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Arizona Gourds

Updates from the desert southwest...

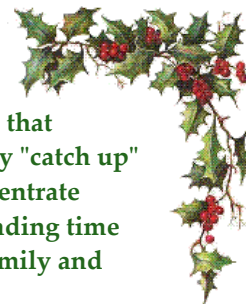
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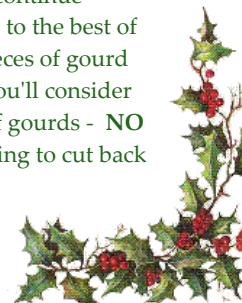
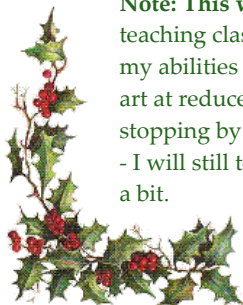
Welcome to the December issue of the Arizona Gourds newsletter!



I have to apologize for skipping a November newsletter! I keep so busy that sometimes something has to give. Actually, this past month has been my "catch up" month. This is the time of year where I don't teach any classes and concentrate more on getting things done around the house and shop and perhaps finding time for my own gourd art. I'm looking forward to Thanksgiving with the family and hope all of you enjoy the holiday!

My classes at the Wuertz Festival are both full, but if you didn't get a slot, don't hesitate to email or call the Wuertz farm and ask to be placed on the wait list. Plans often change for people and there are usually places that open up before the festival.

Note: This will be my last year to have a booth at the Wuertz Festival. I hope to continue teaching classes at the festival in future years, but doing both the booth and classes to the best of my abilities has become extremely challenging. I plan to offer some of my older pieces of gourd art at reduced prices at the festival in an effort to reduce my inventory, so I hope you'll consider stopping by to see what is available. Some people have asked if I am getting out of gourds - NO - I will still teach classes and run the Arizona Gourds website as usual. I'm just trying to cut back a bit.



Enter your email address and hit the submit button to join the class updates notification list.

Submit

*Please consider doing some of your online holiday shopping through our Amazon link. ALL Amazon purchases made through site links and the search box help support Arizona Gourds and the Gourd Art Enthusiasts websites, and it costs you nothing extra!

Just type what you are looking for into the search box below. *Can't see the search box? Please disable your ad blocker for the Arizona Gourds domain.

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What's new on the [Arizona Gourds](#) website?

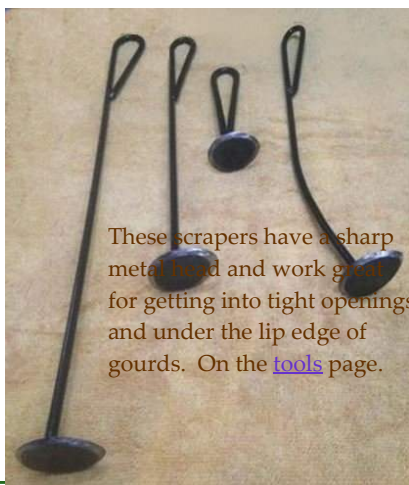


New Lion's Paw shell heishi - Real shell and looks like the much more expensive Spiny Oyster shell in mixed tones of oranges, tans and cream. These go well with the larger Lion's Paw shell disc beads, and the Lion's Paw shell pendants. Heishi is on the [Inlay supplies](#) page, the shell disc beads and pendants are on the [Bone Beads and Embellishme](#)

New styles of inlaid earrings! Not only are these great for gourd masks - they are perfect for gift giving. The same earrings in a gift or jewelry store cost about three times more. Most styles on our website are \$10 or less. See them on the [Earrings and More](#) page.



New on the [Metal Page](#): New larger pewter feathers. Like the smaller size, these are dimensional on both



These scrapers have a sharp metal head and work great for getting into tight openings and under the lip edge of gourds. On the [tools](#) page.



sides and are very inexpensive accents.

Also on the Metals page are new Celtic Knot conchos. These are a special purchase and limited to stock on hand.

Enthusiasts site available. We sincerely appreciate your business.

Feature - Wood and Gourd Artist Mark Doolittle

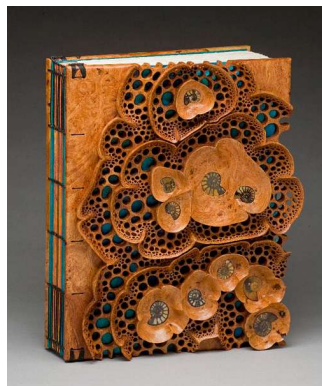
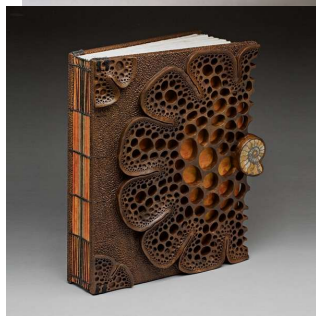


Note: In the 90's, when I first got interested in gourds, Mark Doolittle was one of the first people whose work really spoke to me - it was creative and different and stimulating all at the same time. I was fortunate to meet Mark and his wife Kathy (who does the wonderful paper work on some of his gourd pieces) at various trade shows and enjoyed visiting with them and even purchasing a couple of pieces. I am pleased that Mark has agreed to be featured in this month's newsletter - his talent is amazing and his pieces are very distinctive. He crosses over easily from wood to gourds and both of them are equally superb. You can see more of Mark's work on his website, www.markdoolittlestudio.com, or on his facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/markdool>

"The trajectory of my art has been through science. During an era of tremendous advancement in cell and molecular biology occurring in the 1970s and 80s, I gained a doctoral degree in these fields from the University of California at Los Angeles. At this institution, I pursued a career in biomedical research while developing a keen interest in woodworking and art. I began to seriously produce wood artwork in 2002, and have recently transitioned into a full-time wood artist.

My style and approach are my own, greatly influenced by my background in biology. In my artwork, I try to express the dynamic form of growth and symmetry encountered in cells and tissues, as well as in whole organisms throughout the natural world. Without attempting to accurately portray biological structures, I use organic shapes and abstract forms, like holes and fissures, to achieve the perception of biological growth in my artwork. Often my aim is for a sculpture to appear as if it arose by the process of natural growth rather than carved by human hands. I also enjoy the use of biological specimens, such as fossils and butterflies, as central features in my sculptures, playing off their form and symmetry. Wood seems a natural choice of medium, as it is derived from the processes of biological growth that is the foundation of my artistic style.

Before wood, I began carving on gourds since my wife, Kathy, who is an accomplished gourd artist herself, encouraged me years ago to try gourds as an artistic medium. While there are many species of gourds, the ones used for artwork are "hard-shelled" gourds, which grow on a vine (like all gourds and pumpkins) but when dried, develop a hard skin much like wood. Once dry, the inside seed-bed is removed, resulting in a hollow gourd vessel; the wall of the vessel can then be decorated, stained and/or carved in a

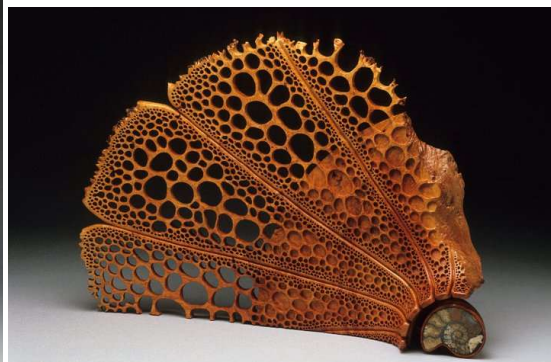
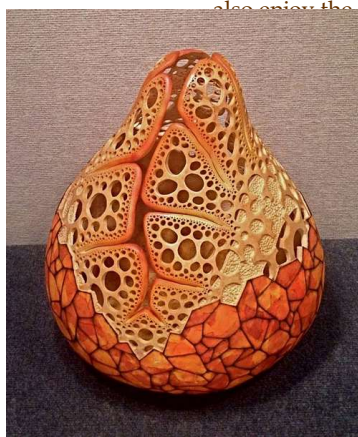
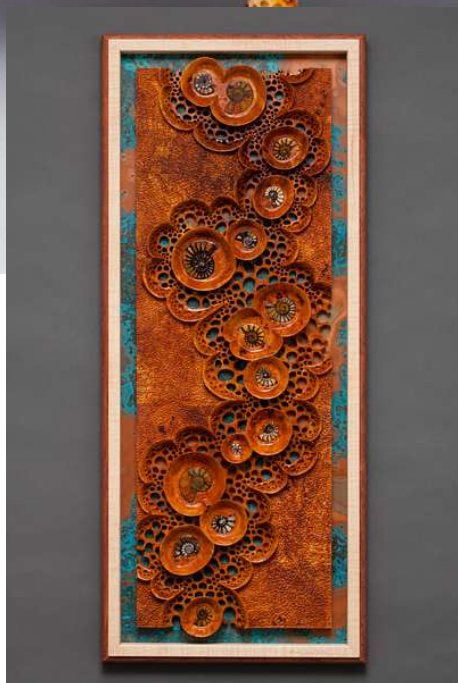




variety of creative ways. Over her career, Kathy developed a unique and beautiful style of surface embellishment by applying handmade paper to the gourd, followed by woodburning to achieve a stained glass-like appearance. It did not take us long to start a collaboration with gourds featuring her paper applique style with my carving, creating what we believe are artwork vessels that are truly unique.

Gourds are a very forgiving medium for carving, being relatively soft and having little grain structure. Thus, gourd carving is, relative to wood, fast and easy, and the carved surface can be stained using a variety of wood dyes and pigments. As a result, I often use gourds to try out new and different styles of carving, including adding color enhancements to achieve interest and variety. Like my wood pieces, I often feature fossils or polished stone cabochons as central elements in my carvings, and I enjoy playing with various textures as well. Kathy finishes each piece by applying her paper applique style to the surrounding (non-carved) surface, bringing in rich colors and textures that sets off each carving beautifully. Occasionally, we bring in carved wood, copper and bead elements as well.

My style and approach are greatly influenced by my backgrounds in biology and scientific research. In my artwork, I try to express the dynamic form of growth and symmetry encountered in cells and tissues, as well as in whole organisms throughout the natural world. Without attempting to accurately portray biological structures, I use organic shapes and abstract forms, like holes and fissures, to achieve the perception of biological growth in my artwork. My aim is for a sculpture to appear as if it arose by the process of natural growth. I





"Like" Arizona Gourds on Facebook to get special offers, up to the minute news about new products and classes, and other gourding updates. (Just a note - I don't add gourd friends on my personal page, I save that for family and non-gourding friends.)

NEW GROUP on Facebook - "Gourding Destash". This is the place to sell your used gourd tools and excess supplies. No fees to sell your surplus supplies and raw gourds.



The [Gourd Art Enthusiasts site](#) has about 4750 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.

[Check out our GAE T-Shirt designs !](#)



Arizona Gourds Newsletter Index

See all our old newsletters from the past 9 years!
Articles and Tips are indexed.

[Newsletter Index](#)

Special Feature - A Trip to the Heard Museum in Phoenix

Some of you have written me in the past about things to do in Arizona after or before attending the Wuertz Festival. A couple of years ago I posted photos and a story about the Musical Instruments Museum in Phoenix, where many gourd instruments were on display. Recently, I visited the Heard Museum, which is another fantastic place to visit in the area. The Heard specializes in Native American arts. There are examples mostly of southwestern tribes, but also pieces from other areas. If you enjoy beading, basketry, katsinas, weavings and pottery, then you will enjoy the museum. There are even some pieces of gourd art on display by Native artists. The photos below are just some examples of what you will see there. It's well worth a stop.

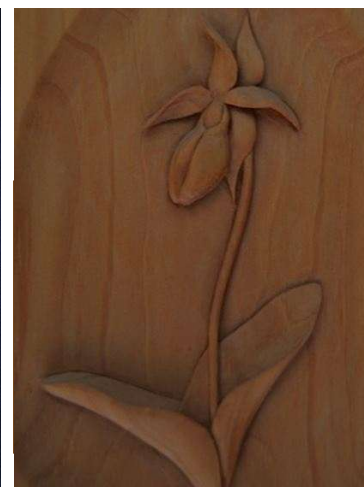
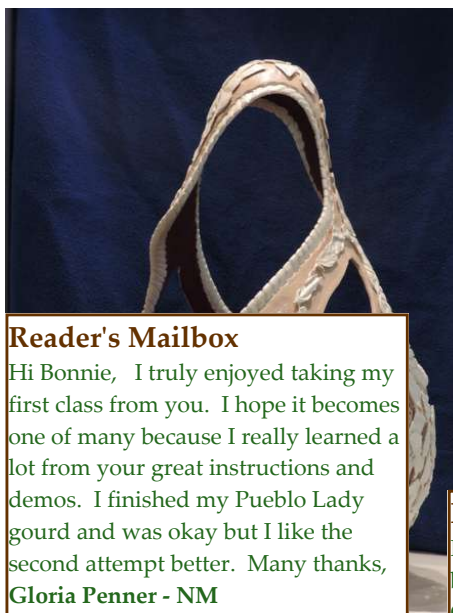


Reader's Mailbox

Hi Bonnie, I thought you would enjoy seeing my second basket carving gourd. This one has more carving and some color. **Madonna Watermon -MO**

Reader's Mailbox

Hi Bonnie, My project from the Desert Rabbits class is finished. Painting is the hardest part. Thank you for sharing your knowledge. **Wanda Sparks - NM**



Reader's Mailbox

Hi Bonnie, I truly enjoyed taking my first class from you. I hope it becomes one of many because I really learned a lot from your great instructions and demos. I finished my Pueblo Lady gourd and was okay but I like the second attempt better. Many thanks,
Gloria Penner - NM

Reader's Mailbox

Hi Bonnie, Here is my finished birdhouse that I did in the Basic Power Carving class. I think it turned out great!
Gisela Haley - AZ

Reader's Mailbox

Hi Bonnie, I wanted to share this recently completed gourd which is heavily inspired by your techniques and wonderful classes. This has many hours with sanding sticks and riffers, but it is one of the gourd I'm most proud of!
Leslie Robins



Reader's Mailbox

Pam Donnelly of California did this whale gourd in a class last May. She wrote to tell me that she was donating it to a Breast Cancer fundraiser event, and wondered if she needed to put a disclaimer on the bottom since it came from patterns used in my class. I told her it was fine and no disclaimer was needed.

About that same time, well known artist **Lora Irish** published a great piece on the use of patterns and the difference between personal use and distribution. It is well worth the read. Read it [HERE](#).



Tip of the Month: Some Handy Measuring Tools

Some handy but lesser know measuring tools! Thank you to Michelle Green for sharing info about the [QuickDraw Measuring Tape](#). I might not use this as much on gourds as I would on some of my other projects - but I can think of a lot of great uses for this one!

The [QuickDraw Measuring Tape](#) has a built in graphite marker - watch the short you tube video

Built-in



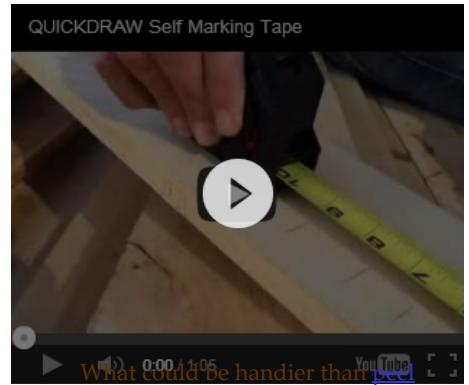
Granhite Marker



The [14-in-1 Measuring Gauge](#) is made for sewers and quilters, but it's a really handy little measuring tool when you need to mark small increments from 1/8" to 1 3/4". I have one of these in my tool bag.

to see it in action; click on the photo or the link above to read more about it on Amazon. This probably has more uses for woodworkers, but I can see some potential for using it on gourds as well. [Graphite refills](#) are available.

Below: The [InkraRule](#) is a steel ruler with micro-fine marking holes and slots every 1/16", 1/32" and 1/64" to mark a sharp pencil point EXACTLY where you want it. No more squinting as you try to line up your pencil on that blur of lines along the edge of your old ruler. (And that is the truth - my eyes need all the help they can get these days!) Available in 6, 12 or 18" sizes.



[and stick adhesive masking tape?](#)



Featured Gourds of the Month:

Solitary Traveler I and II
Ginkgo and Manzanita editions
 Cannonball gourds, hand carved basswood hummingbirds.

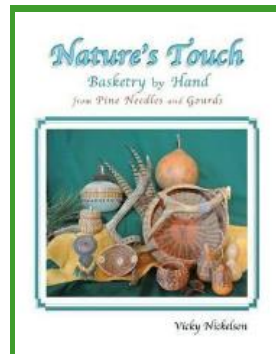


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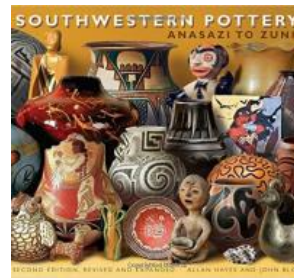
Featured Books:



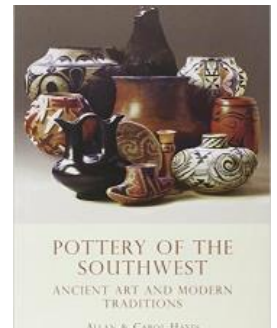
[Nature's Touch Basketry by Hand](#)



[Creating Wall Pockets](#)



[Southwestern Pottery - Anasazi to Zuni REVISED](#)



[Pottery of the Southwest](#)

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<http://www.arizonagourds.com/December-2015.html>

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Nature's Touch - Basketry by Hand was released earlier this year. It combines weavings and gourds. I have not yet seen a copy myself, but it has some good reviews on Amazon

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***The current issue is always available from our home page.**

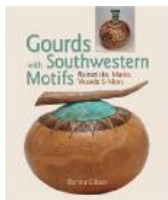
Creating Wall Pockets is a new release by Sammie Crawford. It is available for preorder and will be released in March of 2016.

Southwestern Pottery - Anazazi to Zuni is a new revised edition of one of my favorite books. Wonderful for reference as to pottery designs and full of eye candy. If you are interested at all in southwestern Native pottery, then this is a great book to own.

Pottery of the Southwest - Ancient Art and Modern Traditions is a great companion piece to *Southwestern Pottery*. It has one of the same authors as the previous book, and includes great images and descriptions of pottery through the ages. You can see more about the two pottery books by visiting the Amazon pages and clicking on the "Look inside this Book" feature.

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

Recommend This Site



(Click on book cover for ordering information.)

Gourds with Southwestern Motifs by Bonnie Gibson

Out of Print - some copies still available through Amazon and they are at a reduced price.



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I often get questions about shipping costs that are added to shopping cart sales. To clarify things, I've added a new page to the website, [Shipping Policies](#).

I am using a no-frills shopping cart program that has limitations and little flexibility. By not paying for expensive software, I can offer you lower prices on the website merchandise. **I'm not looking to make a profit on shipping; if you order lightweight items you will likely get a refund or some freebies to make up for it.** Please take a minute to look at the shipping policies page for clarification and explanation of how things work. If you ever have any questions, please feel free to email me directly. I value your business!

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