CRAFT A JOLLY ASSORTMENT OF PROJECTS

WOODCARVING ILLUSTRATED

WINTER 2026 ■ ISSUE 117

18 Engaging Lessons and Patterns

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- *Rustic Nativity*
- *Tree and Star Decoration*
- *Tiny Cocoa Mug*

Winter Whittles

TIPS FOR CARVING ON THE CORNER

Seasonal Carves: 6 Unique Santas



PLUS

Skiing Gnome

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By Dave Stetson

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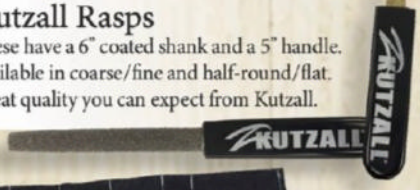

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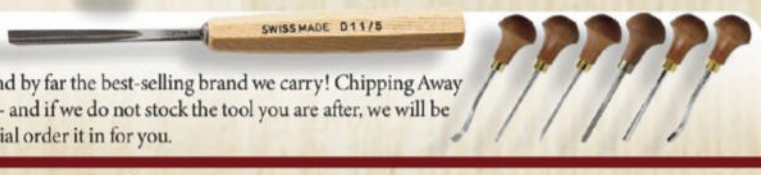

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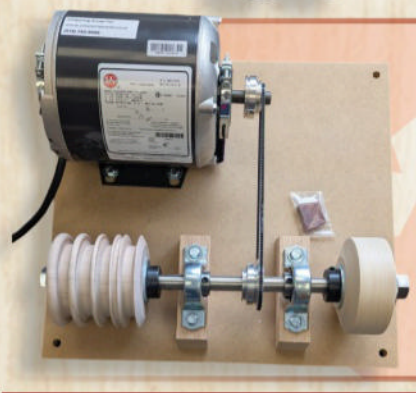

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Find these free extras at

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Free Project– Want more holiday ornaments? Carve Larry Green's "Happy Tree Ornament" at woodcarvingillustrated.com/happy-tree-ornament/.

Club Information– Discover carving communities in your area in our Carving Clubs section.

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Jolly Good!

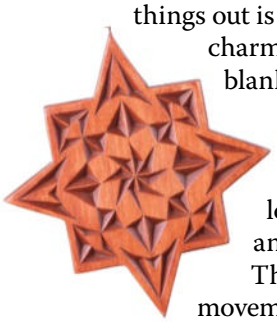


When talking to *WCI* contributors about their projects and ideas this past summer, many mentioned that they were already deeply immersed in Santa carvings for the upcoming holiday season. They joked about it being 90° where they were while their thoughts were focused on the North Pole. We all know that Santa has been a beloved folklore figure for centuries with a popularity that spans the globe. But I particularly love the enthusiasm and sense of wonder that the carving community brings to the Santa mythos. I guess if carvers had a mascot, it would be Santa.

The popularity of Santa as a carving subject makes sense. Although his shape is fashioned after a human, there is no single true and correct Santa because his image lives in people's minds. We have a basic sense of him being a larger fellow with long white hair and a beard, but his appearance lends itself to multiple interpretations that can also be modified according to a carver's skill level. The universal popularity of St. Nick, coupled with the flexibility of putting one's own spin on the character, makes Santa an irresistible figure. With that in mind, this issue of *WCI* features six unique Santas to usher in the holiday season.



Starting things out is Dave Stetson's expressive cover project that features a classic Santa who looks like he's trudging through the Christmas Eve snow (page 38). Roxana Cristean's "Sleepy Santa" has a cozier feel and exquisite paint job that sees him tucking in for the night (page 59). Blake Lunsford gives us an impeccable Santa ornament that's a lesson in perfectly carving on the corner (page 19). Then we have two undercover Santas who show what he does after the holidays with Russell Scott's highly detailed "Chef Santa" and Joe McMullen's humorous "Businessman Santa" (pages 27, 49). Rounding things out is newcomer Kelsea Shelton-Heath who coaxes a charming Santa out of a tiny precisely measured basswood blank (page 66).



Continuing the winter theme, this issue boasts several festive projects that make great gifts and decorations. Fill the tree with Charlene Lynum's lovely chip-carved ornaments or make a standing tree and star decoration from Cody Bonham (pages 46, 41). Then break the speed record by incorporating extreme movement into your carvings with Graham Hannah's "Skiing Gnome," or carve a cool twist on a wood spirit with Peter Hardy's "Ice Spirit" (pages 14, 24).

As you hunker down for the winter, we at *WCI* hope you enjoy this issue packed with some iconic images of the season. From the staff of *WCI* and our parent company, Fox Chapel Publishing, we wish you all happy holidays and a prosperous new year.

Happy carving!



Dorissa Bolinski

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Let's Give It a Shot

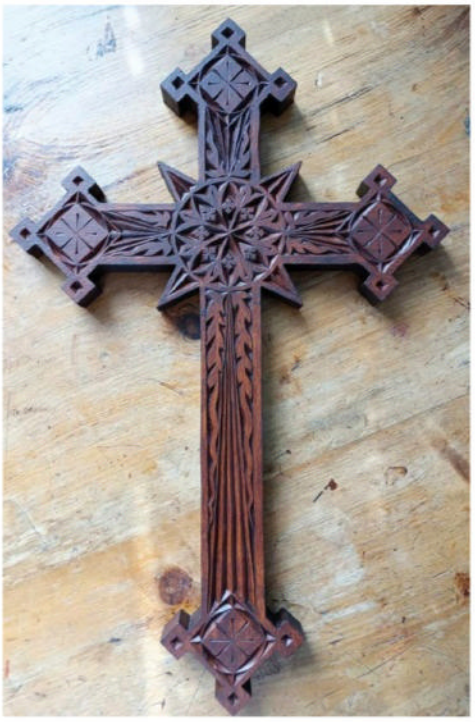
While looking through Issue #116, I came across Tony Tanev's "Winged Pumpkin" and it immediately caught my eye. I thought, "Hey, let's give it my best shot!"

Eric Kehl *Leesville, S.C.*

Tree of Life Cross

I have been chip carving for 14 years, having taken classes with Wayne Barton and Marty Leenhouts. By incorporating Wayne's rosette design and having design help from my brother, Fr. Ioan Gotia, I crafted this cross to represent the Tree of Life.

Andrei Gotia
Cluj-Napoca, Romania



Light the Way

I recently ordered some back issues of *WCI* and came across Aaron and Andy Mayer's "Lighthouse In-the-Round" from Issue #103. While working on this carving, I found out about micro lights and drilled a hole in the bottom and installed one at the top to give this carving some more life.

Jim Smaardyk
Port Charlotte, Fla.





Fox on the Run

My wife and I joined a local carving group at our community senior center in the spring of 2026. Having carved simple spoons and comfort birds, I saw a carving in *WCI* Issue #113 of Wouter de Bruijn's "Arctic Fox." I decided to take the challenge on. With the pictorial instructions that he provided and some suggestions from fellow carvers, I completed my fox, which shows movement with this frosty creature on the run.

David Schlarbaum *Newberg, Ore.*



Santa's Best Friend

I've been carving for about five years and decided to do my own spin on Dwayne Gosnell's "Curly" Santa caricature. I ended up making Santa smaller and carved him a polar bear companion. I love Dwayne's work and love putting my own spins on his roughouts.

Tracy Sodders
Palmyra, Ind.

Cottonwood Castle

I began carving six years ago with just a hatchet on a stump. I began experimenting with cottonwood bark carving and created this whimsical house that I call "Twin Towers Castle." I ended up making the windows and doors from two-ply veneer.

James Wilcheck
Rockford, Mich.







Folks Around Here

I recently picked up *WCI* contributor Mike Shipley's *Whittling Country Folk, Revised Edition* and ended up carving all 12 carvings in the book. Such a fun project!

Danny Thomas *Oxford, N.C.*

It's Alive!



When I received Issue #116, I was immediately drawn to Pat Coffey's "Frankenstein Caricature." After copying the pattern, I shrunk it down to fit on a 2"-by-3"-by-7"-piece of basswood. I roughed it out and had it carved in less than three days. I did unfortunately carve too much at the right hand and lost his thumb. I wanted to add a little more to him, so I carved a battery and some clamps, as well as a cobblestone base. To add more texture, I added moss to the base and wires for the jumper cables. I had a lot of fun with this.

James Bruce McIntyre *Fort Worth, Texas*

We love hearing about the carvings that readers like you create! If you tried your hand at one of our projects, put your own spin on an existing design, or created something original, send us an email at editors@woodcarvingillustrated.com. Please include your name, where you live, high-res photos, and a brief description of the piece.

Brian Pierson *Oregon City, Ore.*

Brian Pierson's woodcarving journey began after seeing a trout carving by artist Franz Dutzler. After seeing that the purchase price for the trout was out of his price range, Brian came up with another way to obtain the carving—make one of his own! "I got into woodcarving simply to try and create scenes that I enjoy looking at and to tell stories with my pieces," he said. Before he begins a project, Brian likes to visualize the type of fish and the complete layout of the piece, which helps him determine where to place wood supports to add movement and depth to the fish. See more of Brian's work on his website at https://piersoncarving.wixsite.com/my-site-7.





Trent Humphreys
Derby, England

During the COVID-19 lockdown, Trent Humphreys, also known as The Yorkshire Woodcarver, found himself looking for a hobby to occupy his hands and time. Having been a pencil portrait artist for many years, woodcarving allowed him to take his fascination with the human face and features from paper to wood. "Carving gave me the opportunity to take something I've enjoyed for years and explore it in a completely different way, bringing those faces to life in three dimension," he said. See more of Trent's work @the_yorkshire_woodcarver on Instagram.



Ryan Wood *Hebden Bridge, England*

After trying out a whittling kit his wife bought for him while on bed rest, Ryan Wood instantly took to the craft. Ryan soon combined his love for woodcarving with his interest in mythology and folklore. "I love reading stories from around the world and how communities influence them, which provides an unlimited source of inspiration for my carvings," he said. Although he prefers carving with just one knife, Ryan also uses tools like chainsaws to carve his larger pieces. See more of Ryan's work @woodbynaturecarving on Instagram.

Share Your Latest Work!

Send a professional print or digital image (300 dpi minimum) with 100 words about you and your piece. Include your hometown, the name of the pattern maker (if applicable), and a list of wood and materials used. Send to Artists to Watch, *Woodcarving Illustrated*, 903 Square Street, Mount Joy, PA 17552, or email editors@woodcarvingillustrated.com.

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coming features



Carve one or more hilarious bird caricatures that make great shelf sitters or can hang out on their own fence

Look for these projects in an upcoming issue!



A festive floral chip-carved project sets the scene for spring



This charming fox with large eyes and a fluffy tail is too cute to resist

Find the Fox Hunt winners on Page 76!

Keep Your Knife in the Wood

By Blake Lunsford

Editor's Note: This is the first of a new short series where we will invite some of our renowned artists to talk about something important they've learned on their woodcarving journey or to just share an expert tip that readers might find enlightening.

With the volume of resources available to the average woodcarver, there is no reason that progress can't be accomplished if the carver puts in the time to learn and improve. With the advancement of computer technology, woodcarvers have unlimited resources at their fingertips to guide their journey. These include instructional videos, live demonstrations through woodcarving meetings, podcasts used for motivation and encouragement, and endless visual resources for reference. From these resources, we can order the best quality carving wood, purchase the sharpest knives and gouges, and buy the most vibrant paint on the market. From pretreatment techniques to finishing techniques, antiquing and waxing, it's all available to us. You can spend as little or as much as you want to set yourself up for success, but none of this matters if you don't **keep your knife in the wood**.

The explosion of social media has given carvers the ability to interact with each other and discuss carving tips, tricks, and techniques. What has taken me 20+ years to learn, some newer carvers are discovering at a rapid pace due to the resources available. If you study woodcarving and social media posts, you'll find that there is a direct correlation between the progress someone is making and the amount of time they spend carving. You can tell this from the number of carvings they produce and the improvement of quality over time. It's not enough to just talk about carving and claim to be the best, want to be a teacher, or feel like you have the best advice for new carvers. You must spend time honing your craft, developing your skills, and creating your own style. Over time, your style will be recognizable and truly unique. Until then, there is nothing wrong with learning from others, applying techniques and tips, and incorporating what someone else is doing into your own carvings. Try new things, push your limits, allow yourself to fail. Through this process, you will find that your skills and confidence grow tremendously.

> **"Try new things, push your own limits, allow yourself to fail. Through this process, you will find that your skills and confidence will grow tremendously."**

We are all on this woodcarving journey together. I encourage you to share your work, encourage each other, participate in classes, help new carvers to grow the community, and enjoy the process. Those are the things that make this the best hobby and art form in the world. But beyond all of that, remember that in order to improve, you must **keep your knife in the wood**.





One of Blake's early Santa ornaments compared to his Buffalo Plaid Santa project on Page 19.



Blake Lunsford has been carving caricatures for over 21 years. He teaches caricature carving and painting throughout the United States. Blake is the founder of the International Association of Wood Carvers and is a member of the Caricature Carvers of America. Blake lives with his wife in Bristol, Tenn. Find out more about Blake and his carvings at lunsfordcarvings.com.

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Victorinox Swiss Army Knife Whittling Book, Updated Gift Edition

By Chris Lubkemann

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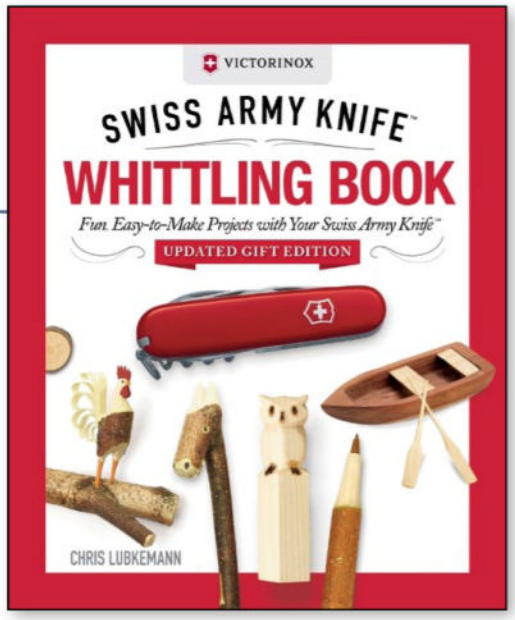

With just a knife and a piece of wood, whittling possibilities are endless. Author and world-famous whittler Chris Lubkemann shows how to transform a fallen twig or branch into a an interesting object in his new book *Victorinox Swiss Army Knife Whittling Book, Updated Gift Edition,* which includes 43 useful and whimsical projects and countless whittling tips.



Victorinox Swiss Army Knife Whittling Book, Updated Gift Edition opens with a brand-new gallery of Chris Lubkemann's found wood creations, ranging from anniversary burls, driftwood sailboats, and his smallest carved rooster that earned him a Guinness World Record certificate. The book then moves to an introductory section detailing the history of the world-famous Victorinox® Swiss Army Knife™. This new edition also has the most up-to-date information on the latest Swiss Army Knife™ products.

The book then segues to a Getting Started section that provides an overview on essential information and tools needed before diving into your first whittle. From choosing the right pocketknife to evaluating twigs and branches, Chris discusses the ideal characteristics for your whittling materials and tools. The section also details sharpening and honing techniques, basic cutting tips, and additional tool recommendations.

The project section is divided into four categories: easy utensils and tools, toys, branch animals, and curl creations. Each main project includes a complete materials and tools list, comprehensive step-by-step instructions, and high-quality photos. This section also includes bonus projects that are variations of the main project steps. The book concludes with a simple but stunning project chapter that highlights using interesting pieces of wood for your whittles.

Victorinox Swiss Army Knife Whittling Book, Updated Gift Edition showcases how to choose and carve found wood into one-of-a-kind creations. Discover and whittle your next handmade treasure with some wood from the backyard, a trusted pocketknife, and a comfy spot in nature!



Ordering Information

This book is available at foxchapelpublishing.com.

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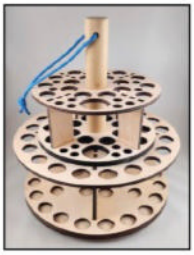

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Skiing Gnome

Feel the wind in your beard with this high-flying speedster

By Graham Hannah

Skiing is one of my favorite activities in the winter. I wanted to create a gnome that depicted the thrill of making a high-speed turn in the snow, with an emphasis on creating motion in this piece. This is an intermediate project that places a focus on the details of the beard to assist in creating the illusion of movement. The gnome is carved from a single piece of basswood with the skis made separately. The poles are shortened shish-kabab skewers. I added graphics to the skis and texture to the snow, but both elements could easily be painted. Feel free to change different elements to make this project your own!

Getting Started

Refer to the pattern to mark out the front profile of the gnome or transfer it to the blank using carbon paper. Then use a band saw to cut out the front profile. Transfer the ski pattern to the other blank and set that blank aside for now.



1 **Rough out the head and beard.** Use a carving knife to shape the beard so that the outer ends are well behind the gnome's head. Then use a 9/16" (14mm) #9 gouge to remove material from behind the gnomes head. Leave the hat intact at the top so it looks like it's flailing in the wind.





2 **Establish the main features.** Use a ¼" (6mm) 70° V-tool to begin forming the main features of the carving, which include the hat, nose, arms, and the bottom of the jacket. Using a carving knife, start undercutting the hat at the back. This will give the perception that the force of the wind on the beard is pulling the hat away from the shoulders.





3 **Detail the beard.** Use a ⅛" (3mm) #11 gouge and a detail knife to add texture to the beard and mustache. Layer strands of the beard to give it depth and show that different strands are different lengths. Avoid straight lines because the strands weave from the front of the gnome's face to their end points at the back of the carving. Finish the moustache off with the ¼" (6mm) 70° V-tool for additional texture.





4 **Add clothing details and carve the hands.** Use the ⅛" (3mm) #11 gouge to texture the cuffs of the jacket and sleeves. Using the ¼" (6mm) 70° V-tool and detail knife, add details to the gloves including the thumbs and fingers, which are in a fist to grip the poles. Then use a 3⁄16" (5mm)-dia. bit to drill holes for the ski poles in the mitts. Add cuffs to the pants and shape the boots using the detail knife and ¼" (6mm) 70° V-tool. *Note: Remove wood from under the toe of the left foot so that the carving leans forward, adding to the movement of the gnome.* Then use the detail knife to add wrinkles to the pants and to undercut the jacket, beard, hat, and anywhere else that needs additional shadows.



5 **Make the skis.** Use the 9⁄16" (14mm) #9 gouge to thin out the skis and to create curved tips on the front and back. Refine the shape with the detail knife.

Painting and Finishing

Wash the carving thoroughly with dish soap, using a toothbrush to scrub away any dirt or pencil marks. Then prep the carving for painting with boiled linseed oil. I prefer this method since I like the way paint applies after the wood is treated with the oil.

Using watered down acrylic paints, start painting with the light colors and work your way to the darker shades. Use vanilla white for the trim on the jacket and the pom-pom on the hat. For the beard, use a combination of vanilla white, gray, and wrought iron to create a gradient of colors. Keep the darker wrought iron in the shadowed areas and closer to the face. Lighten the beard and the hair strands as they get further from the face using the gray and white.



MATERIALS

- Basswood, 2" (5.1cm) thick: gnome, 4" x 6" (10.2cm x 15.2cm)
- Basswood, ¼" (6mm) thick: skis, 4" x 6" (10.2cm x 15.2cm)
- Shish-Kabob skewers: 2 each
- Pencil or marker
- Carbon paper (optional)
- Boiled linseed oil
- Acrylic paints, such as FolkArt®: Santa red, titanium white, wrought iron; such as DecoArt®: ocean blue, ultra deep blue; such as Craftsmart®: black, gray, vanilla
- Dish soap
- Wood glue
- Finish, such as clear acrylic
- Decal paper, such as Waterslide (optional)
- Faux craft snow (optional)
- Base (optional)

TOOLS

- Band saw
- Knives: detail and roughout
- #9 gouge: 9⁄16" (14mm)
- #11 gouge: ⅛" (3mm)
- V-tool: ¼" (6mm) 70°
- Drill with bit: 3⁄16" (5mm)-dia.
- Toothbrush
- Paintbrushes: assorted

The author used these products for the project. Substitute your choice of brands, tools, and materials as desired.

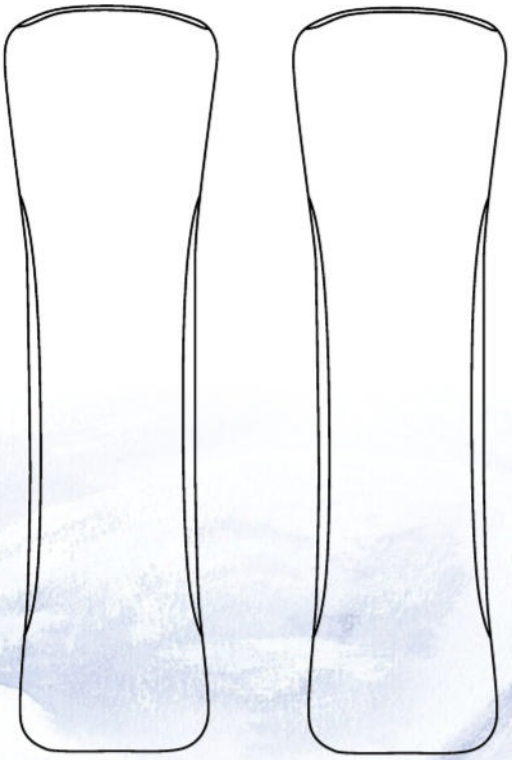


Graham Hannah started woodcarving in 2020 and lives in Alberta, Canada with his wife and two children. Carving is a hobby for Graham and is a great stress reliever that he does in his spare time. Graham completes most of his carvings to be gifted away. You can see more of Graham's work at @whittle_gram on Instagram.

Paint the jacket with Santa red. The hat and pants can be painted with ultra deep blue and ocean blue. Use the darker blue in the shadow areas and the light blue where light would hit the hat. Finish the boots by painting them black. Drybrush the carving with titanium white to bring out the highlights. Then paint the poles and skis in your choice of colors. *Note: I created graphics for the skis using AI, and then stuck the graphics to the skis using Waterslide decal paper.*

Assemble the carving. Using wood glue, attach the skis and poles and allow the glue to dry. If desired, you can affix the carving to a base. *Note: A base will allow the gnome to stand if he is a little wobbly, and it can be decorated with faux craft snow.* Apply a clear matte acrylic finish when the carving is dry. If desired, a commercial snow texture can be sparingly applied to different parts of the gnome for extra detail.

Skiing Gnome Patterns



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Skiing Gnome Patterns



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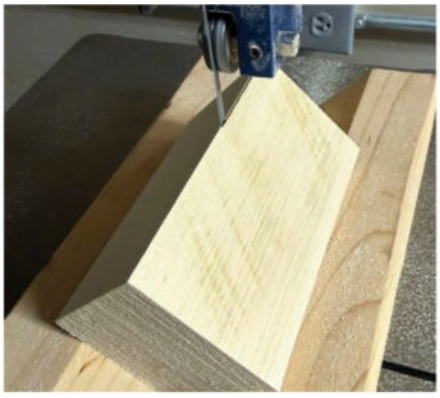
Buffalo Plaid Santa Ornament

A fluid beard adds movement to this expert carving

By Blake Lunsford

Each year I carve several Santa ornaments and specifically try to paint their hats a little differently than others I have seen. Santas are one of the caricatures I enjoy carving most because they bring joy to people. A few years ago, I was having a difficult time deciding on color schemes and sought advice from my wife who is good at determining what trends are popular. That particular year buffalo plaid seemed to be everywhere. So, I decided to paint a Santa with a buffalo plaid hat that looked like the pattern on some wrapping paper she bought.



Getting Started

This ornament will be carved on the corner, so begin by using a band saw to cut the basswood blank on the diagonal down the middle. Then use a carving knife to remove the sharp edges on the front and sides of the blank. Refer to the pattern and leave the front edge of the triangle the width that you want the ball of the nose to be. Then draw the arch of the fur for the hat about ⅓ of the way down from the top of the wood. This should allow room to shape the top of the hat while leaving enough wood for the tail of the hat and the pom-pom.







1 **Rough out the hat.** Using a ⅜" (10mm) 45° soft V-tool, outline the fur and cut in the tail of the hat and pom-pom. Remove wood from underneath the bottom and above the top of the fur to make it stand out from the face. Then use the knife to round over the top of the hat and give it some shape, recessing it back from the fur.



2 **Set the nose.** Determine where the tip of the nose will be and draw a circle in that area using a pencil. *Note: You will not remove the circle as you carve the nose.* Using the knife, remove a triangle chip underneath the circle to identify the bottom of the nose.



3 **Rough out the face.** Consider the slope of the nose and identify where the eyes will go. Using the knife, cut up from above the ball of the nose by making a scoop cut up to the forehead stopping at the hat fur. Then remove 45° chips from the bottom of each side of the nose to give it some shape.

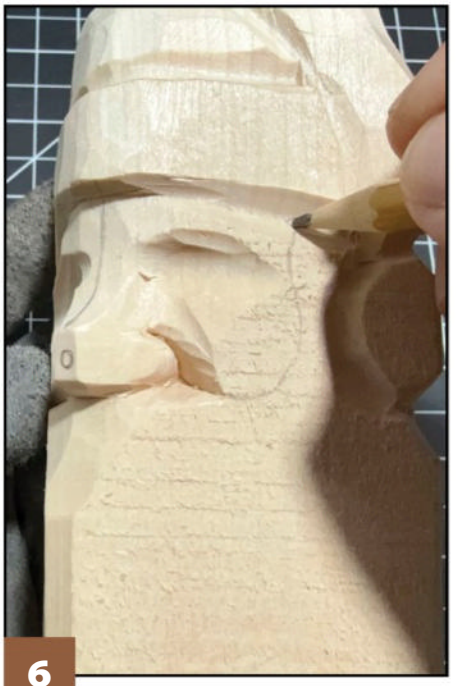




4 **Set the eyes and define the nose.** Draw a centerline for the face. Then use a ⅜" (10mm) #9 gouge to create eye channels on each side of the line. *Note: I slant the eyes down a bit from the middle to give the face a little movement and character.* Use the same gouge to define the nose by cutting a groove from the outside corner of the nose up to the inside corner of the eye channel. Use a slicing cut by laying the knife on its side and cutting from the outside of the nose up to the bridge to help thin down the nose.



5 **Create the wings of the nose.** Invert the ⅜" (10mm) #9 gouge and place it on the outside corner of the nose. Lay it at the angle of the nose and push into the wood at that angle to create the wing. Turn the gouge back over and carve back to that cut to remove a chip, allowing for the wing to be exposed. Repeat on the other side.





6 **Define the facial features.** Using the knife, remove a triangle chip on the outside corner of the wings of the nose to create a shadow. The corner of that triangle will be where the cheek should begin. Pencil in the cheek area at the corner of the triangle up to the temple area. Then use the ⅜" (10mm) 45° soft V-tool to follow the line up to the temple area continuing to the fur of the hat to help define those areas and separate the face from the hair. *Note: This should be accomplished in one cut.*



7 **Set the moustache.** Pencil in the moustache. Then use the ⅜" (10mm) 45° soft V-tool to cut a groove underneath the moustache and carry it right around the cheek into that same groove cut in Step 6. *Note: This cut will help curl the moustache around the cheeks.*



8 **Carve the mouth.** Using the knife, separate the moustache by cutting in a triangle chip. Then remove some wood below the triangle chip to create the opening of the mouth. Then create lips by using the ⅜" (10mm) 45° soft V-tool to carve a "U" underneath the opening.



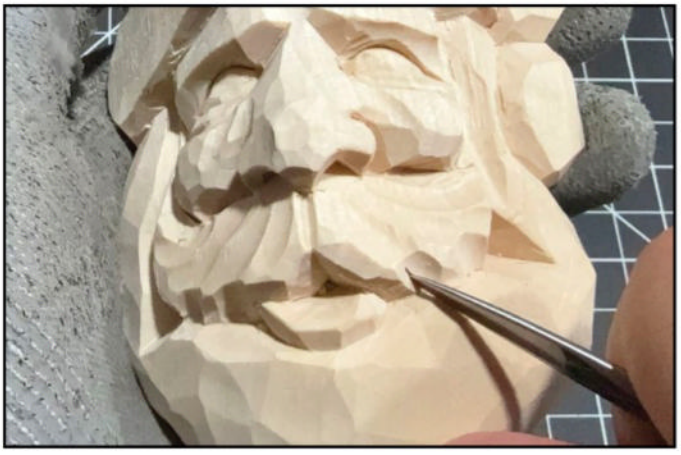
9 **Rough out the bottom of the beard.** Use the knife to remove wood from the bottom of the block to make room for the beard. Carve off the sharp corners at the bottom, and then round the wood underneath the mouth.





10 **Carve the eyes.** Use a ⅛" (3mm) micro gouge to carve deep in the inside corners of each eye, which will be the deepest part of the eye. Then use the knife to cut in an arch starting at the inside corner of the eye and continuing to the outside corner. Turn the carving over and cut back to that arch and remove a sliver of wood to define the top of the eyeball and separate it from the lid. Next, cut a line that goes from the inside corner of the eyeball and meets up with the outside corner to create the bottom of the eye. Remove another sliver of wood from that cut and round the eyeball down to the bottom eyelid. *Note: This sets up the area where you will paint the eyeballs.*





11 **Define the moustache.** Use the ⅜" (10mm) #9 gouge to shape the moustache hair starting from the outside tips of the hair, carving it back toward the nose on each side. Then use the same gouge to break the ends of the moustache and use the knife to carve triangle chips that give the moustache ends some sharp points.





12 **Carve the beard.** Create flow and texture in Santa's beard using the ⅜" (10mm) 45° soft V-tool. Make some initial "S" shaped cuts starting on one side of the mouth and carving them around to the other side of the beard for movement. After creating the initial flow, break up any flat places that are on the beard area by carving additional "S" curves. Then use a ⅜" (10mm) #6 gouge and a ⅛" (3mm) #11 gouge to continue creating detail in the hair. Add some depth to the beard by carving inside of the grooves you have already created, cutting out a wedge of wood using the knife to add shadows. Next, use the ⅛" (3mm) micro gouge to carve in some eyebrows, always being sure to carve them toward the nose.

Painting and Finishing

I pretreat my carvings with boiled linseed oil by applying it with a foam brush and immediately wiping it off. Prior to painting, use a wash of burnt sienna to shade all the deep creases and crevices to help with shadowing. Paint the face, beard, hat trim, and pom-pom with thinned down acrylic paints, referring to the Paint Notes below for specific colors. Paint the red base of the hat. Then use a wide flat brush to paint the black plaid lines. When finished painting, allow the carving to dry and seal it with spray acrylic or sealer of choice and allow it to dry overnight. Then apply Howard Feed-N-Wax®, let it soak in for at least 20 minutes, and wipe off the excess using a dry paper towel. Next, buff the carving to a soft sheen using a horsehair or shoe brush. Add a screw eye to the top of the hat for hanging the ornament.

Paint Notes

Beard: antique white (3), titanium white (2), yellow ochre (2)

Hat: charcoal (3), cherry red (2), tomato spice (3)

Eyes: charcoal (3), French gray blue (2), winter blue (2)

Shadow Shading: burnt sienna (2)

Blush: cadmium red light hue (1)

1 Academy®
2 Americana®
3 Ceramcoat®

materials & **tools**

MATERIALS

- Basswood, 2½" (6.4cm) square: 5" (12.7cm) long
- Pencil
- Finish, such as spray acrylic
- Boiled linseed oil
- Acrylic paints, such as Academy®: cadmium red light hue; such as Americana®: burnt sienna, cherry red, French gray blue, titanium white, winter blue, yellow ochre; such as Ceramcoat®: antique white, charcoal, tomato spice
- Howard Feed- N-Wax®
- Paper towels
- Screw eye: ¼" (6.4cm)-dia.

TOOLS

- Band saw
  Carving knife: 2" (51mm)
- #6 gouge: ⅜" (10mm)
- #9 gouge: ⅜" (10mm)
- #11 gouge: ⅛" (3mm)
- Soft V-tool: ⅜" (10mm)
- Micro gouge, such as Dockside: ⅛" (3mm)
- Paintbrushes: assorted
- Shoe brush
- Foam brush

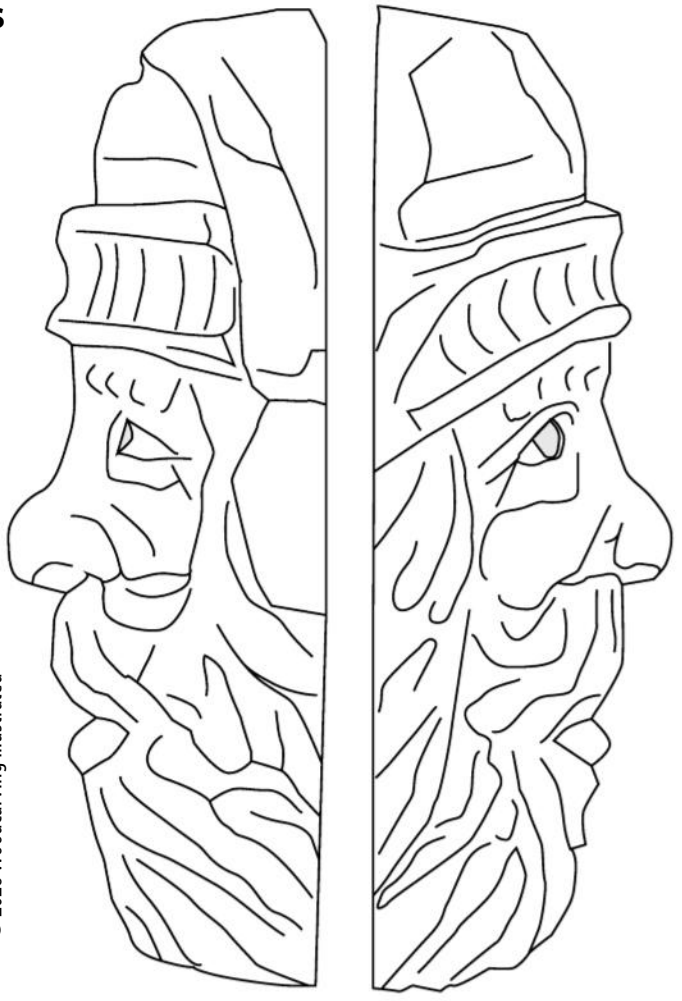
The author used these products for the project. Substitute your choice of brands, tools, and materials as desired.



Blake Lunsford has been carving caricatures for over 21 years. He teaches caricature carving and painting throughout the United States. Blake is the founder of the International Association of Wood Carvers and is a member of the Caricature Carvers of America. Blake lives with his wife in Bristol, Tenn. Find out more about Blake and his carvings at lunsfordcarvings.com.

Buffalo Plaid Santa Ornament Patterns





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Ice Spirit

Carve a cool twist on the traditional protector of the forest

By Peter Hardy

Since discovering my love of whittling, I have always been enamored by wood spirits with their wise, all-knowing eyes and wispy beards. The wood spirit also offers a lot of versatility and opportunities for letting your creative juices flow. From carving happy, joyful spirits to grumpy, frowning curmudgeons, the fun never ends. I started to wonder what else could be done within this style, and I got the idea of carving "ice spirits" by adding a few strokes of blue and white paint. I like to imagine this guy peeking out from in between an ancient glacier, watching the world grow and change around him.

Getting Started

Refer to the pattern and mark the major landmarks for the face, such as the eyes and nose, on a corner of the blank. I aim for a blend of realism and caricature, so feel free to accentuate or exaggerate certain features as desired.



1 **Rough out the area for the nose and eyes.** Use a carving knife to make a deep stop cut under the nose, and then carve up to the stop cut to from below the nose. Remove some wood above the nose using a series of push cuts. Next, use a ⅜" (10mm) #9 gouge to remove wood from either side of the nose. Then use the same gouge to scoop out some wood to make the eye sockets.





3 **Carve the face.** Draw the main outline of the face including the moustache, beard, cheeks, and forehead. Run the knife along those lines a few times to create deep stop cuts. Then carve up to the lines. While you are carving, keep in mind that the face should look as if it's embedded in the wood. Spend time shaping the cheeks and rounding off all harsh edges on the facial features. If desired, use 120-grit sandpaper to help smooth the features.



2 **Form the eyes.** Draw a line across the eye sockets to help ensure the eyes are level, symmetrical, and correctly proportioned to the nose. Form the upper eyelid by using a ⅛" (3mm) micro U-gouge to carve an oval-shaped mound above the pencil line. Then repeat this step below the pencil line.



4 **Define the face.** Use your choice of gouges to create nostrils and nose flares. Then add eyebrows using the gouges, and smooth out any imperfections with the knife.



5 **Detail the eyes.** Refer to the pattern and draw the eye details. When you're happy with the design, run the knife along the pencil marks and start to gently relieve the wood. Carefully shape the eyeball with small, delicate cuts.



6 **Carve the ice.** Sketch out the ice pattern on the wood around the face in a blocky and random pattern. Use the knife to begin carving out sections of the ice pattern with a series of stop cuts and paring cuts that remove slithers of wood. Round off the edges of each block to create an ice cube effect.





7 **Add the final details.** Use your choice of micro V-tools and U-gouges to create patterns and details on the hair and to add wrinkles. Refine the ice by carving little slits in the ice cubes to indicate a natural splitting effect in the ice.

Painting & Finishing

I finished the carving with a thin coat of mineral oil, allowing it to dry overnight before painting. Begin painting by applying a basecoat of medium blue acrylic paint. Then use very diluted white acrylic paint to slowly build up layers to achieve an icy-blue color. Use full strength white paint and a fine bristle brush to add highlights on the edges of the ice. Allow to dry, and then highlight the beard and eyebrows with a heavier coat of white. Paint the eyes using full strength white and blue for the iris and white of the eyes. Paint the pupil black and add a white eye highlight.



materials & **tools**

MATERIALS

- Basswood 2" (5.1cm) square: 6" (15.2) long
- Pencil
- Sandpaper: 120-grit
- Mineral oil
- Acrylic paints, such as Citadel®: abaddon black, banharroth blue, white scar

TOOLS

- Carving knife, such as BeaverCraft: 2" (5.1cm) long
- #9 gouge, such as BeaverCraft: ⅜" (10mm) sweep
- Micro U-gouges, such as Dockyard: ⅛" (3mm), 3⁄16" (5mm)
- Micro V-tools, such as Dockyard: 1⁄16" (1.6mm), 1⁄16" (2mm)
- Paintbrushes: assorted, fine bristle

The author used these products for the project. Substitute your choice of brands, tools, and materials as desired.



Peter Hardy is a woodcarver from the South of England. He's a family man who splits his time between playing with his four-year-old daughter and carving wood spirits and the occasional Santa. Peter doesn't sell his carvings, but prefers to put them on a shelf in his office where they can smile down upon him. See more of Peter's work on Instagram @p.j.hardwood.

Ice Spirit Pattern



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Chef Santa

Bake a batch of Christmas cheer with a jolly cook who's an expert in the kitchen

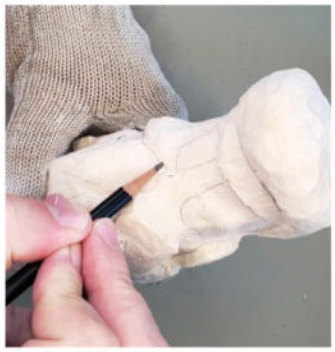
By Russell Scott





Some Christmas traditions begin when lights go up and Christmas music starts playing on the radio. In my house, Christmas begins when the cookie recipes come out. That warm holiday feeling inspired Cookie Chef Santa. This undercover Santa had traded in his red suit for a chef's uniform with a cookbook tucked close and wooden spoon ready. He looks as if he really knows his way around the kitchen!

Getting Started



This figure is carved from one of my roughouts. Alternately, you can cut out the shape from a basswood block by copying the front and side patterns onto the wood and cutting out both views on a band saw. Pencil in the major landmarks of the carving, such as the cheeks, book, spoon, hands, and feet and sketch the clothing lines.





1 **Define the clothing lines.** Use a ⅜" (10mm) 60° V-tool on the pencil lines to create stop cuts along the clothing creases. Then use the same tool to carve in the elbow creases on both sides to help guide the rounded shaping of the upper arm and forearm.





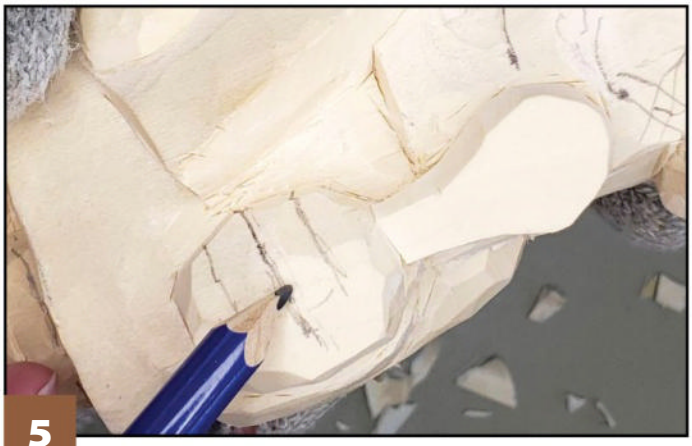
2 **Rough out the head.** Use the knife to remove the extra wood from the top of the head. Then move down the body and remove extra wood between the book and right shoulder, leaving enough wood for the thumb to hold the book.



3 **Create the apron knot.** Pencil in the knot on the back of the apron, and then use the knife to carve it out. Use the knife to carve the right apron string below the left apron string for depth.



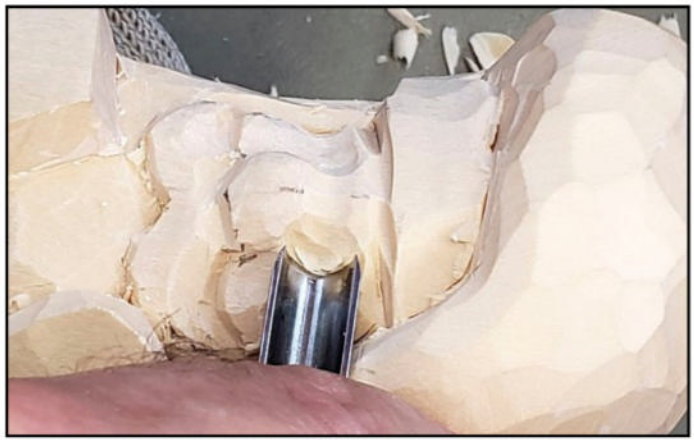
4 **Rough out the feet and cookbook.** Rough out the feet using the #9 or #11 gouge to remove the wood between the feet and the apron. Then use the knife to cut out the square block that is shaped like a large cookbook in Santa's hand.



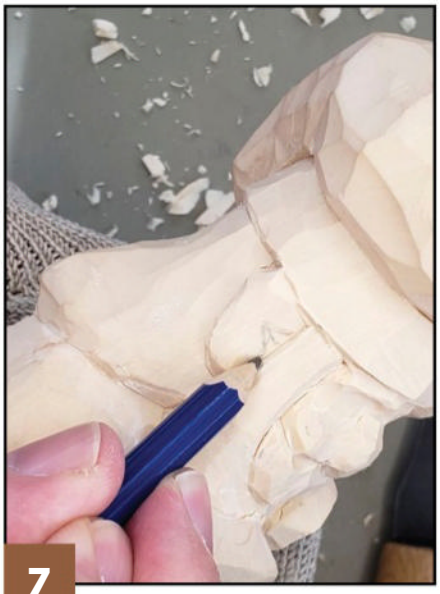


5 **Carve the fingers.** Pencil in the lines between the fingers of his hands. Then use the V-tool to remove the pencil marks and leave grooves between the fingers. Use the tip of the carving knife to cut down and separate the fingers. Then use the knife to carve around the spoon so it looks like he is holding the spoon.

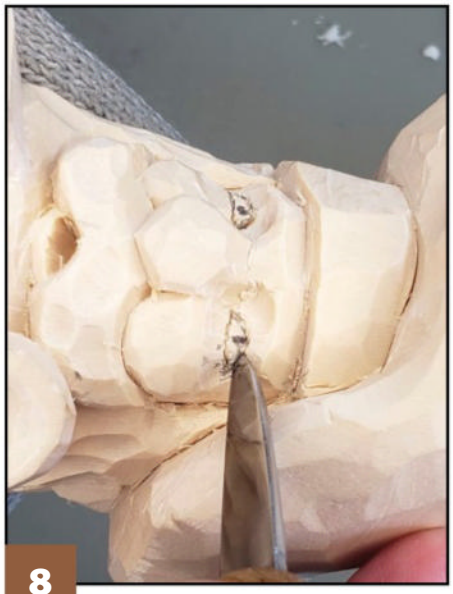


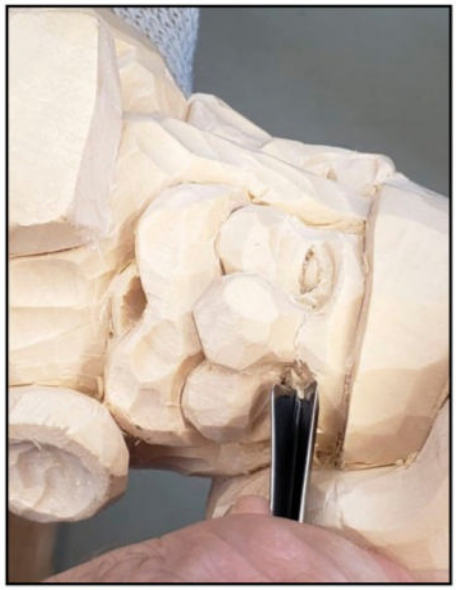


6 **Define the face.** Pencil in the cheeks, bottom of the nose, and the moustache. Then use the V-tool to cut along the pencil marks to bring out the cheeks and moustache and begin rounding the face. Create eye sockets using the #9 or #11 gouge.

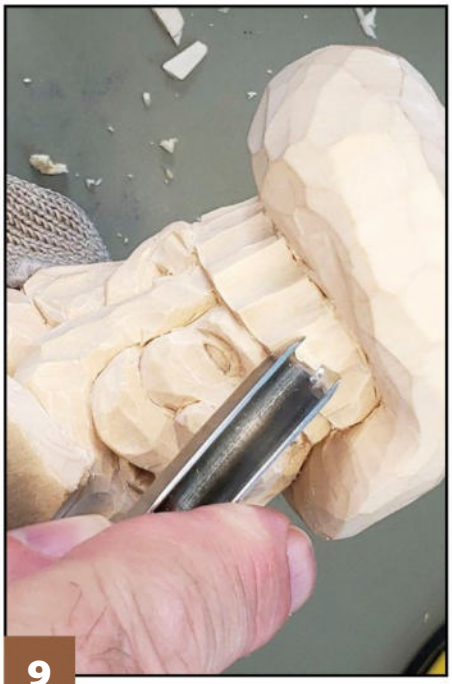


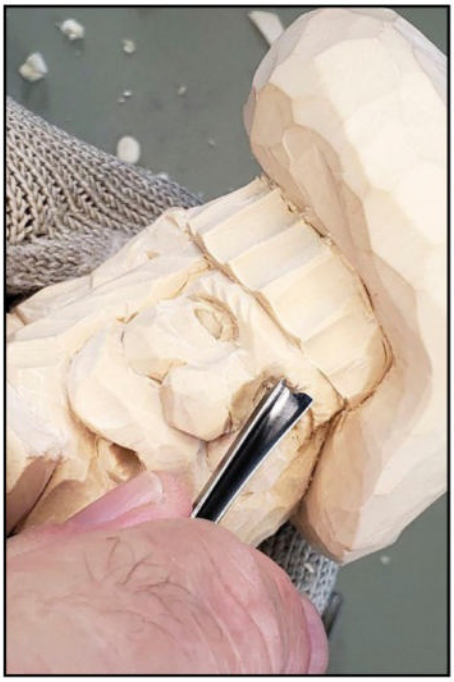
7 **Create the ears.** Pencil in both ears. Then use a ⅜" (10mm) #9 or ¾" (20mm) #11 gouge to carve them, redrawing the details as needed.





8 **Create the eyes.** Draw the eye lines with a pencil, and then use the tip of the knife to cut around the eyes. Round the eyeballs so the center is close to the upper lid. The eyeball should be carved at an angle, with the pupil tucked underneath the eyelid. Then use the V-tool to cut in the upper eyelid just below the eyebrow bone and use the tip of the knife to deepen the upper eyelid.





9 **Add the final details.** Round off the cheek and nose with the knife. Then use a #9 or #11 gouge to carve in the ruffles on the hat brim. Carve the eyebrow with the V-tool, and then use the #9 or #11 gouge to carve the beard and hair.



10 **Finish the bottom of the carving.** Use the ⅜" (10mm) #9 or ¾" (20mm) #11 gouge to carve the sole and heal of the shoe and the lines of the pants. Add fur ruffs around the bottom of the pants using the ¾" (20mm) #11 gouge.

Painting and Finishing

When finished carving, go over the piece with a knife to clean up stray bits of wood and sharpen corners. Prior to painting, lightly spray the carving with matte polyurethane, such as Deft®. I painted Santa's chef's hat with titanium white and gave him cherry red pants with white cuffs. His shirt is painted in parchment, with little nutmeg-colored gingerbread cookies added to fit the cookie-baking theme. His eyes and eye highlights are painted titanium white, irises are French blue, and pupils are charcoal black. The cookbook cover is nutmeg, the wooden spoon is honey brown, and the shoes are traditional burnt umber.

Allow the paint to dry, and then use diluted black plum to shade around the edges and bring out the carved details. Then drybrush the piece with white paint to brighten the highlights. Allow to dry and then spray the carving with semigloss polyurethane. Finish by antiquing the piece with Watco® wax, using a mixture of three parts neutral wax to one-part dark wax. Brush on the mixture, let it dry, wipe it off, and then buff the carving with a soft-bristle brush.

materials & **tools**

MATERIALS

- Basswood, 3½" (8.9cm) thick: 2¾" (7cm) thick: 3" x 6½" (7.6cm x 16.5cm)
- Pencil
- Acrylic paints, such as Americana®: black plum, charcoal black, cherry red, French blue, honey brown, nutmeg, traditional burnt umber, parchment, titanium white
- Finish, such as Deft® polyurethane: spray
- Finishing wax, such as Watco®: neutral and dark

TOOLS

- Band saw
- Carving knife
- #9 gouge: ⅜" (10mm)
- #11 gouge: ¾" (20mm)
- V-tool: ⅜" (10mm) 60°
- Paintbrushes: assorted
- Buffing cloth
- Soft-bristle brush

The author used these products for the project. Substitute your choice of brands, tools, and materials as desired.

SPECIAL SOURCES:

- Roughout available from Scottcarvings.com or on Etsy at https://www.etsy.com/shop/ScottCarvings on the roughout page.



Russell Scott of St. Paul, Minn., has been carving since 1999. He is the author of Carving Undercover Santas *by Fox Chapel Publishing and teaches online and in person at carving shows and meetings. Check out his free instructional videos on YouTube at Scottcarvings. See more of his work on Etsy and purchase his roughouts at scottcarvings.com.*

Chef Santa Patterns

ON THE WEB Find the right-facing pattern on our website.
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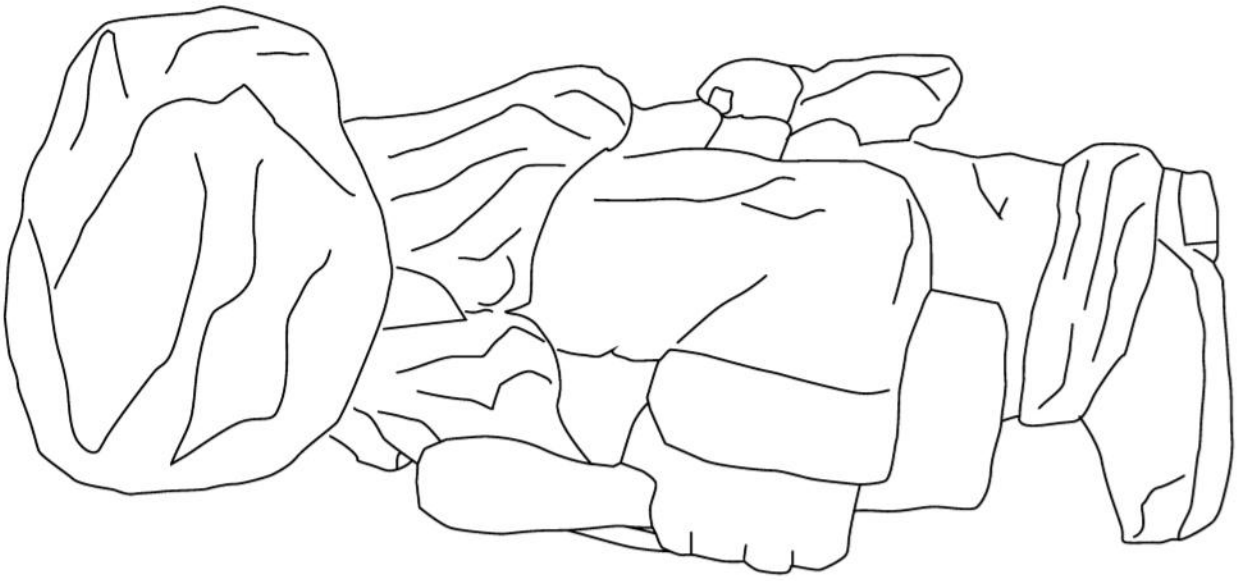

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FP04
Chip Carving Knife
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Pro Mini-Detail Knife
7/8" (22mm)



Flat Grind Blade
FP01S
Detail Knife Small/Slim Handle
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Flat Grind Blade
FP04S
Chip Carving Knife Small/Slim Handle
1" (25mm)

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Pro Handle Size Comparison

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Snow Day

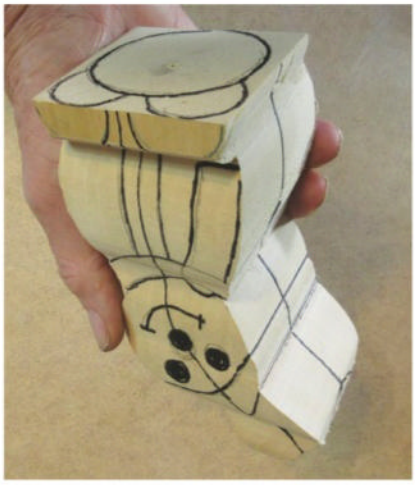
Spend the first blizzard of the year carving a happy snowman

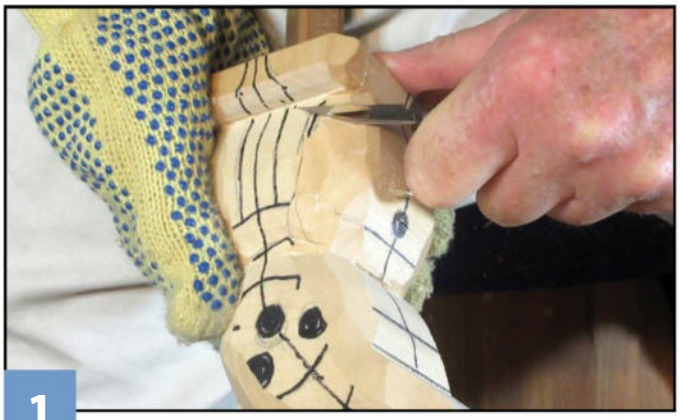
By Gerry Canavan

Not everyone loves the snow in winter, but this guy does and he's here to celebrate a good blizzard. I gave this figure a tilt to counterbalance the weight of the balloons. Drywall screws and springs form the arms, but you could also use a couple of twigs or carve your own.

Getting Started

Refer to the pattern and draw a centerline on your blank, and then draw the main details of the carving. On the bottom of the blank, draw a circle for the body and feet that match those on the front.

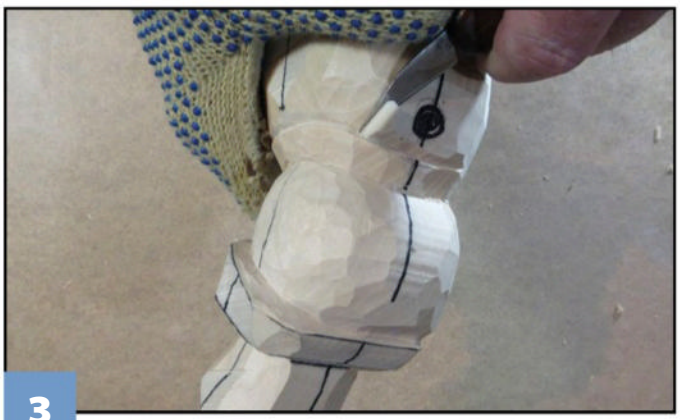




1 **Rough out the shape.** Round off all the sharp edges of the blank except those on the bottom. Don't worry about achieving the final shape at this point.



2 **Rough out the hat.** Draw a circle on the top of the carving as a guide to rough out the hat. Use a ⅜" (10mm) 70° V-tool to separate the brim from the crown. Then use the knife to taper the crown down the to the brim.



3 **Round the back side of the carving.** Separate the hat brim from the top of the head using the ⅜" (10mm) 70° V-tool. Then use the knife to shape the back of the head and trim the scarf as needed to give the back of the head a nice, rounded look. Block in the scarf with the ⅜" (10mm) 70° V-tool, and then use the knife to round out the back of the body.



4 **Define the front of the body and round off the feet.** To separate the feet, use the knife to cut out increasingly large V chips. Redraw the scarf and buttons, and then use the ⅜" (10mm) 70° V-tool to block out the scarf. Use the knife to stop cut around the buttons. Then lower the surface of the body so the buttons and scarf stand proud of the body.



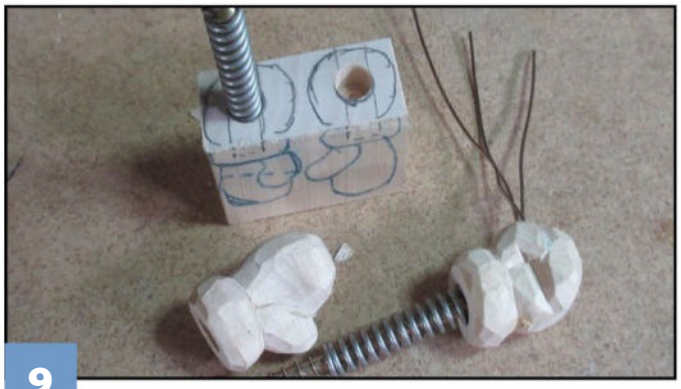
Gerard "Gerry" Canavan lives in Colorado Springs, Colo. He is a member of the Pike's Peak Whittlers and has been carving on and off for 40 years. Find him on Instagram @g_canavan.



5 **Carve the front of the head.** Drill a ¼" (6mm)-dia. hole for the nose. Then locate the eyes and stop cut around them. Continue to round off the front of the head. Carve back the top of the scarf so it fits nicely against the neck. Draw the mouth and stop cut the line indicating the parting of the lips. Then lay the knife on the top lip and tilt it toward the stop cut you just made to release a chip. Repeat for the bottom lip. Next, create the carrot nose by cutting a piece of ¼" (6mm)-dia. dowel about 1 ⅛" (2.9cm) long. Taper and texture the dowel to look like a carrot.



7 **Add the final details.** Use the knife to round off the buttons and the eyes and to define the knot and overlap of the scarf. Soften the edges on the scarf, and then draw the bands and fringe. Use the 1/16" (2mm) 70° V-tool to define the bands, fringe, and the soles of the shoes.



9 **Carve and assemble the hands.** Sketch the pattern for the hands onto the blank, and then use a 5/16" (7.9mm)-dia. bit to drill a hole in each while they are still attached to the block. After that, grind or sand the heads of the screws so they fit tightly into the holes. Then carve the hands with the knife. Drill a ⅛" (3mm)-dia. hole in the closed hand so that the three wires for the balloons fit tightly. Twist the smaller spring onto the screw and screw the assembly into the body. The larger screw slides over this assembly. Then slide the hand over the screw head. You can tighten or loosen the screw so the larger spring fits snugly or cut the screw with a pair of diagonal cutters or small file. Then disassemble the arms for painting.



6 **Detail the hat.** Use the knife to give the front of the brim an upswept curve and continue to refine the brim and crown. Then use a 1/16" (2mm) 70° V-tool to give the hat a band and a seam around the rim.



8 **Carve the balloons.** I cut out the balloons on a scroll saw, but a band saw would also work. Draw a centerline around the side of each balloon. Then use the knife to shape and round out the balloons. When finished carving, sand them smooth with 180-grit sandpaper. Next, use the 1/16" (2mm) 70° V-tool along the side centerline to form the seam. On both sides of the seam, use the small V-tool to cut thin indentations toward the seam. Drill a 1/16" (2mm)-dia. hole ¼" (6mm) deep alongside the balloon's neck. Later you will insert the wire into this hole and wrap it around the neck.

Painting and Finishing

Begin by underpainting the snow with navy blue to give the white some depth. Then refer to the Paint Notes on page 37 to paint the rest of the snowman. I spray-painted the inside springs with red enamel to give them some pop. Screw the arms into the body and add the larger springs if you choose to use them. Use 5-minute epoxy to attach the hands onto the arms and allow them to dry before adding the balloons. Then insert the wire into each balloon and wrap it around the balloon's neck. Use a toothpick to add a bit of epoxy into the hole in the closed hand, and then insert the three wires attached to the balloons. Use wood glue to attach the nose. Spray the finished piece with clear matte acrylic.

MATERIALS

- Basswood, 3" (7.6cm) thick: body, 3⅞" x 6" (9.8cm x 15.2cm)
- Basswood, ¾" (1.9cm) thick: hands, 1¾" x 1³⁄₁₆" (4.4cm x 3.0cm)
- Basswood, ¾" (1.9cm) thick: balloons, 3" x 4¼" (7.6cm x 10.8cm)
- Wood dowel: ¼" (6mm)-dia.: 1⅜" (3.5cm) long
- Sandpaper: 180-grit
- Compression springs, 16 gauge: 2 each, ⁵⁄₃₂" x 1 ½" (4mm x 3.8cm)
- Compression springs, 16 gauge: 2 each, 1" x ⁷⁄₃₂" (2.5cm x 5.6mm)
- #8 drywall screws: 2 each, 2 ½" (6.4cm) long
- Brass wires, 16ga: 3 each, 5 ½" (14cm) long
- 5-minute epoxy
- Wood glue
- Acrylic paint, such as Ceramcoat®: antique white, black, charcoal, Christmas green, navy blue, opaque red, pumpkin; such as FolkArt®: antique cold, bright red, emerald green
- Finish, such as acrylic: clear matte
- Enamel spray paint: red

TOOLS

- Scroll saw or bandsaw
- Knife: 1 ½" (38mm)
- V-tools: ¹⁄₁₆" (2mm) 70°, ⅜" (10mm) 70°
- Drill with bits: ¹⁄₁₆" (2mm), ⅛" (3mm), ¼" (6mm), ⁵⁄₁₆" (7.9mm)-dia.
- Diagonal cutters
- Small file
- Paintbrushes: assorted

The author used these products for the project. Substitute your choice of brands, tools, and materials as desired.

Paint Notes

Body: navy blue (1), antique white (1)

Hat, shoes: charcoal (1)

Eyes, mouth, buttons: black (1), antique white (1)

Carrot: pumpkin (1)

Hat band: opaque red (1)

Mittens: antique white (1), opaque red (1)

Scarf: antique gold (2), bright red, Christmas green (1)

Balloons: antique gold (2), antique white (1), Christmas green (1), opaque red (1)

1 Ceramcoat®
2 FolkArt®

Snow Day Patterns



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Snowed-in Santa

This wistful St. Nick makes a perfect holiday decoration

By Dave Stetson

The greatest influence in my 50-plus years of carving Santas was probably Peter Engler. When I asked him how he approached Santa carvings, he said he always wants his Santas to possess childlike qualities. This charming Santa looks like he's trudging through the snow, contemplating his big trip around the world to deliver presents to waiting children.

Getting Started



Copy the pattern outline to two sides of the block with the grain running vertically. Then cut the outside contour using a band saw or coping saw. Reattach the removed sections using a hot glue gun and a small spot of glue. Then cut the side profile and discard the waste wood. Draw a centerline down the front and back of the carving. Transfer the main details of the pattern, such as the arms, hat, hair/beard, coat, pants, and boots, to the blank by drawing freehand or using carbon paper.

Carving

Using a straight-bladed carving knife, rough out the basic shape of Santa. Concentrate on removing excess wood for the major landmarks like the hat, head, beard, arms, coat, and legs. Turn the figure as you carve to retain symmetry all around while shaping.



Continue carving with the knife to define the main areas. Carve off excess wood from the hat and head area and round the shoulders. Shape the hat brim and floppy hat top and tassel. Separate the head and hair by carving up to the brim. Work down the carving to bring out the beard, arms, and clothing. Shape the legs and then the boots, tapering the feet back to the heal.



Next, refer to the pattern and main article photo to draw the details for the eyes, beard, hat, eyebrows, hands, and boots. Begin the beard and hair by using a 3⁄16" (5mm) veiner to establish the general flow and direction, followed with a ¼" (6mm) 30° V-tool or knife to judiciously apply cuts, varying depth, width and length, for detail. Be sure to include nostrils. When the details are carved to your liking, use a ⅛" (3mm) veiner to dig a hole in the hand for holding the staff. Use a twisting and spinning motion to create the hole. Then carve the staff from a basswood scrap to a diameter that will snuggly fit into the hole.

Painting and Finishing

Go over the carving and clean up any final cuts. Prepare for painting by using a disposable foam brush to saturate the carving with boiled linseed oil straight from the can. The oil seals the wood and gives the side and end grain a consistent rate of paint absorption. *Note: Dispose of any used items in a can of water, as linseed oil is prone to spontaneous combustion if rags and oily items are left lying around.*



Begin diluting burnt sienna to a light color wash and apply it to the deepest cut areas to enhance the shadows.



Add a wash of primary yellow to the hair, beard, and eyebrows. I applied a base coat wash of country red to the hat, coat, and pants followed by a base coat of antique white to all hair, hat, and coat details. Gradually build up these paint layers until you achieve your desired color.

Next, add a coat of cherry red to the clothing and cadmium red to the cheeks. Paint the staff, boot soles, and mittens with a wash of burnt sienna and the boots with a wash of burnt umber. Use black plum to enhance the shadows in areas, such as the bends in the arms and where needed on the clothing. Use a very fine liner brush to paint the eyes with undiluted antique white and brown.

materials & **tools**

MATERIALS

- Basswood, 2" (5.1cm) thick: Santa, 2½" x 5" (6.4cm x 12.7cm)
- Basswood scrap, ¼" (6mm) thick: staff, 3 11⁄16" (9.4cm) long
- Pen or pencil
- Carbon paper (optional)
- Boiled linseed oil
- Acrylic paints, such as Americana®: antique white, black plum, brown, burnt sienna, burnt umber, cadmium red, cherry red, country red, primary yellow

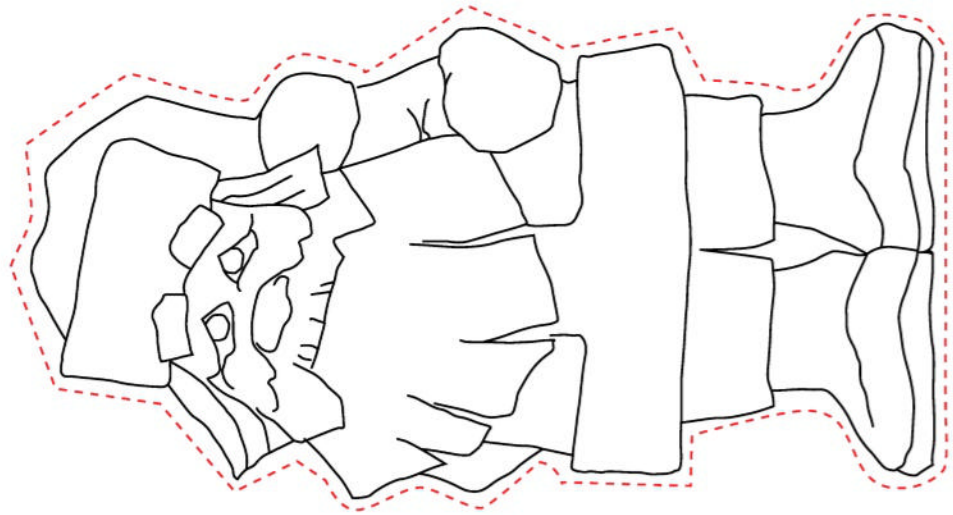
The author used these products for the project. Substitute your choice of brands, tools, and materials as desired.

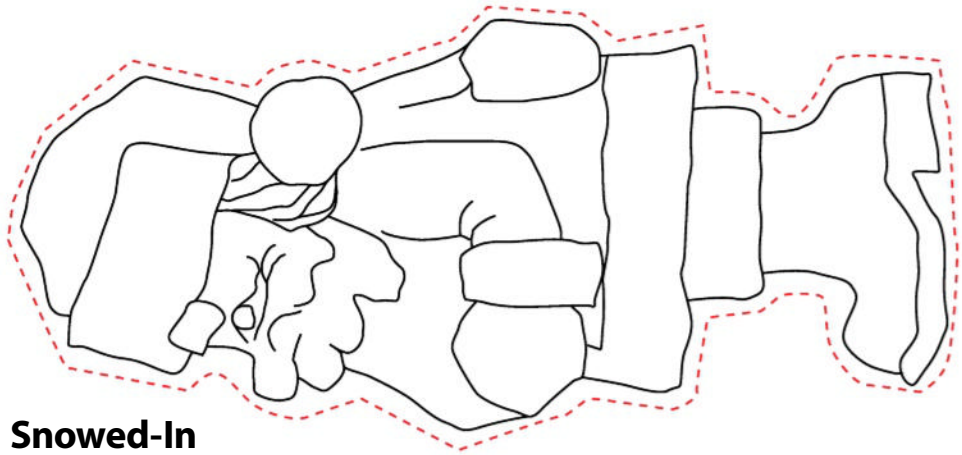
TOOLS

- Band saw or coping saw
- Glue gun with glue sticks
- Carving knife: straight blade
- Veiners: ⅛" (3mm), 3⁄16" (5mm)
- V-tool: ¼" (6mm) 30°
- Paintbrushes: assorted
- Disposable foam brush: 1" (2.5cm)

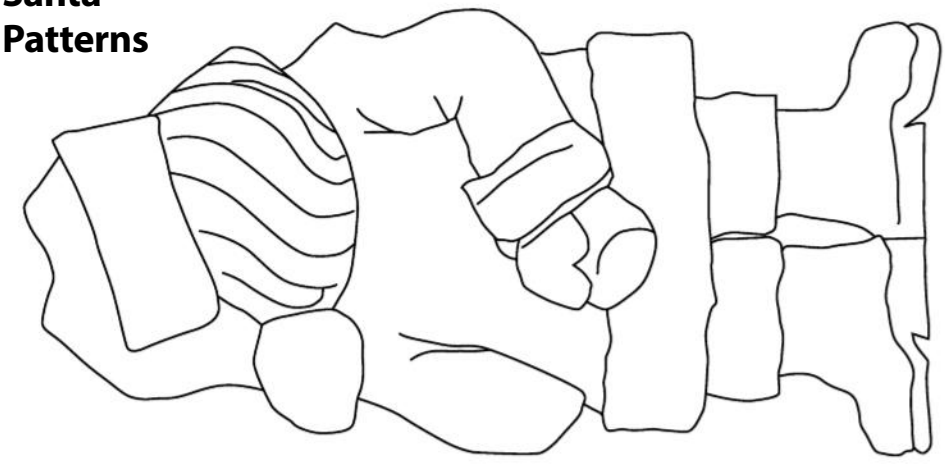


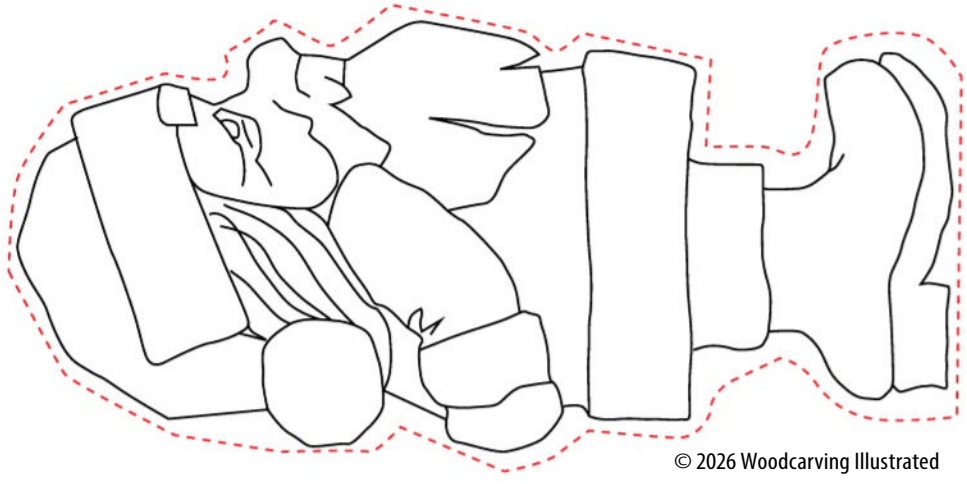
Dave Stetson is a co-creator and founding member of the Caricature Carvers of America (CCA). He teaches seminars around the country. Dave is the author of Caricature Carving from Head to Toe, *available from Fox Chapel Publishing, foxchapelpublishing.com.*





Snowed-In Santa Patterns





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Christmas Tree with Star

A dangling ornament adds interest and movement to this charming decoration

By Cody Bonham

This project came about through a few different sketches that involved some trial and error. For my initial sketch, I tried to capture a windswept tree, but that version looked more like a tree that had toppled in a storm. I landed on a design that captured a more graceful feeling. This tree has a deep, elegant bend that suggests it is being weighed down by the prize it carries. The elongated trunk provides enough clearance for a dangling ornament of various sizes, while the rugged rock base serves as both a naturalistic anchor and a functional counterweight.

Getting Started

Transfer the front tree pattern to the blank using carbon paper and a pencil or by drawing freehand. Then cut out the rough outline of the tree and stand using a band saw. Transfer the star pattern to one of the offcuts from the tree and cut that out on the band saw.



Carving

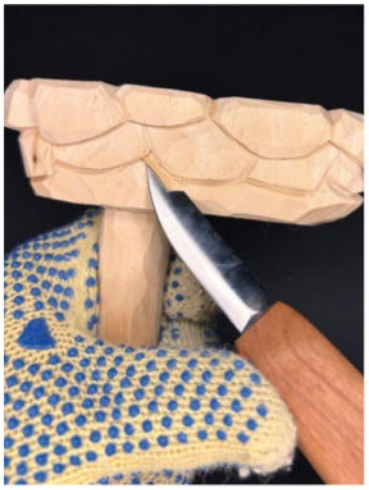
Using a ½" (13mm) #7 sweep gouge, begin shaping and rounding the tree. Visualize a cone, starting



with a wide base, and gradually slim the profile as you reach the peak. As you carve, be mindful of the grain direction along the tree's curve. Continue shaping and rounding until you are satisfied with the silhouette. Then carve the finer details. Pencil in subtle horizontal curves around the cone and trace them with a ¼" (6mm) 45° V-tool. Set the lines deeper with a roughout knife. To give the tree a more natural, organic feel, finish the surface of the branches by adding light texture with the ½" (13mm) #7 sweep gouge.



Moving down to the trunk, use the roughout knife to round the wood, keeping the base slightly thicker than the top of the tree for a sturdy appearance. To mimic the texture of bark, use the ¼" (6mm) 45° V-tool to carve vertical ridges along the length of the trunk.



At the bottom of the piece, begin rounding the base to remove all hard angles. Then pencil in a random arrangement of rocks to create the look of a natural stone anchor. Trace these lines with the ¼" (6mm) 45° V-tool and set them deeper with the roughout knife to create distinct separation. Slightly round the individual stones with the knife, but leave some of the tool texture behind so they look like rugged rocks rather than smooth pebbles.



Next, shape the star. Simply shave away the saw marks using the knife and add a touch of texture to match the tree with the ½" (13mm) #7 sweep gouge.

Painting and Finishing

Prior to painting, prime the carving with a mixture of boiled linseed oil with a hint of burnt umber oil paint, and allow it to dry overnight. For painting, I use a 50:50 wash of water and acrylic paint to let the woodgrain peek through. Paint the tree with a blend of deep viridian and burnt umber. Then apply a burnt umber wash to the trunk and immediately pat it down with a paper towel. This technique ensures the deep V-tool lines remain dark while the surface highlights soften.

Paint the base with silver marlin and the star with school bus yellow. Allow the paint to dry thoroughly to prepare for drybrushing. Using undiluted vintage white, load a small amount onto your brush, and then wipe most of it away onto a paper towel. Lightly "dust" the entire carving (including the star) with the remaining pigment. I find that going a bit heavier on the top branches and the tops of the rocks creates an illusion of a light snowfall. When painting is complete, allow the piece to dry. Then seal the entire carving with a final coat of the boiled linseed oil and burnt umber mixture.



Add the star to the tree. Use a hand drill with a 1/32" (1mm)-dia. bit to create a hole for the screw eyes in the tip of the tree and the top of the star. Then insert the screw eyes with a drop of cyanoacrylate (CA) glue. Link the two eyes together, allowing the star to crown the tree with a bit of festive movement.

materials & **tools**

MATERIALS

- Basswood, 2" (5.1cm) thick: tree, 4" x 9" (10.2cm x 22.9cm)
- Basswood, ½" (1.3cm) thick: star, 1¾" (4.5cm) square
- Pencil
- Carbon paper (optional)
- Boiled linseed oil
- Oil paint: burnt umber
- Acrylic paints, such as FolkArt®: burnt umber, deep viridian, school bus yellow, silver marlin, vintage white
- Paper towels
- Screw eyes, 2 each: small
- Cyanoacrylate (CA) glue

The author used these products for the project. Substitute your choice of brands, tools, and materials as desired.

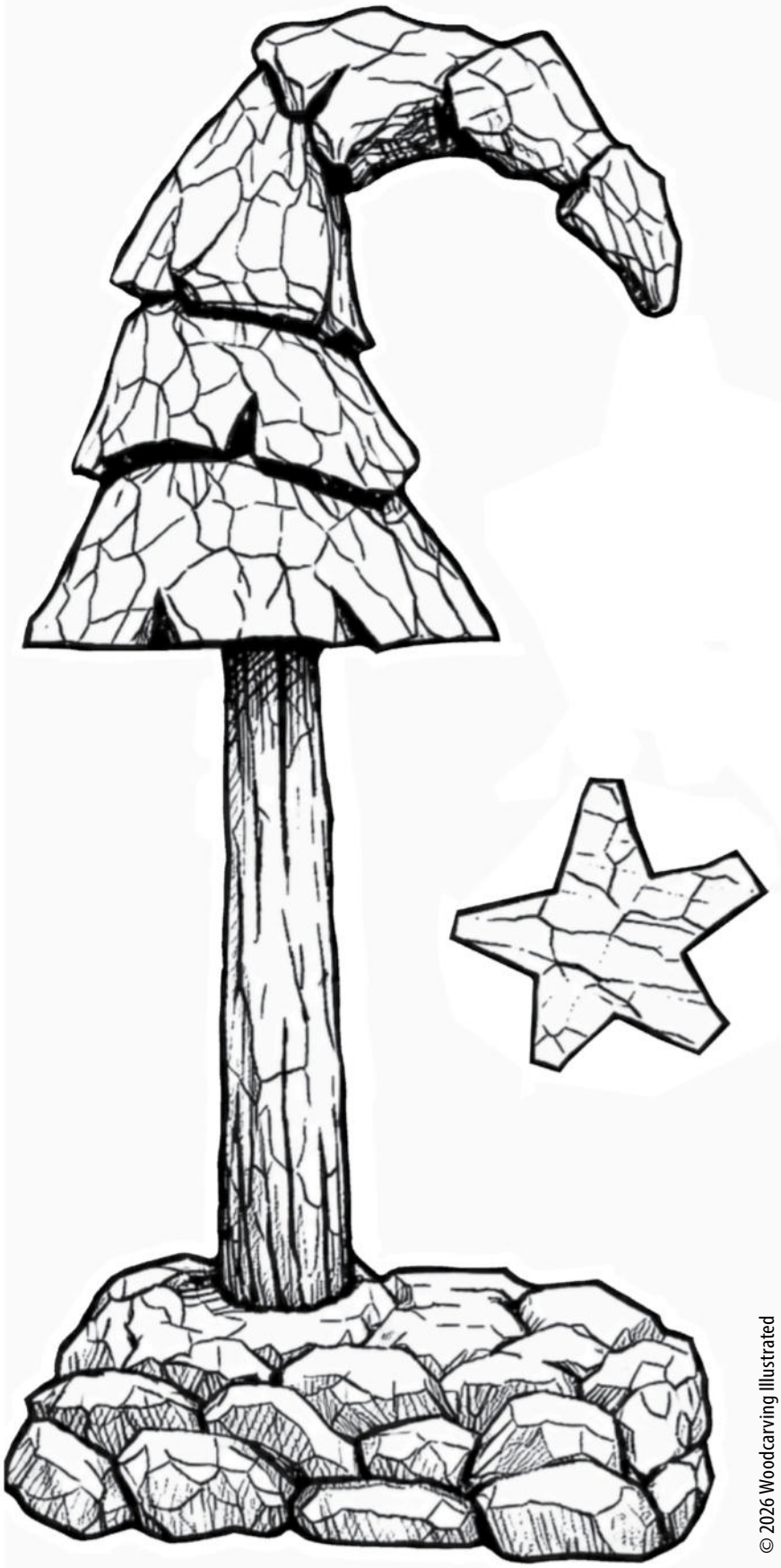
TOOLS

- Band saw
- Roughout knife: 2" (51mm) long
- #7 sweep gouge: ½" (13mm)
- V-tool ¼" (6mm) 45°
- Hand drill with bit: 1/32" (1mm)-dia.
- Paintbrushes: assorted



Cody Bonham is an elementary school teacher who began woodcarving during the pandemic in 2020. Carving became a therapeutic sanctuary during that time, and evolved into a true passion for the craft. He loves teaching others about woodcarving and seeing the joy it brings to them. You can find Cody on Instagram @block_and_knife or Etsy at BlockandKnife.

Christmas Tree With Star Patterns



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Candy Cane Mug

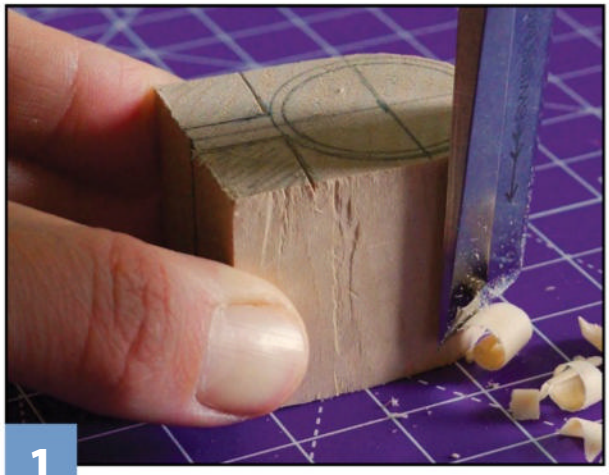
Carve a charming ornament in three easy steps

By Kelsea Shelton-Heath

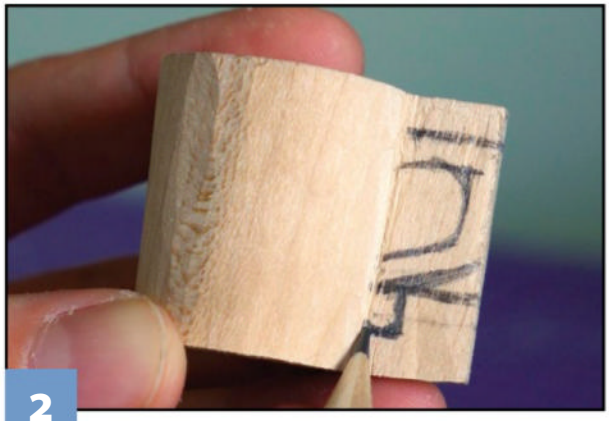
Warm drinks always bring me so much joy, especially in the colder months. There's nothing better than tucking under a blanket with a cup of tea, the fire crackling away, and a festive film playing. I wanted to make a decoration for the Christmas tree that captured that cozy feeling, and that's how the candy cane mug came to be. This carve has just one delicate part—the handle. It's worth taking a little extra care when working on it, as too much pressure could cause it to snap off.

Getting Started

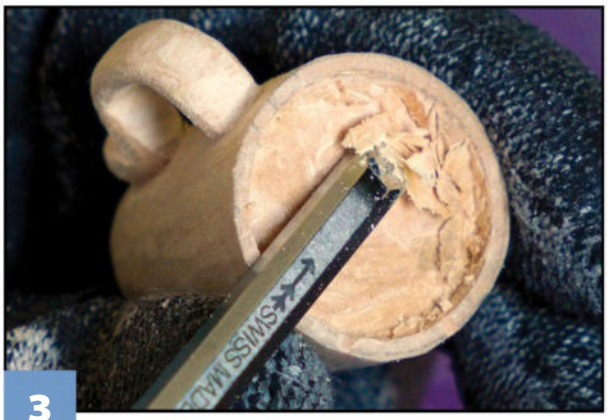
Transfer the pattern to the blank by drawing it on freehand or using carbon paper.



1 **Rough out the mug.** Using a ¾" (19mm) chisel, remove the corners and begin tapering the wood slightly from the top of the mug down to the base. Then remove excess wood around the handle until the mug shape starts to emerge.



2 **Shape the handle.** Mark the measurements for the handle so that the top of the handle sits 3⁄16" (5mm) down from the top of the block. Score around the handle outline with a detail knife to define a clean edge. Then, using a ¼" (6mm) chisel, gently rough out the center, scraping away small sections until you break through. Smooth the inside and round the outside with the detail knife, and then use diamond needle files to refine the handle.



3 **Carve out the top of the mug.** Score a circle around the top of the mug, and then use the ¼" (6mm) chisel and a roughout knife to remove up to 3⁄16" (5mm) of wood. Be careful when holding the mug's handle, so as not to snap it off. Finish the top of the mug with a diamond sander to smooth any rough edges.

Painting and Finishing



Sand and seal the ornament. Use diamond sanders to smooth around the top and bottom rim of the mug, and then sand the inside with 200-grit sandpaper. Next, apply Danish oil to seal the carving.

Use masking tape to create stripes on the mug. Cut 3⁄16" (5mm) strips of masking tape, and then apply them to the carving at a diagonal to keep the stripes an even thickness when painting. Dilute your paints with a touch of water. Apply the red



to the exposed wood and allow to dry. Then remove the masking tape and fill the gaps with white paint. Next, paint the handle and the inside of the mug making the "liquid" as dark or light as your favorite hot beverage. I made "tea" by mixing raw sienna with a drop of titanium white. When the paint is dry, apply Howard Feed-N-Wax® to enhance the overall look and protect the finish. Add a screw eye into the center of the top of the mug, tie with decorative string, and then hang it on your Christmas tree.

materials & **tools**

MATERIALS

- Basswood, 1 3⁄16" (3cm) thick: 1¾" x 2 15⁄16" (4.5cm x 7.5cm)
- Pencil or marker
- Carbon paper (optional)
- Masking tape
- Sandpaper: 200-grit
- Acrylic paints, such as Pēbēo: raw sienna, titanium white, transparent vermilion
- Finish, such as Rustins Danish oil
- Howard Feed-N-Wax®
- Screw eye: small
- Brown twine or ribbon of choice

TOOLS

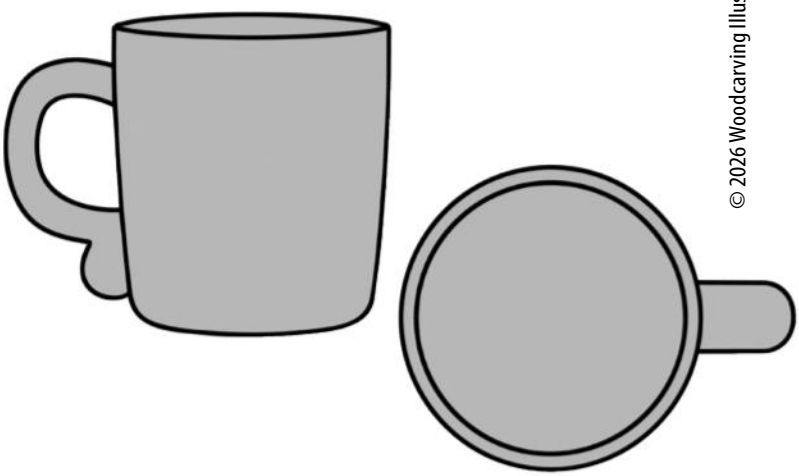
- Knives: detail, such as Flexcut Pro Series; roughout
- Ruler
- Chisel, such as Pfeil: 3⁄16" (4mm) butt
- Diamond needle files
- Diamond sanders
- Paintbrushes, such as Mont Marte Gallery Series: assorted sizes

The author used these products for the project. Substitute your choice of brands, tools, and materials as desired.



Kelsea Shelton-Heath lives in Leeds, UK, and has been carving for two years. She has always loved being creative, moving through hobbies that never quite stuck. Carving was different. There's something about shaping wood by hand that just clicked, and she has not put the knife down since. You can follow her work at @carvedbykels on Instagram.

Candy Cane Mug Patterns



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Star Ornaments

Chip carve a handful of attractive seasonal decorations

By Charlene Lynum



Stars make wonderful Christmas ornaments and are a natural subject for carving. I find it relaxing to create an ornament that represents light, joy, guidance, and hope. Fill your tree with these chip-carved stars for an extra glow this holiday season.

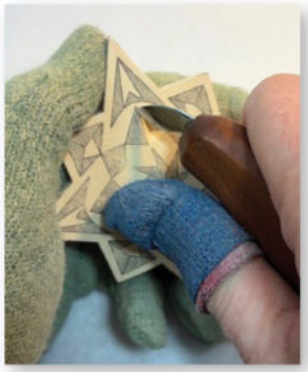
Getting Started

Sand the wood smooth with 220-grit sandpaper and wipe away all dust. Position the pattern with the grain of the wood, and then transfer it using either a heat transfer tool or tracing with graphite paper. *Note: If using a heat transfer tool, the pattern must be printed with a laser printer or copied on a toner-based copier.* Once the pattern is transferred, cut out the ornament on a scroll saw using a #5 reverse-tooth blade.



Carving

Carve the shaded areas of the patterns. When carving, keep two things in mind. First, when removing a chip that includes a cut running with the grain, make the cut with the grain either first or second whenever possible. This helps prevent the third cut from tearing the wood instead of carving it cleanly. Second, when removing a chip next to one that has already been carved, make the cut that shares the wall with the previous chip first. This provides better support for the remaining ridge. After carving the





Splash of Color

For a colorful twist, carve through acrylic paint to create a design that pops. Make a copy of the pattern, prepare the board by sanding to 220-grit, and clear dust with a tack cloth. Then paint the board with red acrylic paint (or any festive color) and allow it to dry. When the paint is dry, seal the wood by applying two coats of wipe-on polyurethane over the paint.



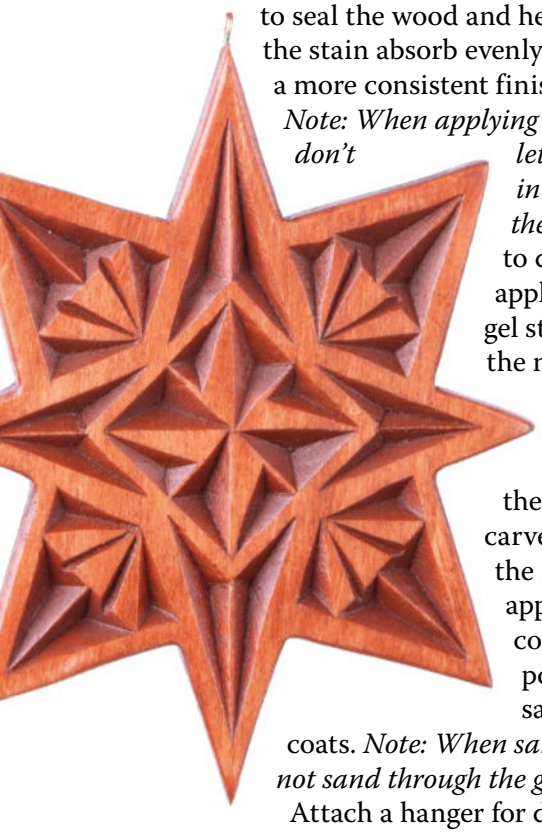
Apply the pattern to the blank with a thin layer of rubber cement on the pattern and the wood. Then carve the ornament according to the instructions at right.

design, slightly round over the front edge of the star by either sanding it or cutting a small chamfer with your knife. This softens the edges and gives the ornament a more finished appearance.

Finishing

When the carving is complete, lightly sand the ornament with 220-grit sandpaper to remove any remaining pattern lines. Be careful to avoid over sanding, as the ridges between the carved chips should remain sharp and come to a peak rather than go flat.

Apply two coats of wipe-on polyurethane according to the manufacturer's directions, lightly sanding between coats to seal the wood and help the stain absorb evenly for a more consistent finish.



Note: When applying the polyurethane, don't let the finish pool in the bottom of the chips. Allow to dry, and then apply two coats of gel stain according to the manufacturer's directions. Use a stiff bristle brush to work the stain into the carved chips. After the stain has dried, apply two additional coats of wipe-on polyurethane, lightly sanding between coats. *Note: When sanding, take care to not sand through the gel stain.*

Attach a hanger for displaying. Use a heavy needle or pin to make a hole approximately ⅜ (1cm) deep into one point of the star. Test-fit an eye pin, trimming it to length if necessary. Once it fits properly, apply a small amount of cyanoacrylate (CA) glue to the eye pin and insert it into the hole. Thread a decorative ribbon or cord that complements the color of the ornament through the eye. You now have a lovely ornament that's ready to hang on the tree or be given as a gift!



materials & **tools**

MATERIALS

- Basswood: ¼" (6mm) thick: 3 each, 3½" x 3¾" (8.9cm x 9.5cm)
- Sandpaper: 220-grit
- Pencil
- Graphite paper (optional)
- Clear finish, such as Minwax® Wipe-On Poly: warm satin
- Clean lint-free cloth
- Acrylic paints (optional)
- Gel stain, such as Old Masters: cherry
- Heavy pin or needle
- Jewelry making eye pins: 1" (2.5cm)
- Cyanoacrylate (CA) glue
- Rubber cement (optional)
- Decorative ribbon

TOOLS

- Heat transfer tool
- Scroll saw with blade: #5 reverse-tooth
- Chip carving knife
- Stiff bristle brush

The author used these products for the project. Substitute your choice of brands, tools, and materials as desired.



Charlene Lynum began chip carving around 1985. She lives near Eau Claire, Wisc., and is a member of the West Wisconsin Woodcarvers Guild. What started out as a hobby has turned into an artistic adventure. She appreciates the simple beauty that chip carving can add to a project. She is the author of the book Chip Carving Starter Guide, *published by Fox Chapel Publishing. She is also a regular contributor to* Woodcarving Illustrated. *You can find her on Instagram @thelynums.*

Star Ornament Patterns

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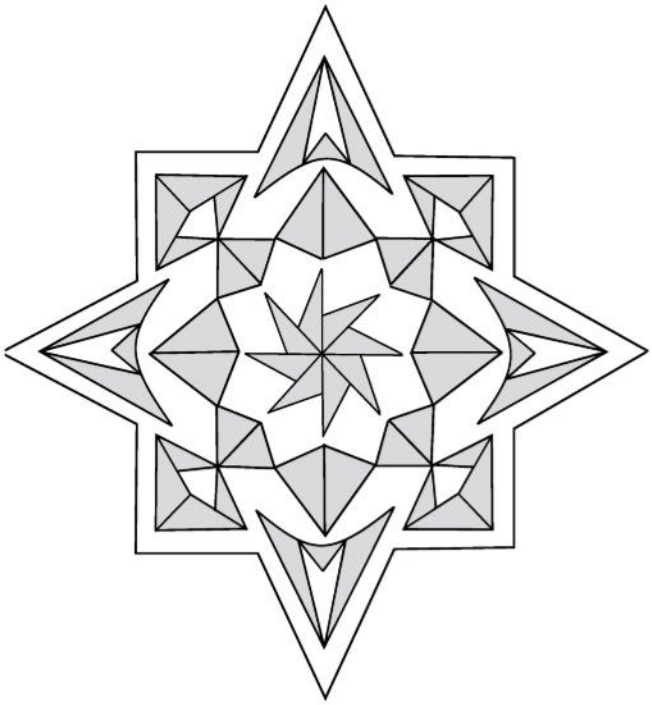

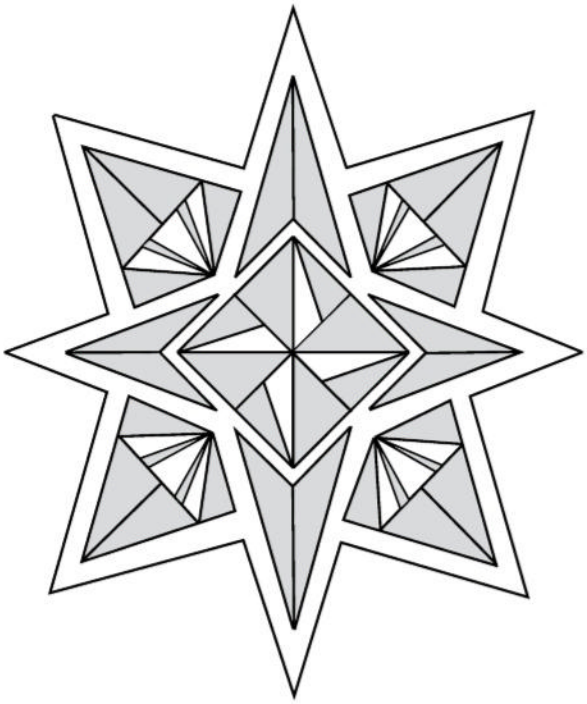

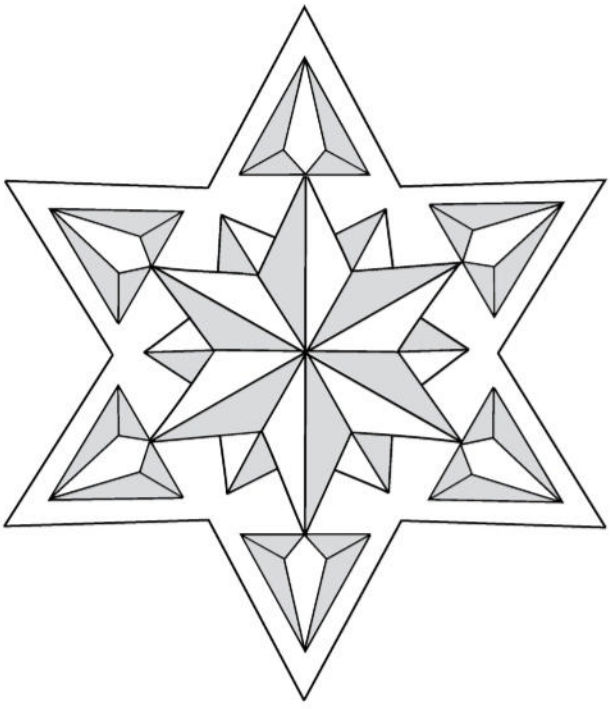

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Businessman Santa

Check out this stylish guy who's always the best dressed at the office

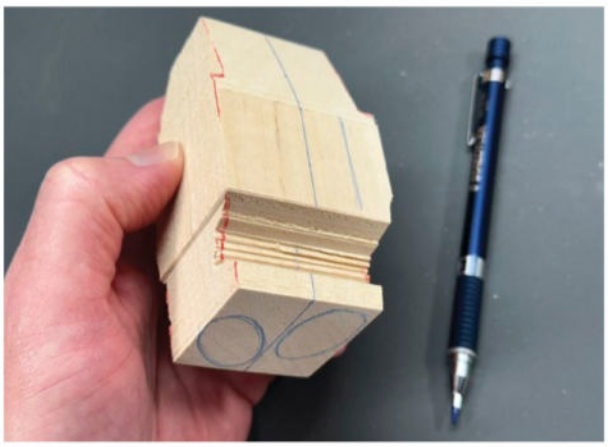
By Joe McMullen



This Santa was inspired by an old friend's Christmas outfit of red pants, plaid tie, and a Santa hat. It was a fantastic look, so I decided to design a Santa based on that outfit, with the addition of a red suit coat. With that, Mr. Businessman Santa was born.

Getting Started

Make a copy of the patterns and transfer them to your block. Using a band saw, cut the profile first and then the front view. Draw centerlines, including on the underside, and then draw footprints to set Santa's stance. If you want to turn his head and show off the tie, draw a separate centerline for the head. Mark the left edge of the jacket, the approximate locations of the arms, and the bottom of the left hand. Then divide each side into thirds.



Carving

Start roughing out the carving by using a ⅜" (10mm) #7 gouge to remove wood from the footprints. Use a 2" (51mm) carving knife to bevel off the corners, following the thirds that were established earlier. Bevel from the belly to the top of the head, and then from the belly to the shoes. Be mindful of the location of the left front jacket where it will hang down. Remove wood from the sides of the



TIP

BRAIN DRAIN

When you feel like your carving has entered the "Ugly Stage" and you're questioning the decisions you've made to that point, take a break. Step away from the carving and give your mind a rest. Come back with a fresh brain, trust yourself and your skills, and enjoy finishing the piece.



head with the 2" (51mm) carving knife to set the turn of the head. Then use the ⅜" (10mm) #7 gouge and a ¼" (6mm) soft V-tool to establish the hat, beard, fronts of the arms, bottom edge of the jacket, right hand pocket mound, and inner legs. Define the backs of the arms with the ¼" (6mm) soft V-tool, and then remove wood under the left side of the jacket to reveal Santa's chest and belly. Continue to shape and define all the areas.



Use a 1/16" and ⅛" (2mm and 3mm) #11 gouge to remove wood between the inner eyes and the sides of the bridge of the nose. Continue using the ⅛" (3mm) #11 gouge along the bottom of the eye socket and along the top of the cheekbones. Then use a 1¼" (32mm) carving knife to angle the mound down from top to bottom, and angle off the inner and outer ⅓ of the eye mound.

Draw the upper eyelids and use the 1¼" (32mm) carving knife to carve them, and then draw and cut the lower lid. Angle off the inner and outer ⅓ of eyeball. Start making deeper cuts to separate the arms, jacket, and legs. Use the ⅛" (3mm) 60° V-tool to set the cuffs, sleeves, and tie. Separate the beard and add whisker lines with a 3/16" (5mm) 60° V-tool, angling the tool to add some layering to the beard. At this point, go back to the top of the carving and work your way down, adding final details, deepening cuts, and cleaning up where necessary.

Painting and Finishing

My painting process consists of coating the pieces with Danish oil and using multiple coats of acrylic paint washes. Begin by undershading Santa with burnt sienna, and then adding an undercoat of bright yellow on the beard and hair.



Apply buttermilk to the shirt, tie, beard, hair, and hat trim and use soft black for the belt and shoes. Undershade the skin with adobe red and a few coats of flesh tone and add a coat of coral cloud if it looks a little washed out. Next, dab some adobe red on the tip of the nose and blend it with a dry brush. Repeat for the cheeks, lips, ears, and knuckles. Paint the eyeballs with buttermilk, add a Prussian blue



outer iris, a calypso blue inner iris, a lamp black pupil, and then add an eye highlight with white wash. The lower edge of the upper eyelid is charcoal grey and the upper edge of the lower eyelid is adobe red. The coat, pants, and hat are Santa red. *Note: This is an intense hue, so be careful along the borders with white areas.*



Paint the tie with a coat of white wash. Then draw a grid with a brush marker. Starting from the bottom left, paint a holly green stripe followed by a cherry red stripe. Skip a stripe and make another set of holly green/cherry red stripes. Starting from bottom right, paint the same sequence in very light washes over previous stripes. Paint the hat trim and pom-pom with a drybrush using metallic pearl white. Add a thin wash of black plum in crevasses, contact points, and wherever a little more definition is required. *Note: This will take multiple coats.* Finish the carving with several coats of matte clear spray polyurethane. If desired, attach the carving to a base of your choice.

MATERIALS

- Basswood: 2" (5.1cm) square: 4" (10.2cm) tall
- Pencil
- Brush marker, such as Tombow Fudenosuke: gray, hard tip
- Shop towels
- Acrylic paints, such as Americana®: black plum, bright yellow, burnt sienna, buttermilk, calypso blue, charcoal grey, cherry red, coral cloud, flesh tone, holly green, lamp black, Prussian blue, Santa red, soft black, white wash; such as FolkArt®: metallic pearl white; such as Delta Ceramcoat®: adobe red
- Danish oil
- Finish, such as polyurethane spray: clear matte
- Small base of choice (optional)

TOOLS

- Band saw
- Knives: 2" (51mm), 1¼ (32mm)-long blades
- #11 gouges: 1⁄16" (2mm), 1⁄8" (3mm)
- #7 gouge: 3⁄8" (10mm)
- V-tools: 1⁄8" (3mm) 60°, 3⁄16" (5mm) 60°
- Soft V-tool: ¼" (6mm)
- Paintbrushes: assorted

The author used these products for the project. Substitute your choice of brands, tools, and materials as desired.



Joe McMullen is a Multimedia Graphics Designer in Lincoln, Neb. He has been carving since 1985, when he began working summers at Engler Woodcarvers in Branson, Mo. as a young whippersnapper. Joe frequently posts his work on Instagram @joemcmullen1970.

Paint Notes

Undershading: burnt sienna (1)

Beard: bright yellow (1), buttermilk (1), white wash (drybrush) (1)

Shirt: buttermilk (1)

Hat trim, pom-pom: buttermilk (1), metallic pearl white (drybrush) (2)

Tie: buttermilk (1)

Belt, shoes: soft black (1)

Skin: adobe red (3), flesh tone (1), coral cloud (1)

Hat, coat, pants: Santa red (1)

Tie pattern: white wash (base) (1), holly green (1), cherry red (1)

Eyes: Prussian blue (1), calypso blue (1), lamp black (1), charcoal grey (1), adobe red (3), and white wash (1)

Contact shadows: black plum (1)

1 Americana® *3 Delta Ceramcoat®*

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Businessman Santa Patterns







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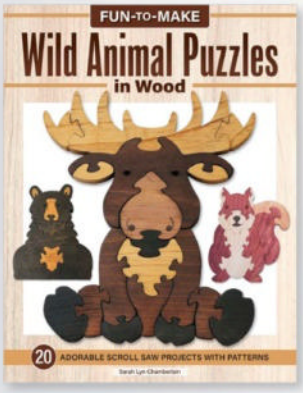

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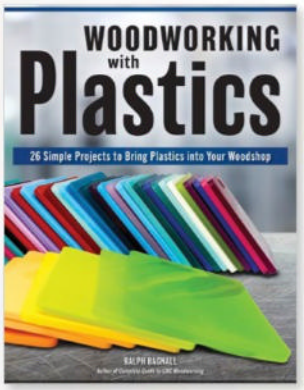

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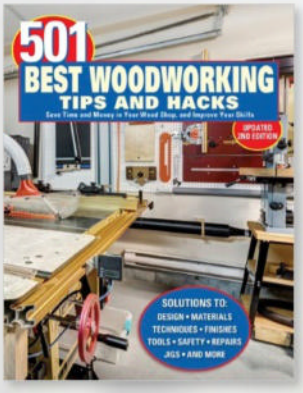

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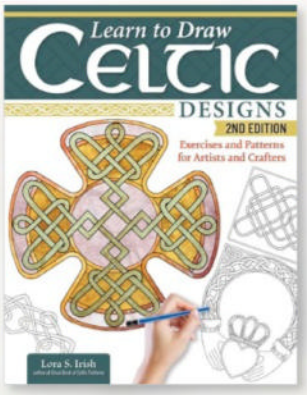

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Rustic Nativity Scene

Whittle the Christmas manger scene in just a few steps

By W. Todd Martin



When I first started carving, one of my main goals was to carve a Nativity scene for each of my daughters. Many of the books on carving a Nativity were intimidating for a beginner, but then I happened upon Lynn Diel's *Flat Plane Carving: The Nativity*. Since the project didn't require carving faces, I felt it was a project within my grasp. So, when I found myself with a small scrap of butternut that I didn't want to go to waste, I thought back to that rustic design and fashioned this small Nativity. The finished carving looks great in a shadowbox or on a small shelf. It could also be turned into a Christmas tree ornament by attaching an eye screw and hook between Mary and Joseph.

Getting Started

Refer to the pattern and mark the manger measurements on the block. Begin by marking the center of the block. The top of the manger is 1" (2.5cm) from the bottom of the block and the bottom is ½" (1.3cm). Mark the initial depth of the manger ⅜" (1cm) along each side of the block from the front to the back.



1 **Carve the manger.** Use a bench knife to make a stop cut at the top of the manger, and then begin cutting back toward the ⅜" (1cm) side mark to offset the manger. *Note: It may be easier to carve the corners first before moving to the center of the manger.* Make a stop cut at the ½" (1.3cm) mark and carve up from the bottom to create the manger legs, carving the legs at an angle under the manger. Draw two narrow triangles on both sides of the manger and a third triangle to mark the separation of the legs. Remove the wood from these three triangles with the knife ⅜" (1cm) back. Angle the front of the manger down to the legs, leaving a ledge to create a shadow.



2 **Shape the bodies.** Mark the center of the front, top, and back of the block. Round the side corners on the back, and then round the top toward the front. Then mark ⅜" (1cm) from the top of the right side of the block, and carve down to just above this line so that the right half is shorter than the left. Create a deep stop cut in the center of the front of the block using the marked centerline. Then remove the wood from either side to separate Joseph and Mary.



3 **Carve Joseph and Mary.** Mark the band for Joseph's headdress and sketch large circles for their faces. Then sketch simple clothing lines and draw each arm pointing toward baby Jesus in the manger. Carve these lines with the knife using a series of V-cuts and chip cuts, relieving enough wood to highlight the shapes and to create shadows. Make a chip cut between the bottom of each face and headdress to separate the head from the body. Carve the outline of the rest of the face. *Note: Keep in mind where features overlap, such as the hand that is slightly more relieved than the sleeve to make the hand appear like it is going into the sleeve.*



4 **Carve the back of Joseph and Mary.** Draw Joseph's arm and hand on Mary's back, and then carve them in shallow relief using V-cuts and chip cuts with the knife. Carve above and below Joseph's arm using the centerline to relieve the arm.



5 **Add the manger details.** Draw a small border about 1⁄16" (2mm) around the edge of the manger. Then draw a small circle for baby Jesus' head and an oval for his swaddled body. Make a chip cut at each corner of the manger and another where the head meets the body, and then join these together to create the outline of the baby. *Note: Make sure to take your time as you will be carving into the end grain.*

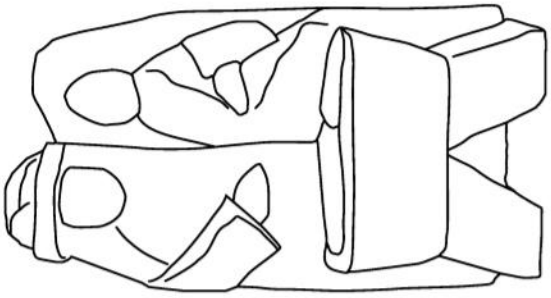
Finishing

If the Nativity was carved in butternut, apply Howard Feed-N-Wax® with a 1" (25mm) paintbrush to the entire carving, let sit for at least half an hour, and then wipe off the excess with a clean cloth rag. If using basswood, tint the Howard Feed-N-Wax® with burnt umber to create a more rustic stained look rather than a slight golden look. To make this into an ornament, attach an eye screw and ornament hook between Mary and Joseph and display.



W. Todd Martin teaches English literature at Huntington University in Huntington, Ind. He is a member of the Eastern Woodland Carving Club in Converse, Ind. He has had the privilege of working with a number of CCA members, including Mitch Cartledge, Kevin Applegate, and Ron Doughty. More of his work can be found on Instagram @wtoddmartin.

Rustic Nativity Scene Pattern



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materials & **tools**

MATERIALS

- Wood, such as butternut or basswood, 1¼" (3.2cm) thick: 1¾" x 3" (4.5cm x 7.6cm)
- Pencil
- Clean cloth rags
- Howard Feed-N-Wax®
- Oil paint, such as Artist's Loft™: burnt umber (optional)
- Eye screw: ½" (1.3cm)-dia. (optional)
- Ornament hook (optional)

TOOLS

- Bench knife
- Ruler
- Paintbrush: 1" (25mm)

The author used these products for the project. Substitute your choice of brands, tools, and materials as desired.

Classic Nutcracker Ornament

Take a break from Santa and carve a different character for the holiday season

By Josh Arroyo

With Christmas comes a lot of Santa carving. Now, don't get me wrong—I love a good Santa, but this little nutcracker was born out of a desire to do something different. Nutcrackers offer so much variety due to the differences in hat designs, color, and costumes. Take this as a springboard to explore new and fun designs!

Getting Started

This ornament is carved "on the corner." Transfer the pattern to the wood or just mark a few key landmarks on the blank. I prefer to start corner carvings of this size with a 12" (30.5cm) blank. This gives me plenty of room to hold the piece and fewer limitations because I can cut the blank down to length when I am happy with the placement of everything.





Carving

Begin by setting the face, working your way up to the hat. Set the nose, brow line, and the base of the hat with a carving knife. Round the area below the base of the nose to create a bit of a dental mound. *Note: Working up the hat helps protect the feather, which can end up being the weakest part of the carving.*

Using a 1/16" (2mm) #11 gouge, set the inside corner of the eye, which is the deepest part of the face. Then set the sides of the nose, being careful to keep as much wood as possible for the cheeks. Use the knife to round the eye mound down into the cheeks where the bags under the eyes would be, and then set the corners of the nostrils.





With a ¼" (6mm) 45° V-tool, set the edges of the outside of the moustache by the nose. Then define the edges of the face where it meets the hairline and up to the base of the hat. Round the cheeks and facial areas with the knife.

Begin shaping the hat with the knife and a ½" (13mm) soft V-tool, removing wood from the left and right up to the pattern line and at the top around the feather. Leave some wood on the back of the feather to avoid breaking it, but remove enough from the front to make it appear to

lean forward. Leave a small mound at the bottom edge of the hat where it meets the forehead to simulate a rope.

Return to the face and finalize the shape of the moustache using the ¼" (6mm) 45° V-tool. Then set the edges of the facial hair, removing all excess wood to the outside. After the edges of the hair are roughed in, use a handsaw or band saw to cut the carving close to its finished length. Then clean up the cut, and use 3/16" and ¼" (5mm and 6mm) #11 gouges to create the form of the hair. Separate the goatee slightly from the beard. Then use various small micro gouges to suggest soft strands of hair.



Refine the details. Using the tip of the knife, carve the eyes. Then use a ⅛" (3mm) 45° V-tool to flatten the teeth and separate them. Finish the feather by removing the remaining excess wood, refining the shape, and carving in the lines. Add a button using the small ⅛" (3mm) micro gouge, recessing the surrounding wood to make it stand proud. Then use the ⅛" (3mm) 45° V-tool to create grooves in the rope mound and detail the hat. Use a 1/16" (2mm) #11 gouge to separate the brow and a small 1/16" (2mm) micro gouge to create hair texture on the eyebrows. Add smile lines below the eyes with the same 1/16" (2mm) gouge, following the contour of the cheeks to emphasize the smile. Then use a small 1/32" (1mm) micro gouge to set the bottom and top of the lip.



Painting and Finishing

When finished carving, use a pin vise to make a 1/32" (1mm)-dia. hole in the top and glue in a small screw eye with cyanoacrylate (CA) glue for hanging. Then apply a very light coat of mineral oil and let dry for a day or two. Paint the entire

carving with a wash of honey brown and yellow ochre acrylic paint for a golden tone. Then paint the details using burnt sienna for beard shadows, buttermilk for the hair, titanium white for the whites of the eyes, undiluted cobalt blue eyes with soft black pupils, diluted country red and soft black for the hat, undiluted antique gold for the rope and button, and titanium white for the highlights. If desired, paint another wash of the honey brown/yellow ochre mixture to add back warmth to the carving. Allow to dry, and then finish with a coat of wax and buff with a horseshoe brush.

materials & **tools**

MATERIALS

- Wood, such as basswood, 2" (5.1cm) square: 12" (30.5cm) long
- Pencil
- Acrylic paints, such as Americana®: buttermilk, country red, honey brown, soft black; such as FolkArt®: antique gold, burnt sienna, cobalt blue, titanium white, yellow ochre
- Cyanoacrylate (CA) glue
- Mineral oil
- Finishing wax
- Screw eye
- Decorative string

TOOLS

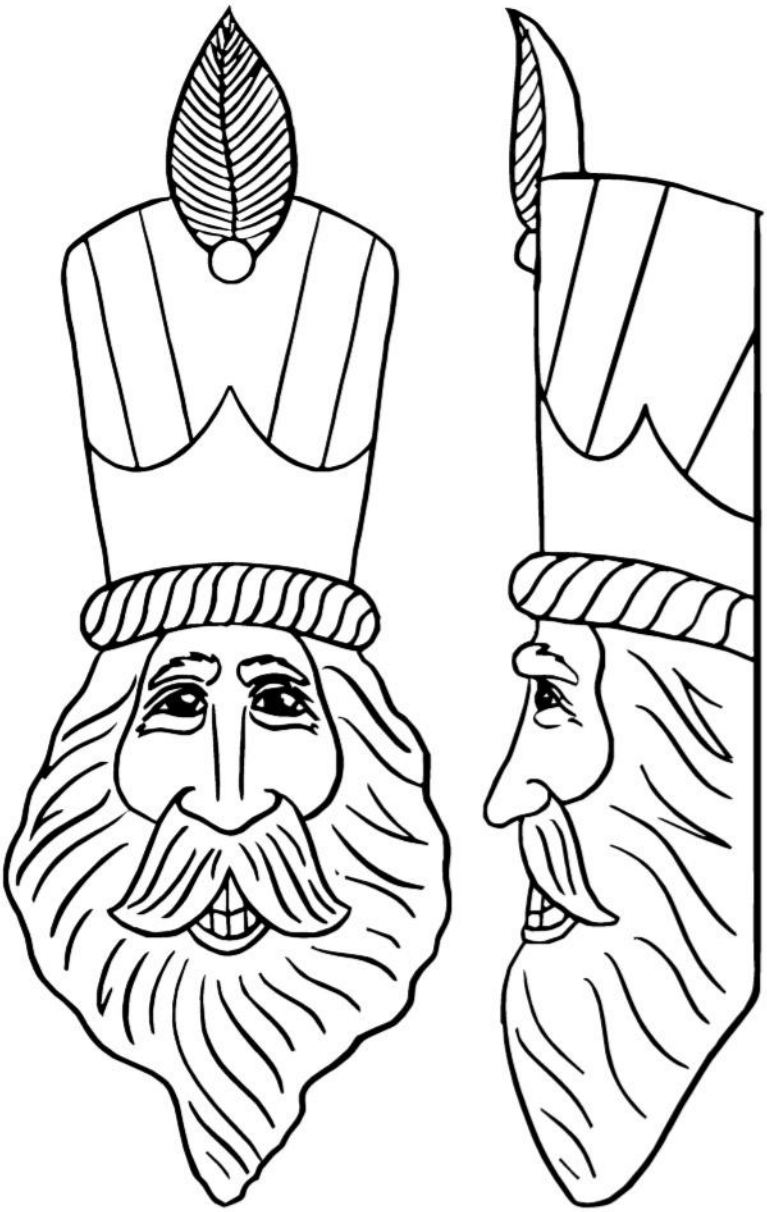
- Handsaw or band saw
- Carving knife
- V-tools: ⅛" (3mm) 45°, ¼" (6mm) 45°
- Soft V-tool: ½" (13mm)
- #11 gouges: 1/16" (2mm), 3/16" (5mm), ¼" (6mm)
- Micro gouges: 1/32" (1mm), 1/16" (2mm), ⅛" (3mm), 3/16" (5mm)
- Pin vise
- Horseshoe brush
- Paintbrushes: assorted

The author used these products for the project. Substitute your choice of brands, tools, and materials as desired.



Josh Arroyo lives in Winter Springs, Fla. with his wife Halei Jo and their son. He has been carving for more than 10 years and is a member of several clubs in the Central Florida area. To see more of his work, check out @arroyo_handcrafts on Instagram.

Classic Nutcracker Ornament Patterns



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Sleepy Santa

Carve a tired St. Nick who's resting up for the big holiday

By Roxana Cristean

I was inspired to create this design after watching the deep blue sky one winter's night. The gold on Santa's robe resembles stars and the silver and blue stripes represent icicles. This is probably what Santa looks like before retiring to bed on a cold December night.

Getting Started

Draw a centerline down the middle of the blank. Then transfer the pattern to the wood by tracing the design with a pencil and carbon paper or by drawing it on.





CARVE THE FIGURE



1 **Rough out the head.** Use a roughout knife to round the top of the hat with push cuts. Then start rounding the face a bit. Decide where Santa's beard is going to end on both edges of the blank and create a deep V-cut on either side of the wood. Mark the tip of the hat with the tassel on the right side of the carving, as you're looking at it.



2 **Set the hat tip and tassel.** Turn the blank to the left and use the roughout knife to begin carving the tip of the hat with the tassel. The tip of the hat should have a "V" shape, with a wider top and tapered bottom. The tassel should be about the same size as the tip of the hat. Carve the tip of the hat and the tassel together with slicing cuts on each side. Separate the tassel and tip of the hat by making a stop cut with the knife or by using a small V-tool. Then round the bottom of the tassel with small stop cuts.



3 **Establish the facial features.** Draw a triangle for the nose with the tip facing frontward and the bottom downward. Make sure to leave enough material for tapering the upper side of the nose because it's a fragile part of the carving. Then deepen each side of the nose with slicing and curve cuts and deepen the bottom side of the nose with stop cuts. Round the tip of the nose and the overall shape of it. Tapper the bridge of the nose and add the nostrils using a ⅓" (8mm) #11 U-gouge, pushing downward. Carve the eyes with the same U-gouge, pushing downward creating a "C" shape. This will give the illusion that Santa is smiling, even though his eyes are closed. Then round the beard with slicing cuts.



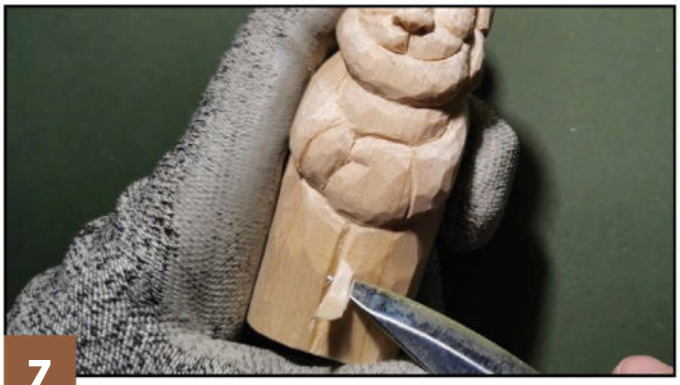
4 **Refine the facial features.** Keep shaping the nose as desired. Then carve the top of the nostrils by making a tiny stop cut on each to create a curve on each side of the nose. Deepen the nostrils by creating triangle cuts. Then deepen the eyes using a detail knife. Carve the cheeks and the area where the beard/moustache begin. Start by using a small V-tool to trace and shape the area, and then use the detail knife to make stop cuts on the line of the cheeks and under them. Keep carving the beard until you achieve a full round shape. Mark a line on top of the forehead that goes around the head for the hat, and then use the detail knife to carve around the head.



5 **Refine the beard.** Create the moustache by using the detail knife to make a concave shape with stop cuts or by using a small V-tool of choice. Part it in the middle with a stab cut and round the edges near where the lips should be. Use downward cuts to shape the beard a bit more. Then begin carving the chest area. Create a second line on the hat about 3⁄16" (5mm) above the one made in the previous step, and then follow the same instructions to create the fur brim.



6 **Carve the arms.** Make deep V-cuts about one third on each side of the block until they meet in the middle to create the arms. Then round over the edges on the bottom part of the robe by carefully cutting toward yourself. If this is uncomfortable, just turn the carving upside down and go with the grain.



7 **Carve the gloves and robe.** Trace the gloves by carving stop cuts above and under them. One glove should be above the other and the one underneath should be partially visible. Shape the gloves and the arms with slicing cuts. Then make stop cuts to define the sleeves and the gloves. Next, carve a V-cut on the middle part of the robe, starting just beneath the gloves down to the bottom of the carving and round the robe all over.



8 **Shape the arms.** Carve the sides of both arms with a combination of slicing and stop cuts at the angle in the photo. Then round them so there aren't any rough edges.



9 **Carve the back of the arms.** Turn the carving to the back and extend the arms in the back by making two deep V-cuts underneath each arm. Then round the back of the robe with a series of slicing cuts. Separate the hair from the robe by making stop cuts, and then round the bottom of the hair.

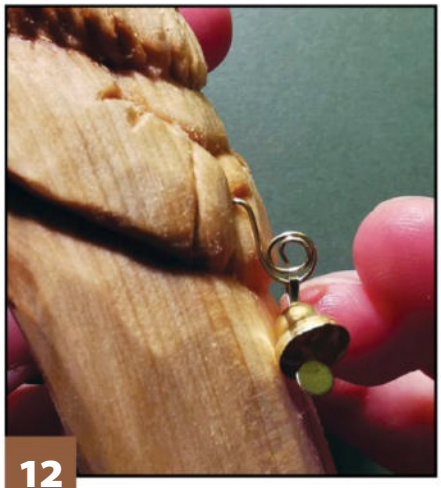


10 **Detail the beard.** Use the small V-tool to detail the beard and moustache, making sure to also carve the back of the head. Then use the ⅛" (3mm) #11 U-gouge to texture the fur brim and tassel by carving upward.

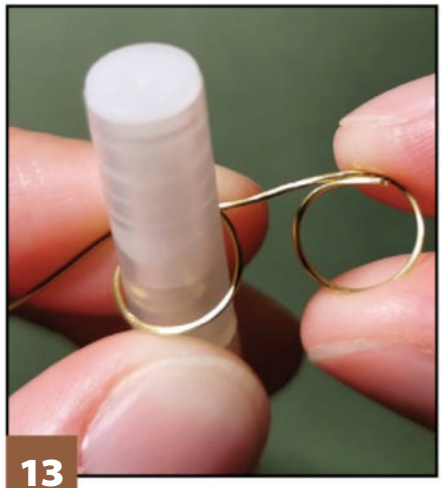
MAKE THE ACCESSORIES



11 **Drill the bell hole.** Use a hand drill with a 1/16" (2mm)-dia. bit to make a small hole underneath the thumb of the upper glove to hold the bell. Then oil the carving with boiled linseed oil or mineral oil to prepare for painting. Wipe off excess with a paper towel and let the carving cure for a few days.



12 **Make the bell holder.** Use round-nose pliers to make an upside down "L" shape on one side of a piece of 0.019" (0.5mm)-dia. gold wire. Then make a swirl on the other side of the wire and thread a mini craft bell onto the wire. Test fit it to the hand, making sure the depth and overall shape and size suit the carving.



13 **Make the glasses.** Use a pen to shape the glasses from the gold wire. Make a loop for the first lens around the pen, leave a straight bit for the bridge of the nose, and then loop the second lens around the pen. Compare the size of the glasses to the carving, adjusting the shape, if needed, so that they aren't too big or too small.

Painting and Finishing

Paint the cheeks, tip of the nose, and above the eye sockets with vintage lila. Then use black for the slits of the eyes. Paint the beard and the eyebrows matte vintage gray. Then drybrush vintage white on the beard to make the carved details pop. Create eyebrow hairs using a fine detail brush with the same vintage white. Use nimbus for the hat brim fur, tassel, and gloves.



Paint the entire hat with indigo and make some "comma" shapes above the fur with metallic bluish silver. Then add some dots with gold contour liner. Paint the entire robe with the same indigo and detail the robe using the same technique as on the hat.



Next, use the same technique on the front of the carving, but add some metallic silver accents on the bottom of the robe and on the middle of the sleeves. For the gloves, add some dots with gold contour liner and use a fine tip brush to make even smaller dots with metallic cobalt blue. Sparingly brush some pearl white on the fur brim and the tassel of the hat.

Deepen all the creases with black/dark brown watered-down acrylic, especially on the jointing of the arms, hands, beard, and where the hat joins with the rest of the body. Allow the paint to dry. Then apply a matte water-based varnish to the carving and attach the glasses and the bell with a bit of cyanoacrylate (CA) glue.

materials & tools

MATERIALS

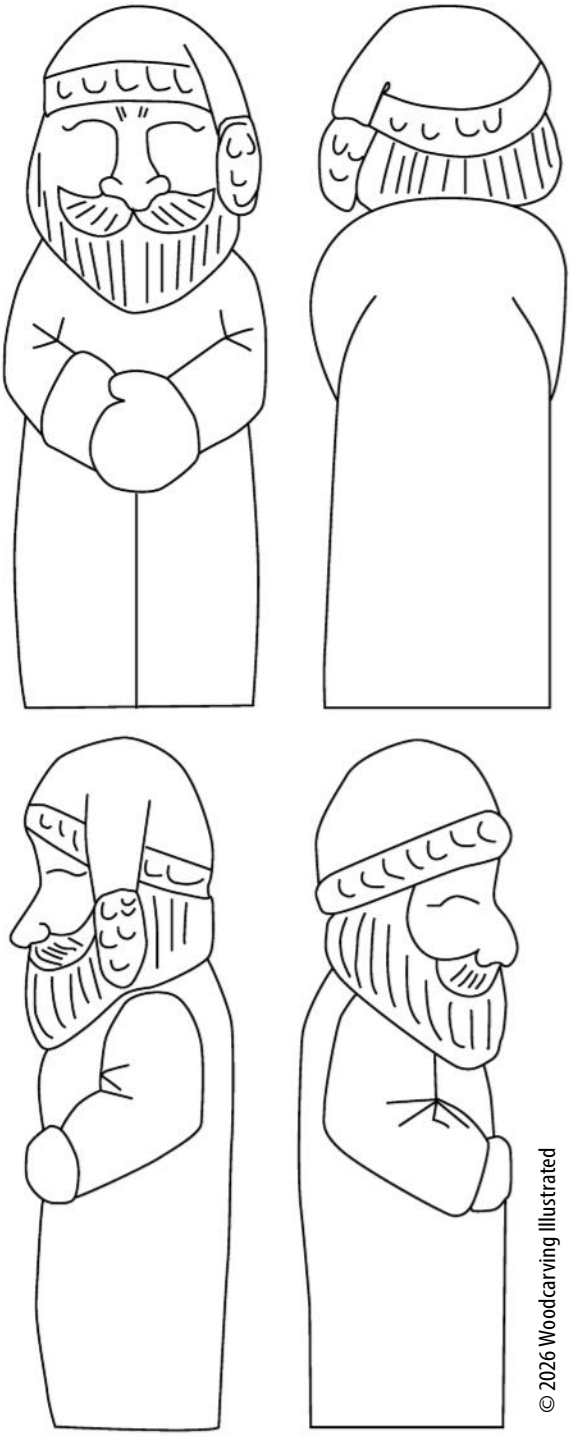
- Basswood, 1⅜" (3.5cm) square: 3¾" (9.5cm) long
- Pencil and pen
- Carbon paper
- Boiled linseed oil or mineral oil
- Paper towels
- Matte acrylic paints, such as Pentart: black, blue indigo, dark brown, metallic cobalt blue, metallic bluish silver, metallic silver, nimbus, pearl white, vintage gray, vintage lila, vintage white
- Contour liner, such as Pentart: gold
- Gold wire: 0.019" (0.5mm)-dia.
- Mini craft bell
- Cyanoacrylate (CA) glue
- Finish, such as water-based varnish: matte

TOOLS

- Roughout knife, such as Morakniv 120
- Detail knife, such as Narex 8942
- V-tools of choice
- #11 U-gouge, such as Narex: ⅛" (3mm)
- Small hand drill, such as Green Stuff World, with bit: 1/16" (2mm)-dia.
- Round-nosed pliers
- Paintbrushes: size 6, 10 round; size 0 fine detail

The author used these products for the project. Substitute your choice of brands, tools, and materials as desired.

Sleepy Santa Patterns



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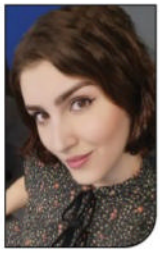

Roxana Cristean began carving in 2020 after finding carving tutorials online. She is often inspired by nature and animals. Roxana has a master's degree in the theory and practice of translation, and lives in Timișoara, Romania. Find her on Instagram @etno_creations, or on Facebook at Roxi Cristean.

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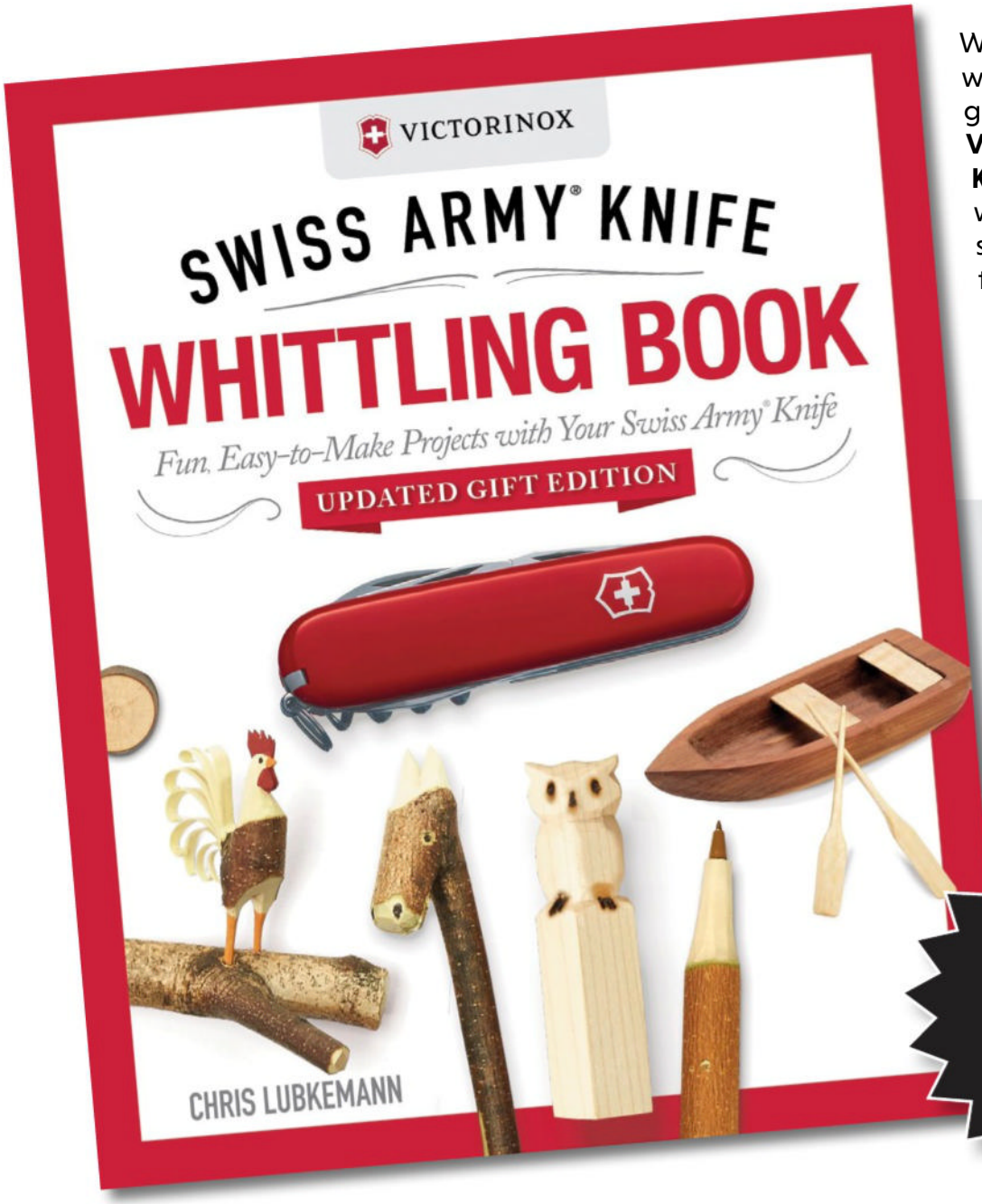

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Easy Polar Bear



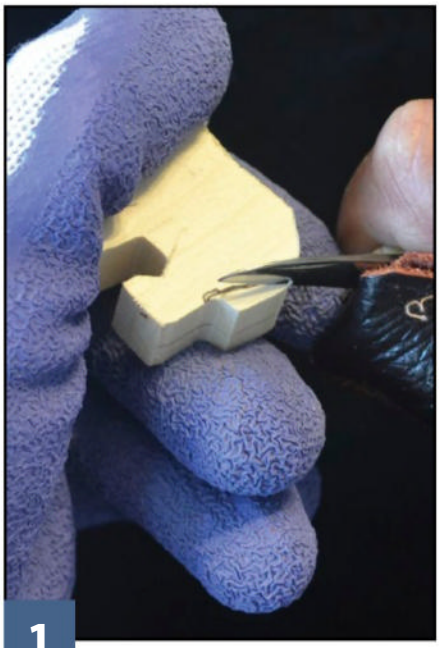
This little bear is the perfect project to try with a friend or youngster who is interested in a carving hobby

By Tom Hindes

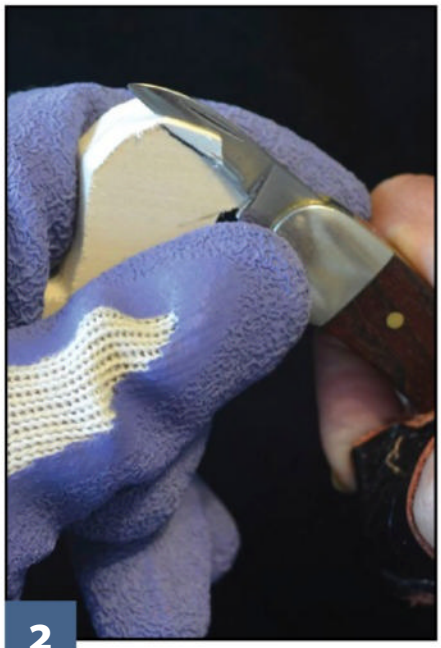
The polar bear's scientific name, *Ursus maritimus*, means "maritime bear." Fittingly, while the bear is born on land, it spends much of its time hunting on the ice and in frigid arctic waters. Pay special attention to the curvature of the bear's back; the flat planes will add motion and character, suggesting the bear is ready to set off on its next journey across the ice.

Getting Started

Transfer the pattern onto the wood, and then cut around the perimeter with a band saw, scroll saw, or coping saw. Draw the detail lines on both sides and a centerline around the edge of the blank.



1 **Separate the tail from the rump.** Make stop cuts between the tail and the rump on both sides of the blank. Rock the knife blade up and down to make the cuts.



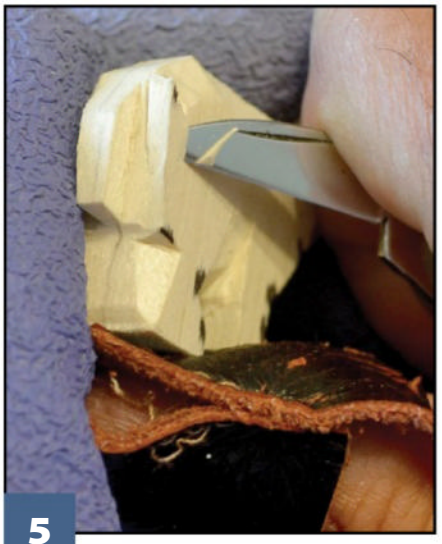
2 **Thin the tail.** With a carving knife, remove thin slices of wood from the outside edge of the tail to the stop cuts. Use the thumb as a pivot point. Repeat the process of slightly deepening the stop cuts and removing thin slices of wood from the tail until you remove about one third of the tail's thickness on each side of the blank. Use the centerline as a reference.



3 **Define the head.** Make stop cuts between the polar bear's head and the neck on both sides of the blank. The head should be narrower than the body. Use push cuts or paring cuts (whichever is more comfortable) to remove thin slices of wood from the nose back to the stop cut between the head and neck. Remove these thin slices of wood until the head is thinner than the body, tapering slightly toward the nose. Using either paring or thumb-assisted push cuts, thin the neck area from the body to the stop cut between the head and neck. Do this on both sides of the blank.



4 **Add the haunch details.** Make stop cuts behind the front legs and in front of the back legs, as shown on the illustration. Remove V-shaped chips of wood from the belly to the stop cuts at the rear of the front legs and the front of the rear legs. Use the centerline for reference to make the chips the same size and shape.



5 **Add the flat-plane details.** With a pencil, mark points where the straight edges of the blank intersect. Make a shallow stop cut at each of these points. Complete on both sides of the blank. Between each of the shallow edge stop cuts, remove a thin sliver of wood from the edge of the blank, creating flat planes. Use a combination of thumb-assisted push cuts and paring cuts. Make sure the cuts are clean and uniform in width (about one third the thickness of the blank). If you're careful you will get one continuous line running around the entire bear. Clean up your cuts.



6 **Separate the ears.** Make two angled cuts between the ears, and then remove the created chip.



Painting and Finishing

There are several ways to finish the polar bear: leave the knife cuts visible in a flat-plane style, stain it, paint it, or sand it smooth. Mix and match these techniques or leave the polar bear unfinished. I chose to paint the polar bear with diluted white paint, sanding lightly after it dried to highlight the facets.

materials & tools

MATERIALS

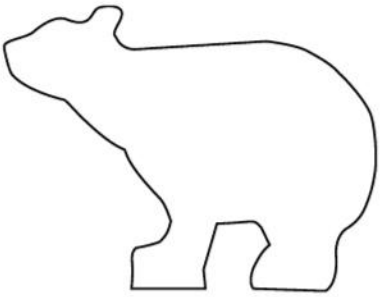
- Basswood, ¾" (1.9cm) thick: 1½" x 2" (3.8cm x 5.1cm)
- Pencil
- Sandpaper: assorted grits
- Acrylics, such as FolkArt®: pure black, titanium white

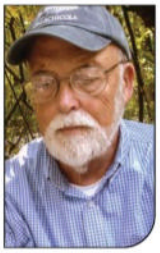
TOOLS

- Saw: band, coping, or scroll
- Carving knife: small
- Paintbrushes: assorted small

The author used these products for the project. Substitute your choice of brands, tools, and materials as desired.

Easy Polar Bear Pattern





Tom Hindes started whittling and carving in the early 2000s. Now retired from a career in technical training development at Ohio State University, Tom lives in Port St. Joe, Fla. He carves Noah's arks, Christmas ornaments, wizards, and gnomes. He is the author of Whittling in Your Free Time *and* 20-Minute Whittling, *both available from Fox Chapel Publishing.*

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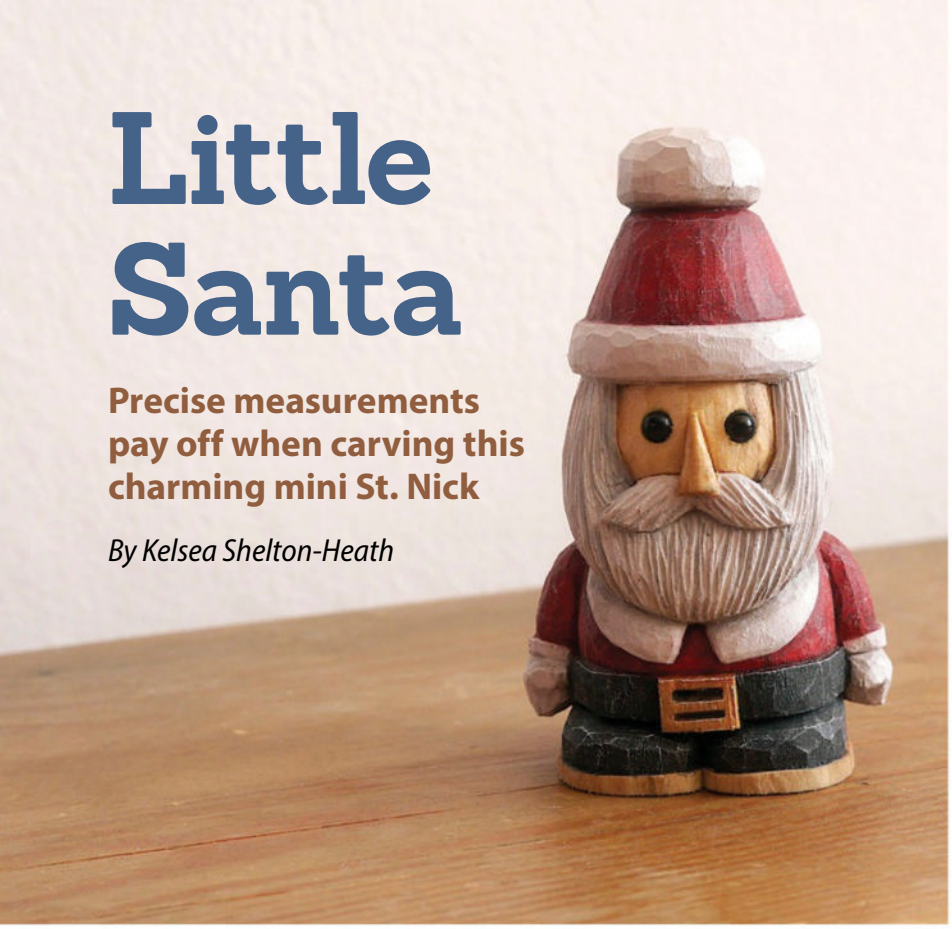
Little Santa

Precise measurements pay off when carving this charming mini St. Nick

By Kelsea Shelton-Heath



Like many people, I've always loved Christmas, and Santa is the center of all that excitement. I felt it was almost customary for everyone to carve a Santa at some point in their carving journey. So, I wanted to create my own with a bit of a spin on the traditional Santas you usually see.

Getting Started

When carving this Santa, I always start from the top down, refining as I go. I'm too eager to see the carving come to life, so I don't rough everything out first and add the details later. Instead, I work each section through as I reach it. To get started, mark the blank in quadrants by drawing lines all the way around the wood at the following measurements:

- Pom-pom on hat: ⅜" (9.5mm)
- Hat: 13⁄16" (2cm)
- Hatband: ¼" (6mm)
- Face and beard: 1 3⁄16" (3cm)
- Back of head: 13⁄16" (2cm)
- Back collar: ¼" (6mm)
- Body: 9⁄16" (1.4cm)
- Feet: ⅜" (9.5mm)

Use the pattern as your main guide, but drawing these measurements on the block first is highly recommended since they will give you a clear reference to work from while carving. When finished marking the blank, draw the figure on the front of the blank.



1 **Rough out the blank.** Using a roughout knife, trim off the corners of the block. Then carve V-cuts to mark the body's sections.





2 **Carve the hat.** Use the knife to score along the lower edge of the hat, working all the way around the block. Then make stop cuts to establish the hat, and taper it upward with push cuts. Next, trace around the hatband with the knife and use stop cuts to establish the shape. Mark a cross on the top of the blank and draw a circle around it to indicate the pom-pom. Whittle down the pom-pom until it reaches your desired size.



3 **Rough out the head.** Cut along the guideline to rough out the head. Begin with the back of the head, as the hairline sits higher than the face. Then draw the collar.



4 **Establish the beard.** Score the beard's outline, and then use V-cuts to separate it from the body. Begin forming the shape with a series of small push cuts.





5 **Carve the face.** Use the knife to score the facial features into the wood. Then use a ⅛" (4mm) butt chisel to carve the face. Work carefully around the nose to avoid removing too much wood. Then use the same chisel to shape the nose into a small triangle. Refine the facial features, taking small cuts to soften and round them off.



6 **Establish the arms.** Turn the block upside down and draw a cross in the center, extending the lines up the sides. Measure 3⁄16" (5mm) on either side of the centerline to mark the width of the arms. Then mark the bottom of the hands ¼" (6mm) up from the base of the block. Use the knife to score the lines for the arms.





7 **Carve the body.** On the front of the carving, use the knife to score the lines for the collar, belt, and buckle. Then remove small sections of wood, making stop cuts to gradually bring out the details on the front of the body. Next, turn the carving to the back and use a series of stop cuts and push cuts to remove wood up to the collar line. When the collar is formed, round it off.





8 **Carve the arms.** Use the knife to remove excess wood around the arm guidelines. Then shape the arms with small push cuts. Mark a 1⁄16" (2mm) cuff where each arm meets the hand and score along the line with small push cuts to create the cuffs. Next, remove excess wood around the hands and shape each hand using small cuts.





9 **Shape the belt.** Use the 1⁄8" (4mm) butt chisel to shape the belt, working your way around the body with smooth push cuts. Then mark two 1⁄4" (6mm) horizontal lines across the buckle. Create the buckle detail by using the 1⁄8" (4mm) butt chisel to carve clean V-cuts along each line.





10 **Create the boots.** Using the knife, carve a V-cut between the feet on the front and back of the block, gradually deepening it to separate the boots. Remove excess wood around the lower body until the shoes sit naturally beneath the hands. Then draw a line 1⁄8" (3mm) up from the bottom of the block to mark the sole of each boot. Score along the line, and then use stop cuts to remove the wood above it.





11 **Add final details.** Carve the hair, beard, and moustache by making push cuts with a 1⁄32" (1mm) #13 micro gouge. Next, mark the position of the eyes with a pencil and drill the eye sockets using a rotary tool with a 3⁄16" (5mm)-dia. bit. Prepare the glass eyes by trimming the stems to fit with a wire cutter. Then gently tap them into the sockets with a small rubber mallet.

Painting and Finishing



Finish the carving with Danish oil to seal the wood. Leave it natural or paint it according to the Paint Notes below. Water down the acrylic paint, so you can build up color in thin layers until it looks right to you. Paint the carving and allow it to fully dry. *Note: Keep the face left unpainted.* Next, add a heavily diluted wash of black paint to bring out natural shadows. Paint the wash into all creases and joints, building on this until you are satisfied with the results. Allow to dry. For the final step, drybrush the carving using undiluted white acrylic. Dip a dry brush into the paint and wipe almost all of it off onto a paper towel before you touch the carving. The brush should look almost dry. Then gently brush over the raised areas to highlight the details. When the paint is dry, apply Howard Feed-N-Wax® to enhance the overall look and protect the finish. Enjoy Santa as he is or add a small screw eye to the top and string with ribbon to make an ornament.

Paint Notes

Hat and coat: transparent vermilion mixed with a drop of primary magenta and mars black

Hatband, collar, gloves: titanium white mixed with a drop of mars black

Belt and boots: mars black with a drop of white

Belt buckle and shoe treads: yellow ochre

Face: unpainted wood

Drybrush: titanium white

materials & tools

MATERIALS

- Basswood: 1 9/16" (4cm) thick: 1 3/4" x 2 15/16" (4.5cm x 7.5cm)
- Pencil
- Glass craft eyes: 1/6" (4mm)-dia. 2 each
- Acrylic paints, such as Pēbēo: mars black, primary magenta, titanium white, transparant vermillion, yellow ochre
- Danish oil, such as Rustins
- Howard Feed-N-Wax®
- Screw eye: small (optional)
- Decorative ribbon (optional)
- Paper towels

TOOLS

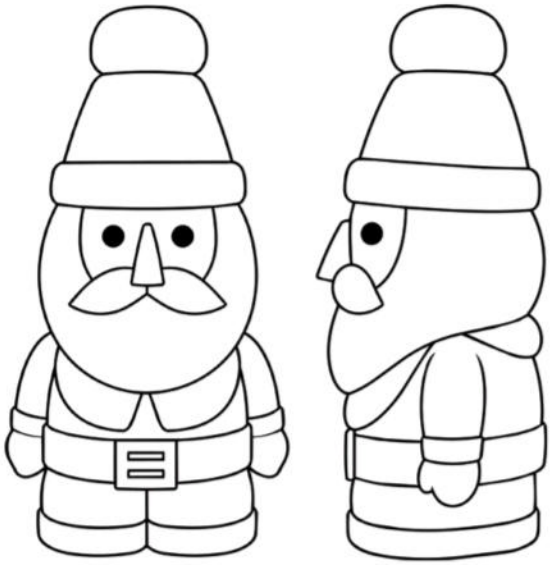
- Ruler
- Roughout knife, such as Flexcut®
- Butt chisel, such as Pfeil: 1/8" (4mm)
- #13 micro gouge, such as Pfeil: 1/32" (1mm)
- Rotary tool, such as Dremel®, with bit: 3/16" (5mm)-dia.
- Wire cutters: small
- Rubber mallet: small
- Dry brush, such as Fuumuui®
- Paintbrushes, such as Mont Marte® Gallery Series: assorted small

The author used these products for the project. Substitute your choice of brands, tools, and materials as desired.



Kelsea Shelton-Heath lives in Leeds, UK, and has been carving for two years. She has always loved being creative, moving through hobbies that never quite stuck. Carving was different. There's something about shaping wood by hand that just clicked, and she has not put the knife down since. You can follow her work @carvedbykels on Instagram.

Little Santa Patterns



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Rosette Napkin Holder



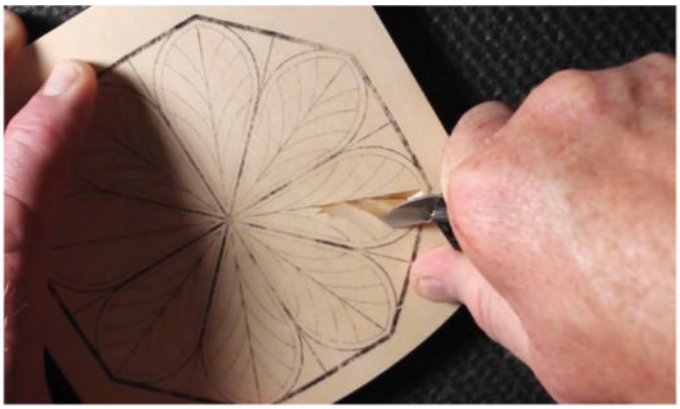
Liven up your dining table or counter with a lovely chip-carved accessory

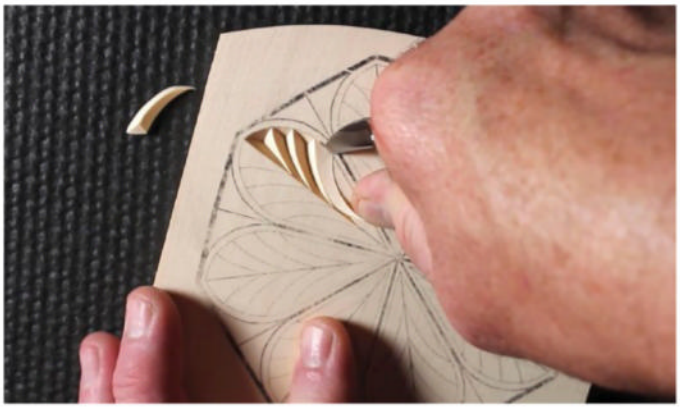
By Marty Leenhouts

One advantage in learning how to chip carve is that you can create and carve a wide variety of utilitarian items, such as this napkin holder. When you put this holder to use on your dining table or kitchen counter, it's sure to gain a lot of attention and beautifully showcase your work. I've included a second pattern for the other side and some instructions for carving it in the sidebar on page 73. Try your hand at this napkin holder that looks much better than something you'd just pick up in a home goods store!

Getting Started

Cut the sides and base of the napkin holder with a band saw. Sand the surface of the blanks smooth using 220-grit or finer sandpaper and remove any sanding dust. Then measure ⅜" (1cm) from each side of the base blank, and use a router with a ½" (13mm)-dia. bit to cut the two grooves lengthwise across the blank. Remove any dust and transfer the patterns to the side and base blanks using a pattern transfer tool or graphite transfer paper. Before starting to carve, ensure that your chip carving knife is sharp by either sharpening the entire blade or honing the blade with a leather strop if you know the edge is already sharp.



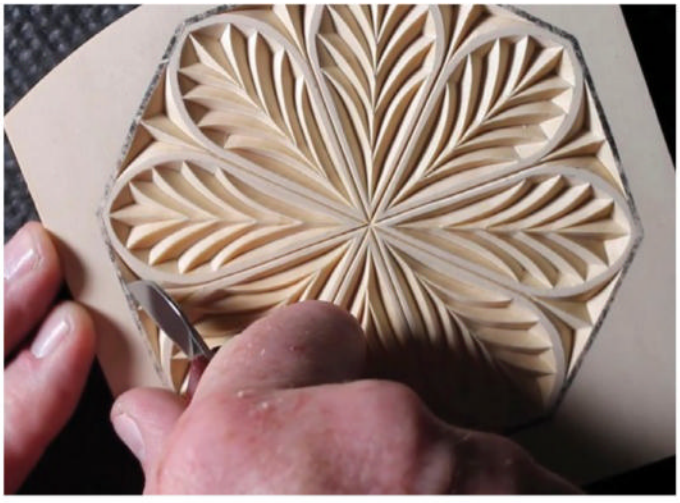




Carving

To carve the eight-point rosette and avoid chip out, it's important to follow this order of cuts. Start on the right side of a leaf if you are right-handed and the left side if you are left-handed. As you make each cut, remember that as the chip gets wider, the depth of your cut needs to increase. Holding your knife properly during each cut will result in a consistent 55°- to 65°-angled cut. Begin by cutting from the outer edge to the centerline. Start at the bottom of the leaf and work your way up the leaf, resulting in a total of four cuts.

Next, at the top of the leaf where you ended your last cut, make a cut along the centerline to the outer edge. Remove the chip by making the final cut on the outside edge. Continue this same order of cuts to remove all five chips on the right side of the leaf.



Work on the other side of the leaf. Start at the top and make five cuts, starting from the outside edge and finishing at the pointy center of the chip. Remove the chips from the bottom of the leaf and work your way to the top, carving in the reverse order of what you did on the other side. Repeat the previous steps to remove the chips that make up the remaining seven leaves.

TIP

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

The rosette pattern can be complicated. If you're new to chip carving or have yet to carve a rosette pattern like this, start by applying the pattern on a practice board and carving it there. That way you can work out any challenges that come up and make necessary corrections before carving the actual project.

Remove the two back-to-back chips on the edge in between each leaf by making the cut down the middle first. Then remove one of the chips, and cut down the middle on the second chip. Your knife should be pointed away from the chip you just removed, avoiding chip out on the delicate center ridge separating the two chips. Remove the straight lines in between each leaf with two straight cuts.

Remove the outer border lines. Make the inside cut first with your knife angled away from the rosette chips already removed. Then carve the base pattern. Repeat these directions to carve the rosette and base designs on the other side of the napkin holder.

Finishing

Remove any leftover pattern lines with a Tombow Sand Eraser. Be careful when sanding off the pattern lines so you don't flatten the sharp ridges. Finish the holder by spraying three or four coats of clear matte acrylic. Lightly sand the holder and remove the dust before the final coat for a glassy smooth surface. Glue the holder sides into the base slots and let dry.

materials & **tools**

MATERIALS

- Wood, such as basswood, ½" (1.3cm) thick: napkin holder sides, 2 each, 5" x 5½" (12.7cm x 14cm)
- Wood, such as basswood, ¾" (1.9cm) thick: base, 3¾" x 5" (9.5cm x 12.7cm)
- Pencil
- Graphite transfer paper
- Sandpaper: 220-grit or finer
- Wood glue
- Tombow Sand Eraser
- Clear finish, such as Rust-Oleum®: matte acrylic spray
- Spray satin lacquer (optional)

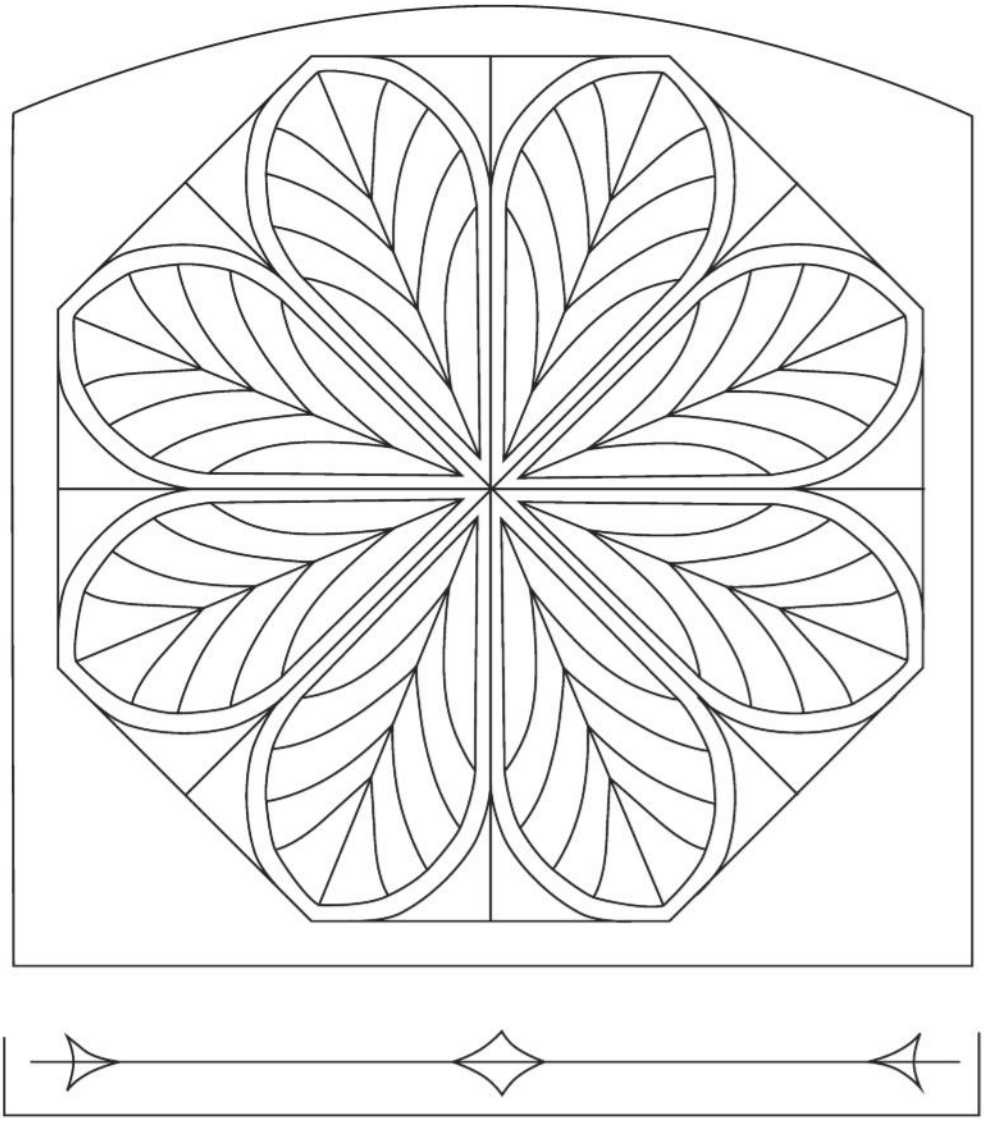
TOOLS

- Band saw
- Pattern transfer tool (optional)
- Chip carving knife
- Router with bit: ½" (13mm)-dia.

The author used these products for the project. Substitute your choice of brands, tools, and materials as desired.

SPECIAL SOURCES:
For napkin holder blanks, chip carving knives, sharpening kits, and pattern transfer tool, visit mychipcarving.com.

Chip-Carved Napkin Holder Patterns



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Marty Leenhouts is a regular contributor to Woodcarving Illustrated *and the author of* Chip Carving Essentials: A Step-by-Step Guide to Successful Chip Carving. *The founder of MyChipCarving.com, he has 40 years of teaching experience. His instructional videos have more than three million views and can be found at MyChipCarving.com and on YouTube @MyChipCarving.*

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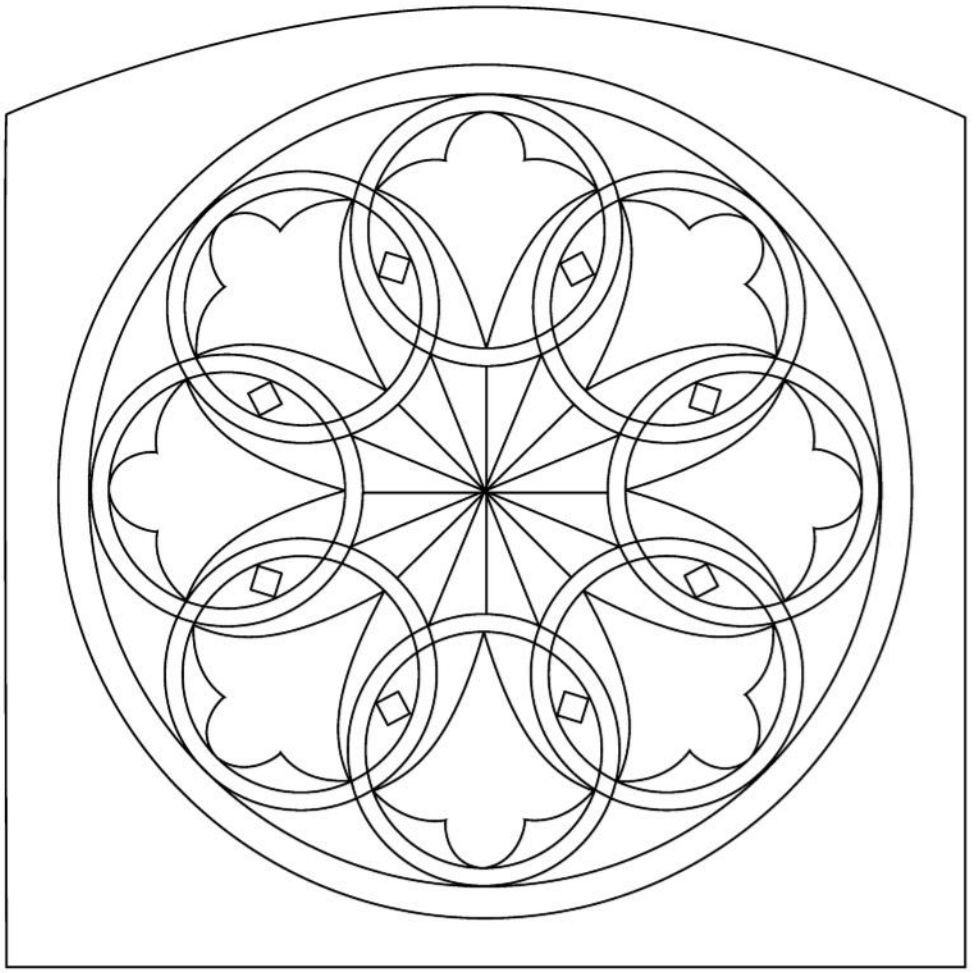

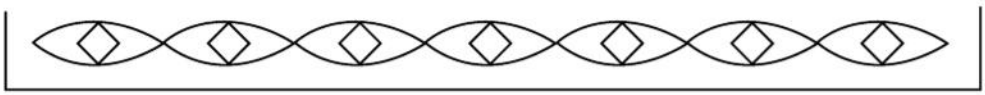

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Carving the Bonus Pattern

The second pattern has fewer back-to-back chips, making it easier to carve. Start in the center of the rosette making your first cuts from the outside to the center. Make second cuts from the inside-out and remove each chip, one at a time, with the third cut. When the center section is complete, work on the eight small rosettes one at a time. To carve the large outer chips, make the inside cuts first and follow up with one continuous, smooth, non-stop cut around the outside. Don't forget to make small two-sided cuts on the eight rings to create the illusion that the rings are overlapping.



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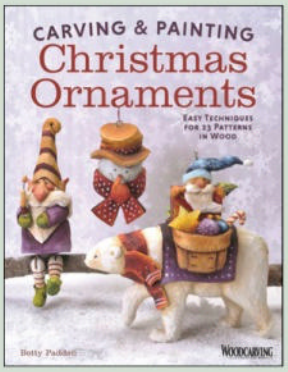

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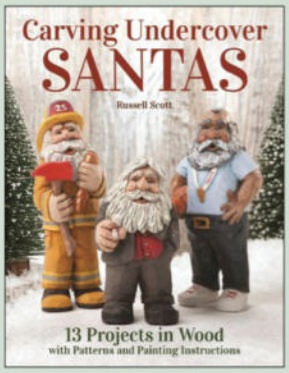

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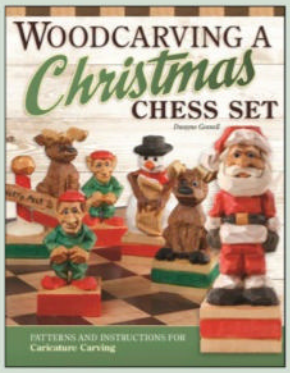

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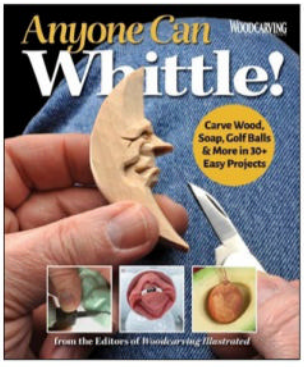

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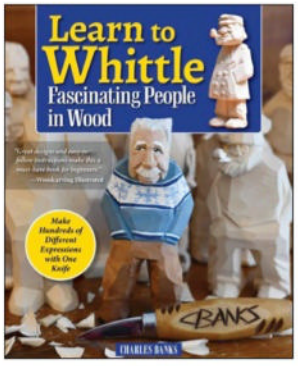

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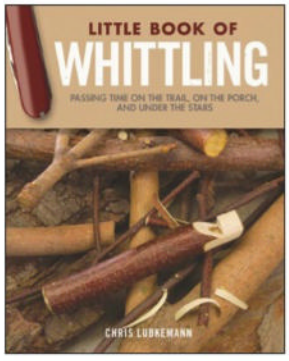

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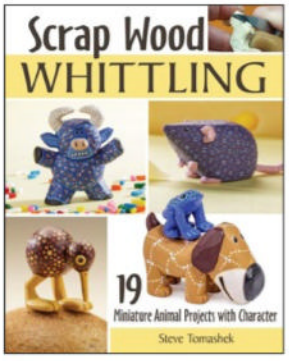

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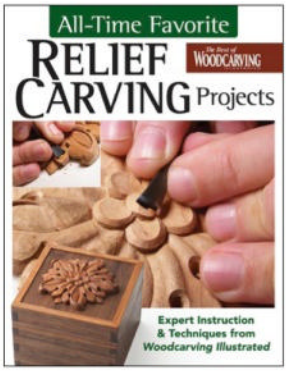

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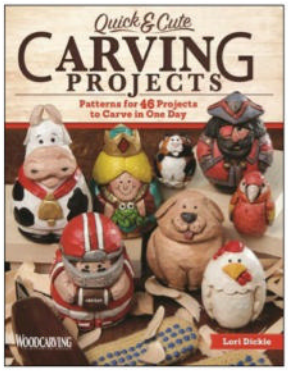

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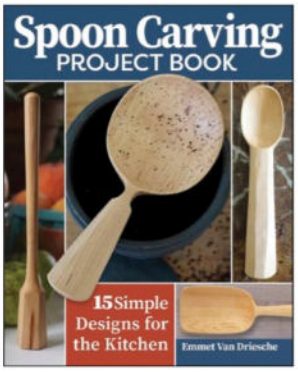

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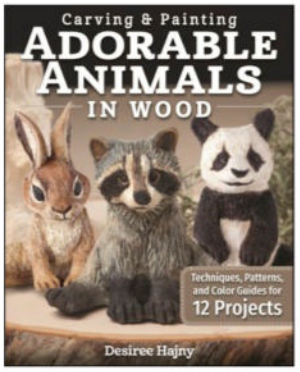

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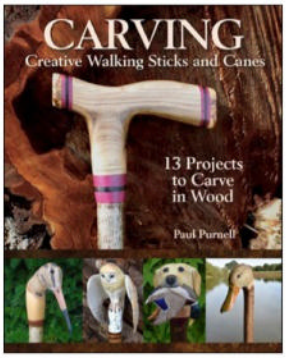

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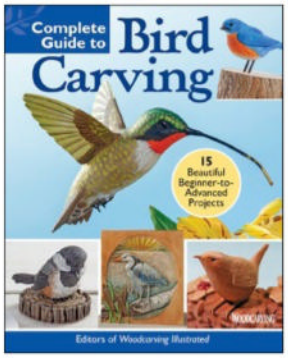

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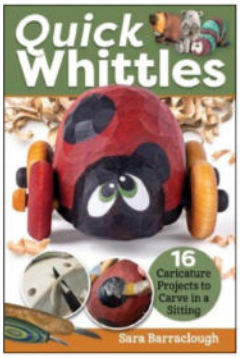

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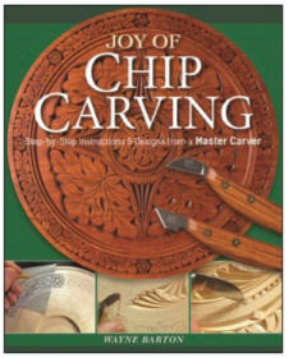

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FOX HUNT

Elias S. Lee of Yankton, S.D., and Brent Hemmerlein of Granger, Ind. were randomly drawn from the readers who located the fox in our last issue (Fall 2026, Issue #116). The fox was hiding in the Step 2 photo in Dale Kirkpatrick's "Spool Carving" on page 27.

Find the fox in this issue 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 December 23, 2026, to be eligible. *Note: The contest fox is an outline drawing that would face left if its feet were on the "ground" (other foxes appearing in* WCI *don't count).*

Send your entry to *WCI,* Attn: Find the Fox, 903 Square Street, Mount Joy, PA 17552 or enter online at woodcarvingillustrated.com.



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calendar of events

ALABAMA
Nov 6–7: HUNTSVILLE
Mid-South Woodcarving Show and Competition. Trinity United Methodist Church, 607 Airport Rd. Free adm. Contact Paul Freeman, 256-714-6163, paulf691@comcast.net.

ARKANSAS
May 1–2: MOUNTAIN HOME
North Arkansas Woodcarvers Club's (NAWC) 47th Annual Woodcarving Show. Baxter County Fairgrounds, College and Wade Sts.10am-5pm Sat., 10am-4pm Sun. Free adm. Contact Sandy Smith, 870-431-8070, webmaster@northkansaswoodcarvers.org.

FLORIDA
Mar 13: TANGERINE
3rd Annual Lake County Woodcarving Show and Sale. Tangerine Improvement Society, 7101 Wright Ave. 9am–3pm. Free adm. Contact John Haan, 616-862-8645, johnh.vet@gmail.com.

ILLINOIS
Nov 13–14: BELLEVILLE
Midwest Artistry in Wood and Craft Show. First United Presbyterian Church, 1303 Royal Heights Rd. 4pm–7pm Fri., 9am–5pm Sat. $5 adm. Children under 12 free. Contact Midwest Wood Carvers, 618-806-7232, midwestwoodcarvers.com.

INDIANA
Nov 14: MT SUMMIT
Raintree Woodcarvers Show and Sale. Mt Summit Christian Church, 508 S Walnut St. 10am–5pm. Free adm. Contact Randy Sollars, 765-730-0286, rsollars@hotmail.com.

KANSAS
Nov 21: TOPEKA
Kaw Valley Woodcarvers Art Show and Sale. IBEW #226 Bldg, 1620 NW Gage Blvd. 9am–5pm. $5 adm. Children under 12 free. Contact Linda Benson, 785-231-3003, linda.benson1437@att.net.

MICHIGAN
Apr 10–11: SHELBY TWP
45th Artistic Creations in Wood Carving Show. Packard Proving Grounds Historic Site, 49965 Van Dyke Ave. 10am–4pm Sat., 11am–3pm Sun. $8 adm fro adults. Contact Chris Miller, 586-610-3373, chris.miller@metrocarvers.com.

MINNESOTA
Mar 20–21: ROCHESTER
51st Annual Rochester Woodcarvers Woodcarving Show. Aune Hall (formerly the 4-H Building), Graham Park (formerly Olmsted County Fairgrounds), 1508 Aune Drive SE. 10am–4pm daily. Free adm. Contact Tom Severson, 507-254-5445, rochcarve@gmail.com.

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MISSOURI
Nov 7: CAMDENTON
Lake of the Ozarks Woodcarving Show and Competition. Community Christian Church, 1064 N Bus Rt 5. 830am–330pm. Free adm. Contact Pam Karl, 573-723-1043, pkarl74@yahoo.com.

NEW JERSEY
Nov 7–8: WANAQUE
40th Annual Woodcarving and Arts Show, Sale and Competition. Wanaque First Aid Squard, 5 Melrose Ave. 10am–5pm Sat., 10am–4pm Sun. Contact North Jersey Woodcarvers Club, njwoodcarvers.sqaurespace.com.

NEW YORK
Apr 3: ROCHESTER
Genesee Valley Woodcarvers 41st Annual Show and Competition. Rochester Museum and Science Center, Eisenhart Auditorium, 657 East Ave. 10am–430pm. Free adm. Contact Show Chairman, webmaster@gvwoodcarvers.com.

OHIO
Oct 16–Jan 30: BEACHWOOD
Beyond The Third Dimension: Superrealistic Wood Carvings by John T. Sharp. WOLFS Gallery, 23645 Mercantile Rd. 11am–5pm Tues.–Sat. Contact WOLFS Gallery, 216-721-6945, info@wolfsgallery.com.

Woodcarving Illustrated publishes a general listing of carving shows in each issue. To list your show in our Calendar of Events, send the following to editors@woodcarvingillustrated.com:
- Name of event
- Date(s)
- Location (city, state, address, and building name if applicable)
- Hours for each day of show
- Admission
- Contact information

Deadline for the spring 2027 Issue is December 23, 2026.

PENNSYLVANIA
Mar 13–14: MILLERSVILLE
Wonders in Wood 52nd Annual Woodcarving Show, Sale and Competition. Student Memorial Center, 108 Shenks Ln. $5 adm. Free adm. with military and student ID. Contact Show Chairman Bob Hershey, bzcarvn@ptd.net.

TEXAS
Jun 4–5: MINEOLA
The Mineola League of the Arts 6th Annual Woodcarving/Woodburning Show. Mineola League of the Arts, 200 W Blair St. 10am–4pm daily. Free adm. Contact Vince DiCarlo, vincedc71@gmail.com.

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Glossary of Common Carving Terms

Bevel: The angled cutting surface that allows a tool to slice through wood.

Chisel: A flat-bladed tool with a single beveled edge.

Double-Edged Blades: These blades have a bevel on both sides; the bevels meet to form a sharp point in the center. Classic bench knives, chip carving knives, and some whittling knives are double-edged blades.

Gouge: A carving tool with a single-bevel, curved cutting edge. Gouges come in many sizes and sweeps; the lower the number, the flatter the blade (a #3 is flatter than a #7).

Honing: To refine the cutting edge after sharpening. Not to be confused with sharpening itself.

Secondary Bevel or Micro Bevel: An additional bevel included on some carving tools at the very edge of the blade. Some carvers prefer to maintain this secondary bevel during sharpening, while others prefer to remove it.

Sharpening Stones: Made with a variety of materials, both natural and synthetic, these tools come in different grits and are used to set the bevel on a cutting edge.

Single-Edged Blades: These blades have a bevel on one side. Gouges, V-tools, and chisels are single-edged blades.

Slip Strops: Sharpening stones that are pre-profiled to fit chisels, round gouges, and V-tools.

Strop: A flexible strip of leather used to hone and refine the edge of a tool. Most strops have two sides: a raw leather side and a tanned leather side. The raw leather side uses stropping compound, and the tanned side (meant to be used afterward) does not.

V-Tool: A carving tool with a single-bevel cutting edge consisting of two flat surfaces that meet to form a V. These tools come in various sizes and degrees.

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This page is included to assist novice carvers with basic tips and info.



Strop Stuff

Cleaning Your Strop

Over time, your strop will develop a thick layer of used stropping compound and the leather fibers will become compressed. To refresh your strop, use a dull-bladed knife—either a knife that has lost its edge or an old, serrated kitchen knife.

Pull the knife across the raw leather side of the strop, scraping away the old compound. Work the strop until you can see the fibrous grain of the leather over the entire surface. Lift the knife, so that you are working the raw leather with just the edge of the knife. Scrape several more times to open the fibers of the raw side.



The tanned leather side can be washed clean using a mild dishwashing soap and warm water. Dip a washcloth into the soapy water, and then rub the cloth across the leather surface until all the black metal residue has been removed. *Note: Do not drench or submerge the strop in the soapy water.* Oversaturation can cause the glue that holds the leather to the wood to soften. Lightly rinse the strop with clean water and dry well with a towel.



Flattening Your Strop

The leather on your strop can develop ridges as you pull gouges, knives, V-tools, or chisels across its surface. Those ridges can cause uneven honing on your cutting edge. To flatten the ridges, simply pull one of your sharpening stones, or the handle of one of your tools, over the surface using a firm, strong pressure. Work the stone or handle several times, in both directions, to raise the raw leather nap.

Refresh Honing Compound

If you have several different honing compound sticks, each with a different grit, they can become contaminated as you draw them across the raw leather surface of the strop. You can use 220- or 150-grit sandpaper to sand off the residue of the other compounds from your compound stick, leaving a clean, fresh surface.



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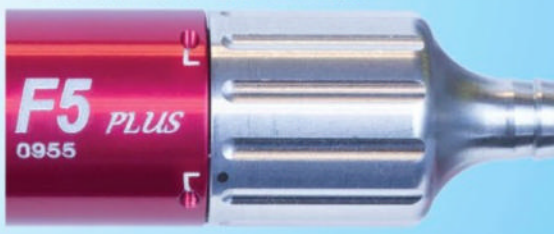

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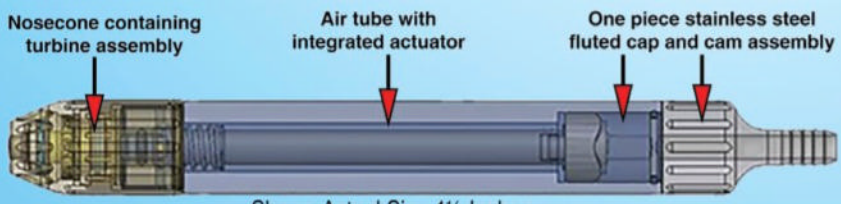

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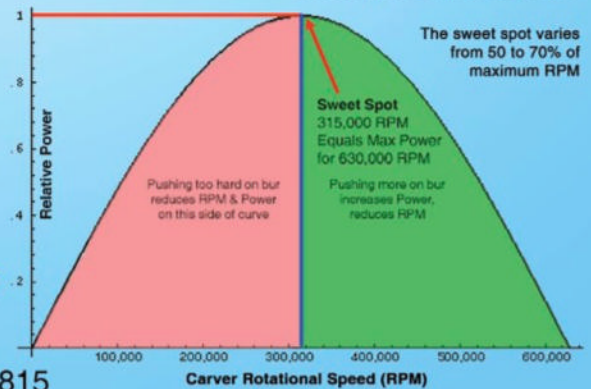

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PW12
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PW14
Flexcut Knife Strop

Our Flexcut Knife Strop has an 8" x 2" leather stropping surface, designed exclusively for stropping and keeping your knife blades razor sharp. Includes a 1 ounce bar of Flexcut Gold Polishing Compound designed to adhere to the strop by rubbing the bar on the leather surface of the strop.

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