



Arizona Gourds

December updates from the desert southwest...

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Welcome to the December issue of the Arizona Gourds newsletter!

Tucson Coupons

1 ridiculously huge coupon a day. It's like doing Tucson at 90% off!
www.Groupon.com/Tu...

Images Gourds

ClipArt - Pictures Image & ClipArt Search
www.Bing.com

Dried Gourds

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Dried Gourds

10+ Dried Gourds at Great Prices. Shop, Compare and Save at Pronto.
Gourd.Pronto.com

Reminder: Last month, our email address changed when we switched service providers. The old qwest.net address no longer works; if you sent email last month and did not get a response, then please resend to my new address:

bonnie@arizonagourds.com (My new secondary address, **arizonagourds@comcast.net**, will be used to send out newsletters, notices only - please add this to your "safe senders" list to keep getting the newsletter notices.)



We feature **gourd ornaments** this month, and hope that they will inspire you to create some special holiday decorations of your own! Thank you to all of the artists that participated.

Our best wishes go out to each and every one of you during this festive holiday month!



This large Santa gourd was created by Sue Haberer of Levelland, Texas. It is carved and painted with acrylics, and won a 2nd place ribbon at the recent Texas Gourd show.

Coming next month: Zentangle, Zendoodle and doodle gourd patterns. *Have you done a Zentangle style gourd? Please send a photo(s) and any written information about yourself or your art that you'd like to include. Photos should be sent to: bonnie@arizonagourds.com

Update: Gourd Classes

It's not too soon to be thinking about attending the 3rd annual *After Midnight Art Ranch Retreat* in Sonoita, Arizona. This has been a popular event the last two years, and due to the small class sizes, has filled quickly each year. For more information and registration (both for the full retreat and for individual classes, please visit the [After Midnight classes page](#), or contact our hostess, [Linda Hanson](#). Classes run April 15-19th, 2011.

Are you interested in having me come to YOUR area to teach classes? Please contact me to find out more details about how to arrange this. I'm currently working on my schedule for 2011. Just send me a note at bonnie@arizonagourds.com.

*Join the class updates list to receive advance notice of upcoming classes. Get the news first and have the best chance for popular classes!



Join The Class updates List

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

New item - Mini Dreamcatchers These small dreamcatchers are lightweight earrings that you can wear and enjoy, or, use them as special embellishments on your gourd projects. They are available in several colors, please send me an email if you have a color preference. At a special price of \$5 per pair, order several and use them for Christmas gifts! These are found on the [Embellishments page](#).



The holidays will soon be here, and I know many of you do a lot of your shopping online. Did you know that the Gourd Art Enthusiasts site and the Arizona Gourds site can benefit from gift purchases you make - and it won't cost you a penny? [Bookmark this page](#) and use the Amazon Search box at any time during the year to find almost any kind of merchandise you can imagine. With each purchase, our sister sites earn a small commission. This will ensure that the GAE site remains free to all, and supports this site and our free monthly newsletters. Thanks!

New item - Decorative Upholstery Tacks These tacks are used for attaching drum skins, and as accents on gourds. They look really great on Western style leather tooled designs. These are found on the [Musical Supplies](#) or [Metals](#) pages. *Look for instructions on using these to attach drum heads in the tips section at the bottom of the newsletter!*



December Feature - Holiday Ornaments

This month we asked people to send in photos of their gourd ornaments - thanks to everyone that shared!

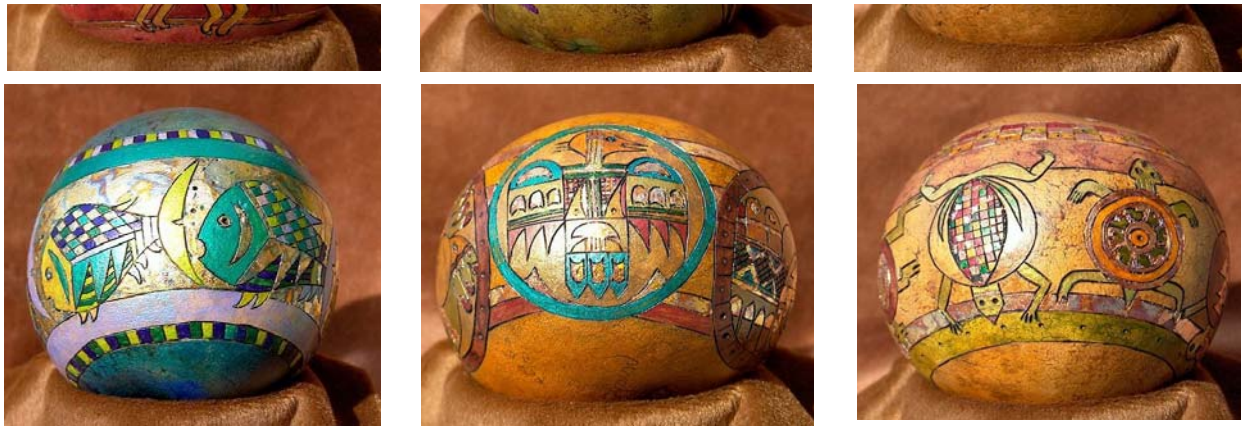
Ornaments by Carol Elliot of Cave Creek, Arizona. The ornament to the right is covered in polymer clay. She used a snowflake cane with a Swarovski heat set crystal in the center of each snowflake.



Paula Ferrell of Woodridge, Illinois made the nativity gourd and the stacked Christmas tree gourds. She made the trees from cut off tops. A 3/16" dowel supports them with a wooden thread spool glued inside the box to hold everything upright. The patterned parts on the trees are decoupaged cotton cloth.

The nativity figures are small bottle gourds and the baby is removable. The clothes are made from cotton fabric, using "Stiffy" to hold their shape. The cradle is also a cut off top of a gourd. The filler is excelsior. The stars are cut out scrap and there is a hole in the back to





Suz Rawn of Somis, California shared these lovely woodburned and decorated 5" gourd ornaments.



Wildlife artist Gail Savage of Bethel, Pennsylvania made these great banana gourd ornaments. Gail mostly works in watercolor on paper and also paints feathers, but she enjoys the smoothness and the organic nature of gourds. (Her watercolors and her wonderful paintings on feathers can be seen at her [website](#).)

Below: Elaine Sutherland of Van Meter, Iowa created these ornaments out of small cannonball gourds. The first example was done with melted Crayola wax crayons.



The ornaments below are from Cathy Toot of Ennis, Montana.





Folk Angel ornament by Debbie Wilson of Travelers Rest, South Carolina.

Below: Traditional designs - Gourd ornaments by Nan Noble of Apache Junction, Arizona



Left: Carrie Cervantes of Dimondale, Michigan, makes these Santa ornaments each year to sell at her Holiday Craft show at our church. She loves to form the mustaches, eyebrows and beards on these little fellows using air dry clay.



Below: Katie Cisco of Peoria, Arizona makes beautifully painted ornaments - many featuring different dog breeds. The beaded Native style ornament is also her work.



Below: L.E. "Lori" Ashley of Middleboro, Massachusetts also makes beautifully painted ornaments - these are really wonderful examples of her work.



Bonnie Adams of Port Byron, Illinois made these whimsical ornaments.



Right: Ornament by Jane Weller of Continental, Ohio. Jane has made several gourd ornaments that have been





Ornaments that have been displayed on the Ohio Governor's Christmas tree.

Left: Ornaments by **Steve and Jackie Walker of Merritt Island, Florida.**



Julie Lind of Arlington, Texas made these egg gourd ornaments using [patina paints](#), microbeads, and copper wire.

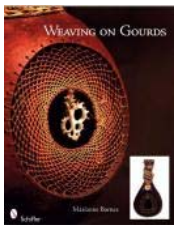


Three views of a poinsettia ornament by **Sandy Taylor of Lilburn, Georgia**

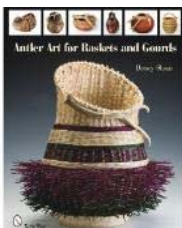


Book Review: "Weaving on Gourds"

Schiffer Publishing has just released a new book by **Marianne Barnes, "Weaving on Gourds"**, and I received a copy to review.



[Weaving on Gourds](#)



[Antler Art for Baskets and Gourds](#)

For people that are accomplished basket makers, the material in this book may not be new to you - but if you are the average gourd crafter with limited experience working with reed and other basketry materials, then this book is one you will want to add to your collection. The book begins with basic gourd crafting information for those that are new to gourds, and progresses through basic basketry techniques, pulling these skills together into projects in the later chapters. Information about weaving materials is included; most projects use reed and related fiber embellishments. One chapter shows how to weave dreamcatchers with waxed linen and optional added beading. (This book does NOT include information about pine needle weaving or closed coil weaving.)

The book shows several projects made by Marianne Barnes, but also includes a gallery section at the end of the book with photos from other contributing artists. Also included are a glossary of terms, a list of suppliers and biographies of the contributing artists. Each page is filled with photographs to illustrate techniques and to show finished examples. Professional photographers were used and the photos are clear, but the overuse of black backgrounds with heavy shadowing at the edges overpowered the subjects instead of enhancing them.

The first person writing style makes you feel like you are in a class and the teacher is talking to you personally. Instructions are clear and the included diagrams make the weaving steps easy to follow. In addition, helpful tips on topics such as gathering and dyeing, embellishments, and tools are included. In summary, if you are interested in the specific topics of weaving with reed on gourds or weaving dreamcatchers into gourds, then this book has the information you need and clear instructions on how to do the project from start to finish.

Releasing in December from Schiffer Books: *"Antler Art for Baskets and Gourds"* by *Betsey Sloane.*

Product Review: "Powertex"

While I was teaching classes at the Michigan gourd festival, I had the opportunity to try a product that I wasn't familiar with but is popular with figure sculptors. The product is **"Powertex"** - and the supplies to experiment with were kindly provided by **Bridgette Thompson** of

Canada, who is the Canadian distributor of this product, which is made in Belgium. In addition to playing with the product that day, I brought home some supplies and got together with a couple of local gourd crafters to try it out.

If you are interested in draping figures, then you may like this material. It is non-toxic, available in 4 basic colors, and has a thick batter like consistency. It is used in conjunction with fabric or it can be mixed with stone powders to make a compatible clay. Once dry, the material is hard and impervious to weather, so it can even be used for outdoor sculptures without a finish. (If the sculpture is painted, then a finish is required to protect the paint.) This product is used over an armature - but for gourd artists, the gourd itself becomes the base of the sculpture. Powertex will stick to anything except for plastic.



I have to admit that this type of artwork is not my style. I was not happy with my draped figure - but Phyllis Sickles went in a different direction and found a creative use for the product that was very striking. Thanks to Phyllis for allowing me to share these photos which show the initial draping of the gourd, and the finished results after additional carving and painting.

Want to learn more about Powertex? Please visit [Bridgette Thompson's Powertex website](#). You may also enjoy watching this short video by Renine Dossche.



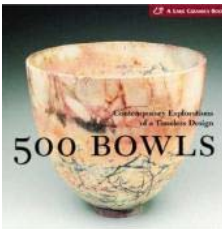
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In the News - New Gourd Book Opportunity!

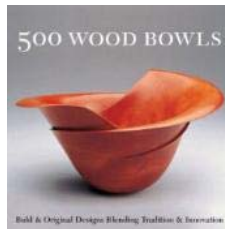
Lark Publishing has just announced a call for submissions for their newest book in the "500" series - "**500 Gourds**"! If you've ever seen one of their other "500" titles, you'll be really excited to see this new offering, which is scheduled for release in 2012. Jim Widess and Ginger Summit, authors of several other gourd titles published by Lark and Sterling (Lark's parent company) will be jurying the submitted photos. The deadline for entries is March 1, 2011.

Please visit Lark's website: <http://www.larkcrafts.com/submit/calls-for-submissions/> and download the entry form. You'll be submitting photos: transparencies, negatives and high resolution digital images. It's critical that you submit very high quality photos as these will be used in the final "coffee-table" book. The jurying will be of these photos - so take care to read the entry requirements and follow the instructions exactly, as those not meeting the guidelines will not be considered.

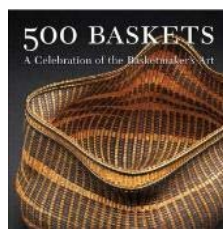
Here are a few of the titles from the 500 series that I really enjoy.



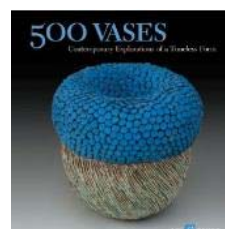
[500 Bowls](#)



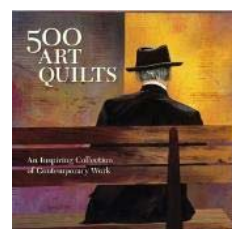
[500 Wood Bowls](#)



[500 Baskets](#)



[500 Vases](#)



[500 Art Quilts](#)

[More books from the Lark "500" series](#)

Reader's Mailbag - Thanks to everyone for sharing their photos. I will include as many as possible each issue.



Donna Vargus of Arizona recently attended my gourd mask/rattle class. She did an unusual mosaic technique on the





unusual mosaic technique on the bottom part of the mask using broken gourd shards.

Sue Berger of California started this piece in a filigree class held in San Diego. She took it home to finish and this is the final result! Lots of work went into this very detailed piece.

Below Right:
Lion Mask by **Larry Dorn**



Reader's Mailbag

Hi Bonnie. I just have to brag a bit on my mom. She is 76 years old. We took up 'gourds' about three years ago. She started doing "spirit dolls" out of her gourds. She entered her first gourd at the Show Me Gourds Society's gourd festival last year and won her first ribbon. Then, earlier this year, she entered her gourds at the Wuerz Festival and won a second place ribbon.

This year, she entered the Texas Gourd Festival and, as you can see by the picture, one of her spirit dolls won a blue ribbon, AND "Best of Show"!

Needless to say, our family is soooo excited for her. She dearly loves doing the spirit dolls and researches each tribe so that she can incorporate her artwork to reflect that tribe. She has now done many spirit dolls and each one tells a story and is beautiful. The artwork goes all around the whole gourd and while this picture doesn't really do it justice, you can at least see an example. Thanks for letting me "brag" about my mom. I'm so happy for her!

Sandy Heimann



Reader's Mailbag

*Bonnie, I had a fantastic time at our second retreat. Here is a picture of my finished pottery shard bowl. I feel so much more comfortable with my tools & have been busy practicing all my new techniques I learned. The [Pitt Pen marker](#) is the bomb, I highly recommend this pen to all. **Alice Pawlowski - Indiana***

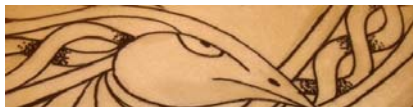
Reader's Mailbag

*Here are the last 2 gourds I finished. I love the [dichroic glass](#). Thank you! **Brenda Neathery - Utah***



The [Gourd Art Enthusiasts site](#) continues to grow! We now have 1490 members and over 4800 gourd photos to inspire you. Membership is free and easy. The site also has state groups, event listings, a Q&A forum and a chat feature if you need an quick answer to a gourdning question! [Check out our two great new GAE T-Shirt designs!](#)

Tip of the Month: Making a Simple Tacked Head Drum



*"I'm attempting to make a drum and would like to use trim instead of lacing on the skin. Haven't ever done it. Don't have a clue how to tighten the skin or assemble a drum like this. I have looked around, but could not find any tutorials or instructions. Can you help me?" **Linda P***



This drum head was attached with a staple gun, then a strip of leather and decorative tacks were added over top.



This drum head was attached with white glue (dries clear) and decorative upholstery tacks.

This type of drum is fairly easy to make using staples or tacks to fasten on the skin. First, select a drum skin that overlaps the edge of the gourd by at least an inch on all sides. Wet the skin until it is soft and pliable - use room temperature water, never hot water. Staple or tack one side, then fasten the opposite side, rotating back and forth as you work around the gourd circumference. (This is similar to how you tighten lug nuts when changing a tire.) As you tack down the head, stretch the skin firmly and pull out any wrinkles as you go. I prefer to use a staple gun or electric stapler for this process, it goes very quickly, and these types of staplers have much more power than a regular office stapler. Next, use a strip of leather or decorative braid to cover the staples. Finish by adding some decorative upholstery tacks over top of the strip.

Alternately, use thumbtacks, small carpet tacks or something similar instead of staples. You may also choose to use only decorative tacks, and omit the decorative strip. Most people that use this method also glue the skin to the gourd shell. Note that most decorative tacks are long, and will need to be cut or snipped off from the back side of the gourd shell.

When you are finished, don't be tempted to push or beat on the drum head right away. Let it dry thoroughly; it will tighten as it dries.

You will find drum skins and decorative tacks on the [Musical Supplies page](#).

**Do you have a tip or tutorial we can feature here? Please [contact me](#).*

Featured Gourd of the Month:

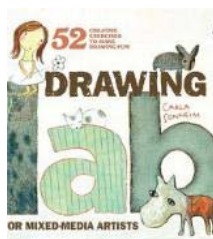
"Spirit Gathering"

This sculpture was made from parts of two different gourds. The gourd is decorated with woodburning and acrylics over a stained base. The headdresses are made from basswood and they are also burned and painted. The small basket and bowl are made from gourds, and the finished sculpture is mounted on a slice of manzanita burl.



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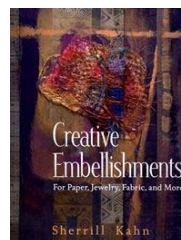
Featured Books of the Month:



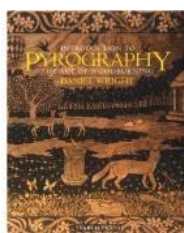
[Drawing Lab for Mixed-Media Artists](#)



[1000 Ideas for Creative Reuse](#)



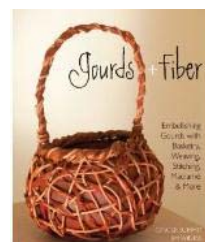
[Creative Embellishments](#)



[Introduction to Pyrography](#)

Gourds + Fiber

Coming Soon!
From Authors
Widess and Summit
April 2011 Release



This month, we've included some books that are designed to stimulate your creativity. While they aren't specifically geared towards gourd artists, the creative process is the similar for all artistic endeavors.

The first book has exercises and ideas to help you draw; the second book shows 1000 great examples of using recycled items in art, and the third book has some great ideas for embellishing items using items such as tyvek, fun foam, shrink plastic, fabrics and other items often used by stampers.

Introduction to Pyrography has basic info on woodburning from tools to techniques. A good companion to the pyrography book written by [Sue Walters](#).

Gourds + Fiber is due out for release in April of 2011. Jim Widess and Ginger Summit always do a superb job on their books and this one

Thanks for checking out the latest news! Feel free to

pass the newsletter link along to your friends.
<http://www.arizonagourds.com/Dec2010.html>

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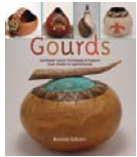
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Gourds Southwest Gourd Techniques & Projects from Simple to Sophisticated
by Bonnie Gibson

The hardcover edition is now OUT OF PRINT!

I still have some on hand, but supplies are limited. Last chance to get a copy before they are gone!

(Click on book cover for ordering information.)

[Arizona Gourds HOME](#)

and Ginger Summit always do a superb job on their books and this one is sure to be a winner as well. Pre-order now and get a special savings.



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- Gourds - Misc.
- Musical Instruments
- Pyrography Books
- Carving Books
- Weaving
- Decorative Painting

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