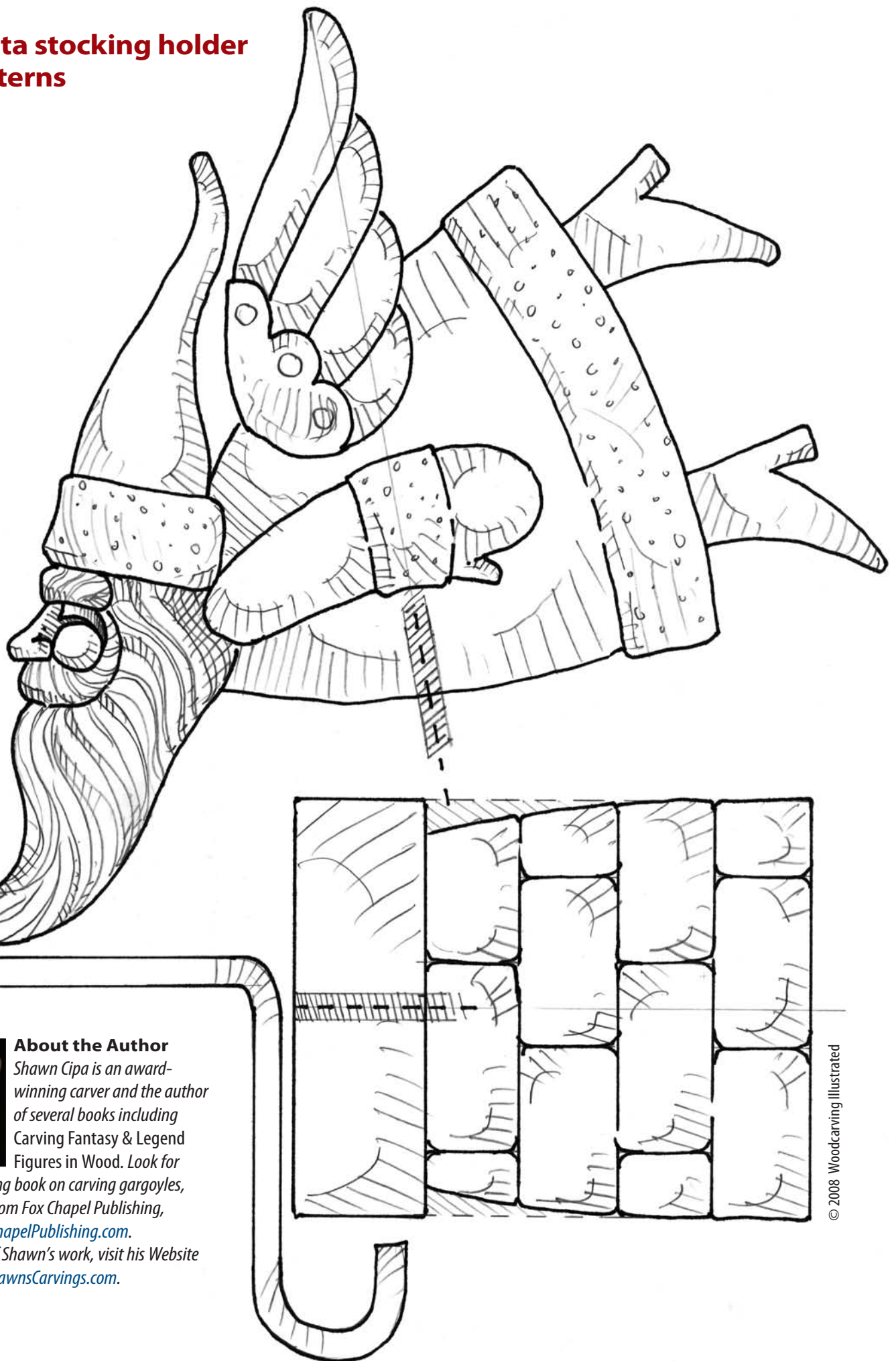
Seal the weight. Fill the gap with construction adhesive, such as Liquid Nails. Spread the adhesive out with a craft stick. Make sure the adhesive seals the corner where the copper wire rests to lock the wire in place.



18

Attach the base. Center the base on the bottom of the chimney, over top of the construction adhesive. The carved edges should face the bricks. Nail the base to the bricks using small finishing nails.

Santa stocking holder patterns



About the Author

Shawn Cipa is an award-winning carver and the author of several books including *Carving Fantasy & Legend Figures in Wood*. Look for

his upcoming book on carving gargoyles, available from Fox Chapel Publishing, www.FoxChapelPublishing.com.

For more of Shawn's work, visit his Website at www.ShawnsCarvings.com.

STOCKING HOLDER: FINISHING NOTES

Coat the carving with a mixture of equal parts boiled linseed oil and mineral spirits. Wipe off the excess and let it dry overnight. Dispose of the oily rags properly. When dry, begin painting the carving with matte craft acrylic paints. Thin the paints with water and apply the colors in layers. Use the reference photos or develop your own color scheme. After the paint has dried, seal the carving with one good coat of Deft satin lacquer or a few thinned coats of polyurethane. When the clear coat has cured, antique the carving by slathering on your brown gel stain of choice. Immediately wipe the excess stain off the carving.

materials
& tools

MATERIALS:

- 2" x 6" x 8" basswood (Santa)
- 3¼" x 3¼" x 4" basswood (chimney)
- ¼" x 3½" x 3½" basswood (chimney base)
- 15" of #6 gauge copper ground wire
- 3 pounds of steel or lead shot
- General purpose construction adhesive (such as Liquid Nails)
- 4 each small finishing nails
- Craft stick (for spreading adhesive)

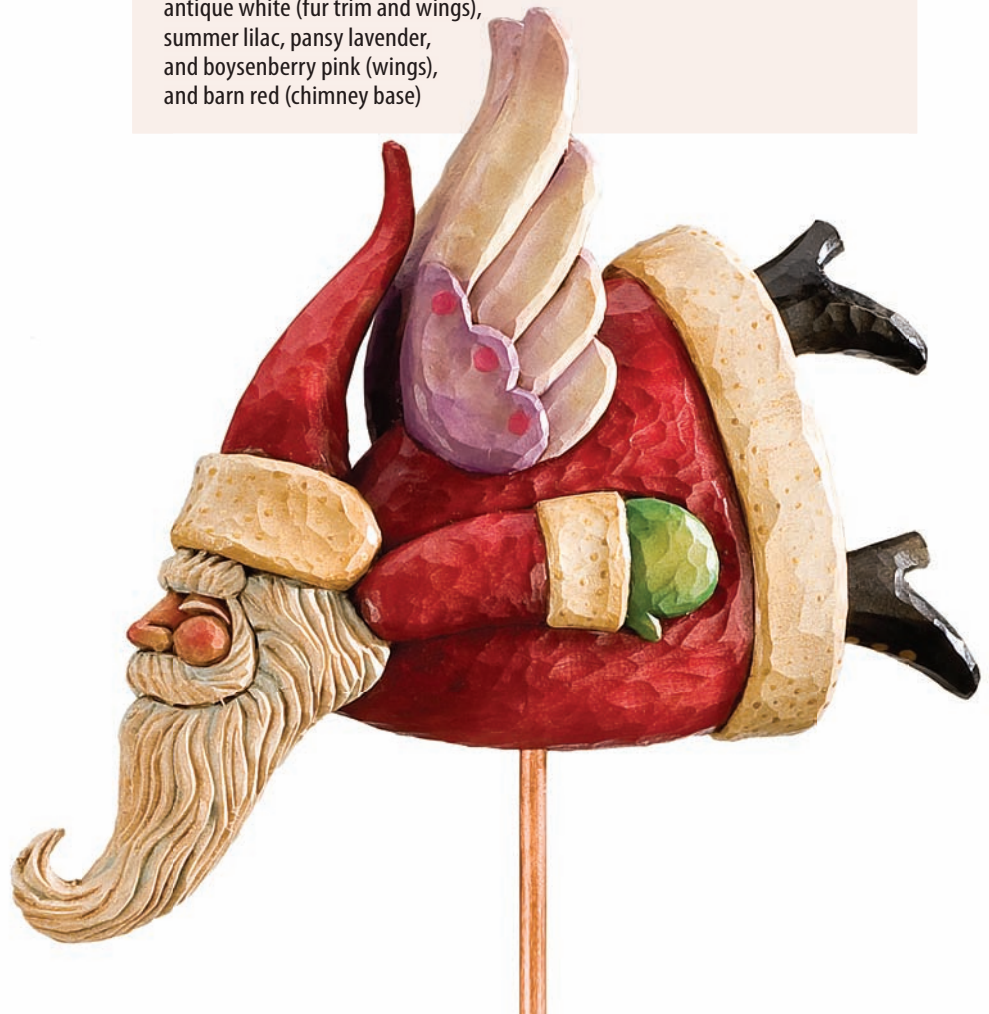
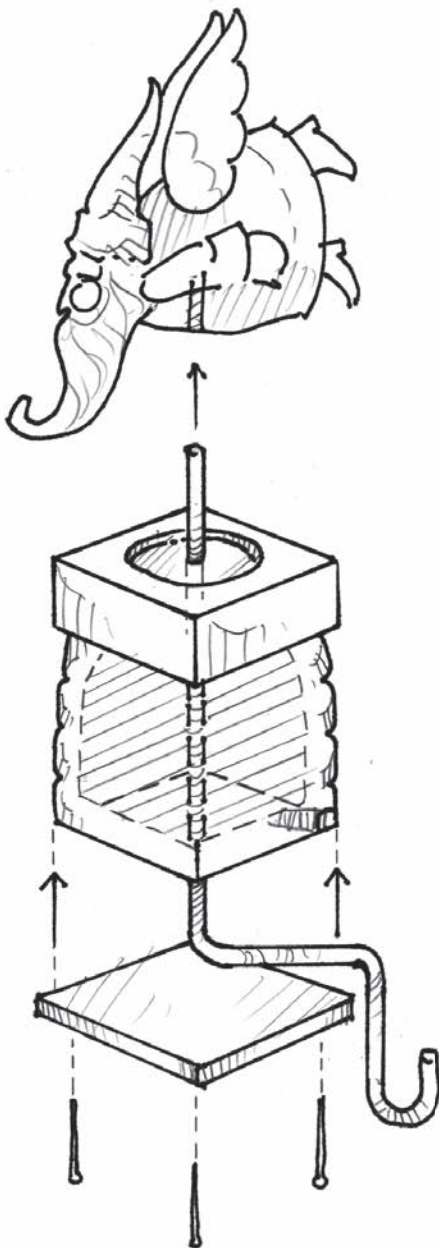
FINISHING MATERIALS:

- 50/50 mix of boiled linseed oil and mineral spirits
- Deft satin lacquer or thinned polyurethane
- Brown oil-based gel stain
- DecoArt Americana acrylic paints: Tuscan red (robe), black (boots), splendid gold (fur trim and boots), hauser light green and Black Forest green (gloves), neutral grey and black (chimney base), snow white (chimney base and beard), and primary red (to tint the natural wood on the face)
- Delta Ceramcoat acrylic paints: antique white (fur trim and wings), summer lilac, pansy lavender, and boysenberry pink (wings), and barn red (chimney base)

- Plaid Folk Art acrylic paints: raw sienna (fur trim shading), and light blue (beard shading)
- Apple Barrel acrylic paints: tapestry wine (robe shading)

TOOLS:

- Band saw
- Carving knife of your choice
- Detail knife
- 1½"-wide shallow gouge
- ½"- and ⅛"-wide V-tool
- ½"-wide macaroni tool (optional)
- ½"- and ¾"-wide fishtail gouge
- 1"-wide shallow gouge
- Mallet
- Drill with ⅜"- and 1"-diameter bits
- Assorted paintbrushes
- Hacksaw (to cut wire)
- Pliers (to bend wire)
- Hammer (to bend wire)
- Vise
- File or grinder (to smooth wire)



Power Carving a Dove Ornament



Classic symbol of peace makes a beautiful Christmas ornament

By Hugh Parks

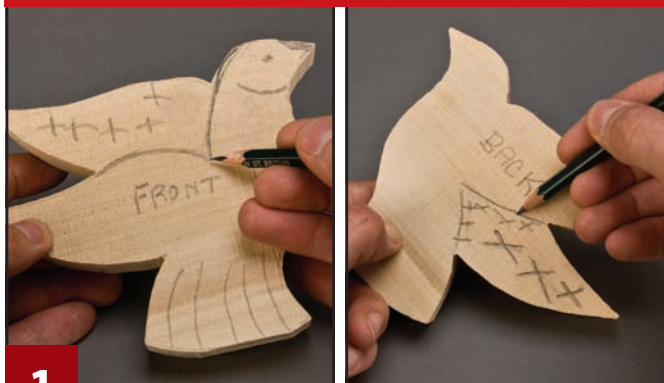
This dove ornament is an excellent way to practice texturing techniques. Because the ornament is essentially a relief carving, you can finish the project quickly. The carved dove makes a great gift or addition to your Christmas tree.

This dove ornament evolved from the annual Christmas ornament exchange between members of the *Woodcarving Illustrated* message board (www.woodcarvingillustrated.com). Compared to some of the wonderfully carved ornaments I received, I felt my ornaments were little more than trinkets. I designed and carved this dove ornament as something credible to exchange with my carving buddies.

The dove is light enough to be used as a Christmas tree ornament or wreath embellishment. I use white cedar or tupelo wood. Trace the outline of the pattern onto a 1"-thick piece of wood. Avoid wood with knots and highly figured grain. Cut around the outline of the pattern on a band saw.

Create realistic feather details with a woodburner.

DOVE ORNAMENT: ROUGHING OUT



1

Draw the major landmarks. Use the pattern as a guide to draw the outline of the head, cheek, position of the eye, neck, and the outline of the rear wing onto the blank with an HB pencil. Sketch in the front wing on the back of the carving. Draw a centerline on the edges of the wings.



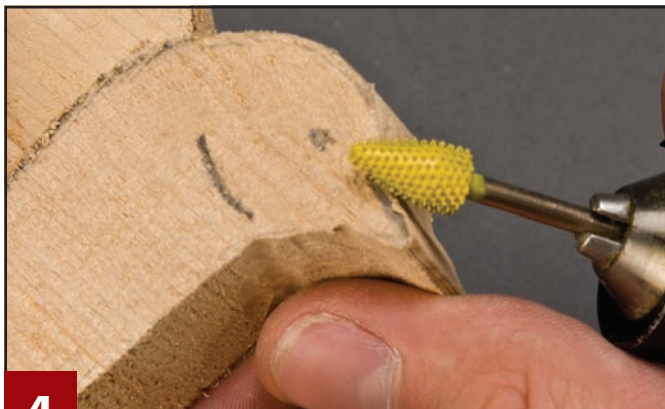
2

Sketch in the thickness of the tail feathers. The tail feathers are $\frac{1}{16}$ " thick on the completed carving. Draw a curved line on the edge of the tail. The line runs diagonally from the wings toward the breast and angles from the front of the bird toward the back. Move $\frac{1}{16}$ " and draw a line parallel to the first line.



3

Rough carve the wings. Use a large cylinder-shaped flat-end Typhoon bit to remove wood down to the centerline of the front wing. Use the same bit to remove wood from the back of the front wing down to the centerline. Leave the pencil lines intact. Shape the tight corners with a small pointed Typhoon bit.



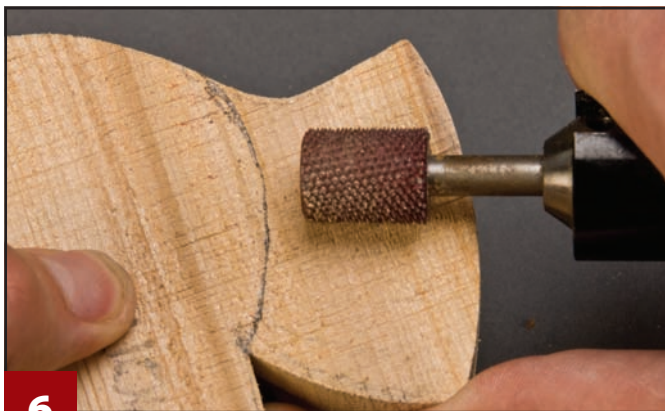
4

Rough out the head. Doves have small rounded heads. Carefully round the head and shape the area where the head intersects with the bill. Use a small pointed Typhoon bit and sand it smooth. Draw a centerline from the top of the head to the end of the bill and draw in the bill.



5

Refine the bill and head. Remove the extra wood around the bill with a small pointed Typhoon bit. Round the edges of the head with the same bit. You don't have a lot of wood to work with, so go slowly. Work down the neck, shaping it and creating a smooth transition.



6

Shape the rump area. Draw in the rump and tail area using the pattern as a guide. Remove wood from the top and bottom of the tail using a large cylinder-shaped flat-end Typhoon bit. The tail should slope downward as you move from left to right. Leave the pencil marks. Round the edges of the tail and give it a fan shape.



7

Round the breast. Work from the head down to the tail. Use a $\frac{1}{2}$ "-diameter cushioned sanding drum equipped with 80-grit Swiss sanding paper. Use the same tool to round the front of the wings and add a slight taper to the bottom of the wings. Bring the edges to a point at the tip of the wings.

DOVE ORNAMENT: SMOOTHING AND SHAPING



8

Hollow the back of the carving. Use the same sanding drum. Run your fingers over the front of the carving while sanding. You can feel the vibration of the sanding drum in any thin spots. Use the tool at a slow speed so you don't catch the edge of the carving and break off a section of the wings or tail.



9

Sand the dove. Start with 80-grit sandpaper. Move on to 150 grit and then 220 grit. Use caution when sanding the bill. Spray the carving with denatured alcohol to raise the grain and sand it again with 220-grit or finer sandpaper. Sketch in the primary, secondary, and shoulder feathers.

DOVE ORNAMENT: TEXTURING



10

Relieve along the feathers. Use a ball-shaped diamond bit. Carve the primary, secondary, and shoulder feathers on both wings and the tail section. Sand the edges. Draw in the cheek line. Relieve along the line and add ripples to the cheek with the same bit. Blend the edges to make a smooth transition. Drill a 4mm eyehole the entire way through the carving.



11

Add the eye. Add the eye channel, running from the rear of the bill just past the eyehole, with a ball-shaped diamond bit. Drill a 5mm hole up through the back of the 4mm hole with the same bit. Stop when the bulge of the ball protrudes through the front of the carving. Leave enough wood to hold the eye in place. Insert the eye through the back and fill the hole with Kulis Karvit epoxy.



12

Add texture to the feathers. Draw in the feathers on the head and breast. Burn in the feather details with a skew woodburning pen or a use a cylinder-shaped stone to carve the texture. Seal the wood with your sealer of choice. I use KT Sealer.

DOVE ORNAMENT: PAINTING NOTES

Mix white acrylic paint with a small amount of black and paint the entire carving to shade it a very light grey. Highlight the edge of each feather with two to three coats of straight white. The goal is to create a grey feather with a white edge. Thin white paint heavily with water or flow medium and apply several washes to the entire carving. Do not hide the grey centers of the feathers. Mix a little black into the original grey mixture and apply the mixture to the feather splits. Paint the bill black. Add a small black edge to some of the primary wing feathers. Add pearlescent or iridescent white to the quills and apply matte medium varnish to the quills and the bill. Attach a small eyelet to the top of the rear wing to hang the ornament.

materials
& tools

MATERIALS:

- 1" x 5" x 6" tupelo or white cedar
- Assorted grits of Swiss sanding paper up to 220 grit
- Denatured alcohol
- Kulis Karvit epoxy
- 5mm brown eye
- KT Sealer
- Acrylic paint: white, black, pearlescent, or iridescent white
- Matte medium varnish
- Eyelet

TOOLS:

- HB pencil
- Large cylinder-shaped flat-end Typhoon bit
- Small pointed Typhoon bit
- ½"-diameter cushioned sanding drum
- 4mm drill bit
- Ball-shaped diamond bit
- Woodburner with skew pen or cylinder-shaped stone



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About the Author

Hugh Parks lives with his wife in St. George, N.B., Canada. He started carving duck decoys in 1987 and started carving professionally in 1998. He loves to carve black-capped chickadees and saw whet owls. For more of his work, visit his Website at www.feathersinwood.com/.

Carving in High Relief

The koi carved in the previous article, “Carving in Low Relief” (Issue 44), was so flat it had many similarities to straightforward drawing. This project uses the same koi design, but the subject is much higher than the background.

There is much more space for modeling the koi in high relief. You can give the koi additional life and movement, and you can add more drama to the piece by cutting beneath the koi’s outline, a technique known as undercutting. The depth dimension is still compressed in high relief—we still have to play with perspective—but not nearly as much as in a low-relief carving.

You will soon see the koi in three different views:

- ♦ **Drawing** (flattest)
- ♦ **Low relief** (flat)
- ♦ **High relief** (moving from flat to round)

Any higher relief and the fish will become completely round. The more you carve three dimensionally, the more you want to follow the rule of working from the form into the empty space. In this high relief, we carve the form first by shaping the fish itself. Next, we set in the edges where the form meets the space. Finally, we undercut the edges to increase the depth of the carving. This is by far the best way to carve, but it is not always easy or comfortable for beginners to see or follow.

Low Relief vs. High Relief

In the low-relief carving, we started by lining in around our fish. However, because we have far more wood to remove, we need to take a different approach with a high-relief carving. It is important to grasp the main difference.



The difference between low relief and high relief is evident when the two carvings are seen side by side.

In low relief, we set in an accurate outline and then model the subject. In other words, we work from edge to form. In high relief, we model the subject first and then set in the accurate outline, working from form to edge. With high-relief carving, you carve the form first and then set in the edges or the horizon where the form meets the space. Undercutting is done last, once you are completely finished carving the subject.

This change of approach saves a lot of time. There is no point cleaning up junctions that will be undercut later or finishing off walls in awkward places that will be mostly cut away. Additionally, carving the form first and letting the edge take care of itself is truer to life, since any edge is only a horizon. The horizon in a carving is the outline, which is the line of the edge behind which you cannot see. The edge exists in a particular position because of our viewpoint. So, we carve from a viewpoint and let the edge take care of itself.

**Produce a dramatic effect
by lowering the background
and undercutting the subject**

By Chris Pye



Preparing the Blank

I cut the previous low-relief carving of the koi from its block and use the remaining 1½"-thick block to carve the high-relief koi. The block measures 11½" across the grain and 9" with the grain. The depth of this carving is about ⅞". Mark a line at this depth around your wood with a marking gauge or a pencil and a ruler.

Transfer the pattern to the blank. Place carbon paper under the pattern and lock the two in place with masking tape. Trace the design onto the blank. Sketch in a buffer zone around the fish. Since the high-relief carving requires more wood to be removed, this buffer zone is required to protect the subject.

ROUGHING-IN

tips

Roughing-in across the direction of the wood fibers makes sense. When carving across the grain, the shavings simply break away and you don't have to worry about working with or against the grain.

HIGH-RELIEF KOI: SETTING IN THE SUBJECT



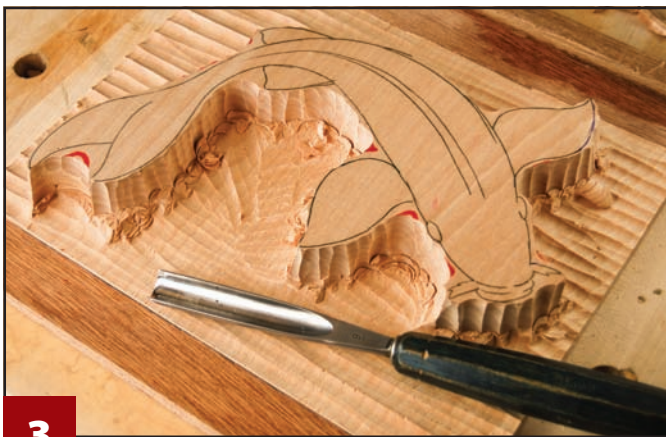
1

Begin lowering the background. Carve uniformly across the grain with a deep gouge held in the low-angle grip. Start at one end and work toward the other. Stop short of the buffer line or before reaching the edge of the blank. After completing one pass across, return and complete a second pass to lower the background further. Turn the blank around and work from the other side to keep from chipping out the edges.



2

Continue to lower the background. Do the best you can within the inner curve of the fish. The high walls interfere with your tool and make it difficult to get a clean cut. When you have carved the background down ⅝", stop and trim the walls back to the true outline of the koi. Use the same deep gouge and make vertical cuts. Continue removing wood until you are just above the final background depth.



3

Finish roughing in the walls. The vertical cuts should skim the surface of your background, but not stab below it. Make the walls as vertical as possible. Do not try to clean up the junction between the wall and background at this stage. The margin or relationship between the vertical walls and the drawing is the same as that between the horizontal surface and the line of the final background depth.



4

Level the background. Use a wide flat gouge in the low-angle grip. Switch to narrower gouges in tight spaces. Work methodically across the grain with slicing cuts, skimming off the ridges. Smooth the surface down to the background depth line. Remember, this is the final background surface. Keep the surface as level as possible. Stop the smooth background short of the walls around the koi.

HIGH-RELIEF KOI: SHAPING THE SUBJECT



5

Clean up the outline of the subject. Use the same flat gouge to trim off the vertical ridges on the walls of the koi. There is no need for precision. You just want to preserve an overall sense of the fish. Do not clean up the intersection of the background and the fish. The final junction will be under the edge of the koi and will be cleaned up when we undercut. Avoid tight recesses, like the area between the fins and the body.



6

Visualize the finished carving. Concentrate on the flow and shape. Mark the high spots, such as the front half of the spine and one tail fin, and the areas to remove a lot of wood, such as the side fins. Mark the horizon line. The horizon is the line below which you cannot see and where you will be free to remove wood. In this carving, the horizon line is $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{3}$ of the way up from the background, rising at the tail and lower at the whiskers.



7

Begin bosting in the subject. Bosting is a traditional carving term that means giving the carving its overall shape. Bosting is the most important step. It is more refined than roughing out and focuses on getting the sculptural volumes in the right place and correctly related to each other. It also involves getting the overall flow and feel of the piece right. Start by carving the side fins down to the horizon lines and tapering the back of the fish up toward the head.



8

Finish bosting in. Use a variety of gouges. Round the sides of the body and tail toward the background. Use flat gouges held upside down. As you follow the form over the horizon line, the tool handle rises and the cutting edge will be vertical. Avoid undercutting and stop rounding at this point. Carve only a suggestion of a dorsal fin, arcing along the back. Leave wood for the eyes. Round the head into the lips and lower the whiskers close to the background.

HIGH-RELIEF KOI: SETTING IN AND UNDERCUTTING



9

Refine the carving. Choose a gouge shape that matches the curves to model or refine the subject. Reduce the thickness of the whiskers and redraw them onto the wood. Shape the tail and split the two tail fins. Turn the board on its side to carve the eyes more easily. Make sure the eyes don't stick out too much. You should see the fish clearly at this point. The surface should be clean and ready for the details.

HIGH-RELIEF KOI: SETTING IN AND UNDERCUTTING



10

Set in the perimeter of the subject. These cuts are done along the horizon line. Match the sweep of the gouge with the tight curves. Slice along the long curves with a flat gouge. You do not need to cut more than $\frac{1}{8}$ " below the horizon line. The wood beneath the horizon will not be seen, and will be carved away as you undercut the subject. Merge the cuts along the horizon line so they pass continuously around the subject.



11

Begin undercutting. Make sure you have the form right before undercutting. Remove the excess waste with a deep gouge or V-tool. Cut in below the horizon line at a 20° angle by slicing or matching gouges to the curves. Keep the edges of the flat areas, such as the fins, sharp. Round the body. Don't just think about space, but think about the form of the koi and lead the edges around into the space beneath the fish.



12

Finish undercutting. Use flat gouges to clean up the background where it meets the subject. Only undercut the whiskers slightly. Use shortbent flat gouges or narrow shortbent skew chisels for the awkward areas marked in the photo. Clamp the wood from the side for better access. The elevated tail is free of the background and will be fragile if the grain is not aligned properly. While the final junction is not visible, it should be clean and smooth flowing.

HIGH-RELIEF KOI: ADDING THE DETAILS



13

Add the details. Practice on scrap wood first. Stab deep gouges vertically into the wood, overlapping the cuts for a scale effect. Angle the gouge so the corners stab in more deeply. Carve the flutes on the fins and tail with a deep gouge. The flutes taper in toward the body, but stop short of the body. Create clean, flowing ridges by working backward and forward, avoiding the tearing side of the gouge. Add a narrow flowing groove to represent the dorsal fin.

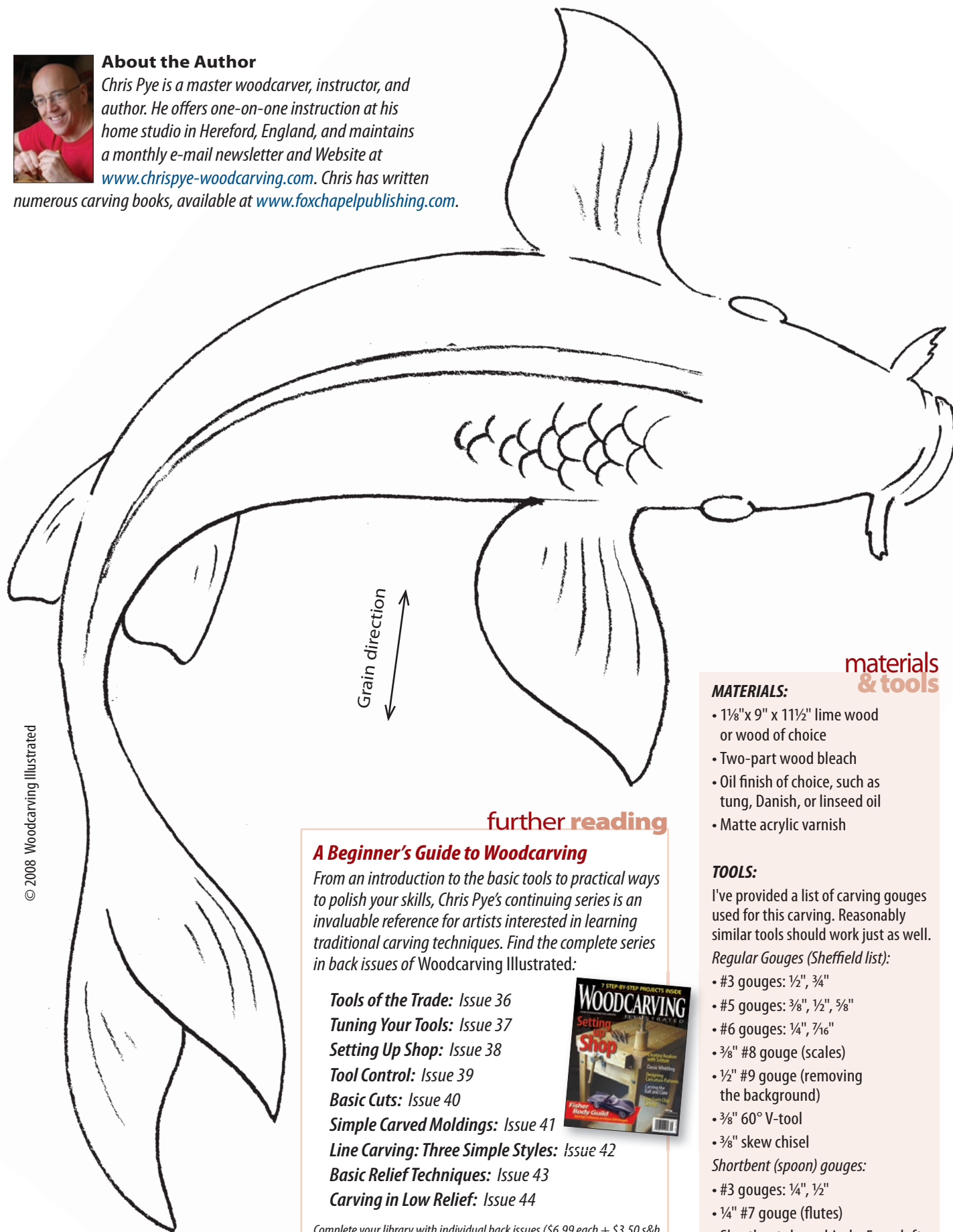
HIGH-RELIEF KOI: FINISHING NOTES

As with the low-relief carving, we want to create contrast between the subject and the background. Before finishing, look at the carving under different lighting. Defects in the surfaces, such as cuts or tears, will be amplified by the finish and must be corrected before you apply the finish. Bleach the fish itself with a two-part wood bleach such as Rustins. Test the bleach on scrap wood before applying to your carving. Be careful not to get the bleach on the background. After bleaching, seal the fish with a matte acrylic varnish. Finally, brush tung, Danish, or linseed oil into the background to bring out the figure of the wood.



About the Author

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



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materials & tools

MATERIALS:

- 1½" x 9" x 11½" lime wood or wood of choice
- Two-part wood bleach
- Oil finish of choice, such as tung, Danish, or linseed oil
- Matte acrylic varnish

TOOLS:

I've provided a list of carving gouges used for this carving. Reasonably similar tools should work just as well.

Regular Gouges (Sheffield list):

- #3 gouges: ½", ¾"
- #5 gouges: ⅜", ½", ⅝"
- #6 gouges: ¼", ⅞"
- ⅜" #8 gouge (scales)
- ½" #9 gouge (removing the background)
- ⅜" 60° V-tool
- ⅜" skew chisel

Shortbent (spoon) gouges:

- #3 gouges: ¼", ½"
- ¼" #7 gouge (flutes)
- Shortbent skew chisels: 5mm left and right

further reading

A Beginner's Guide to Woodcarving

From an introduction to the basic tools to practical ways to polish your skills, Chris Pye's continuing series is an invaluable reference for artists interested in learning traditional carving techniques. Find the complete series in back issues of Woodcarving Illustrated:

Tools of the Trade: Issue 36

Tuning Your Tools: Issue 37

Setting Up Shop: Issue 38

Tool Control: Issue 39

Basic Cuts: Issue 40

Simple Carved Moldings: Issue 41

Line Carving: Three Simple Styles: Issue 42

Basic Relief Techniques: Issue 43

Carving in Low Relief: Issue 44



Complete your library with individual back issues (\$6.99 each + \$3.50 s&h, up to \$30) or Chris' numerous woodcarving books, available from Fox Chapel: 800-457-9112, 1970 Broad St., East Petersburg, Pa. 17520, www.FoxChapelPublishing.com.

Santa Brings Home the Christmas Tree

Charming details highlight this action pose

By Mark Akers

This carving tells the story of Santa on his way home with a freshly cut Christmas tree. Santa's pose implies movement and gives the piece added interest. Although the carving in the base is minimal, it ties the base to the main figure and pulls the carving together as one piece.

Designing the Carving

In order to get Santa's pose correct, I created an articulated pattern template. I sketched out the general shape of the arms and legs and cut the individual pieces out of cardboard. Grommets attached the limbs to the body at the joints. This way, I can adjust the position of the arms and legs until I have the exact pose I want.

For strength and durability, the tree, axe, and base are carved separately. If you carve the scene from a solid block of wood, there will be areas of fragile grain that can break easily.

Carving Notes

Draw a centerline down the front and back of the carving. As you rough out the piece, always round toward the centerline. Use the same approach of drawing a centerline and rounding toward the centerline to shape the arms and legs.

Layer the clothing with the suspenders on top of the shirt and the shirt tucked into the pants. Taper the shoes so they give the effect of going under the pants. To make a button, draw a plus sign the same size as the button. Use a 5mm Dockyard U-gouge to gently



A cardboard template is used to develop the pose of the carving.



Use a 5mm Dockyard U-gouge to make perfect buttons.

stab in the circular button around the plus sign. Angle the handle so you don't undercut the button. Use the same tool to relieve wood up to the button, giving it the appearance of sitting on top of the clothing.

Carve texture in the beard and hair with a series of S shapes. Start with a 6mm #11 U-gouge, move to a 4mm #11 U-gouge, and then a 2mm #11 U-gouge. Add random cuts for shadows with a 1/4" V-tool. Carve the layers of the tree from the bottom up toward the top and add texture by carving S shapes.

Finishing Notes

I use Delta Ceramcoat acrylic paints thinned to a wash. Mix three to four drops of each paint color with two teaspoons of warm water in an ice cube tray. For white, I use equal parts of water and paint.

Paint the lighter colors first, working your way to the darker colors. After the paint is dry, dip the carved pieces into an antiquing mixture. Mix approximately 1" of burnt sienna oil paint squeezed from a paint tube with one quart of boiled



Dry fit the elements together before finishing to ensure a good fit.

linseed oil. I mix the solution three quarts at a time in a gallon paint can so the solution can be saved for future projects.

Place the dipped carvings on paper towels to allow the excess antiquing mixture to run-off. After 10 minutes, dab the excess solution off the carved pieces with paper towels. Discard the paper towels with proper care.

Let the carvings dry for three days and then apply a product called Feed-n-Wax with a 1" paintbrush. Allow the wax to dry for a few minutes and wipe off the entire carving with paper towels. After the wax dries completely, glue the elements of the carving together and glue the carving to the base.



materials & tools

MATERIALS:

- 3¼" x 4" x 7¾" basswood (Santa)
- 3" x 3" x 8¼" basswood (tree)
- ¾" x 1½" x 4½" basswood (axe)
- 1" x 6" x 10" basswood (base)
- Delta Ceramcoat acrylic paints: 2 parts medium flesh mixed with 1 part Caucasian flesh (face, hands), tomato spice (blush on the cheeks, nose, lips, tongue), blue stoneware (eyes), butter cream (hair, mustache, beard, eyebrows), Moroccan red (pants), seashell white (shirt, basswood base), burnt umber (shoes, suspenders, axe handle, tree trunk), gold (buttons), Seminole green (tree), and Quaker gray (axe blade)
- Boiled linseed oil
- Feed-n-Wax
- Wood glue

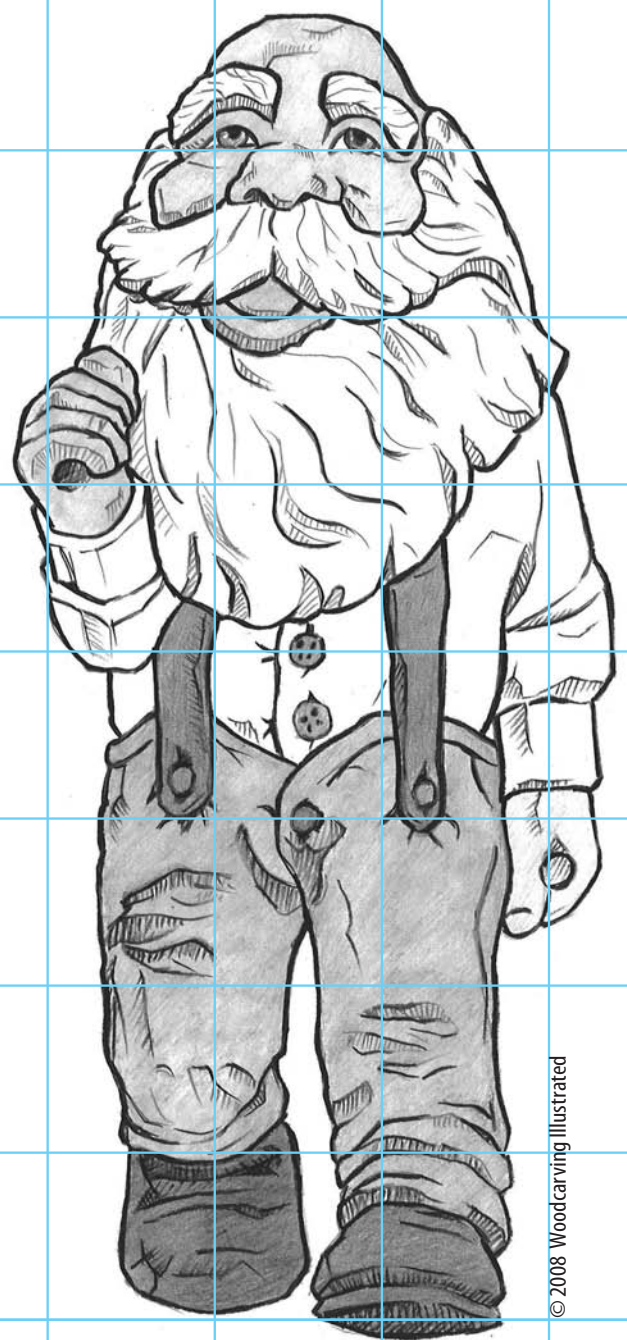
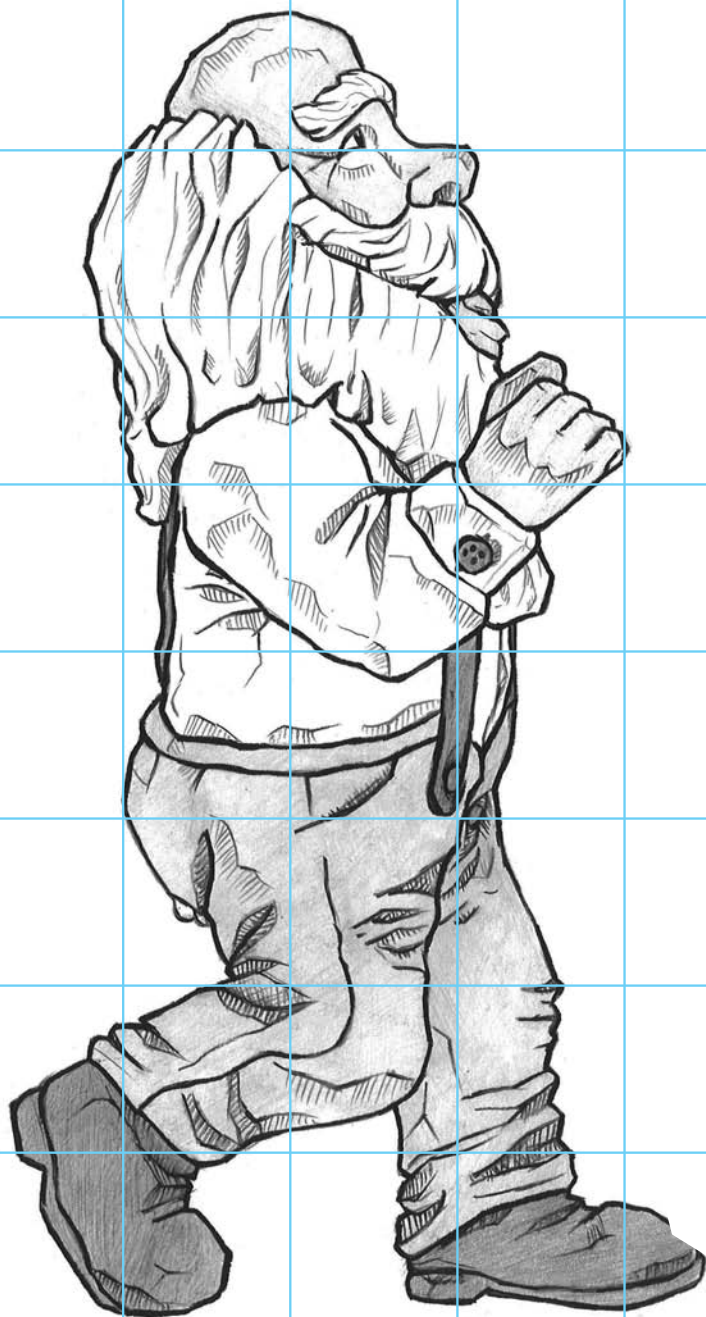
TOOLS:

- Long-bladed knife (I use knives made by Mike Shipley or Gill Drake)
- Detail knife (I use one made by Ralph Long)
- #11 U-gouge: 2mm, 4mm, 6mm (Stubai)
- ¾" #9 gouge (Henry Taylor)
- ¾" #7 gouge (Henry Taylor)
- #3 gouges: ½" & ¾" (Stubai)
- ¾" Denny V-gouge
- ¾" Drake V-tool
- 5mm Dockyard U-gouge
- 1"-wide paintbrush (to apply Feed-n-Wax)
- Paintbrushes of choice

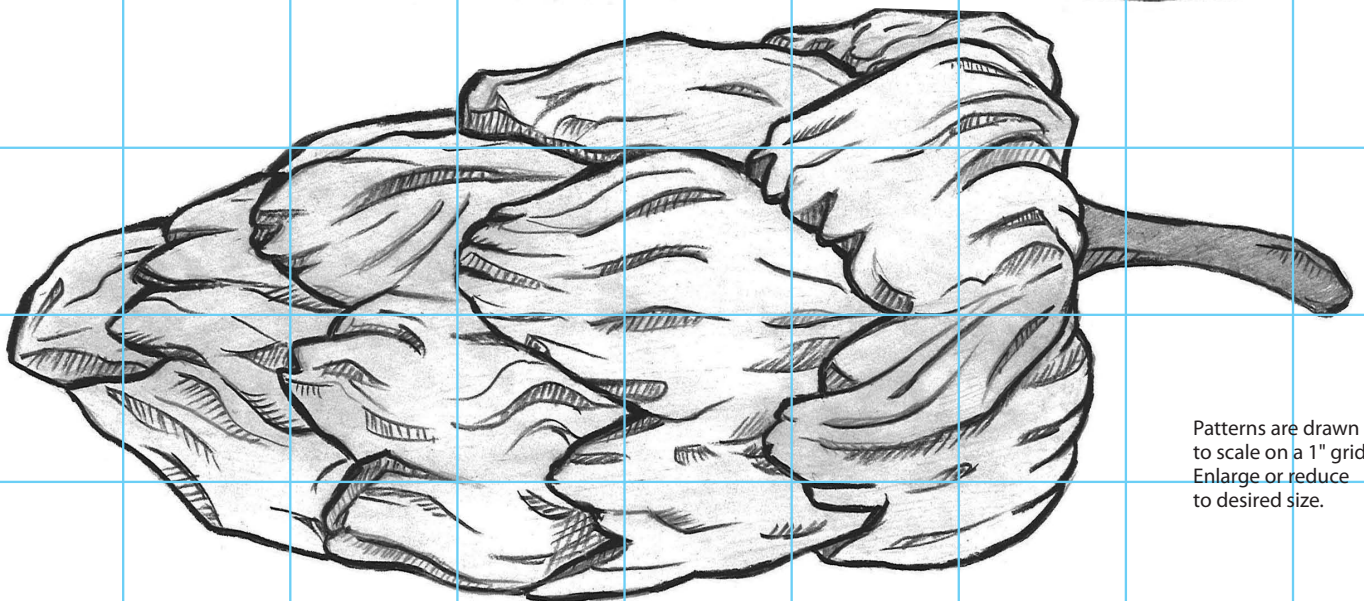


This Santa carving is now part of the private collection of Bob and Lynn Doolittle from Irmo, S.C.





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



About the Author

Mark Akers, of Lexington, S.C. is the assistant building services manager for the County of Lexington and a semi-professional woodcarver and instructor. He has won awards at local carving shows and at the International Woodcarvers Congress in Davenport, Iowa. For more of Mark's work, or to order carvings and rough outs, visit his Website at www.carvingsbymarkakers.com.

Carving Candy Cane Ornaments

Practice basic carving and painting skills with easy Christmas ornaments

By Hershal Borders

Elaborate carved canes are my trademark. I love to incorporate various designs in my themed canes, but sometimes it's nice to take a break with a smaller carving. These candy canes are a wonderful diversion from more involved projects and are ideal for beginners. Once you've mastered the basic techniques, get creative with variations on the theme. These ornaments can be carved with power tools, but I use just a few hand tools. The projects are a great way to fill your Christmas tree and make delightful gifts.

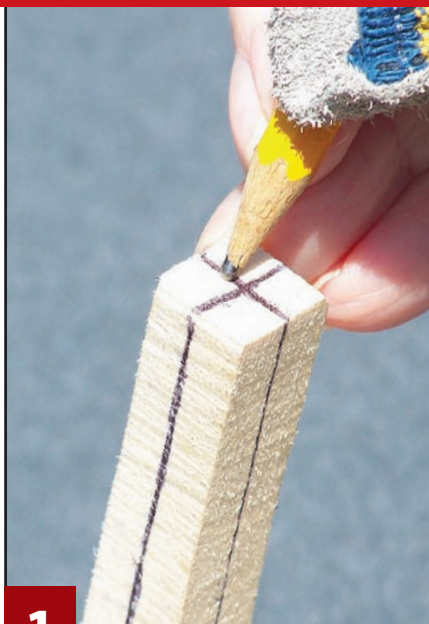
The Christmas candy cane, dating back to the 1400s, was originally a straight hard all-white stick of candy. Carving the original holiday treat is a lesson in turning a square piece of wood into a cylinder. This basic technique is useful for creating a variety of projects ranging from staffs to accompany carved figures to full-size walking canes.

Historical references to the familiar cane shape go back to about 1670, when the white sugar-sticks were bent into canes to represent a shepherd's staff. Some people believe the shape represents a J for Jesus. The all-white candy canes were given out to children during long-winded Christmas services. Carving the hook shape helps carvers develop skills to properly create smooth curves.

The first red-and-white striped candy canes appeared in the early 1900s. Around the same time, candy makers added peppermint and wintergreen flavors to their candy canes. The large red and white stripes represent Christ's blood and purity. The three thin red stripes symbolize the Holy Trinity. Carving a traditional striped candy cane provides valuable painting experience.



CARVING THE STRAIGHT CANDY CANE



1

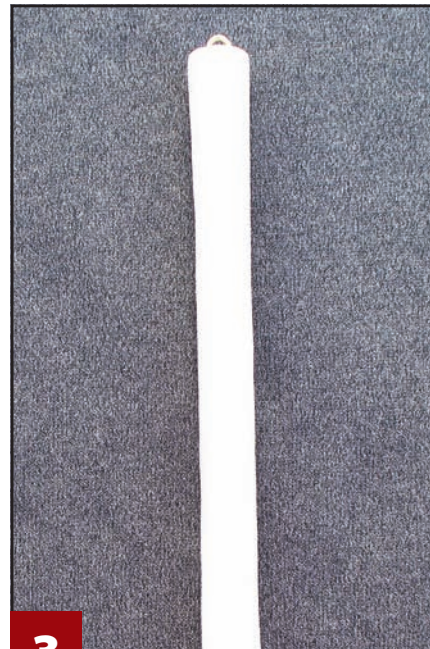
Prepare the blank. Cut the $\frac{1}{2}$ " x $\frac{1}{2}$ " basswood blank to size. Draw centerlines on all four sides and both ends with a pencil.



2

Remove the sharp corners.

Use the centerlines as a guide and remove the sharp corners to turn the rectangular blank into a cylinder.



3

Finish the ornament. Screw

a small eyelet into one end. Paint the candy stick solid white with your acrylic paint of choice.

CARVING A BENT CANDY CANE



1

Carve the bent cane. Trace the pattern onto the blank and cut it out using a band saw. Draw centerlines on all four sides and both ends. Use the centerlines to round the cane. Work toward a smooth transition from the hook to the straight shaft.



2

Finish the bent cane. Make sure

the diameter of the cane is the same from one end to the other. Place an eyelet in the top of the bent part of the cane. For a J cane, put an eyelet in the bottom of the cane. Paint the candy cane solid white with acrylic paint.



CARVING A STRIPED CANDY CANE



1 **Mark the white stripes.** Carve another bent candy cane using the techniques explained on page 69. Mark the W points on the cane using the pattern as a guide. Use masking tape to connect the W marks. Trace along the outside of the masking tape with a pen. Trace along the pen lines with a woodburning pen.



2 **Mark the red stripes.** Remove the masking tape from step 1. Use the pattern as a guide to mark the R points. Connect these marks using masking tape. Trace along the outside of the tape with a pen. Re-trace the pen lines with a woodburning pen. Remove the masking tape and sand or carve away all of the pen marks.



3 **Paint the red and white stripes.** Insert an eyelet into the top of the cane. Paint the red and white stripes with acrylic paint. The woodburned lines help prevent the paint from bleeding between the two different colors of stripes, which makes this cane easy to paint. Both ends of the cane should be painted white.

CARVING A THREE-STRIPE CANDY CANE



1 **Draw the pattern on the cane.** Carve the cane and divide it into two main stripes using the techniques explained above. On the white stripe, draw a line halfway between the woodburned lines with a pencil. This is the middle line of the three thin lines.



2 **Carve the three lines.** Carve a groove along the pencil line with a small 60° V-tool. Use the same V-tool to carve a groove on each side of the first line. The grooves are close together. Sand the cane with 320-grit sandpaper. Add an eyelet in the cane's top.



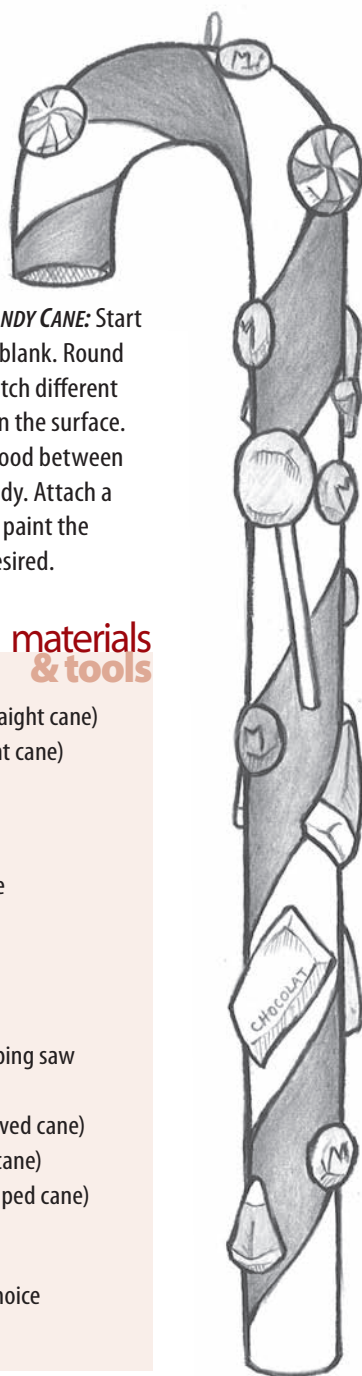
3 **Paint the cane.** Paint the red stripe and the entire white stripe, including the three grooves. Use acrylic paint. Clean the paint out of the grooves with a small three-cornered file. Use a #1/0 brush to apply red acrylic paint in the three grooves.



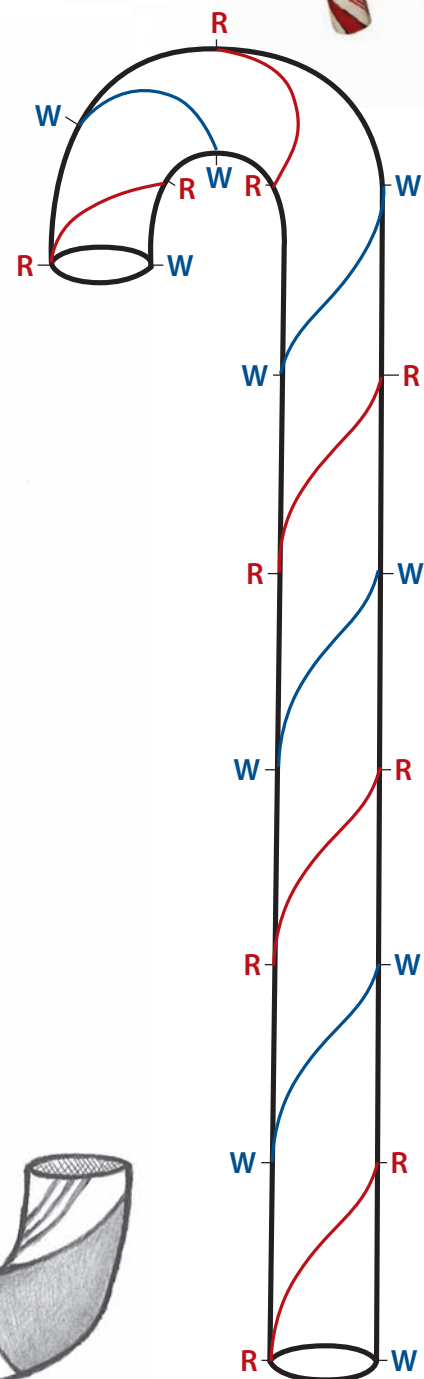
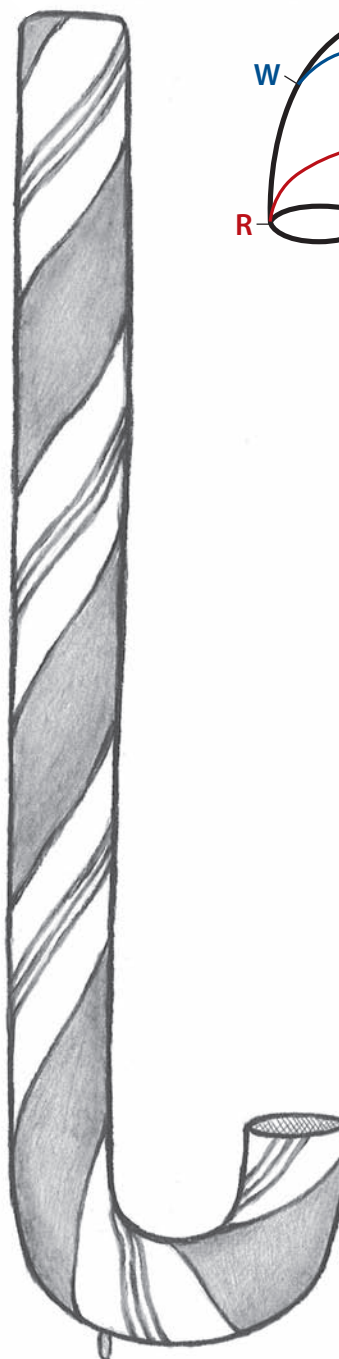
CREATIVE IDEAS: Use glue and dowels to connect two or more candy canes. Add embellishments, such as a bow or elf. Reduce the size to create a holiday pin.



RELIEF-CARVED CANDY CANE: Start with a $\frac{3}{4}$ " x $2\frac{1}{4}$ " blank. Round the cane and sketch different types of candy on the surface. Remove $\frac{1}{8}$ " of wood between the pieces of candy. Attach a small eyelet and paint the candy cane as desired.



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materials & tools

MATERIALS:

- $\frac{1}{2}$ " x $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 7" basswood (straight cane)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 2" x 7" basswood (bent cane)
- $\frac{3}{4}$ " x $2\frac{1}{4}$ " x 7" basswood (relief-carved cane)
- Small eyelets
- Acrylic paint (red and white or colors of choice)
- 320-grit sandpaper

TOOLS:

- Band saw, scroll saw, or coping saw
- Bench knife
- #22 Exacto knife (relief-carved cane)
- Detail Knife (relief-carved cane)
- Small 60° V-tool (three-striped cane)
- Small three-corner file (three-striped cane)
- Woodburner with pen of choice
- Paintbrushes: #5 and #1/0



"Old World Santa Cane"
This naturally finished cane celebrates the different incarnations of Santa throughout history and in other countries. The cane was carved from butternut and took 200 hours to carve.



"Santa Cane"
This cane shows some of the different traits Santa picked up as he was introduced to other countries. It was carved from basswood and took 390 hours to complete.

ONLINE BONUS

For an extended gallery of Hershhal Borders' canes, visit our Website.



woodcarvingillustrated.com



"Angel Cane"
Carved from basswood, this cane features angels and messengers mentioned in the Bible. The cane took 375 hours to complete.



"Noah's Ark Cane"
This cane, carved from butternut, was inspired by the classic Bible story and took 75 hours to complete.



About the Author

Hershal Borders is a wood sculptor noted for cane carving, but he enjoys all phases of carving. He began working in wood at age 13. He has carved for 53 years and has studied under many nationally and internationally known artists. Hershal lives in Middletown, Ohio, with his wife of 60 years, Patricia Lee. Contact Hershal at 10 Gideon Road, Middletown, Ohio, 45044, 513-423-3290, Hborders@cinci.rr.com.

Carving a Snowman Collector's Plate

Learn the basics of intaglio carving with this cheerful winter relief design

By Robert Biermann

Intaglio carving involves recessing the main subject below the surrounding background. In traditional relief carving, the background is removed around the subject so the subject stands proud. Both carving styles use similar techniques, and the same pattern can be used for either style, but the two styles produce distinctly different results.

Begin with a 10"-diameter flat beaded plate, available from most woodcarving suppliers. I use Pfiel Swiss-made tools. All references to tool sizes and types in this article refer to Pfiel designations. Start by cutting out the pattern and placing it on the plate with the grain running parallel to the fence. Slide a piece of graphite paper under the pattern and trace along the pattern lines to transfer the design. I don't use carbon paper because it smears and is hard to erase.



Charming intaglio scene is recessed into the wood.

INTAGLIO PLATE: ROUGHING-OUT THE SNOWMAN



1

Define the elements. Position a 6mm #15 V-tool with the outside wing of the V perpendicular to the plate. The outside of the cut is vertical. Cut around the perimeter of the snowman, broom, fence, ground, and snow. Do not use the V-tool on the face. Use a knife to make a deep stop cut along the perpendicular edge. Keep the edge clean and smooth.



2

Round and lower the body. Use a 10mm #3 gouge. Think of the snowman as being carved in the round. Round the edges to create depth and perspective. Continue lowering and rounding the body, separating the elements so you can begin to see the shape. One of the snowman's legs is behind the other and should be carved slightly deeper.



3

Shape the snowman's right arm. Lower and round the arm to create depth. Envision the carving in the round and taper the arm down so the shoulder appears to go under the scarf. Remove less wood from the forearm and mitten, which are closest to the surface, giving the effect they are closest to the viewer.



4

Round the face. Stop-cut along the hat brim with a knife. Use an 8mm #3 gouge to round the face, removing more wood from the left side. Outline the nose with a 6mm #15 V-tool. Slant the V-tool's wings toward the nose, but do not undercut. The tip of the nose is higher than the base, but lower than the hat brim.

INTAGLIO PLATE: CARVING THE ELEMENTS



5

Round the cheeks and mouth. Use an 8mm #3 gouge. Turn the gouge upside down and press it in along the cheek line. Maintain the same arc as you shape the rest of the cheeks. Form the mouth barrel. Do not carve the eyes or mouth, but pencil them in to gauge their shape and position. Use an 8mm #3 gouge to shape the left hand, which is the lowest part of the snowman.



6

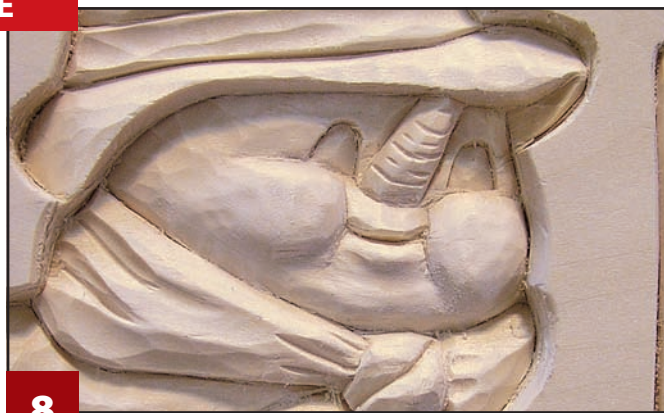
Shape the hat and scarf. Use an 8mm #3 gouge to round the edges of the scarf and lower the ends so it appears to go around the neck. Round the hat and undercut the brim slightly. Carve the folds in the hat and scarf. Deepen the stop cuts around the edges to produce shadows. The shadows at the face and back side of the body are stronger than the shadow at the right foot.

INTAGLIO PLATE: ADDING DETAILS AND TEXTURE



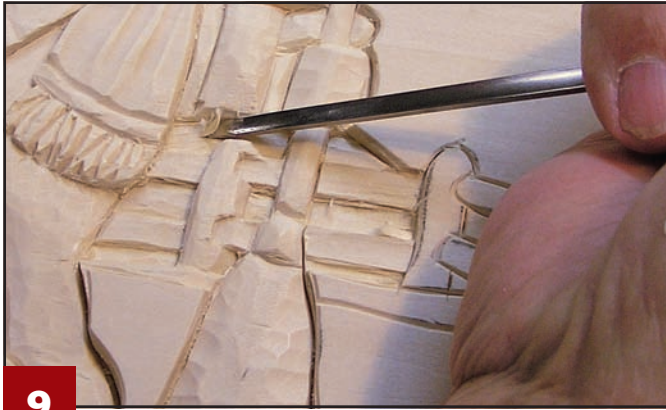
7

Carve the eyes. Match the sweep of a gouge, such as a 4mm #9, to the curve at the top of the eye. Position the tool on the line and angle the handle so the bevel is vertical. Press lightly to make a shallow cut. Complete the outline of the eye with a knife. Hold the knife at a low angle and cut a small chip around the eyeball. Shave and round the eye. Repeat the process on the other eye.



8

Carve the face details. Make a stop cut along the mouth with a knife. Hold the knife vertical to keep from chipping the lip. Shave wood from the top of the lower lip. Cut under the lower lip with a 4mm #9 gouge to make the chin. Add the carrot texture. Make sure the scarf knot is realistic and add the fringe. The folds in the hat and scarf are smooth and flowing.



9

Carve the fence and broom. Lower the fence posts and rails so they are deeper than the snowman. Go deep enough so they appear to be behind the snowman. Carve the intersection of the posts and rails so it looks like the rails sit on the posts. Round the poles and rails. Shape the broom and reduce the thickness of the broomstick so it appears to go into the snowman's left hand.



10

Add texture and shadows. Add lines simulating grain to the fence posts and rails with a 2mm #11 gouge. Add texture to the glove cuffs and broom straw with a 3mm #15 V-tool. Texture the snow mounds behind the snowman with an 8mm #3 gouge. Clean up all of the vertical cut edges and deepen the cuts slightly with a knife. Do not undercut. Remove any remaining fuzzies.

INTAGLIO PLATE: PAINTING AND FINISHING



11

Prepare for Paint. Liberally coat the entire plate with boiled linseed oil. Be sure the cuts are covered all of the way to the bottom. Remove excess oil with a paper towel. Oily towels are a fire hazard; dispose of them properly. Allow the plate to dry overnight. Apply several light coats of clear matte finish, buffing the surface lightly with a crumpled paper bag between coats.



12

Apply the base coat. Thin acrylic paints with Minwax clear wood stain. This method reduces runs and makes it easier to blend colors. Keep the stain in a small cup and add drops of paint to your palette. Pick up stain with a brush and mix it with the paint. Apply light coats, applying color heaviest in the shadowed areas. Add more stain to the paint, blending to almost no color in the center.



13

Paint the snowman. Use undiluted black paint for the pupils and eyebrows. Add a thin strip of blue heaven for the irises. Use a toothpick to add a light ivory highlight to each eye. Shade the cheeks and lips with light coats of thinned cadmium red. Thin blue heaven with stain and highlight the shadows of the snow, including the snowman's body and the snow in the background.



14

Add shading and highlighting. Blend the paint out from the shadows. Dry brush burnt umber on the fence. Darken the grooves in the broom with burnt umber. Dry brush light ivory on the scarf, hat band, and fence top. Use a toothpick to add dots of undiluted light ivory on the scarf and hat band. Apply two coats of matte sealer. Buff between coats with the crumpled paper bag.

Snowman relief pattern



materials & tools

MATERIALS:

- 10"-diameter flat beaded plate
- Boiled linseed oil
- American Accents clear matte finish
- Minwax water-based wood stain, decorator tint formula
- Palette paper or freezer paper
- Brown paper bag (without ink or printing)
- Delta Ceramcoat acrylic paints: light ivory (snow, broom lacing), brown velvet (fence and broomstick), burnt sienna

- (hat, gloves, scarf fringe), orange (nose), black (eyes), blue heaven (eyes, shadows on snow), burnt umber (fence and broom texture)
- Porter Accent acrylic paint: larkspur blue (scarf and hat band)
- Decoart American acrylic paints: primary yellow (broom straw), cadmium red (cheek highlights)
- Plaid Folk Art acrylic paint: midnight (scarf highlights)

TOOLS:

- Carving knife of choice
- 11mm #2 gouge
- 3mm #3 gouge
- 9mm #4 gouge
- 3mm #5 gouge
- 3mm #8 gouge
- #10 gouges: 3mm, 8mm
- #15 45° V-tools: 3mm, 6mm
- Paintbrushes of choice



About the Author

Robert Biermann, of St. Louis, Mo., has been carving for 27 years and teaching carving for 15 years. He has won awards at several woodcarving shows,

including the International Woodcarvers Congress in Davenport, Iowa. He also received the CCA Merit Award in 2006. Contact him at twodulbug@sbcglobal.net.

Carving a Traditional



Classic heart design is a great project for novice carvers

By David Western

This simple design is the pattern I use with beginner carvers in my lovespoon carving classes. Although it is a straightforward design, it contains several elements that will assist new carvers in learning important carving techniques.

Shaping the abundant curved edges will vividly illustrate the importance of following the wood's grain. The design also contains over-under work, which will prepare you for undertaking more complicated knotwork patterns as your skills progress. The opportunity to do some cutting out (known as fretwork) will develop patience, tenacity, and motor skills. I recommend carving your first spoon from an easily worked timber such as basswood, poplar, or alder. Using pine or similar softwoods will make for easier carving, but will require razor-sharp edges on the tools for a crisp finish.

further reading

Fine Art of Carving Lovespoons

By David Western

Learn to create beautiful lovespoons—handcarved symbols of love and deep affection that have been popular for centuries. With three step-by-step projects and 15 original patterns, this book will help you enjoy the craft no matter what your carving skill level. Sections on the history of lovespoon carving, selecting woods, using and maintaining tools, applying long-lasting finishes, and customizing your own designs ensure every aspect of your lovespoon carving project goes smoothly.

Available for \$24.95 + \$3.50 s&h (parcel post) from Fox Chapel Publishing, www.FoxChapelPublishing.com, 1970 Broad Street, East Petersburg, PA 17520, 800-457-9112, or check your local retailer.



Lovespoon

WHAT MAKES A GOOD DESIGN?

Poor Design

The first thing you notice about this design is the spoon bowl is not quite symmetrical. The top heart is too small and the shape is incongruent with the rest of the design. The overall design is boring and repetitious with nothing to grab a viewer's interest. The scrolls are too thick and feel too big. The elements, stacked on top of each other, have no flow. Your eye stops each time it encounters a new design element.



Balance and Symmetry

The design presented here is symmetrical and balanced. The elements are connected and there is a flow between the sections. The eye travels freely up and down the handle. The central heart breaks up the repetition of the scrolled designs and gives the spoon a strong focal point. The scrolls are unobtrusive and don't feel contrived or forced. The overall spoon feels natural and cohesive.



ONLINE BONUS



This pattern available as a downloadable file on our Website.
woodcarvingillustrated.com

materials & tools

MATERIALS:

- $\frac{3}{4}$ x 3" x 11" basswood or wood of choice
- Deft clear Danish oil
- Assorted grits of sandpaper (optional)

TOOLS:

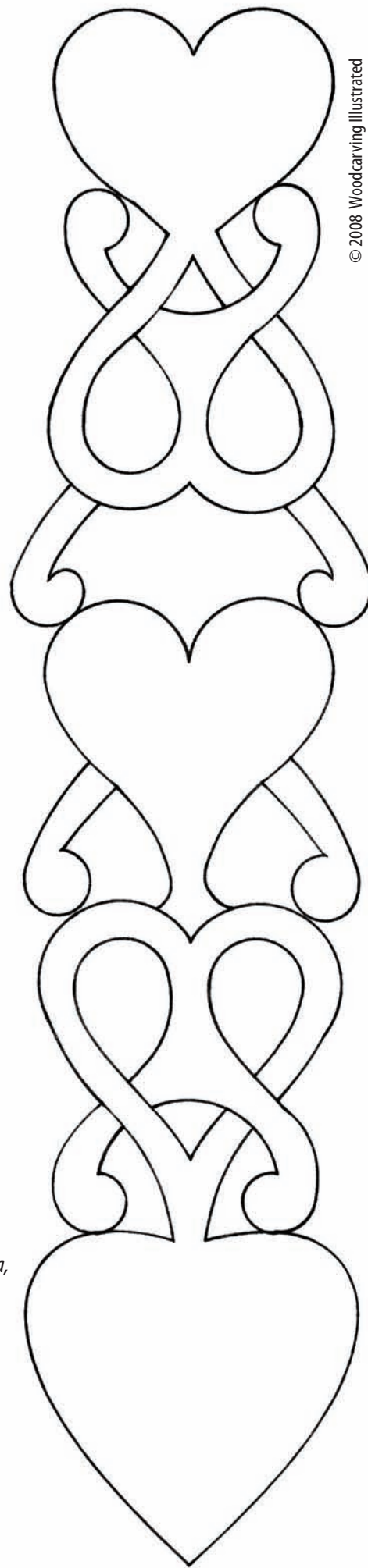
- Scroll saw
- Carving knife of choice
- Bent knife (to shape inside of bowl)
- Drill with $\frac{1}{8}$ "-diameter bit (blade-entry holes)
- Paintbrush and rags to apply Danish oil



About the Author

David Western of Victoria, B.C., Canada, carves lovespoons for a living and

teaches lovespoon carving classes at Camosun College in Victoria. He is the author of *Fine Art of Carving Lovespoon*, available from Fox Chapel Publishing, www.FoxChapelPublishing.com.



Gilding a House Sign

Learn gold-leafing techniques with a handcarved residential plaque

By Francis S. Lestingi

Gilding is the ancient art of applying a thin layer of metal to a surface. In carving, gilding is most often done using gold leaf, although silver and other metals can be used.

The creation of a carved and gilded sign, such as a residential plaque, can be approached in two ways. One method entails carving directly on the bare wood, coating the panel, and then applying the size (adhesive) and gold leaf. The problem with this approach is that the application of the size requires considerable skill and time. An easier method uses removable vinyl masks. With this method, the wood panel is completely painted first. The vinyl is applied to the painted surface and the carving is done directly through the vinyl and painted wood. The carved areas are then painted and sized. With the vinyl serving as a mask, the process is effortless.

Size is available in two curing speeds—fast (one-hour curing time) and slow (12-hour curing time). We find that slow-curing size produces a more brilliant gild, especially if it is allowed to cure for 48 hours. Gold leaf is available in loose-leaf form and in patent form. Patent gold is attached to tissue sheets, comes in booklets of 25 sheets, and is novice-friendly. After you become comfortable with the gilding process, I recommend learning to use loose-leaf gold.

This sign was carved in *Woodcarving Illustrated* Fall 2008 (Issue 44). The numbers on the sign are carved through a vinyl mask, allowing us to use the easier method of gold leafing. The scrolls do not use a vinyl mask and will be gilded using the alternate method. Patent gold leaf is used in both instances to simplify the process.

GILDING: PREPARING THE SURFACE



1

Prime and paint the numbers. Apply three coats of primer. Sand lightly between coats with 120-grit sandpaper. Apply two coats of sign-industry oil-based high-gloss paint. Let the paint dry for 24 hours between coats. High-gloss paint produces a brilliant gild. Use satin paint for a matte gild. Sand the surface around the numbers lightly with 120-grit sandpaper to remove any paint buildup.



2

Dust the surface with kaolin USP. Vacuum up the sanding dust, wipe it with a paper towel, and vacuum again. Spatter the kaolin, a pure powder form of the mineral kaolite, on the entire surface of the sign and smooth it out with an artist mop brush. Vacuum away any excess dust. The kaolin makes the colorless size visible and also prevents gold leaf from adhering to the painted areas on the cove and scroll that are not intended to be gilded.

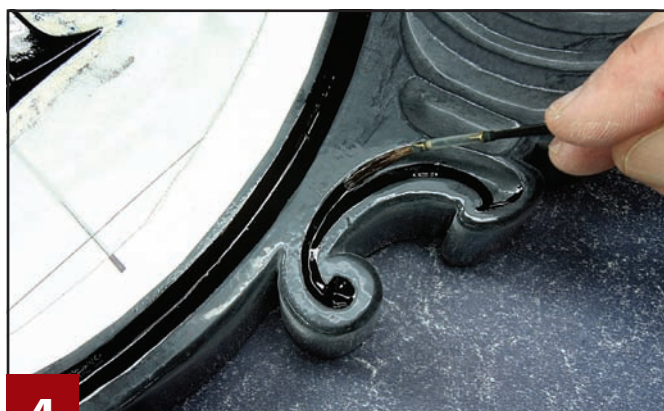


Gold leafing withstands the elements well and is ideal for exterior signs.



3

Apply size to the numbers. Pick up a small amount of size on a ½"-wide white sable artist's brush. Stroke the brush on a glossy magazine page to distribute the size thinly and evenly throughout the brush. Apply the size to the numbers. The size absorbs the kaolin and produces a visible glossy coating. Make sure the coating of size is thin, complete, and uniform. Remove any puddles in the valleys.



4

Apply size to the cove and scrolls. Use a professional lettering quill brush. This brush remains a constant width as you draw it around the curves. Use a #5 brush for the coves and a #0 brush for the scrolls. Take your time and be careful as you apply the size. Because these areas are not carved through a vinyl mask, the surrounding surface is not protected. The gold leaf will adhere to any area where size is applied.

GILDING: APPLYING THE GOLD LEAF



5

Gild the cove and numbers. Let the size dry for two days.

Start at the top of the cove and work your way around. Place a sheet of gold leaf face down on the size and press lightly. The gold should rest on top of the size, but not be submerged in it. The gold peels off the paper as it sticks to the size. Gild the numbers, pressing lightly on one side of the number and then the other.



6

Burnish the gold leaf. Use a white sable brush. The

term burnish refers to cleaning up the edges and removing any overlapping gold leaf. Never touch the gold with your fingers. Use the brush to lightly press the gold leaf against the size where necessary. The more you touch the gold, the less brilliant the gold will be. Eventually, the size will harden with the gold leaf atop it.



8

Remove the vinyl mask. Use a hobby knife to lift up a

corner of the mask. Pull the vinyl at a 90° angle to the gold-leaved edge. Cut the mask with scissors at strategic places, such as the serifs, to facilitate crisp clean edges. If you pull the mask toward the gilded section, it may lift some of the gold. Always remove the vinyl mask perpendicular to the gilded edge, not toward it.

TOUCHING UP

tips

It is possible to have small voids where the gold leaf does not adhere properly. These voids are called holidays. If the gold leaf does not adhere when you attempt to cover the holiday, it may be necessary to re-size and re-gild these areas. Fast size can be used if the holiday is small enough.



7

Apply gold leaf to the scrolls. Use the same method

explained in step 5. The kaolin prevents the gold from sticking to the relatively fresh paint. Use a soft gilder's mop to burnish the scrolls. The mop also removes the excess kaolin dust. If the kaolin sticks to the paint, remove it with a paper towel moistened with rubbing alcohol. Do not touch the gold with the alcohol.

Installing the sign

Use the template created in the carving article in *WCI* Fall 2008 (Issue 44) to position the sign. Place the template on the wall and mark the holes. Drill into the wall with a bit that is twice the diameter of the hanger bolt. Clean out the holes and fill them with silicone caulk. Add some silicone on the back of the panel and insert the bolts into the holes. Do not apply a finish over the gold leaf. Genuine 23-karat (or higher) gold leaf used in an exterior application is impervious to the elements. Coating the gold leaf will immediately lessen the luster drastically and will cause the gold leaf to crack as the coating or finish decays. Nothing is as good as gold.

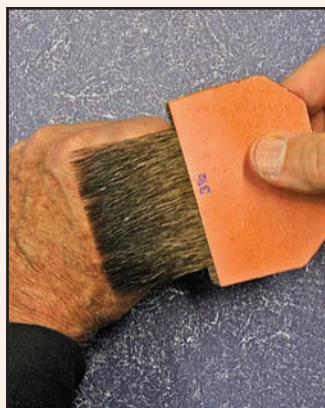
Gilding with loose leaf

While the surface preparation is the same, the process of gilding with loose-leaf gold requires a different approach than gilding with patent gold. Loose-leaf gold is heavier than patent gold. It also provides a more brilliant gild. In a high-relief carving, loose-leaf gold will provide better coverage than patent gold.



1

Charge the brush. Dab a bit of lip balm on your hand and brush a gilder's tip (a specialized brush) over the oiled hand. The brush picks up a bit of oil, which attracts the gold leaf.



2

Cut the gold leaf. Full sheets of gold leaf are rarely used. Cut the full sheet into smaller segments with a gilder's knife.



3

Apply the gold leaf. Transfer the gold leaf to the sized surface using the gilder's tip lightly charged with lip balm. The gold leaf is attracted to the oil on the brush, but is more attracted to the size and will easily transfer to the size.



4

Burnish the gold leaf. Tear off small pieces of gold leaf with a white sable brush and fill any small voids or holidays. Burnish the gold leaf with the same brush using the techniques explained in step 6.

materials & tools

MATERIALS:

- Primer (Jay Cooke's primer)
- High-gloss oil-based paint (1-Shot lettering enamel)
- Sandpaper, 120 grit
- Kaolin, USP
- Slow size (LeFranc Charbonelle 12-hour)
- 23k patent gold leaf
- Rubbing alcohol

TOOLS:

- 1"-wide red sable brush (apply paint)
- Dusting mop
- #0 and #5 lettering quill brushes
- Gilder's mop
- White sable brush of choice
- Scissors
- Hobby knife

SPECIAL SOURCES:

Gold leaf and gilding supplies are available at many art and craft stores. You can also purchase gilding supplies on Woodcraft's Website, www.woodcraft.com.



About the Author

Francis S. Lestingi is a sign artist, calligrapher, and professor emeritus in physics at the State University College of New York at Buffalo. Francis

runs Signs of Gold, Inc., and has published 13 articles on sign carving, which are available at his Website www.signsofgold.com.

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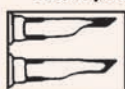
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Woodcarving Illustrated publishes a general listing of carving shows in each issue. If you would like your show listed in our Calendar of Events, please send the following information to Duncan@FoxChapelPublishing.com:

- 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 Spring Issue is December 1, 2008.

■ NOVEMBER

Nov 7-8: TEXAS. Wooden Wonderland, TYLER (Rose Garden Center, 1900W. Front St.). Fri. 10am-6pm & Sat. 10am-5pm. \$2 adm., children under 12 free with an adult. Contact Lorrie Thomas, 903-238-8843, justforit@aol.com.

Nov 8-9: ALABAMA. 27th Annual Mid South Woodcarving Show and Competition, HUNTSVILLE (Huntsville Depot Museum Roundhouse, 320 Church St.). Contact 256-881-5897, nawashow@yahoo.com.

Nov 8-9: CALIFORNIA. Riverside Chip Chuckers Annual Show & Sale, RIVERSIDE. Sat. & Sun. 9am-4pm. Contact www.chipchuckers.com.

Nov 8-9: OHIO. Dayton Carvers Guild Artistry in Wood Show and Competition, DAYTON (Dayton Exposition Center, Dayton International Airport, 3900 McCauley Dr., Northwood Blvd.). Sat. 10am-6pm & Sun. 10am-5pm. \$7 adm., \$10 for both days, children under 12 free and scouts in uniform free with adult. Contact Ralph Moeller, 937-372-7726, www.daytoncarvers.com.

Nov 8-9: WASHINGTON. Northwest Wood Carvers Association's Juried Show and Sale, PUYALLUP (Western Washington Fairgrounds). Sat. 10am-5pm & Sun. 10am-4pm. Adm. \$7, children under 12 free. Contact Greg Hewitt, 253-874-3164 www.woodcarvers.org.

Nov 9-10: MASSACHUSETTS. Wildlife Artisans Association's Wildlife Art & Carving Expo, TOPSFIELD (Topsfield Fairgrounds). Sat 10am-4pm & Sun. 9am-4pm. Contact Jim White, 978-768-7218, thewildlifeartisans.com.

Nov 14-16: MARYLAND. 38th Annual Waterfowl Festival, EASTON (40 S. Harrison St.). Fri. & Sat. 10am-6pm & Sun. 10am-4pm. Adm., Fri. & Sat. \$12, Sun. \$10, multi-day, \$24. Contact 410-822-4567, www.waterfowlfestival.org.

Nov 14-16: SOUTH CAROLINA. 20th Annual Piedmont Woodcarvers Sculpture & Designs in Wood Show, MAULDIN (Ray Hopkins Senior Center). Contact David Sikkelee, 864-458-7240, www.piedmontwoodcarvers.com.

Nov 14-16: SOUTH CAROLINA. Sculptures & Designs in Wood, MAULDIN (Mauldin Senior Center). \$2 adm. Contact 864-325-4883, dsikkelee@bellsouth.net.

Nov 22: FLORIDA. Central Florida Wood Carving Show sponsored by Deltona Woodcarvers Club, DELTONA (United Church of Christ, 1649 Providence Blvd.). 10am-4pm. \$2 adm, children under 12 free. Contact Gene Stephenson, 386-775-9321 www.deltonawoodcarvers.com.

Nov 28-30: CANADA: ONTARIO. Outaouais Wood Carvers Club's Canada's Capital Carving Competition in conjunction with the Ottawa Woodworking Show, OTTAWA (Lansdowne Park, Aberdeen Pavilion, Bank St.). www.owcarvers.com.

Nov 29-30: INDIANA. Tri-State Woodcarvers Show and Sell, EVANSVILLE (National Guard Armory). Sat 9am-5pm & Sun. 10am-4pm. \$2 adm. Contact Linda Allen, 812-867-5734, www.tristatecarvers.com.

Nov 29-30: MISSOURI. St. Louis Area Woodcarvers 18th Annual Woodcarving Show (Kirkwood Community Center, 111 S. Geyer Rd.). Sat. 10am-5pm & Sun. 10am-4pm. \$1 adm. Contact John Panhorst, 314-481-3419, piroshki@swbell.net.

■ DECEMBER

Dec 6: FLORIDA. Nature Coast Carving Club 11th Annual Show, INVERNESS (Citrus County Auditorium, Highway 41). \$2 adm. Contact 352-527-4561, dmelton6@tampabay.rr.com.

Dec 6-7: NORTH CAROLINA. Core Sound Decoy Festival, HARKERS ISLAND (Harkers Island Elementary School). \$8 adm. Contact 252-838-8818, info@decoyguild.com.

■ JANUARY

Jan 10-11: ARIZONA. Yuma Woodcarvers Show and Sale, YUMA (Readiness and Community Center, National Guard Armory, Arby Road and 24th St.). Sat. 9am-5pm & Sun. 9am-3pm. \$2 adm., children under 12 free. Contact Joe Cox, Joe.Cox@ci.yuma.az.us.

Jan 17: FLORIDA. Culture Club Woodcarvers annual show, CHARLOTTE (2280 Aaron St.). 10am-4pm. Free adm. Contact Bev Bacon, 941-764-6452.

Jan 17-18: FLORIDA. Sun Coast Woodcarvers 15th Annual Show, SEMINOLE (Seminole Recreation Center, 9100 113th St. N). 10am-4pm. \$5 adm. Contact John Roush, 272-398-0888, jroush2@mac.com.

Jan 24-25: FLORIDA. Southwest Florida Woodcarving/Turning Expo, FT. MYERS (Harborside Events Center, 1375 Monroe St.). Sat. & Sun. 9:30am-4pm. Contact John Franz, 239-768-6570, swfloridawoodcarvingexpo.com.

Jan 30: ARIZONA. Easy Bleeder's Woodcarving Show, APACHE JUNCTION (Superstition Springs RV Resort Ballroom, 702 S. Meridian Rd.). 11am-3pm. Free adm. Contact Bob Andersen, 480-380-3559.

Jan 30-31: TEXAS. Rio Grande Valley Woodcarvers 23rd Annual Show, PHARR (Pharr International Convention Center, 3000 N. Cage Blvd.). Fri. 10am-4pm & Sat. 10am-4pm. \$2 adm. Contact Dorothy, 956-581-2448.

Jan 31: FLORIDA. Space Coast Wood Carvers Annual Show, MELBORNE (Eau Gallie Civic Center, 1551 Highland Ave.). 10am-4pm. Contact Charles Graves, 321-453-6862, chasmo77@aol.com.

■ FEBRUARY

Feb 7-8: FLORIDA. Treasure Coast Woodcarvers 25th Annual Show, Sale, and Juried Competition, JENSEN BEACH (Vince Bocchino Community Center, Langford Park). Sat. & Sun. 9am-4pm. \$3 adm. Contact Russ Cox, 772-285-6402, rec42@aol.com.

Feb 7-8: IOWA. The Art of Woodcarving Show and Competition sponsored by the Cedar Valley Woodcarvers, CEDAR RAPIDS (Longbranch Hotel and Convention Center, 90 Twixtown Rd. NE). Sat. 9am-5pm & Sun. 10am-4pm. Free adm. Contact Maurie Vandewalle, 319-377-6520, vanlobo32@aol.com.

Feb 7-8: OHIO. Woodcarvers Den's 17th Annual Woodcarving Show and Sale, BELLEVUE (VFW Hall, Route 20). Sat. & Sun. 11am-5pm. Free adm. Contact Al Clark, 419-483-7495.

Feb 13-14: TEXAS. Chip-O-Tex Woodcarvers of Harlingen's annual show, HARLINGEN (Casa de Amistad, 1204 Fairpark Blvd.). Sat. & Sun. 9am-4pm. \$2 adm. Contact Alan Cowley, corriveaucowley@aol.com.

(Continued on page 88)



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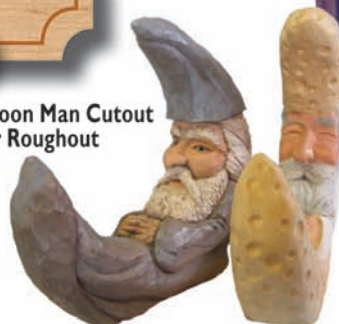
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Feb 14: CANADA: BRITISH COLUMBIA. Spirit of Wood Festival, PITT MEADOWS (Heritage Hall, 12460 Harris Rd.). Contact 604-460-8300, info@tmrpm.com.

Feb 14: FLORIDA. Indian River Woodcarvers Art and Sculpture Show, FORT PIERCE (Lakewood Park United Methodist Church, 5405 Turnpike Feeder Rd.). 9am-4pm. \$3 adm. Contact Joe Miller, 772-589-5824, irwoodcarvers@aol.com.

Feb 14-15: CALIFORNIA. California Open Wildlife Art Festival, SAN DIEGO (Liberty Station, NTC Promenard, Corky McMillion Events Center). Sat. 9:30am-4pm & Sun. 9am-4pm. \$5 adm., children under 12 free. Contact Bob Berry, 619-588-7141, bobberryfishcarvings@cox.net.

Feb 21: ARIZONA. Desert Woodcarvers Show and Sale, MESA (Mesa Centennial Center, 201 N. Center St.). 9am-5pm. \$5 adm., children under 14 free. Contact Nick Daly, 480-736-9434, dnicday@cs.com.

Feb 21: FLORIDA. Peace River Woodcarving Show, ARCADIA (Turner Center). Contact Bob Holderman, 863-491-0877, janieb1000@yahoo.com.

Feb 21: FLORIDA. Highland Wood Carvers Show, SEABRING (Seabring Civic Center). 10am-4pm. Donation adm. Contact Charles Thomas, 863-382-1697.

Feb 28-Mar 1: FLORIDA. Calusa Wood Carvers Club Show and Sale, HUDSON (Veterans Memorial Park, 14333 Hicks Rd.). Sat. 10am-4pm & Sun. 10am-3pm. \$3 adm. Contact David Gourley, 727-376-2180, Dave43@tampabay.rr.com.

■ MARCH

Mar 7: MISSISSIPPI. Pearl River Woodcarvers Guild's 16th Annual Show and Competition, JACKSON (Agricultural and Forestry Museum, 155 and Lakeland Dr.). 10am-5pm. Adm. \$4 adults, \$2 children, children under 12 and scouts free. Contact Willis Johnson, 601-824-0687, www.pearlriverwoodcarvers.org.

Mar 7: FLORIDA. Ridge Woodcarving Show, BARTOW (First Baptist Church, 410 E. Church St.) \$4 adm. Contact 863-665-5241, dulcimerdo@aol.com.

Mar 7-8: OHIO. Miami Valley Woodcarvers 28th Annual Show, MIDDLETOWN (Christ United Methodist Church). Sat. 10am-5pm & Sun. 12:30-5pm. Contact Lowell Dunn, 513-423-0822.

Mar 14-15: CALIFORNIA. Romona Country Carvers Show and Sale, SAN JACINTO (Valley Wide Sports Park, 901 W. Esplanade Ave.). \$2 donation at the door for Valley Wide Association. Contact Joe Peery, 951-767-1691, Jkpeery@gotmsky.com.

Mar 14-15: FLORIDA. Gulf Coast Woodcarvers 31st Annual Show, SARASOTA (Boys and Girls Club, 3100 Fruitville Rd.). Sat. & Sun. 9am-3pm. \$2 donation to benefit Boys and Girls Club. Contact Carl Bordner, 941-365-4252, traveler212@verizon.net.

Mar 14-15: WASHINGTON. Kitsap County Wood Carvers Juried Show, BREMERTON (West Side Improvement Club, 4109 West E St.). Free adm. Contact 360-990-7764, mmm2002@comcast.net.

Mar 14-15: MINNESOTA. Metro Chapter of the Minnesota Wood Carvers Association's Carving Show, BROOKLYN CENTER (Brookdale Mall, Highway 100). Sat. 10am-6pm & Sun. 11am-6pm. Free adm. Contact Roger McCullough, 763-427-8822, rogerm@iexposure.com.

Mar 20-21: MISSOURI. Kansas City Woodcarvers Show and Sale, LEES SUMMIT (John Knox Pavillion, 520 NW Murry Rd.). Fri. 10am-6pm and Sat. 10am-5pm. Contact Ed Zinger, 913-397-6992, zingo@comcast.net.

Mar 21: FLORIDA. Weeki Wachee Woodcarvers Annual Show and Sale, SPRING HILL (Weeki Wachee Senior Citizen Center, Tucan Trail & Susan Drive). 10am-4pm. \$1 adm. Contact Brian Feil, 352-835-4148, b.feil@yahoo.com.

Mar 21: NORTH CAROLINA. 2009 North Carolina Woodcarving Festival, RALEIGH (Klingspor's Woodworking Shop, 3141 Capital Blvd.). Free adm. Contact 919-876-0707, PRolfe@woodworkingshop.com.

Mar 21-22: MANITOBA, CANADA. Prairie Canada Carving Championship and Show, WINNIPEG (Victoria Inn, 1808 Wellington Ave.). Sat. 9am-4:30pm & Sun. 9:30am-4pm. Contact Ted Muir, 204-237-1385, www.prairiecanadacarvers.com.

Mar 25-29: FLORIDA. Florida Woodcarvers Roundup, TAMPA (Recreation Park). Various classes offered. Contact Jim O'Dea, 941-697-2002, www.geocities.com/podea_2000/.

Mar 27-28: UTAH. Great Salt Lake Woodcarvers Show & Competition, SALT LAKE CITY (Wheeler Historic Farm, 6351 South 900 East). Fri. 9am-7pm & Sat. 9am-5pm. Admission: \$4 adults, \$3 seniors, \$2 children. Contact Russ Long, groups.google.com/group/great-salt-lake-woodcarvers.

Mar 28-29: COLORADO. Pikes Peak Whittlers 26th Annual Show, Competition, and Sale, COLORADO SPRINGS (Shrine Club, 6 S. 33rd St.). Sat 10am-5pm & Sun. 10am-4pm. \$2 adm., children under 12 free with an adult. Contact Gary Fenton, 719-475-2139, gary.fenton@juno.com.

Mar 28-29: MINNESOTA. Rochester Woodcarvers 33rd Annual Show, ROCHESTER (Olmsted County Fairgrounds, 4H Building, 1508 Aune Drive SE). Free adm. Contact 507-285-1620, rochcarve@gmail.com.

Mar 28-29: OHIO. Expressions in Wood, CANTON (1001 Market Ave. N). \$4 adm. Contact 330-499-1576, pierrejol@sbcglobal.net.

Mar 28-29: ONTARIO. Niagara Woodcarvers 30th Annual Show and Competition, NIAGARA FALLS (Optimist Recreation Center, 4751 Dorchester Rd.). Sat. 10am-5pm & Sun. 11am-5pm. \$3 adm. Contact Warren D'Amboise, 905-354-8854, www.niagarawoodcarvers.ca.

Mar 28-29: PENNSYLVANIA. Mid-Atlantic "Artistry in Wood" show and competition, FAIRLESS HILLS (Bucks County Technical High School). Sat. 10am-5pm & Sun. 10am-4pm. Adm. \$5, under 12 free, \$1 off coupon on club's Website. Contact www.delvalwoodcarvers.com.

Mar 30: MICHIGAN. Flint Carvers 26th Annual Show and Competition, SWARTZ CREEK (American Legion Post 294, 2440 Morrish Rd.). 10am-4pm. Contact Ed. 810-266-4173.

■ APRIL

Apr 18-19: OHIO. Johnny Appleseed Woodcarvers 10th Annual Show, MANSFIELD (Richland County Fairgrounds, 700 N. Home Rd.). \$2 adm, \$1 seniors, children 15 and under free. Contact Tony Fox, 419-564-0727, mansfieldcarvers@hotmail.com.

Apr 18-19: INDIANA. Duneland Woodcarvers Show and Competition, PORTAGE (Woodland Park, 2100 Willowcreek Rd.). Sat. 10am-5pm & Sun. 10am-4pm. \$4 adm. for a 2-day pass, children under 12 free. Contact Dave Kings, 219-988-5610, www.dunelandcarvers.com.

(Continued on page 90)

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(Continued from page 88)

Apr 18-19: IOWA. Northeast Iowa Woodcarvers Club's 36th Annual Show, WATERLOO (Waterloo Center for the Arts, 225 Commercial St.). Sat. 1-5pm & Sun. 11am-4:30pm. Free adm. Contact Richard Hanson, 319-266-7009, NWIECarve@aol.com.

Apr 18-19: WASHINGTON. Quilceda Carvers 24th Artistry in Woods Show, MONROE (Evergreen Fairgrounds, Building 600). Sat. 10am-6pm & Sun. 10am-4pm. \$3 adm, children under 12 free. Contact Sandy Scism, 425-418-6592, www.quilcedacarvers.com.

Apr 19-25: CALIFORNIA. Oakhurst Wood Carvers Rendezvous, OAKHURST (Oakhurst Community Center). Contact 562-425-0732, jackaparks@aol.com.

Apr 25-26: OREGON. South-coast Woodcarvers 17th annual show and sale, NORTH BEND (North Bend Community Center, 2222 Broadway). Sat. & Sun. 9am-4pm. Free adm. Contact Rick Miller, 541-756-7068, lori.miller@charter.net.

■ MAY

May 2-3: NEW YORK. Southtowns Woodcarvers of Western New York's Annual Show and Sale, ELMA (Senior Citizen Center, 3007 Bowen Rd.). Sat. & Sun. 11am-5pm. Free adm. Contact Chuck Turner, 716-652-9243, chktnr@verizon.net.

Mat 2-3: ILLINOIS. 9th Annual Sculptures in Wood Show, Sale, and Contest sponsored by the Corn Belt Carving Club, BLOOMINGTON (Challenger Learning Center, 2901 E. Empire). Sat. 9am-5pm & Sun. noon-5pm. \$2 adm, children under 12 accompanied by an adult free. Contact Mike Hartzler, 309-662-4276, www.cornbeltcarving.com.

May 2-3: PENNSYLVANIA. Pittsburgh Fantasy in Woodcarving and Woodcraft Show, CASTLE SHANNON (Castle Shannon Volunteer Fire Department Social Hall, 3600 Library Rd.). Sat. 10am-5pm & Sun. 10am-4pm. Contact Walt Niedziela, 412-469-2903, pawaca@verizon.net.

May 16-17: KANSAS. Great Plains Wood Carvers Show and Sale, WICHITA (Cessna Activity Center, 2744 S. George Washington Blvd.). Sat. 10am-5:30pm & Sun. 11am-4pm. Contact Randy Landen, 316-788-0175, rlanden@prodigy.net.

May 23-25: IDAHO. 14th Annual Idaho Woodcarver's Jamboree, TWIN FALLS (College of Southern Idaho Campus). Contact Vic Otto, 208-375-8197, victotto@clearwire.net.

May 30-31: PENNSYLVANIA. Lancaster County Woodcarvers' 36th Annual Woodcarving & Wildlife Arts Festival, LANCASTER (NEW LOCATION: Farm and Home Center, 1383 Arcadia Rd.). Sat. 10am-5pm & Sun. 10am-4pm. \$5 adm. Contact Pete Kovarovic, 717-392-4814, www.lancarvers.com.

May 31-Jun 5: MISSOURI. 25th Annual Woodcarving Rendezvous, BRANSON (Compton Ridge Campground Convention Center). Various classes offered. Contact Ed Zinger, 913-397-6992, Zingo@comcast.net.

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Preparing Your Carving for Paint



Choose the right technique for a perfect finish

By Vicki Rhodes
Carving by Dennis Thornton

Many carvers paint their work with acrylic paints. Acrylic paints clean up with water while wet, dry quickly, and are waterproof when fully cured. For best results, and to ensure the longevity of your painted finish, seal your carving prior to painting.

Preparing for the sealer

The surface of the carving must be smooth and clean before you apply the sealer. If you sand your work, be sure to work your way up to at least 220-grit sandpaper. Remove all of the sanding dust using a soft brush or short bursts of canned air. The canned air helps remove dust in hard-to-reach areas. Do not use a tack cloth. Tack cloths can leave a residue that interferes with sealers, paints, and stains.

Sealing before a paint wash

A light sealer, such as Jo Sonja's clear glaze medium, helps prevent thin washes of paint or stain from blotching. The glaze seals the wood slightly and allows the wood to absorb the stain or wash evenly. Apply the clear glaze to a piece of scrap wood and allow it to dry. Apply a thin wash of acrylic paint. If the surface does not absorb the thinned color, the glaze sealed the surface too much, making it slick. Mix one part glaze with one part Jo Sonja flow medium, apply it to the scrap, and test the sealed area with thinned paint. Softer woods will absorb the sealer easily and require a thick sealer, while harder woods require you to thin the sealer more.

Decide which sealing mixture you prefer and apply it to your carving. Allow the mixture to dry and brush your fingers over the sealed surface. If the sealer raises the grain, sand any rough spots with 220-grit sandpaper. Apply your paint washes or stain.

Sealing before opaque paints

If you plan to use opaque paint to finish your carving, use a pallet knife to thoroughly mix one part Jo Sonja all-purpose sealer with two parts artist or background colors. You can use one color to apply a base coat to the entire carving or mix the sealer with different colors for the first coat in each area.

This method prepares the wood in one step and makes it easy to apply the final colors. Applying a base coat mixed with sealer is also useful if you plan to use a dry brush technique on the carving.

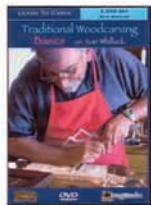
Whether you apply a single-color base coat or mix the sealer with various colors for different areas, apply the paint and sealer mixture with a brush. Make sure this initial coating is smooth. To make it easier to get a smooth coat, you can thin the mixture slightly with water and apply two thin coats. If you do not allow the base coat to dry between applications, the paint may lift.

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Choosing the Finish

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Acrylic Paints

Acrylic paint can be applied to a carving at full strength or thinned to produce a wash, which allows the wood grain to show through. Many carvers thin acrylic paint with water. While acrylic paint pigments appear to dissolve in water, the pigments are actually suspended in a type of liquid plastic called a polymer emulsion. The polymer prevents the pigments from dissolving, but the intensity and consistency of the paint can be diluted with water. Acrylic paints clean up with water when wet, but when the paint cures fully, it is waterproof. If you thin the paint more than 30% with water, the overall paint film loses strength. Experts recommend thinning the paint with one of the various mediums available (flow medium or extending medium for example) to preserve the strength of the finish. If using acrylic paint thinned with water, it is best to apply a clear lacquer or varnish finish to protect the paint.

Boiled Linseed Oil

Boiled linseed oil (BLO) is a combination of linseed oil and metallic driers. Pure linseed oil takes months to cure, but the driers in BLO help it cure much faster. Some carvers apply BLO to a carving to add a warm tone to the wood and enhance the grain. Other carvers use the oil to make thin washes of acrylic paint more vibrant. Mixed with oil paint, BLO is a popular antiquing medium.

Varnishes

Varnishes are created by cooking a curing oil, such as linseed or tung oil, with resins, such as polyurethane, and adding metallic drying compounds to speed up the curing time. Varnishes cure hard and are considered the most durable and protective commonly available finish. Varnishes can be difficult to apply with a brush because



they are thick and heavy. Many carvers use a spray polyurethane varnish on completed projects. Varnishes produce a glossy finish, but there are products available to dull the surface to create a semi-gloss or satin sheen.

Oil/Varnish Mixtures

Danish oil is an example of a finish where varnish is mixed with an oil to make it easy to apply. The oil allows the finish to penetrate into the wood while the varnish provides surface protection. Oil finishes warm up the tone of the wood and produce a protective film with a satin, semi-gloss, or gloss sheen, but it is much softer than the film produced with varnish alone.

Lacquer

To create a lacquer, manufacturers dissolve plastic-like substances in a solvent referred to as lacquer thinner. These plastic compounds, usually nitrocellulose or acrylic compounds, provide a quick-drying finish. The finish is hard, but still flexible and durable. Most woodworkers apply lacquer with a sprayer, while carvers opt for aerosol cans of lacquer, such as Deft. Lacquer thinner is toxic, volatile, and flammable, so wear a respirator during application. Lacquer produces sheens ranging from ultra matte to high gloss.

Wax

Wax is simple to apply, but doesn't add much protection to the wood. Wax dries very soft and dissolves in nearly any solvent, including the solvents in commercial furniture polish. Many woodworkers apply wax on top of a varnish or lacquer finish to add gloss and protect the finish from scuffs and scratches. Some carvers use colored wax or shoe polish wax to antique their completed projects.

What finish do you use the most?



Oil finish (BLO, tung oil, etc.)	21%
Oil finish followed by lacquer	6%
Oil finish followed by varnish	3%
Acrylic paint followed by oil	25%
Acrylic paint followed by lacquer	13%
Acrylic paint followed by varnish	25%
Acrylic paint followed by wax	2%
Wax/shoe polish	3%
Watercolors	2%

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

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