

Arizona Gourds

December updates from the desert southwest...



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Welcome to the December issue of the Arizona Gourds newsletter!

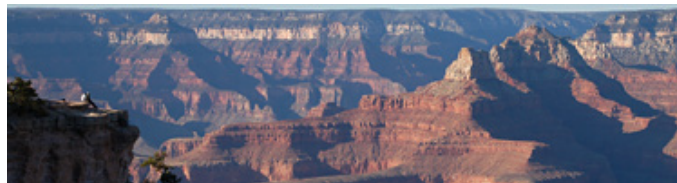
Many thanks to everyone for taking the time to visit the Arizona Gourds website during 2008, and for your business and support. I wish all of you a very happy holiday season!

*Looking for a special Christmas or birthday gift for a gourd friend?
Give them an Arizona Gourds Gift Certificate!*

[Buy a Gift Certificate](#)

I want to thank everyone that took the time to vote last month for my woodcarving entry in the [Smart Flix](#) woodworking contest at the end of October. I was really thrilled to see that I had the winning entry, and I couldn't have done it without all of my gourd friends that "stuffed the ballot box." The best thing about the contest was that it introduced gourds to a whole new group of people, perhaps some of them will be interested enough to give gourds a try!

I have some other special news to report this month as well. Last spring, I submitted an entry to the National Parks "Artist in Residence" program. This program provides selected artists with living quarters and the opportunity to be inspired by nature and the surroundings of the various National Parks. I am happy to announce that I have been selected as an "Artist in Residence" for the 2009 season at the North Rim / Grand Canyon National Park. I will be living and working on site at the North Rim for three weeks next summer, from August 14th to September 6th. During these three weeks, I will give three different hour long presentations to park visitors, and I will present the Park with a finished piece of art when I leave. The rest of the time I am totally on my own and am allowed to use the time to work, play, or just generally enjoy the creative atmosphere of this beautiful region. I hope to be inspired and to really immerse myself into some new gourd projects. My husband Ev will be coming along as well and we are both looking forward to the gorgeous scenery and 3 weeks in cooler weather!



Update: Gourd Classes

I will be teaching again at the Southern Gourd Retreat in Georgia from March 26-29th, 2009. You may visit www.webgourds.com/southern for more information about the retreat in general and about the classes offered. Please note that their registration begins on December 1st.

I will also be teaching classes at the Leiser Gourd Festival in Sacramento, Ca in May 2009. Other out of town teaching locations are still a possibility.

If you would like to receive advance notice of classes, please add your name to my classes updates email list. Get the news first and have the best opportunity to select your classes!


[Join The Class updates List](#)

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

Previous special offers have been very popular, so this month I am offering another special for the month of December, or while my current supply lasts. The [Asian Vase kit](#) includes a copy of complete how-to instructions for adding chopstick legs to create an interesting suspended vase, and also describes finishing methods, lid construction and embellishments. The kit also includes 2 sets of matching chopsticks (3 for legs and one for an handle) and 3 genuine antique Ching Dynasty Chinese coins. All you need to provide is the gourd. This kit is normally \$12, and is now **on sale for \$10.**

As an added bonus, for the first 100 orders totalling \$35 or more, I'll throw in a FREE string of 4 mm round antique bone beads.



Added this month: [Micro size funnels](#) for filling oil candle inserts. These make filling the [oil candles](#) so much easier, and are a thoughtful addition if you gift or sell finished oil candle gourds.

Note: Look for a slight price increase on the boxes of 3 inserts on January 1st.

Also new this month:

Long Southern Pine Needles in natural, wine red and black. Available on the [Misc. Supplies page](#) (formerly Kits and Displays)



Student's Gourd Art



Gourd with "Fantasy Film" by Zeborah Loray. This is a product used in stamping and scrapbooks, and it looks great on this gourd too! The photo above shows a closeup of the gourd surface. Click on either photo to read more about this product on one of Zeborah's blog postings.



Clint Appelt of Nevada shows off his gourd creations.



Fun Gourd Snakes from Donna Vargus of Tucson, Arizona



Connie Worrell - Florida

Gourd Trivia

Gourds have entered into the Girl Scout Handbook of Junior Badges. There is a badge called "Art in the Home" that uses household items to create art. One of the requirements to earn this patch is a gourd project. It is nice to know that gourds are considered a "household" item by the Girl Scouts of America! Thanks to Diane Calderwood of CA for passing this along!



Reader's Mailbag

PLEASE keep the newsletters coming. Not only do we learn new techniques, but you offer new products to try and as always your supply and equipment prices are very fair and reasonable. I also love seeing the finished art pieces produced by your friends as well as the masterpieces of your talented students! Who knew one could touch so many lives with gourd art? Keep travelling and taking time to produce your newsletters. Susan Harkness-Williams - Sunriver, OR

This is a topic that comes up time and time again. Most of us have so much fun making our gourd creations that eventually they start taking over the house! Some people sell a few finished gourds to help offset the cost of materials. *If you want to read previous newsletter articles about different aspects of selling, such as pricing, venues, marketing, etc., please refer to the [September 2007](#), [November 2007](#), and [December 2007](#) newsletter issues for additional articles on this topic.

Part 4: Selling at Gourd Festivals

This topic recently came up on one of the online gourd chat groups, and it promoted a good discussion of what to think about if you decide to sell or teach at a gourd festival. When you are looking at participating in any festival as a vendor or instructor, you may look at things differently than if you are going there just to have fun. What I've written below is not in support of or against any particular show. These are just some things to consider if you want to try your hand at vending or teaching at a any kind of gourd, art, or craft show.

In these tough economic times you want to make sure the experience will hopefully show a profit and not actually end up costing you money due to high fees or travel expenses. Also, some festivals are also more stressful than others for a variety of reasons. In any case, you'll want to do some research well in advance of any show you might consider. Remember that early registration may provide you with a better booth location.

There are advantages and disadvantages to each show or venue. If the show is close enough for you to travel from home each day, you won't have to worry about travel expenses. But also consider other things such as, is the venue outdoors or indoors? Do you have to provide your own tent, tables, chairs etc. and if so, what will it cost to rent them or will you have to transport them? If it is outdoors, will you likely be affected by weather, heat, cold, bugs, or other environmental conditions? Are the people hosting the festival doing a good job with publicity to bring in attendees? (Some festivals are lucky to get a few hundred people, last year the Wuertz festival was probably the largest with close to ten thousand visitors over the course of the festival.) If you are teaching, will your classes fill or will you be lucky to get 4 or 5 students? How many days does the show run, and will you have to take time off from work to participate?

At some shows, the organizers go out of their way to make you feel welcome and provide you with any help they can offer. At others, it is not that warm and fuzzy. Some state societies or shows have provided thoughtful little items such as a free t-shirt, bottle of water, or help for bathroom breaks. Others do nothing. How much are the fees for a booth and how large is the space? Does the show also ask for a percentage of your sales? Do you have to enter gourds in their competition in order to participate as a vendor? If you want to teach classes, will you have a lot of competition for students from other instructors? What percentage of teaching fees will you receive and are you able to set your own price and/or times for classes and/or materials? Some places have a lot of flexibility and take a very reasonable fee for handling registrations. Other places have very restrictive rules and in some cases take up to half of the class fee.

Still other things to consider - are there motels closeby? Is there adequate access to food for vendors and customers alike? Does the venue offer discounted multiday admission fees? Do they charge for parking or is it free? Is the show accessible from large population areas or is it in a remote location? Do the visitors attending the show have expendible income and the buying power to purchase art, or are they in an economically depressed area and only interested in buying raw gourds or supplies? Are there other shows close by or activities on the same weekend that may draw traffic away from your venue? All these things will affect how many people will attend a show and if they'll continue to come back year after year.

~~This should give you some idea about how a show works from the selling and/or teaching side of a festival. There is a lot of competition these days with a lot more shows, and yet fewer dollars being spent as the economy tightens. And as a vendor and/or instructor, you may not want to participate when you might lose money or won't have any fun because of stressful conditions.~~



On the way home from the Arizona Gourd Society State meeting, a few of the Tucson patch members stopped by the Wuertz Farm for a look at a few of the new gourds from this year's crop. Most of the gourds were still out in the fields, but they had already harvested some of the large bushel basket gourds. Waylon Wuertz and I posed with a few of them. Just look at those beauties! (And yes, the wind was blowing, that's not a new hairstyle.)
Thanks to Irma Brewer for the photo!

Reader's Mailbag

Wow, you must have been sitting at the Post Office to get my order to me so quickly. THANKS. I'm so enthused since the convention in Fredericksburg. It was a pleasure to meet you and your work is so beautiful. Thank you for sharing your knowledge. Thanks for your inspiration.
Carol Schultheis - Texas

Tip of the Month: Dremel Tool Hanger ideas

If you use a Dremel Flexshaft tool, you probably already know of the importance of keeping the flexshaft as straight as possible to prevent friction and overheating that might damage the shaft. Most people prefer to hang their tools instead of merely laying the tool on the table.

Dremel makes a hanger, but it is fairly expensive and almost impossible to use on today's thicker plastic topped folding tables. But no doubt about it, gourders are the ultimate inventors when it comes to modifying tools to meet their needs!

Over the years, I have seen many creative hangers. Some are homemade with pipes and fittings, some are modified commercial items. I have seen everything from old IV poles to fancy machined hangers with built in electrical outlets! An old fireplace tool holder was one innovative idea, and I've even seen multiarmed store display racks that were used by several people at once. Pinky Taylor of Texas uses a quad cane for her hanger, although she does recommend extra weight at the bottom to keep it stable. (see photo at right)

My own suggestion is to use a hanger made from a woodworker's bar clamp. These clamps are adjustable and will fit almost any table. The squeeze trigger makes it easy to tighten the clamp securely. I've added a curved hook to hang the Dremel.

Note: I sell these clamping hangers, but they are expensive to ship due to their odd size. I will bring some to the Wuertz festival. If you would like to preorder one and pick it up at the show, just send me a note. The clamp style hangers are \$18.



Clamping hanger - with a closeup of the squeeze trigger clamp mechanism.



Pinky Taylor's quad cane used as a hanger.

Featured Gourd of the Month:

Ammonite Waves

This is a very large canteen gourd that had been sitting in my garage for a couple of years. I paid very little for it as it had a big hole in one side and other major flaws. By standing the gourd on its side and cutting away the flawed areas, I was able to do something fun with it. The pine needle weaving sets off two large resin encased ammonite fossils. The gourd has birch legs, carved accents and is highlighted with patina paints. *Thanks to Sue Brogdon of Tucson for sharing information on resin encasing and to Barb Marshall of Florida for the pine needles!*

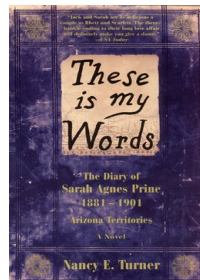


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Thanks for checking out the latest news! Feel free to pass the newsletter link along to your friends.

<http://www.arizonagourds.com/Dec08.html>

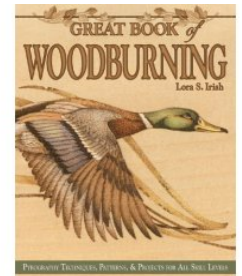
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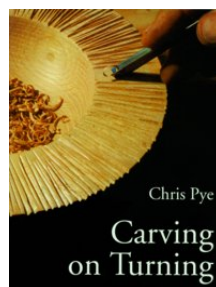
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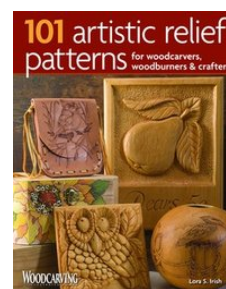
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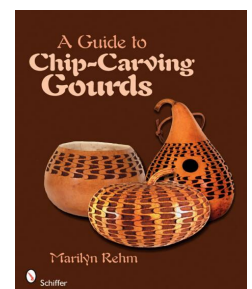
[Great Book of Woodburning](#)



[Carving on Turning](#)



[101 Artistic Relief Patterns](#)



[A Guide to Chip-Carving Gourds](#)

The first book is not gourd related at all, but is a wonderful gift for yourself or others that enjoy a good read. This fictional story is based on the author's real life great grandmother. It is written as the diary of a young girl settling in the Tucson area in the late 1800's. It was an engrossing story and I couldn't put it down!

(I figured if Oprah can have her own book recommendations, so can I!)

Santa Showcase is published by Woodcarving magazine and features carved Santas, but you may be inspired to create similar projects with gourds. The

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If your email address changes, just sign up again with your new address - no need to email me the change, as I purge non-working addresses monthly.

Great Book of Woodburning is a nice book on woodburning with instructions on creating all kinds of burned textures.

The bottom row of books are available as **pre-releases** at a special discounted price. *Carving on Turning* is written for woodturners that want to add carved details to round, vase-like wooden projects. This artist does fabulous work, and the subject of carving techniques on a round objects should be perfect for gourders. *100 Artistic Relief Patterns* is from Lora Irish, who has written other great relief carving pattern books. The last book, *A Guide to Chip Carving on Gourds*, is by Marilyn Rehm, who is well known for her chip carving on gourds.

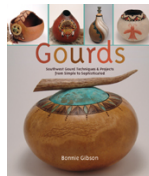
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