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Arizona Gourds

Updates from the desert southwest...

Printable PDF File



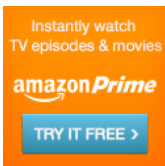
Snow on the gourd garden - a photo of Vanessa Valencia's garden north of Tucson. Taken during a rare winter snowfall in 2012. Vanessa's art and garden blog is ["A Fanciful Twist"](#).

As we enter 2014, it is fun to look back on previous Arizona Gourds newsletters. All of our previous newsletters are indexed for you to enjoy; although some of the time sensitive class info and other material may be dated a bit, the articles and photos are always worth revisiting. Links are available on the [Newsletter Index page](#).

I have been publishing monthly newsletters for almost 8 years. Over the years, we have touched on a wide range of topics, techniques, and how-to's. Creating a newsletter takes a lot of time each month. I would estimate that I spend 20-40 hours each month gathering materials, editing photos, doing layout, and writing most of the content. I've appreciated all of the contributions from our readers over the years, it has certainly made my job much easier. The newsletters started as a public service to the gourding community as well as a way of keeping people up to date on what is available on the Arizona Gourds website. In recent years, I have added the [Gourd Art Enthusiasts website](#) and have served several years on the board of the [American Gourd Society](#). Most of all, I am not just a business, I am a "Gourder", just like all of you that read these newsletters!

Some people may not realize that Arizona Gourds is a one-person business. I do not have employees or use web designers or shippers. As the years have gone on, I'm finding that it is getting harder and harder to find time for my own art, and so I have made the decision to stop publishing the newsletter as a regular monthly feature. I plan to continue with additional issues, but not as frequently. I am looking forward to freeing up some time for creative pursuits!

This decision has not been made lightly -The newsletters have always been a way to keep the Arizona Gourds website in your mind and to keep the business viable. I do hope that you will continue to shop our website for tools and supplies even if you don't have the monthly "reminder" about the website. I do appreciate those of you that shop on our site. :)



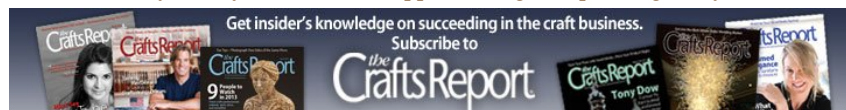
[Free 30 day trial of Amazon Prime!](#)

*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."*



Thank you for your continued support during the upcoming new year!



Update: Gourd Classes

I will be teaching classes at my home in Tucson in late February and/or early March. Watch for details to follow. I'll also be teaching at two After Midnight Ranch retreats in March/April in Sonoita, AZ.

Submit

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

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

Dremel Authorized Dealer It has taken several years to convince Dremel to sell to me directly because I don't have a retail storefront. In the past I was forced to obtain burs and parts from third party distributors, and



I wasn't always sure I was getting genuine Dremel products. I now have some items back in stock that I haven't been able to get for a while, including Dremel flexshafts and #116 inverted cone burrs. I also have a good supply of 4 shapes of structured tooth burrs; cylinder, flame, cone and ball.

Flexshafts and keyless chucks (2 two most helpful Dremel accessories I've found!) are on the [Rotary Tool Accessories page](#), and the burrs are located on the [Carving Burs page](#).

Note: The Dremel burrs shown to the left are made from carbide. This type of burr stays sharper longer than steel burrs, and the unique cutting teeth make them especially valuable for left handed carvers because they cut equally well in forward or reverse. (*These burrs are finer cutting than the coarser teeth of Saburr tooth burrs.)

New to the website - Handheld rotating bur cleaners. Sometimes you are in the middle of a carving project and just don't want to take the time to soak dirty or clogged burrs in acetone and then scrub with a brass toothbrush. This handheld bur cleaning tool has a small brass brush that spins. When you place a spinning bur against the brush, the spinning action of both quickly cleans out residue that clogs the bur. The brass brushes will eventually wear down, but they are replaceable. Look for these on the [Rotary Tools Accessories page](#).



Back in Stock! Navajo Mix Heishi. These heishi strands are longer than the normal strands (36" long) and are prestrung in a lovely pattern of shell and stone. Available on the [Inlay Supplies page](#).



New - Large Beaded Rosettes

These rosettes are fully beaded and compliment the smaller rosettes we offer. (The small size measures 1.5 inches, while the larger size is 3") Beaded on a flexible backing, they can be inset or glued onto your gourd projects. You'll find these on the [Special Embellishments page](#).

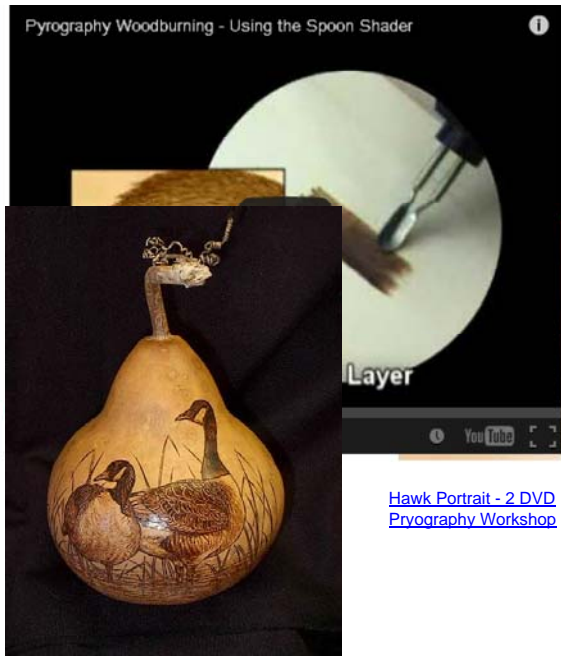
Thank you! Your purchases made from Arizona Gourds and from our Amazon links enable us to keep these free newsletters and the Gourd Art Enthusiasts site available. We sincerely appreciate your business.

Feature - Related Hobbies

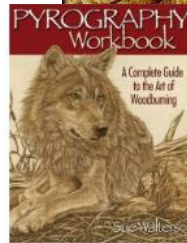
Many of the things that gourd artists are doing today are things that have been done for years with other media - for example, pyrography is commonly used on gourds, but is also used on wood, leather and paper. Gourds are carved, but many of the same techniques were started by artists that carve on wood, bone, stone and more. In fact, many artists work in other areas as well as on gourds. You will often see someone that carves both gourds and eggs, or someone that does beading on gourds as well as creating beaded jewelry. I thought it would be fun to explore some of those other hobbies that have loaned ideas and techniques to our gourding hobby. I know I'm always on the lookout for new things to try with gourds!

Pyrography Sue Walters of Australia does fantastic pyrography on wood, tagua nut, bone and gourds. Her books and [website](#) are great places for instruction and inspiration.

The you tube video here shows the use of the spoon shader tip. The piece below, "Elephant Eye", was done primarily with this tip. It was burned on wood.



[Hawk Portrait - 2 DVD Pyrography Workshop](#)



[Book - Pyrography Workbook](#)



Spoon tip woodburning pen on the Arizona Gourds "[Woodburners](#)" page.

Bone and Antler Carving

Shane Wilson of Canada is a true master of antler and bone carving. The principles he uses in his work are very similar to those used in gourd carving. Because antler and gourds aren't always thick, you have to learn to maximize the relief carving to give the greatest illusion of depth.

In the you tube video below he demos carving on a piece of mammoth ivory. He uses a Freedom tool for heavy rough out and a micromotor tool for detail carving. You can see more of his work on his [website](#).

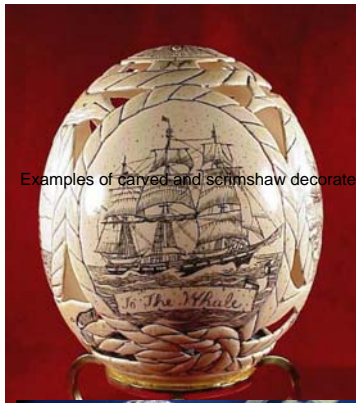


"Short Eared Parliament" - Moose Antler carving by Shane Wilson

Egg Carving and Decorating

Egg carvers have an even greater challenge than gourd carvers when working with these even thinnner shells. The video below shows master carver Gary Lemaster using a high speed air tool for carving.

In addition to carving eggs, egg artists also do scrimshaw, beading, wax resist (pysanky), create lids and other techniques common in the gourd hobby.



Examples of carved and scrimshaw decorated ostrich eggs by Bonnie Gibson



Marlene Brady of Arizona has an armature. She demonstrates making a gourd doll armatures.

[Part 1](#) [Part 2](#) [Part 3](#) [Part 4](#)

We've all seen some beautiful gourd replicas of Native American pottery of the Southwest. These are actual pottery pieces from a museum in New Mexico. Next to it is a wall piece with a gourd pottery jar.



Right: **Michael Ash of Kansas** created "Snow Chick on Ice". It's a great interpretation of southwest pottery and the snow just seems to fit with a January newsletter!

Weaving

I recently was invited to speak to a local handweavers guild. One of the topics of our conversation was how many of the skills that weavers use translate readily to gourds. Weaving with rattan, pine needles, cords and using techniques such as teneriffe are all things done by gourders. Artist **Shannon Weber of Oregon** does some amazing weavings that either use gourds or resemble gourds. You can see more of her eye catching work on her [website](#).



Sewing

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Left: This piece by **Melissa McCollum of Arizona** features teneriffe weaving. Melissa's main focus is on fiber arts and loom weaving so that seems to fit well with gourds - think of all those yards of leftover cord and yarn! Melissa's blog is [Tangible Daydreams](#).

**Interested in Teneriffe weaving on gourds? My good friend Shelley Fletcher and her sister have written a nice book on the subject that they published in 2012. You can find ordering information [here](#).*



Woodcarving

Woodcarving is very closely related to gourd carving, since gourds have very similar carving characteristics. Gourds don't have a grain like wood, but the same tools and techniques are used on both. There are several very fine woodcarvers that work with both wood and gourds. (I also got my start as a woodcarver before I discovered gourds.)

Two superb woodcarvers that also work in gourds are Daniel Montano of California and Jordan Straker of Canada. Daniel specializes in carving birds, and Jordan's main focus is native and western art.



An in-progress woodcarving of a Native Dress by Jordan Straker, with a completed war shirt carving shown below.



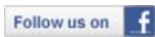
Above - a palm carving by Daniel Montano and a gourd peacock.

Below - I also got my start as a woodcarver before I discovered gourds. Carvings by Bonnie Gibson



Do you get inspired seeing art of all different types? I post one or more art photos a day on the Arizona Gourds facebook page. Whenever possible, links are provided to the original artist's page. Remember - these are for inspiration - use them to come up with your own spin on an idea but please do not just copy other people's art.

"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.)



Like You, Nathan Walton and 4,420 others like this.



The [Gourd Art Enthusiasts site](#) continues to grow! We have almost 3700 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 an quick answer to a gourding question! [Check out our two GAE T-Shirt designs!](#)

Arizona Gourds Newsletter Index

See all our old newsletters from the past 7 years! Articles and Tips are indexed.

[Newsletter Index](#)

Featured Artist - Phyllis Sickles

It's a pleasure to share the work of my carving buddy, Phyllis Sickles. Phyllis is a retired elementary school art teacher who discovered gourds after she retired and moved to Arizona. She has said that working full time teaching art stifled her own creativity during her working years, as she would be tired from teaching and not in the mood to work on her own projects when she got home. It's great to see that she now has the time to enjoy being creative - and I feel very fortunate that she lives in Tucson so we can get together to work on gourd projects!

Phyllis had done some wood carving and had basic carving tools when she discovered gourds - and she has taken her art to higher and higher levels each year. She has won many awards including People's Choice and Best of Show - but no awards are necessary as her work is so stunning that it is a reward in itself. Phyllis's website is www.gourdvisions.com. (If you make it out to the Wuertz Festival next February, look for her booth, she is right across the aisle from my Arizona Gourds booth.)



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The gourd car to the right has wheels made from sea beans



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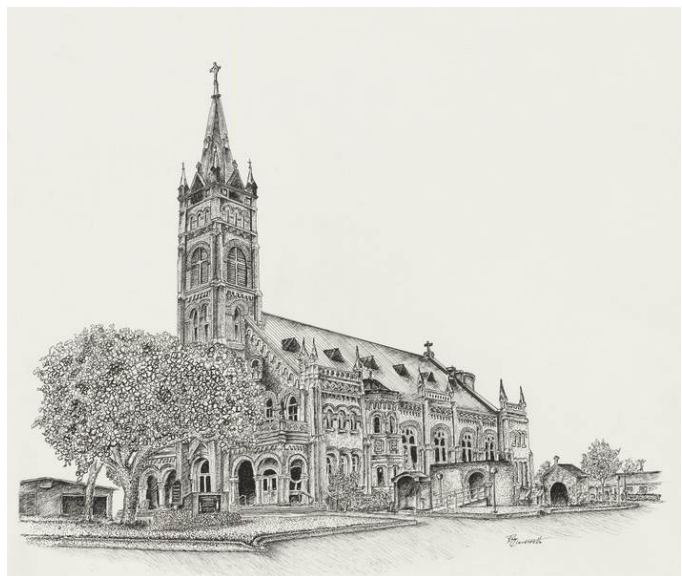
Carved Eggs by Diane Knapp.

Small kaleidocope kits are available in either a regular style (right) or a wand style (shown above) that will fit an egg gourd or other small gourd. You can buy them [here](#).



Dr. Joel Axelrod of Oregon has an interest in theatre, so has also tried his hand at ceramic masks.

Below: Pen and Ink drawings by **Roy Cavaretta of Texas**. Roy says that these were a good transition into pyrography.



Upcoming new book release:

From Marianne Barnes: **Creative Embellishments for Gourd Art**. This book is scheduled for release this month. (January 2014)

[Creative Embellishments for Gourd Art](#)

Tip of the Month - Another Gourd Tool

Debbie McMonagle of Wisconsin saw the tip from last month about a stand you could use for drying gourds after they were painted. She has her own version of a drying stand, and made this one out of scrap wood and a dowel. She places it on a turntable so the gourd can be sprayed while it is on the stand, and it appears that she has some kind of spray booth to protect the surrounding areas from overspray.

Cut several sizes of circles to put on the top of the dowel. Use the circle size that fits the gourd I am using. Glue a piece of non-slip grip material on the top of the circle. Place the stand on a turntable and spray away.

I rarely have runs on any project.



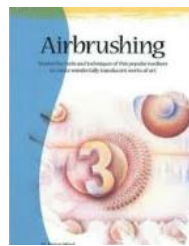
Featured Gourd of the Month:

Hopi Shards - Homage to some of the symbols found in ancient and contemporary pottery from our Hopi friends. Inlaid magnesite, carving, pyrography and transparent dyes. Carved corn lid handle is made from wood.

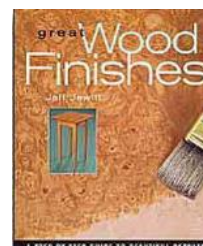


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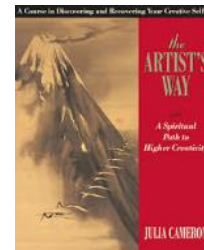
Featured Books of the Month:



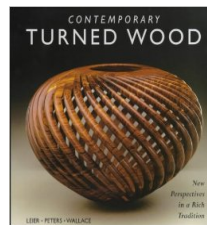
[Airbrushing](#)



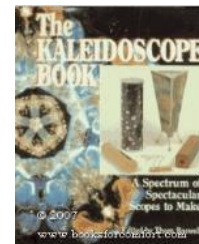
[Great Wood Finishes](#)



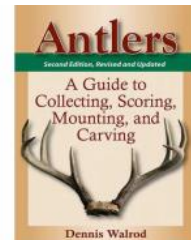
[The Artist's Way](#)



[Contemporary Turned Wood](#)



[The Kaleidoscope Book](#)



[Antlers: A Guide to Scoring, Collecting, Mounting, and Carving](#)

Here are titles about a variety of crafts that use related skills which can be valuable to gourd artists.

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

<http://www.arizonagourds.com/January2014.html>

Not receiving the newsletter? **Join the newsletter mailing list on the [Arizona Gourds home page](#).**

If you are receiving duplicate mailings, or want to unsubscribe from the newsletter list, please send me an [email](#).

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



You can use this Amazon search box link to find all kinds of books and other products. Amazon purchases made through the links on this website help to support this site.

Note: Not getting the emailed notices about

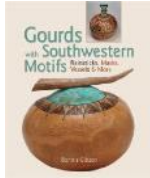
the newsletters? The current issue is always available from our home page.

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.

[Recommend This Site](#)

**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.*

- Gourds - General
- Patterns and Designs
- Gourds - Misc.
- Musical Instruments
- Pyrography Books
- Carving Books
- Weaving
- Decorative Painting



Gourds with Southwestern Motifs by Bonnie Gibson

The hardcover edition is now out of print. This is the paperback version of my "Gourds" book.

All copies I sell are autographed.

(Click on book cover for ordering information.)

Newsletter Index - article and tip index from all the past newsletters
[Newsletter Index](#)

[Arizona Gourds HOME](#)

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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