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Arizona Gourds

August updates from the desert southwest...



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Welcome to the August issue of the Arizona Gourds newsletter!

July was a nice, laid back month for me - and probably vacation time for a lot of you as well. I like to take advantage of this quiet time to work on some gourd projects just for fun. It's easy to get stuck in a rut if you don't try something new now and then! Here's some of the new pieces I worked on this month - (if you follow Arizona Gourds on Facebook, you may have already seen some of them.)



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"Like" Arizona Gourds on Facebook to get special offers, up to the minute news about new products and classes, and other gourdng updates.

(Just a note - I don't add gourd friends on my personal page, I save that for family and non-gourdng friends.)



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Update: Gourd Classes

The **Colorado Springs, CO workshop on August 17 - 19th** is now full, but please contact [Merle Dallison](mailto:Merle.Dallison) if you'd like to be placed on the waiting list.

I'll be teaching at the **Michigan Festival of Gourds, September 14-16**. Classes and details are now posted on the [festival site](#). I probably won't get up that way again for a few years, and **there are still spaces open in the classes**.

*Sign up for the class updates list to the left if you want to get advance notice of all classes.

***What classes would you like to see me offer at the **Wuertz Gourd Festival next February**? I usually teach a class on **Thursday** and one on **Sunday**. Send me an email at bonnie@arizonagourds.com. ***

What's new on the [Arizona Gourds](http://www.arizonagourds.com) website?

*Notice: We will not be shipping from August 14 - 22. Orders placed during those dates will be shipped out as quickly as possible starting on the 23rd.

August Specials - Diamond bur sets and travel size Diamond Files are on sale!

You'll find the burs on the [carving burs page](#). Files are on the [tools page](#).

Tip: Did you know that you can use a [pin vise](#) to hold diamond burs? It turns the vise into a handy sanding tool!



New sizes and shapes in magnesite dyed cabochons! These cabochons are real stone with natural markings. They have been dyed to imitate turquoise, coral, lapis and other gemstones. These are inexpensive and yet look very nice, plus they go well with the various heishi strands. Check out the new "surprise" bags that have a wide variety of sizes, colors and shapes - including many that are different and not available in the regular packs. Check out our available inventory on the [Inlay Supplies page](#).

Feature - Birdhouses and Bird Feeders

This month, readers share some of their birdhouses and bird feeders!



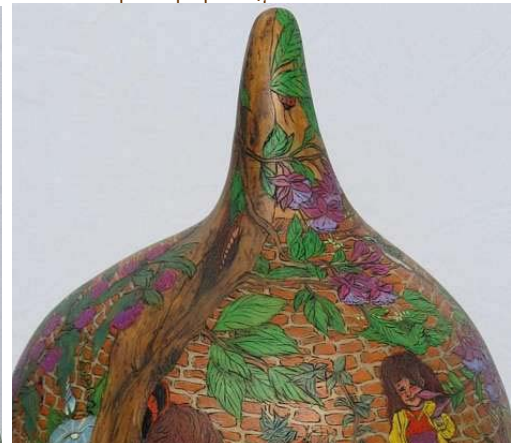
Here's my purple martin gourd setup in my front yard. The gourds are on a metal pole, 25 feet off the ground. Unfortunately, in the three years it has been up, not one purple martin has visited. However, the blue birds love making nests in them. It's fun to watch them perch on the pole (see photo) and then swoop down to hunt for bugs. Their babies sure make a racket when the mother hops back into the nest. They help to keep the critter population down around the house.

Scott Nelson - Virginia

Below: Gerri Bishop of Arizona sent this photo of a birdhouse she made for a longtime friend, who wanted a birdhouse based on her backyard garden area and with her grandchildren on it. They love fairies and



*Check out the [Butterfly Birdhouse Project](#) - found on the [Project Packets Page!](#)





I know this isn't exactly birdhouses or feeders, but thought you'd enjoy seeing our patch project from last month. Everyone made birds, and when we were done, we took them out of my birdbath to take a photo. Some times the quick and easy projects are the most fun as a group.
Alice Pawlowski - Indiana

Below: Here is a female bluebird coming out of our gourd birdhouse. I wanted to attract chickadees, so I made the entrance hole 1 1/8" in diameter. The first year, there were a few twigs carried in, but no nest. This year, a bluebird took bites out of the edges of the hole to make the entrance larger, and she moved in and is nesting! **Marcia Hintz - Ohio**

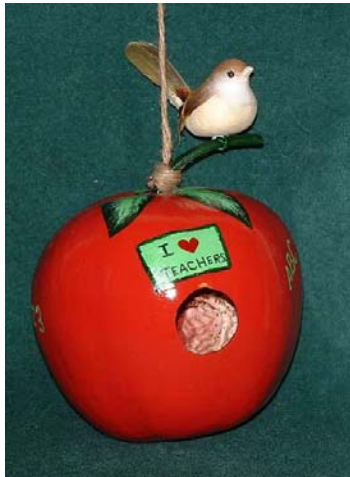


Jeanne Fredrickson of Oregon sent this photo of a swallow feeding her babies inside their gourd home. Jeanne grows her own birdhouse gourds, which is a bit of a challenge where she lives in Oregon.



Richard Wessels of Texas really enjoys birdhouses - just look at all of these different great designs he did.





Left: Birdhouse made by **Carole Elliott of Arizona**, who made this "Palo Verde" designed gourd birdhouse.

Right: **Linda Ashmore of Missouri** shows her love of sunflowers in this pair of birdhouses.

Below: **Rhonda Porzadek of Michigan** made this birdhouse and sold it years ago. She is getting back into painting again, so hopes to duplicate this one. Rhonda loves pink roses.





Left and Below :
Birdhouses made by
Jane Weller of Ohio.



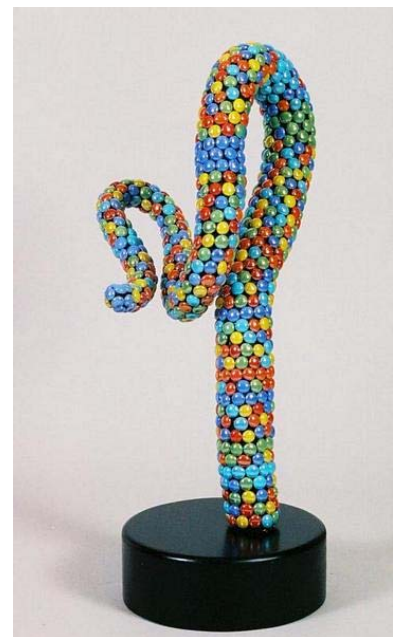
The [Gourd Art Enthusiasts site](#) continues to grow! We have about 2750 members, with gourd enthusiasts from all over the world! Membership is free and easy. The site also has state groups, event listings, a Q&A forum and a chat feature if you need a quick answer to a gourd question! [Check out our two great new GAE T-Shirt designs !](#)

An Artist's Humorous View of Modern Art...

Years ago, I read a column by Marilyn Vos Savant (she has been acknowledged by the Mensa organization as having the highest IQ) where she compared modern art to the story, "The Emperor's New Clothes". I really got a kick out of her column, especially after seeing a huge painting that a museum paid \$50,000 for - which was simply a white canvas painted with one tiny black rectangle. She was castigated by art critics in subsequent columns, and she promised to educate herself better about modern art. I decided to do the same - and after a few years I have discovered that while there is a lot of modern art out there that I DO enjoy, there are still some that I just don't "get".

A few weeks ago, I came across a blog posting by Denise Meyers, a former gourd artist that is well known in the gourd world for her highly detailed wildlife gourds. Denise was one of the first gourd artists to make a real name for herself, and sadly, she has given up gourds for other pursuits. She writes about her activities on her blog, and I really enjoyed her humorous post about her view of contemporary art (probably because it is about the same as mine!) Here is a [link to her blog post](#) - I'll include a very short excerpt below but be sure to visit the link to see the entire article. It's a good read and I thank her for granting me permission to share it with you.

"I don't get contemporary art, and after watching a recent episode of 60 Minutes, I don't think I ever will. Morley Safer visited Art Basel in Miami as a follow-up to a segment he'd done on contemporary art twenty years ago, and as he wandered through exhibitions that included blue plastic casts of bathroom fixtures, a set of vintage lawn chairs (where I come from they call that patio furniture, not art) and the gigantic skeleton of a dead dog lying on its back, I thought, I don't get this either. It almost seems like the more outlandish an idea is, the more committed some overpaid, over-educated, intellectually superior art snob is determined to convince you that the pile of crap you are looking at has great significance in the advancement of human culture, and if you don't agree, then YOU are an idiot."follow the link above for the rest of the article.....



New Release:
Now Available!



Coming next Month: Gourding A to Z. Here's a challenge for you - please send your photos, and label them as to which letter they represent. For example: B is for birdhouse or P is for Petunia (a gourd with a petunia design) or C is for carving or H is for hot air balloon..... I will choose the best photo for each letter and will present our gourding alphabet next month. If you pick a letter that is less common like Q or Z, you'll probably have a better chance of having your gourd selected! **No limit - send as many photos and letter entries as you like!**



[The Art and Craft of Pyrography](#)

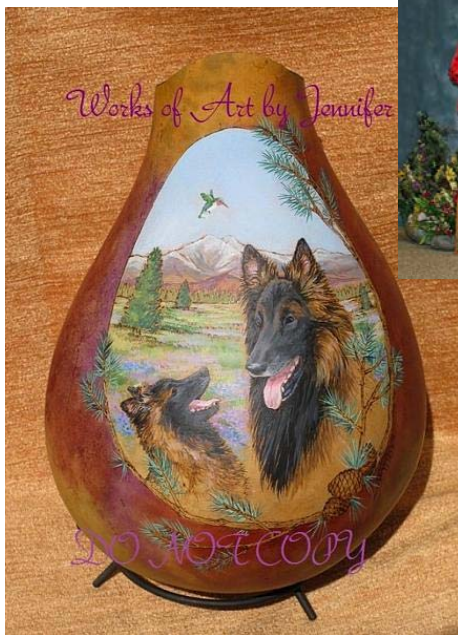
Reader's Mailbag:

Greetings, Bonnie! I wanted to drop a note and a picture to say thank you for the inspiration and guidance. Your book and guides are great! When I ordered an autographed book, I noted that I was an "extreme newbie"...but feel I am starting to get the hang of it. These are the first three gourds I've created. **Val Kimball - Virginia**



Reader's Mailbag:

Bonnie, I took your 3 classes at Visalia this year to get more experience with carving. I just can't get the hang of holding the Dremel but think being left handed makes a difference. I have been preventing its skipping off the line by pushing it with my right thumb. Maybe other lefties have other solutions. (**Unfortunately, lefties have more trouble with our right handed tools and burs. I suggest that lefties use burs with either grit or multidirectional cutters such as structured tooth burs.*) Here is a gourd I started with a drill & Dremel tools, but found that it was necessary to use a knife to get the nice clean edges & sharp corners. Your classes are awesome. And the newsletter too. I look forward to every issue. **Barbara Cody - California**



Left: From a collection of 25 award pieces created for the American Kennel Club. These gourd trophies are gorgeous, and an award that will be cherished by the winners!
*Thanks to Jennifer, the AKC show photographer, and the trophy winner for permission to post these photos.



Left and Above: Artist **Jennifer Benedict** does amazing wildlife art, despite being challenged by MS. She has recently started using gourds as a canvas, but she is talented in many mediums. **Next month, I'll share more about Jennifer and some of her other inspiring art, including sculptures and paintings.**

Tip of the Month: Storage Ideas

Miriam Joy Sagan of Arizona recently shared these great storage ideas. She uses a jewelry storage container (found at Avon) to organize here smaller embellishments. It is double sided and she can see what she has. (Larger sized shoe storage containers would also work well for larger embellishments!) The second photo is of a home made storage rack for paints. It appears to be made from a frame of 2x2" lumber, with smaller thin slats placed at the bottom edge to hold the paints so they don't accidentally fall out.





[Click here](#) to visit Miriam Joy's website.

* Do you have any helpful tips? Please send them to: bonnie@arizonagourds.com. We'd love to share them with our readers.

Featured Gourd of the Month:

"Butterfly Basket"

This is a large gourd with an added driftwood handle, and brass butterflies. The gourd is carved and textured for interest, and has a few pieces of inlaid turquoise..



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Thanks for checking out the latest news! Feel free to pass the newsletter link along to your friends.

<http://www.arizonagourds.com/August2012.html>

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Note: Not getting the email notices about the newsletters? Please check your spam folder near the end of each month and add our address to your "safe senders" list. Many emails bounce each month due to spam blockers.

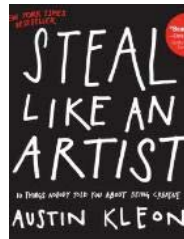
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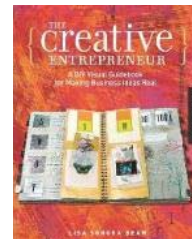
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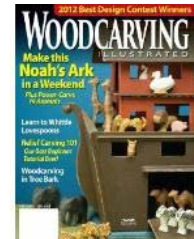
Featured Books of the Month:



[Steal like an Artist: 10 things nobody told you about being creative](#)



[The Creative Entrepreneur](#)



[WoodCarving Illustrated](#)



[American Craft Magazine](#)



[The Crafts Report](#)



[Southwest Art Magazine](#)

Steal Like An Artist is a quirky book that discusses how artists get ideas - don't let the title fool you - you have to actually read the book to understand. :) It's a short, enjoyable read. **The Creative Entrepreneur** is a good read for anyone that wants to sell their artwork. It includes the ins and outs of shows, online sales, etc. It's a book for those that want to their gourds from a craft into a viable business.

The other 4 items are magazines. These are 4 of my personal favorites that I've either subscribed to, or pick up copies of. **Woodcarving Illustrated** is geared to woodworkers, but there are a lot carving tips and ideas that translate well to gourds. **American Craft** is published by the American Craft Council, and focuses on contemporary craft in all media. It's great for stimulating new ideas. **The Crafts Report** is the premier business magazine for those that want to sell their crafts. Every issue has tons of articles on how to sell your products, as well as lots of great craft photos. **Southwest Art** is a beautiful, stimulating art magazine that features art of the southwest. It includes all kinds of art from paintings to sculptures and more. (And it's great bathroom reading material!)

*Want to see my listing of top gourd books? Here is my ["Listmania" listing on Amazon](#)



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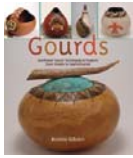
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