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# Arizona Gourds

Updates from the desert southwest...

Printable PDF File

## Welcome to the October issue of the Arizona Gourds newsletter!

Time is flying by and before we know it 2016 will be here; I have already started planning my calendar for the upcoming year.

I plan to teach 2 classes at the Wuertz Festival, on Thursday before the festival and again on Sunday. Registration and information on classes will be published by the Wuertz Farm sometime in October. All registrations for classes at the festival are done through the Wuertz Farm website.

**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.

Classes are now open for registration at **Gourds and Basket Conference in Visalia, CA, April 22-24.**

I am honored to have been chosen as the keynote speaker for the conference, and the AGS annual meeting will also be held at this event. There are plenty of great classes and great instructors so it should be a fun weekend. [Click here](#) for more information or to register.

I may also be returning to **Temecula, CA** in the spring - dates are yet to be determined. If you are interested in classes in Temecula, please send me an email and let me know which classes interest you.

I am excited to announce a **new 3 day workshop in Page, Arizona** in October of 2016. The retreat is \$550 per person, and would include food, lodging, beverages, gourds and classes! You would stay in a VRBO home in Page adjacent to or at the class site. Tours to local attractions are not included, but you could easily do them on your own just before or after the retreat. Antelope Canyon and Lake Powell are fabulous! Dates are October 28-30, 2016, so you have a whole year to plan ahead. There are only 15 spaces, so if you are interested, please contact the event organizer, Marcia Krickhahn, at [marciakrick@hotmail.com](mailto:marciakrick@hotmail.com).

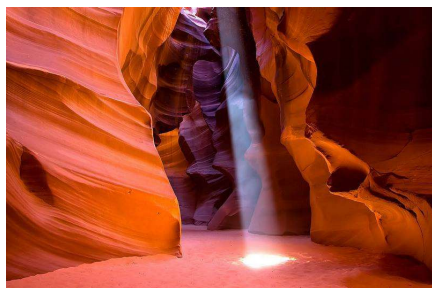
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**\*ALL Amazon purchases made through site links and the search box help support Arizona Gourds and the Gourd Art Enthusiasts websites, and it costs you nothing extra!**

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Antelope Canyon



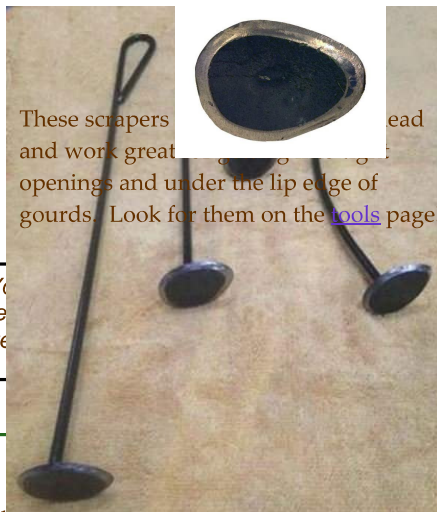
Lake Powell

Submit

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

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

Below: New Pink Coral stone heishi - Real stone, dyed color. Also, some new strands of magnesite turquoise round beads in a variety of sizes. On the [Inlay supplies](#) page. Also, small gourd shaped stone beads are on the [Bone Beads and Embellishments](#) page. Both of these items are a special purchase and are limited to stock on hand. I will not be able to get more.



These scrapers and work great for opening and under the lip edge of gourds. Look for them on the [tools](#) page!



Thank you! Your Amazon links are on the Enthusiasts site

### AGS Special Artistry Award

The American Gourd Society board has voted to take on responsibility for an annual Artistry award, and the dollar figure for 2015. Entries for 2015 will be limited to those who enter an AGS judged show and receive a Choice award, or are entered in a Grand Masters division which is typically open only to previous winners of those two awards. Because the award is now sponsored by the AGS, the artists must be a member of the American Gourd Society to qualify for entry.

**The winning entry will receive a \$300 cash award.**

*With festivals already having taken place this year, there are already several people eligible to send in their entries. **This is not automatic; artists or show chairmen must submit photos of their qualifying entries for consideration.** Photos of qualifying entries should be sent to the Artistry award committee chair: [bonnie@arizonagourds.com](mailto:bonnie@arizonagourds.com). **Deadline for Entry: December 1st!***

**Look for more details in the AGS Gourd Magazine. Not a member? It's easy to join at [www.americangourdsociety.org](http://www.americangourdsociety.org). Membership is only \$15 a year and includes 4 full color magazines! **ENTRIES TO DATE: 6****

### September - New Mexico Classes

In September, we had gourd workshops in both Las Cruces and Albuquerque, New Mexico. Each workshop was two days and included a carving with cutouts class plus one other. It was warm in Las Cruces but sunny and bright with no rain, which was great. The weather was cooler in Albuquerque but still t-shirt and shorts appropriate. I think everyone had a good time, I know that I enjoyed working with everyone. One of the best parts about teaching classes is the opportunity to go to different places and enjoy the local flavor, as well as meeting new gourd friends. Gourders are the warmest, friendliest bunch of people!



Learning about relief carving layers using coloring books!



**\*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.\***

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See all our old newsletters from the past 9 years!

Articles and Tips are indexed.

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### Feature - Gourd Artist Massimo Leotardi



Some of you may have seen the lovely and precise work of Massimo Leotardi. Massimo lives in the UK, so gourds are a fairly unusual art form where he lives. Massimo was born in the town of Fabriano, Italy, which has a tradition of producing high quality watermarked paper stretching back 800 years. He had always loved drawing and art since childhood, so when he finished school he trained as a watermark engraver and worked at a paper mill for six years before relocating to the UK (his wife is English).

In England he joined Portals Ltd, one of the largest banknote paper mills in the world, where he worked as an engraver/banknote designer for the most of his working career. Watermarking is an ancient process that begins with a wax engraving. This is an image cut into a slab of semi-transparent wax resting against a light source. The engraving is tri-dimensional, and could be described as opposite of a drawing, as the task of the engraver is to take out wax to reveal the light areas, in contrast with a drawing where you add dark areas. He still works together with a friend in his home town who still produces hand-made paper in the traditional way.



When Massimo was a young boy he saw a decorated gourd on display. The gourd was from North Africa and was beautifully decorated with a wood-burning technique. He was fascinated by it so about 5 years ago he bought a couple of gourds and read all he could find on the subject (he says one of the most impressive sites he saw in his research was Arizona Gourds!) His job involved a lot of technique working with small items and using very small tools, and these skills transfer well to his gourd art. He does all of the cutting and inlay by hand; the only power tool he uses is a mini drill to make holes for inserting his homemade micro saw blade.

The techniques Massimo uses are: sawing the cutouts, sawing the recess for the inlay (with stones and metal), wood burning, coloring with inks and acrylic, adding leather trims and finishing with gloss spray acrylic. He also likes to experiment with new materials and new techniques to stretch the design to the limit in order to produce something really original. When designing, he likes to balance geometric patterns with wood burning drawings. He tries to apply his range of techniques on a gourd without taking away the natural appearance of the gourd itself. Very often he uses artwork taken from Japanese and Chinese antique art, as the Far East always has always fascinated him. His favorite artist is Xue Mo, an artist born in Mongolia. One of the things he enjoys most about gourd art is finding the right name for each work, sometimes poetic and sometimes just plain wacky, in either Italian or English. Massimo loves his gourd art immensely, and finds

it really magical, as the gourd itself is so natural. He calls it "The Magic Gourd".

Massimo originally obtained gourds from Italy, but now he buys from Amish gourds in Pennsylvania. He says that the quality is excellent and they have a good variety of shapes and sizes. The gourds have to be shipped overseas, but because he buys in bulk he feels it is not too expensive. Massimo works at home, and his studio is the conservatory of the house he lives in.

Massimo says "I would wish to stress how much it has helped me being part of a gourd art community in an online forum like the American Gourd Society and Gourd Art Enthusiasts. The communication and dialogue with other gourd artists is really positive for my work and it is great to feel part of an online team." We are fortunate to have Massimo as part of our international gourding community.



[Leotardi Designs Facebook Page](#)



### Special Feature - Woodcarver David Pelowitz

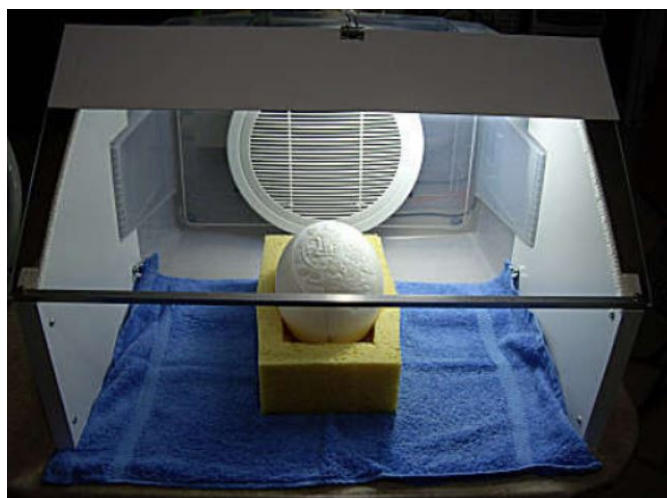
Last month, I was contacted by woodcarver David Pelowitz, who was interested in more information on using resins for inlay. He had seen the [resin tutorial](#) on the Arizona Gourds website and was exploring the use of resins on his carved wooden crosses. I thought you might enjoy seeing some of his work. It appears he uses some machine and some hand carving. If you want to see more of David's work, you can visit his [website](#). Pages two and three have many different carved crosses.



**Special Feature - Indoor Carving Box**

Some of you may know that in addition to carving gourds, I also enjoy carving ostrich eggs, and I am active with a few online egging sites. I am very fortunate to be able to carve outside year round, but many of you are not able to do this, so a dust collection system of some sort is important. One of the Australian eggers, Maureen Williams, has given me permission to show you her home made carving box instructions. While this system was designed for carving eggs, the principles of dust removal are the same for both gourds and eggs. The parts list may be modified to work with US products. It's pretty simple, a plastic boxes, a light and an exhaust fan are the main components.

In the [April 2007 newsletter](#), I featured a homemade system that used a shopvac. This system is less powerful, but is not as noisy. Neither one should be used without a respirator, but harmful dust may be reduced using something like this when you are forced to work indoors. There are also commercially made [tabletop dust collectors](#) available.



[carving\\_box\\_how\\_to.pdf](#)

Click the icon above to see the full instructions in a PDF file.

Right: Here is one of the ostrich eggs I carved. I use a [Shofu air tool](#) for carving eggs. They can also be carved with micromotor or dremel type tools, but a high speed air tool works best on eggs. I use small dental burs in the tool.



**Reader's Mailbox**

Hi Bonnie, I am very, very new to gourd art and LOVE your creations and [tutorials](#)! I purchased your book "[Gourds: Southwest Gourd Techiques & Projects from Simple to Sophisticated](#)" and created a ceramic / pine needle version of your petroglyph project combinations. My next goal is to use gourds instead of ceramics with yours and others amazing techniques!!! :) Thank you for your inspirations and wonderful website full of information, **Lori Conrow - CA**



**Reader's Mailbox**

Hi Bonnie, I finally finished both of the gourds I started in your



Washington classes. I made umpteen mistakes in the fancy filigree one that led to what it is now. The swirl one ended up with a green swirl.... like a green sea creature! I used three strands of copper beads I bought from you that day. I set them with the glue I bought from you and the copper concho in the middle I bought from you! Oh, and I carved it with a couple of burs I bought from you! ha ha... Isn't that cool! Thank you so much for your class. I learned a lot.

Leslie Hassett - WA

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### Reader's Mailbox

While teaching classes in Las Cruces, NM, our hostess Sylvia Hendrickson showed me this interesting ebay purchase. It is an old pyrography unit from South America. It came complete in a fancy wooden box and had multiple burning tips as well as instructions and diagrams of each tip. Thanks to Sylvia for letting me take some photos and share this unusual find in the newsletter.



## Tip of the Month: Cleaning Burs

I recently saw a video about cleaning burs, and felt that the technique shown was not safe. Holding a bur in a plastic clamp or pair of pliers while cleaning them with a power tool can be very dangerous!

While a [wire brush](#) is good for cleaning burs, the bur itself should be chucked into your tool so that it is stable. Place the bur into your tool, and turn the tool on at a moderate speed. Run the bur over a hand held brass toothbrush to clean the bur quickly while you are carving. Small handheld spinning bur cleaners that use a rotating brush are ok, (see photo below) but **always have the bur clamped in the carving tool for safety**. You should also wear some kind of eye protection such as safety glasses or reading glasses, as loose bristles may fly off the brush. Small cup or disc type brass brushes that fit into a rotary tool are much more likely to lose bristles than a brass toothbrush.

For a bur that is loaded with glue, resin, or paint, or just has a lot of buildup from carving, place the burs into a jar with a solvent such as acetone, oven cleaner or strong household cleaner. Clean afterwards with a brass brush. To prevent this heavy buildup, you can use a product for bur lubrication such as "[Cut Lube](#)", on your burs to lubricate them before carving. This keeps them cooler and helps to keep burs sharp longer.

Diamond burs are extremely difficult to keep clean because of their fine grit. If you use them on the gourd skin, they will build up a layer of resin over time that will render them impossible to clean and they will no longer work well. For longer life, use them only on the inner gourd pulp and never on the gourd skin. Clean them often and don't let them get overheated with high speeds and friction, as that can cause the diamond particles to debond from the bur.



The spinning bur cleaner shown below is safe, because the bur is securely held in the spinning power tool.



### Featured Gourd of the Month:

Morning Sentinels

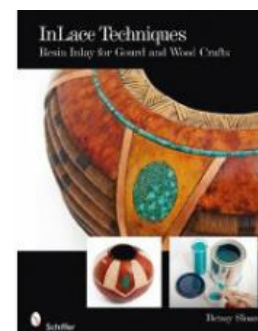
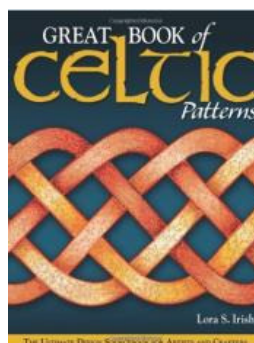
### Featured Books:



[The Art of Tamara SeEVERS](#)



[Complete Guide to Chip Carving](#)



[Complete Book of Celtic Patterns](#)

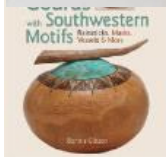
[Inlace Techniques](#)

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**Motifs** by Bonnie Gibson

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

(Click on book cover for ordering information.)

I tried to pick books this month that blend in with some of the newsletter topics.

The Tamara Seevers egg carving book is one of the few books on the subject and the artist is very talented. I have not read this book but it appears to have some beautiful work.

The Chip carving book will give you some techniques to try, and the Celtic Patterns book will give you plenty of patterns and ideas!

Inlace Techniques is specific to the brand "InLace". It has information on using it and a nice gallery section.

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



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*\*Please visit the book page links shown at right to view collections of related titles. Each topic includes a variety of suggested books about each subject.*

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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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