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# Arizona Gourds

May updates from the desert southwest...

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

April was a really busy month for me - I taught four days of classes in Sonoita, Arizona, at the After Midnight Gourd Retreat, then zipped off for 3 more days of classes in Visalia, California, at the "Baskets and Gourds" conference. The weather in the southwest has been mostly hot and sunny - good growing weather! I've seen lots of beautiful spring wildflowers, cactus flowers, and the start of young gourd vines. I love this time of year. May will be quieter for me - but I'm guessing that online activity will slow this month with the start of summer like conditions in the rest of the country.

I want to wish all of the Moms a Happy Mother's day this month- Treat yourself to a gourd gathering with your friends, or do something else to make your day special. Here's a special poppy bouquet for you - this photo was taken at the Garrison gardens in Visalia.



Above left: Michelle Thompson of Raleigh, Mississippi, caught this dragonfly with her cell phone camera. It is resting on a 4x4 post that holds her gourd birdhouse - so this gives you an idea of the scale of his huge dragonfly! It seems appropriate to show this photo in the same issue as the winner of our brass butterfly/dragonfly contest (see below).

### Desert

#### Photography

Fine art landscape photography by M. Thomas Roche  
[www.mthomasroche.com](http://www.mthomasroche.com)

### Dried Gourds

Bid on Dried Gourds now! Find great deals & huge selection.  
[www.eBay.com](http://www.eBay.com)

### Wire Baskets for

#### Industry

Stainless Steel, Super Tough ANY Size - Mesh - Handle you need  
[www.AnySizeBasket.com](http://www.AnySizeBasket.com)

### Tucson

#### Photographer

Portrait - Event - Product - Stock Your Tucson, Arizona Photographer  
[www.mversonphoto.com](http://www.mversonphoto.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



\*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!

### Update: Gourd Classes

Two spaces have just opened up at the 3 day Missouri gourd workshop at the [Golden Hills Ranch & Resort](#) in Raymondville, Missouri. Dates: June 4-6th. For more information or to register, please contact [Sophia Delaat](#), the event coordinator.

The **Colorado Springs, CO workshop on August 17 - 19th** is now full, but please contact [Merle Dallison](#) if you'd like to be placed on the waiting list.

I'll be teaching at the **Michigan Festival of Gourds, September 14-16**. Classes and details are now posted on the [festival site](#).

*\*Sign up for the class updates list to the left if you want to get advance notice of all classes.*

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

### New ~ Another new bur shapes from Saburr-Tooth!

My students are really enjoying the Saburr Tooth brand burs. They cut much faster and with less burning than the silver structured tooth burs, and the wider set teeth don't fill up or clog easily. I've had many people come up to me after classes and tell me that these are "miracle burs" and have made their carving experience much more enjoyable! This new "BUD" shape is now in stock and available on the [carving burs page](#). This shape is longer than the taper bur, and has softly rounded sides. The tip is good for tight areas while the long side may be laid flat for removing wide swaths of material



long side may be used for removing wide swaths of material.  
*\*Are you left handed? Structured tooth carbide burs are your best choice - the teeth are designed to cut well in ANY direction, unlike traditional high speed steel and regular carbides, which are designed for right handed use.*



**Sale:** this month, buy Celtic Conchos at a discounted price. Offer good while supplies last. On the [Metals Page](#).



**Feature - Baskets and Gourds Conference in Visalia, CA**

The Baskets and Gourds conference was held in April for the second time - it's an every other year event that rotates years with the Misti Washington Gourd and Basket Guild event. What a perfect marriage between baskets and gourds! These two mediums go together so well, and I was thrilled to meet so many great fiber artists and have a chance to see the innovative directions they are going. Of course, nothing beats a gourds combined with basketry, and there were plenty of those to enjoy. The event was filled with two days of classes, and the Saturday evening banquet featured a wonderful silent auction and raffle for 21 fabulous gourd baskets filled to the brim with gourd treasures. I personally enjoyed two wonderful days filled with great students and great weather.

One of the highlights of the weekend activities was the raffle for 21 different gourd baskets, each filled with lovely handmade gourd treasures. Each one was made by a different California gourd patch, and all of them were different and wonderful. I know the winners were all thrilled! Here's a few of the baskets and their contents.



Above: Basket, gourd contents, and closeup of the top of the large gourd basket.











Some closeups of a few of the ornaments.



There was plenty of space inside for the basket instructors - and shaded space outside for the noisy classes.

Below: Some examples of the pieces available during the "Teacher's Marketplace".







Above: Student gourds in progress during the Monday "Native Treasures" class at the Garrison's gourd farm.



The [Gourd Art Enthusiasts site](http://www.gourdartenthusiasts.com) continues to grow! We have over 2550 members, with gourd enthusiasts from all over the world! Membership is free and easy. The site also has state groups, event listings, over 9300 gourd photos, 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!](#)

**Contest Winner!**

In previous issues, I outlined a contest to see what people could create using our metal dragonflies and butterflies. Entries were to show off the artist's creativity and artfulness, and the only requirement was that the project must have included one or more of these metal findings in any size.



The winner of the \$25 gift certificate is Heather Schmutzer of Ontario, Canada. She did a great job combining her woodburned dragonflies with the added brass ones, and the extra techniques make her doll really special. Congratulations! Two other gourds came in tied for 2nd place, so wanted to feature them here as well. Thank to everyone that took the time to enter. I really enjoyed seeing what people came up with.



Left: Gourd by Sharon Miller of AZ



Right: Gourd by Debbie Skelly of NC



**Special Feature: Micromotor Tool Reviews**



I've owned a Mastercarver micromotor tool for several years. Because micromotors inherently have less power than Dremel and Foredom tools, I've used mine primarily for things like filigree hole carving, where the handpiece with the soft cord is easier to hold when using the tool in a vertical position. I recently bought the newest Mastercarver tool that advertises that it has more torque than their older models. I also had a chance to compare it with the new Gourdmaster Pro Carver micromotor tool.

The photo shown to the top right is my original **Micro-Pro made by Mastercarver**. It's about 4 or 5 years old, and is a nice tool with a relatively lightweight handpiece that is easy to hold. (I often suggest micromotor tools to ladies that have small hands or little hand strength, or only do light duty carving.) The tool has good speed, but lugs down under heavy pressure, especially when using burs with large heads. When the tool "lugs down" you need to ease off on the carving to avoid overloading the tool. It's lightweight and compact - but it's a precision instrument and must be taken care of to keep the handpiece operating correctly. Best use for this tool is detail carving, it's not ideal for general use.

Not shown, is the **Gourdmaster Pro-Carver**, which looks just like the unit in the lower picture, but the base unit is white instead of blue. The Gourdmaster tool performed similarly to my older Micro-Pro, but with a little less power. It tended to lug down even while using smaller burs. I tested two units owned by two different people, and both performed in a similar manner. The tool was advertised as running at up to 46,000 RPM, but the handpieces on both units were clearly marked as being rated for 35,000 RPM.

The last unit is the newest version of the Mastercarver tool, the **MicroPro Champion**. This tool advertises that it has 11% more torque than their previous model (not shown, but in a similar case to this one, but rounder shaped and white). The handpiece on this one is marked for 46,000 RPM. I gave this new tool a very vigorous workout with several types of burs, and was quite impressed with the extra power it had over either of the other two models I tried. It was definitely more powerful and did not lug down under typical use. The footpedal is an optional feature with this unit. This will not

NOTE: Do not sell any of these tools, nor was I paid for this review. The MicroPro Champion tool was purchased from the Holton's booth at the Wuerztz Festival, but it replaced my original tool for my heavy duty carving, but it's definitely a nice addition to my tool collection. Other micromotor tools are made by Holton, Foredom, Marathon, and other companies.



**Reader's Mailbag:**  
Donna Vargus of Arizona made these woven gourd masks and the tall gourds with acrylic backgrounds and water colored flowers.

**Reader's Mailbag:**

Diane Burke of California and Arizona did this great relief carved gourd. The photo doesn't really show off the wonderful dimension she carved into this piece.

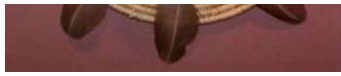


**Reader's Mailbag:**

Cheryl Trotter of Texas took some family photos that were taken at Yellowstone, and turned them into a great gourd story. I can tell she has been practicing her relief carving!







**Reader's Mailbag:**  
Jodi Reed of California did this "Doodles and Glass" gourd at a recent class. I love the effect she got with her mixed color glass.



"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-gourdng friends.)

In the next issue .... The Versatile Gourd. This topic has been pushed back for a month because I got very few submissions. This is a chance to show off the projects you've made that are a bit creative - music boxes, water fountains, chimes or unusual sculptures - anything that is a bit out of the ordinary. Looking for photos of interesting and unusual gourd projects! We'd love to feature your work in the newsletter! Got a photo or two? Please send to: [bonnie@arizonagourds.com](mailto:bonnie@arizonagourds.com).

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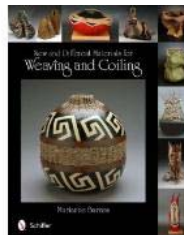
**Featured Gourd of the Month:**

**"Hopi Maiden"**

Are you on Facebook? If you followed my Arizona Gourds Facebook page last month, you would have seen this gourd in various stages of progress. The hair piece is made from the inverted lid; the pot is an added extra gourd piece. This piece is for sale, contact me for details.



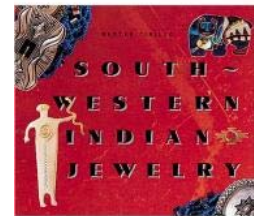
**Featured Books of the Month:**



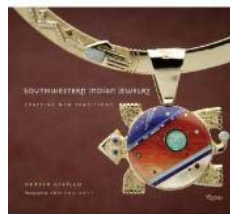
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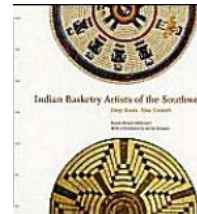
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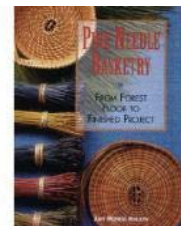
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[Southwestern Indian Jewelry - New Directions](#)



[Indian Basketry Artists of the Southwest](#)



[Pine Needle Basketry](#)



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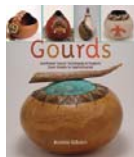
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**Gourds Southwest Gourd Techniques & Projects from Simple to Sophisticated** by Bonnie Gibson

**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!**

[Arizona Gourds HOME](#)

I saw a review copy of "*Different Materials for Weaving and Coiling*", which should be available now. It's written by Marianne Barnes, who also wrote "*Weaving on Gourds*". This book is longer than most craft books (208 pages) and has lots of great examples for both gourders and basket weavers. I hope to have a review posted in the next newsletter, but from first glance I thought the book looked really well done.

Inspired by my classes last weekend - the three jewelry books are fabulous coffee table type books with tons of color photography, and they all are superb inspiration for gourd designs. Normally priced at high cover prices, all are available either at bargain or low used book prices! These are three of my favorites in my own collection. I also own copies of the last two books, basketry topics that are sure to inspire and to instruct. *Pine Needle Basketry* is a classic that everyone should have in their gourd/basketry library.

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



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- Home Amazon Search Site Map About the Artist
- Classes Links Gourd Art for Sale Gourd Books
- Project Packets Drum & Musical Bone Beads Special Embellishments
- Glass Supplies Inlay Supplies Metals Misc Supplies
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- Carving Burs Foredom Tools Rotary Tool Accessories High Speed Air Tools
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- Tutorial - E B Ornament Tutorial - Resin Inlay Tutorial - Candle Holder Tutorial - Gold Leaf
- Tutorial - Luffa Gourd Soap Tutorial - Step by Step Tutorial - Photography Tips Tutorial - Workspace
- Tutorial -Yerba Mate Images - Gallery A Images - Gallery B Gourd Puzzles
- Images - Before and After Images - Gourd Magic Newsletter Index





0005