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Arizona Gourds

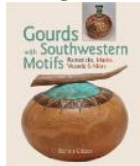
Updates from the desert southwest...

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Welcome to the July/August issue of the Arizona Gourds newsletter!

June was a lost month for me... Thank you to everyone who sent me a card or an email, posted on my Facebook page or called while I was recuperating from hip replacement surgery last month. I am happy to be mostly recovered by now - it just takes some time and I should be able to move around with a lot less pain than before! In the meantime, I have been shipping out orders as usual and just spending a lot of time inside where it is cooler.

I got some good news recently! My "Gourds" book has been out of print for the last year, but it has been picked up by another publisher and should be available again before the end of the year. I am working with the publisher to make a few changes, including an expanded gallery section with more recent works, and possibly adding a new chapter with the filigree technique. Nothing has been finalized yet, but the new publisher seems eager to work with me to make some improvements. The book was originally released 10 years ago so this is a step in the right direction.



Another possible good happening - I have been approached about teaching next summer at the Marc Adams School of Woodworking in Indiana. I would love to hear from you if you are familiar with the school or have taken classes there. It sounds like a wonderful setup with all the amenities.

Class updates

I will be holding classes in both Las Cruces, NM and Albuquerque NM next September. Please contact [Sylvia Hendrickson](#) for info about the Las Cruces classes, (Inlaid Inlay and Closed Coiling, Sept 14-15) and [Barbara Blackwelder](#) for info on the Albuquerque classes (Sept 17-18, River Bed Gourd and Fancy Filigree). **NOTE: Albq. classes are full - you will be placed on a waiting list.**

Tucson fall classes will be posted later this summer. If you are interested in Tucson classes, please drop me a note and let me know if there are any specific classes you would like to see offered.

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

Submit

*Please consider doing some of your online 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.

Search Now: GO! Search Now and Used amazon.com.

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

New item on the website - **Thunder Drum Springs and Kits**. You will find them on the [Musical Supplies webpage](#).



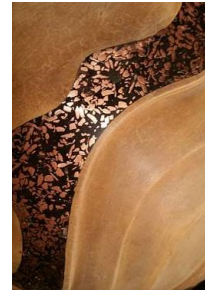
Beautiful conchos with inset stones, these are of exceptional quality. In addition, we've added solid metal buttons for inlay. These are in 2 lovely designs and a great value. On the [Metals page](#).

NEW on the [Metals page](#). New decorative studs in coral red, deep teal, and black! Copper corrugated beads and Scrap brass (**NEW!**) and copper for inlay. (See a wonderful project with metal scrap in the Reader's Mailbox!)





New Lion's Mane shell earrings with a drilled hole for hanging on the [Earrings and More Page](#). Check out the beautiful mask by Kathe Stark using one of these!



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.**

Large Bur Boxes with snap down lid and carrying handle are back in stock on the [Rotary Tool Accessories Page](#). **Gourd Cleaners** in all styles and grits are back in stock on the [Tools page](#).

Venues for Selling your Gourd Art

I recently read an art blog post about different ways to sell your art. The article focused mostly on selling paintings, but the same issues are pertinent to gourd artists as well. Some of the most common ways to sell your art are traditional gallery sales, craft cooperative type galleries, gift shops, art shows and festivals, gourd shows and festivals, word of mouth, and alternative sales opportunities such as selling in a local bank, restaurant, etc. All of these methods have pros and cons, so you may have to look at all of them and take into consideration factors such as quality of your work, viability of your location for art sales (for example, art sells faster in Santa Fe, NM, than it will in a rural city in the midwest), effort required on your part to sell versus commissions paid to others who sell for you, and more. In all cases, you should determine policies on insurance, breakage or loss and pricing. Get a contract if you are working with a gallery, gift shop or other retail venue where you are leaving your work.

1) Traditional Gallery Sales. If you live near or are willing to transport your work to a gallery that gets good foot traffic, and you have nice quality work, a gallery might be a good option. Here are some of the pros and cons:

Pros:

- 1) A good gallery will attract the type of customers who are really interested in seeing or buying art.
- 2) The sales staff is motivated to sell your work, because they get a good sales commission. You don't have to do anything.
- 3) Your work takes on a greater significance in the mind of the customer - "if it is in a gallery, it must be good".
- 4) Many galleries will try hard to show your work off as attractively as possible, because it helps them sell.
- 5) Artists are generally encouraged to leave bios and other information for customers.
- 6) Galleries often sponsor artist's receptions, advertising in local and/or national media and other promotional activities.
- 7) Galleries should take care of sales concerns including sales tax collection, packing and shipping.

Cons:

- 1) Gallery placement can be difficult. There is still resistance to gourds as many gallery owners view them as craft and not art.
- 2) Most galleries take 40 - 50% of the sales price.
- 3) Less well established galleries may suddenly go out of business and you may lose money or art. If the gallery is not close by, it is harder for you to check up on how things are going.
- 4) Your work will be competing against many other fine artists in the same location.
- 5) Some galleries expect the artists to help pay for advertising that features their work.
- 6) Some galleries will not allow you to sell to other galleries within a certain distance or even in the same state.

2) Cooperative Galleries. Cooperative galleries are usually a group of artists that all work together to maintain a gallery so that they will have a venue to sell their work. Commissions are usually less than in regular galleries if you are also expected to work a certain number of hours per week or month. Usually these cooperatives will have a jury process to decide if they want you as a member. It may depend on factors such as if you live in the area, if your work requires specialized display areas, or how your work blends in with the work of the rest of the artists that are involved. Here are some of the pros and cons:

Pros:

- 1) A good gallery will attract the type of customers who are really interested in seeing or buying art.
- 2) Many cooperatives prefer to have a range of pricing - less expensive works are more acceptable.

Cons:

- 1) You will be expected to pass a jury of the other artists in the cooperative. Personalities may or may not factor into admission.
- 2) Many cooperative galleries take 10-20% of the sales price or charge a monthly fee to participate.

- 3) Artists in the coop are usually the sales force - you will have a turn to promote your work personally when you are on duty.
- 4) Many galleries will try hard to show your work of as attractively as possible, because it helps them sell. (You may be required to provide your own display materials.)
- 5) Good cooperatives often sponsor artist's receptions, and local advertising.
- 6) Cooperative galleries should take care of sales concerns including sales tax collection, packing and shipping.
- 7) Commissions are usually much less, especially if you are

3) ~~working part time for the gallery~~ **working part time for the gallery** festivals. Craft shows, gourd shows and festivals and fine art shows are all actually quite different, but all have their place. Craft shows are usually smaller affairs without a jury process. You simply pay your fee, set up and sell. Gourd Shows are similar to craft shows; you pay a fee and get a booth. Fine art shows usually are juried and may be difficult to get into, but they attract more serious buyers. In general, if the people attending have to pay a fee to get in, they are usually more serious about art and are more and likely to buy.

Gourd festivals often attract people that are coming to get ideas, buy supplies and take classes. Some buy and collect the art of others, but many are only interested in making their own art. If your work is inexpensive, a craft venue is probably the way to go, but if you want to attract high end buyers, then you should probably be in a fine art show instead. Here are some of the pros and cons:

Pros:

- 1) These are good venues to meet and interact with your customers.
- 2) Better shows will promote their shows and provide advertising to attract shoppers.
- 3) There is no commission charged at most of these shows. Your booth fee is the only cost. You keep all of the sales dollars.
- 4) Some events are regular, and you have a chance to meet and secure repeat customers.
- 5) Some fine art shows offer cash prizes to top booths.

Cons:

- 1) You will be charged a fee to participate
- 2) You will be responsible for providing all booth display materials, including tent, tables, chairs, etc.
- 3) Outdoor venues may get rained out, have high wind or other weather related factors. Booth fees are usually non-refundable for weather issues.
- 4) People are more likely to view these events as "entertainment" and they may not be serious buyers. Some will only purchase small or inexpensive items or nothing at all.
- 5) You are the sales force - figure not only your time in the booth, but the time it takes to load/unload equipment, set up, tear down and your time away from your studio.
- 6) You may have to depend on family, friends or paid employees to help you set up, tear down, and staff your booth.
- 7) You will need to handle sales tax, packing and shipping (if needed).

4) **Gift Shops.** Gift shops may purchase your work outright, or may sell your work on consignment. Usually, because of the nature of the shop, they are looking for less expensive items that they can turn quickly. Here are some of the pros and cons:

Pros:

- 1) Some gift shops will buy work outright.
- 2) If the shop charges a commission for consigned sales, the percentage is usually (but not always!) lower than at a gallery.
- 3) There may be heavier foot traffic in a nice gift shop in a popular area.
- 4) If you are selling in a local gift shop, you have a chance to attract repeat customers that may be your friends and neighbors.

Cons:

- 1) Most gift shops prefer lower priced merchandise that will turn quickly.
- 2) Your work may be "lost" amongst everything else in the store,
- 3) There is not as much motivation for the owner to sell consigned work as there is to sell work that they had to purchase and pay for up front.
- 4) Insurance against breakage may or may not be included.

5) **Alternative venues** - Consider selling your work in non-traditional venues such as banks, medical offices, libraries, restaurants or cafes, or other heavy traffic areas. Here are some of the pros and cons:

Pros:

- 1) You will have more exposure - a chance to have your work seen by a larger audience that might not ever see it otherwise.
- 2) If the shop charges a commission to sell, the percentage is usually low, sometimes none at all or only up to 20%.
- 3) There are no juries, booth fees or other expenses.
- 4) If you are selling in a local venue, you have a chance to attract repeat customers that may be your friends and neighbors.

Cons:

- 1) Many establishments use this as a way to fill their walls with art, and have little or no interest in actually selling the work.
- 2) People come into these venues for other purposes (to eat, bank, etc) and are not interested in buying art.
- 3) Your work will probably not be promoted in any way other than a small card with your name and the price.
- 4) Your work may not be displayed attractively or well lit.
- 5) There is not much motivation for the owner to sell your work.
- 6) Insurance against breakage is probably not included.
- 7) Your work may be faded, dusty or smell of food or grease when you get it back.

5) **Websites, Etsy, Ebay and Social Media** - Some artists establish a website or use social media to promote sales of their art. Here are some of the pros and cons:

Pros:

- 1) You have control over the promotion and sale of your work
- 2) There are no commissions to pay from your own website sales.
- 3) There are no juries, booth fees.
- 4) With proper exposure, you can reach a very vast audience.

Cons:

- 1) Very little is free - you will pay website fees, facebook advertising fees credit card or paypal fees, and/or commissions to Etsy and Ebay.
- 2) There are so many things on the internet, that looking for your work might be like finding a needle in a haystack.
- 3) You will do all of the work, from listing, promoting, packing, shipping, and collecting funds.
- 4) There is a huge amount of competition on sites like Etsy.

I recently asked for feedback on this topic in some of the gourd related Facebook pages. Here is some of the feedback I received:

I have had several opportunities to show/sell in a variety of places. I am out every month doing shows and am actively looking for places to show my work. As a rule, I try to stay away from the usual arts and crafts shows – I can't compete with the craft items – price wise. I do have a number of items that sell between \$20 and \$35 but most of my work is in the range of \$60 to \$150.

1. Our Art Association arranged a weekend in wine tasting rooms to give the 3-D artists a chance to show their work. Each tasting room chose the work that they wanted to have. Then both the Art Association and Wine Tasting room promoted the weekend. I was with my work for both days and had several sales. I handled my own sales and sales tax, no commission. As customers came into the tasting room – they were told about my work.

2. Our Art Association also has a Traveling Art Show where the artists show their work in a variety of places, such as, banks, realty companies, insurance, couple of small restaurants. They only take wall art so I have created some wall art with the gourds. I was just in a realty company for 2 months and didn't sell anything but I did get a commission piece out of it. The artist handles their own sales and sales tax.

3. I did a 2 month show in January/February where I had a contract with a wine tasting room. They chose which pieces they wanted for the two months and I supplied the pedestals. They handled the sales and sales tax and 25% commission. They promoted my show on social media and I did have a reception. We jointly supplied munchies and they gave me a bunch of cards for 2 for 1 tastings. I handed those out to my customers, etc. The night of the reception – I had 5 sales and then had 2 more during the show. I also got 3 commission jobs.

4. One of our local wineries has a pick up party twice a year. The members come and pick up their orders of the new wine. The winery has food and music – big event. I have been showing there for about 5 years. I handle my own sales and there is no commission. They only 4 or 5 vendors at these events and I have done quite well in sales.

5. I have an ongoing arrangement with a photographer showing in his gallery. He does primarily black and white photos, so he wants my more colorful gourds (4 at a time). I supplied the pedestals. He only charges me 5% to handle the credit card sales. We have a reception every 4 months where I will bring in more gourds for that time. We share in the responsibility of munchies. My sales have been up and down but I have gotten a number of commission work.

Kathy Badrak - California

I showed my work in both a coffee shop and restaurant. Both were in a group show with 7 other artists. All of the my pieces were wall hung pieces. Insurance was not discussed, but it is definitely a good idea to do so! The coffee shop asked for a 40% commission on sales and did provide an artist reception and some social media promoting. The restaurant did not ask for a commission and did not advertise or offer an artist reception. I did not have sales at either venue. The main pro for these types of venues is exposure and the con was the lighting and display were not ideal and did not show off the work to its best advantage. **Carol Kroll**

Thanks also to Shelley Fletcher of AZ for her input on this article.

Juried art shows can bring success. I do the publicity for an art show in California and we work hard to bring in the customers. It has become a major event. Last year the 3 day 60 artist show made \$110,000! **Sondra Hodson - CA**

An art league that I belonged to had an arrangement with the local bank to display local art work to help artists sell. No one that I knew sold anything including me. Some of the local coffee shops and bars have done the same thing and I've never heard of any of the artists that I am friends with selling anything. I've had my work in several galleries with very few sales to make it worth my while. In one case a huge gourd got damaged and I was told too bad. I now make sure it's in every contract that the seller is responsible for any damages. I have a website. It was for sales and was 3 yrs before I got my first sale from it and yes it was easily found in the searches. Now I use it just as a gallery of my work and if people are interested in something they can contact me. My real successes in selling have been at the fine art and craft shows I do. The other venues offered no insurance. The bank never charged a commission but anyplace else it was a standard 30%. No receptions to help generate business either. Basically I feel it was a chance for the businesses to get free art work to decorate with. Most of us have so few venues in which to sell our work we are willing to try anything. My outlook on it is this. I can put it out where people can see and hopefully buy it or it can sit in the trailer sight unseen until my next show and no one will see it and maybe buy it till then. **Kathleen Ewing**

I have not personally displayed any gourds, but I did sell a painting to a restaurant years ago. It didn't help me sell any more art. However, I do know of other artists who have. One big concern would be grease, odors, and light exposure. Not to mention damage from people touching your work. Of course, insurance or lack of would be a big concern. I personally would shy away from such situations. Juried shows have been the best along with word of mouth commissions. **Debbie Wilson**

I have two small, insignificant, pieces of gourd art that have been hanging on the wall of a local health food restaurant for over a year. No insurance but no calls either. **Helen Child**

We have displayed at our City Hall with a great promotion, good turnout at the opening reception, media coverage. But no sales, no commission either. Other exhibits were in gift shops and galleries, 40% commission, but no sales. The success we've had has been with juried art shows. Great promotion and media coverage, repeat customers. **Connie Brady**

We put a few pieces in a small "snack shop/ice cream parlor" some time ago. They had a small display area with local artists' work for sale. We agreed on a 20% commission. Nothing sold and we ended up donating a piece for a local charity event. **Don Miller**

When I first started I put my art in a Resturant where I was working. The manger said it was nice and helped him as well to decorate. No commission, and I sold serveral pieces from 30 to 80 dollars. I also sat alongside a car and sold off the highway. Some days not so good but most days 100.00. Some of my work is not gallery quality so I opened my own little shop in a farmers market. It's not making me rich but how wonderful to meet and make wonderful friends. And yes, make a few extra dollars. **Susie Davis - NC**

"Like" Arizona Gourds on Facebook to get special offers, up to the minute news about new products and classes, and other gourdng 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 over 5000 members, with gourd enthusiasts from all over the world! The site also has state groups, event listings, a Q&A forum and a chat feature.

NOTE: The GAE website will be closing permanently on JULY 23rd due to lack of participation by members.

Follow us on 

Like 8.3K people like this. Sign Up to see what your friends like.

Readers Mailbag:

Thanks, Bonnie, for the inspiration and the brass and copper shavings I got from you! I had fun with this piece and it took me forever. I learned a lot including what to NOT do next time! The first thing I thought about after seeing what you did with brass shavings was "sunshine through the trees". **Cheryl Trotter - Texas**
Cheryl shows some great creativity in her design and use of materials!

Readers Mailbag:

Hi Bonnie, Loved the class you had in Visalia, CA last April. Here is my finished gourd. I hope to get you to our area next year. **Carol Des Voigne**

Arizona Gourds Newsletter Index

See all our old newsletters from the past 10 years! Articles and Tips are indexed.

[Newsletter Index](#)



Readers Mailbag:

Hi Bonnie, I wanted to show you where your tutorial on faux beading has led me. Many, many thanks!! **Judy Kelley - OK**



Tip of the Month: Inlaying Cabochons and More

I created a short YouTube video to show you how to easily inlay buttons, stones and other materials into the gourd surface. Enjoy - and if you need carving burs or cabochons, I hope you'll visit our website! [Carving Burs Page](#) [Inlay Supplies Page](#)

**Featured Gourd of the Month:
"Heavy Metal"**

Gourd with inset rusted steel plugs.

Featured Books:



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[The Everything Guide to Selling Arts & Crafts Online](#)

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Wax on Gourds by Miriam Joy is available as a prerelease from Amazon. Amazon guarantees the lowest price when preordering. The other books may give you more insight and useful information on selling your gourds online or at shows.

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



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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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