



# Arizona Gourds

November updates from the desert southwest...

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

After reading last month's newsletter edition, how many of you were interested enough to build some sort of gourd musical instrument? I know I'm itching to build a banjo - but alas, I have no musical talent to play one. This month, I've included some less well known world gourd instruments. There are even some videos so you can see and hear them in action. I hope you'll enjoy this second installment of the gourd instruments article.

*Right: Fred Rogers of Michigan plays his homemade gourd bagpipes. He started with parts from an old bagpipe and added the gourd drones over hand turned wood. Fred played these beautifully; I'm still kicking myself that I didn't take a short video with my camera.*



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## 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 contact our hostess, [Linda Hanson](#).

**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](mailto:bonnie@arizonagourds.com).**

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



Join The Class updates List

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

With our continuing musical theme this issue, the specials on drumskins has been extended through this month (or while remaining stock lasts). **5 pieces - 16" size drumskins for \$20 - a \$10 discount!**

To purchase drumskins and kalimba kits, please visit the [Musical Supplies Page](#)

These are typical ways to use a gourd as a resonator box for a kalimba. These were made with a [kalimba kit](#).

See the article below for an alternate type of kalimba.



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!

Last month, **Weldbond glue** and **Pitt Artist Brush Tip pens** were added to the website. Only small amounts of each were ordered on a trial basis, and unfortunately both ran out fairly quickly. I now have **more supplies in stock**. You'll find Weldbond glue on the [Tools page](#) and the Pitt Pens on the [Kits, Supplies and Displays page](#).

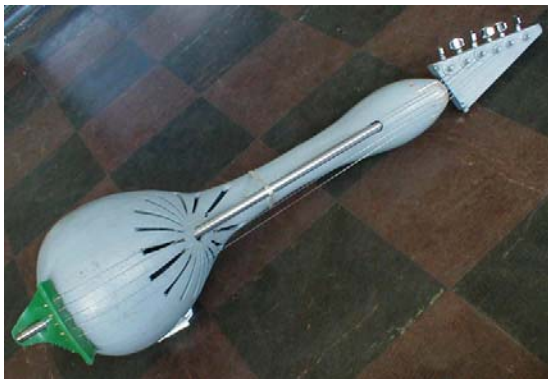


Next month, we'd like to get you in the holiday spirit with gourd ornaments and Christmas/New Year's/Hanukkah themed projects. If you'd like to participate, please send your photos to [bonnie@arizonagourds.com](mailto:bonnie@arizonagourds.com). Please include your name, state and any info you'd like to share about your work.

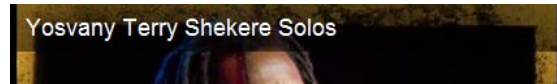
### September Feature - Musical Instruments - Part Two

This month we feature some of the more unusual instruments made with gourds. Many thanks to the websites that granted me permission to use some of their photos and info. Links to each site are provided in case you want to see more from them.

These two very unusual gourd instruments are experimental. The piece with two gourd resonators is a form of sitar, while the other is called a "Pipitar". These photos are courtesy of [McKenna flutes](#).



[Jamtown](#) is a fair trade company that sells musical instruments from all over the world. Shown here are gourd shekeres, a multiple gourd rattle, and a water drum, these are all are from Ghana. Please check out the *You Tube videos* if you'd like more information. The shekere player will inspire you, and the video on water drums shows you what they sound like and how to make one.







The **sitar** is a stringed instrument commonly used in traditional Indian music. This instrument has a large gourd body and an additional gourd resonator at the top. The musician sits to play, as the instrument is typically quite large. The strings are plucked. Want to read more? Visit [Buckingham Music](#) for more detailed information about sitars, their history and how they are played. Thanks to [Calcutta Musical Depot](#) for the photos. *Left: A Sitar and a Tanpura.*

Want to see photos of a sitar being made? Stephan Mikes is a professional sitar player, and he has some great diagrams and photos of all steps of construction on his [webpage](#).

The **Berimbau** is a one stringed instrument that has a gourd resonator. It is played with a stick for tapping and a stone or coin for pushing on the string. The musician also holds a **caxixi** in the stick hand. The caxixi is a small woven basket rattle. This is the traditional instrument of Capoeira, a Brazilian martial art. [Here's a great site showing students making them from scratch.](#)

These videos show the sounds you get from the different instruments. The sound may be surprisingly different than you might have expected.





African cultures use instruments similar to the Xylophone or Marimba. The name varies depending on the location; one name commonly used is "Balafon". The instrument has a frame with wooden bars and a gourd resonator of varying size below each bar.

**BOROMBOROLA par le groupe Super Zamaz.**



Gourd flutes are common in China and Thailand. This type is called a "Hulusi". (Hulu is the Mandarin word for gourd) I bought this one while visiting the Great Wall of China.



*The one shown here is a toy sized version - the real instruments are usually much larger. View show the instrument from above and below.*

**Uliuli by Halau O Kekuhi**



**Ipu Hekes (left) and Uli Ulis (right)** are gourd instruments from Hawaii. One is a percussive drum played by hand, the other is a rattle. These are often used as accompaniments to the







often used as accompaniments to the traditional hula dances.



Bonnie, I am excited to share a bit of my journey through Africa with you.

In short, the instrument you see in the picture is the goni, based out of Burkina Faso, West Africa. While living in Ghana I was fortunate enough to run across a master who lent his talents to me, and trained me in the Traore tradition of his forefathers. Historically, this instrument, as well as its sister instrument the kora, have been used by African griots to pass on the history and ritualisms of specific villages of people, each with their own languages and stories to tell through the passage of music. Physically, the instrument is constructed from a large bushel gourd, covered in animal skin (most traditionally goat) held tight by thumbtacks, and then suited with a vertical bridge that attaches the fishing line strings to the neck of the instrument. It produces an angelic sound, somewhere in the sonic range between a guitar and sitar, and it is my pure pleasure to share with you this small bit of information.



Daniel Sabio (That's Daniel on the left side of the color photo)



Left: Here's a very similar instrument to Daniel's Goni - this African instrument is a "Hunter's Harp" - it's probably a souvenir item and possibly also known by a different name. There are many instruments in the African Harp-Lute family. Thanks to Darienne McAuley for submitting this photo.

Right: Here's a video of someone playing the Goni. It has a very unique sound.



### Reader's Instruments

Here are some great photos submitted by our readers. Thanks to everyone for participating in the musical instruments article!







This lovely ocean drum entitled "Endangered Marine Life" was made by **Kim Bilek** of Ohio. The design was woodburned, colored with oil pencil and liquin, and has some pen and ink details. The drum head was done with pen and ink.

This beautiful ocean drum is made from a large canteen gourd -14 inches in diameter. It was completed with pyrography, ink dyes, permanent ink pens and an Apoxie Sculpt center medallion. The drumhead (bottom view) is goatskin with the artwork done in permanent ink pens. This piece was made by **Sandy Taylor** of [Hot Off the Vine Studio](#). Sandy teaches ocean drum classes and also sells a tutorial for making them on her website.



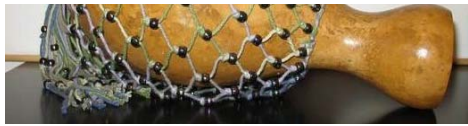
**Jill Atwood** calls this instrument a "Gourdiredoo". This is a small version of the Australian aboriginal "didgeridoo" -which run from 3-9 feet long. Jill also made the gourd shekere, drum and kalimba shown below. (She used a [kit](#) for the kalimba.) *Jill's musician son plays this gourd drum while performing as part of the "Lion King" production in Las Vegas!* All of these pieces are very beautifully made!

Below: The Pocono Patch of the PA Gourd Society made gourd rain sticks, shekeres, rattles, guiros and ocean drums. Thanks to Terry Noxel for sending in photos!



Bonus video - For those of you that are musical, here is a great demo played on a small canteen sized 8 note kalimba. Thanks to Mark Holdaway and his Kalimba Magic site for this demo. Watch and listen to the sound he gets when positioning his thumb around the sound hole on the board. It's a great reverb effect. This kalimba is the same 8





Gourd Didgeridoo by Tressure Hardcastle of Arizona

note diatonic scale type sold as a [kit](#) so you can make your own.



"Hawaiian Shirt" ukelele by Dar Stone. "I play several musical instruments including guitar, ukelele, banjo and kalimba, and have made a number of full size gourd instruments combining my skills as a gourd artist and a lover of music. I have been doing gourds for over 25 years and especially enjoy creating gourd music!"

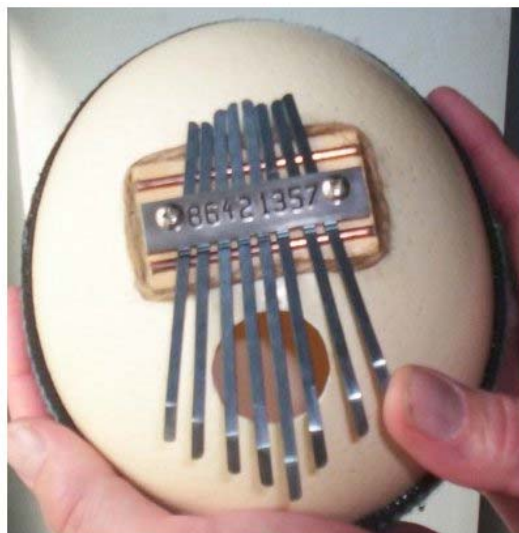


Gourd Fiddle (top) by Sharon Bronson of Florida

### Kalimbas - On the Web - In the News!



Thanks to Mark Holdaway and Anne King for the mention of Arizona Gourds in this newsletter tidbit - this appeared in the [Kalimba Magic Newsletter](#) in October. You may notice that Anne has removed the kalimba mount from the wooden backing board for assembly onto the ostrich shell. It's an innovative use of the [kalimba kit](#)! Mark also sent me this photo of some of the gourd kalimbas he has made.



Anne's Ostrich Egg Kalimba

they are short enough to make a pitch high enough so the body can resonate at that pitch.

### Ostrich Egg Kalimba

Anne King of [The Carved Egg](#) shares her lovely ostrich egg kalimba with us, and mentions that you can get kalimba building kits from Bonnie Gibson's [Arizona Gourds](#) right in my own backyard here in Tucson, Arizona.

By the way, the tines in these kits are on the long side. Keep these two options in mind: In order to resonate well at the low notes made when the tines are out all the way, you will need a rather large gourd or ostrich egg. Or, if you have a smaller resonator, you will want to "choke up" on the tines, pushing them in so that

Reader's Mailbag

This beautiful tree and leaves gourd was done



From reader **Josephine musgrove of Georgia:**

Today was the opening of the GA National Fair in Perry, GA. Guess what ??? I am so excited tonight, because I won 4 ribbons in the Open/Professional Division in Fine Arts.

Here is a photo of a gourd that earned her 2nd place and a \$200 cash award. Congratulations!



leaves gourd was done by **Kathe Stark of New Mexico** after reading the [filigree project packet](#). She was nervous about using power tools, but did a wonderful job on this piece.



I enjoyed seeing this beautiful Halloween gourd by **Sherry Benedict of Indiana**. She brought it to show everyone while she was attending my recent gourd workshops in Indiana. It was made from a cannonball gourd and has clay embellishments. I'm always amazed at the wide variety of beautiful work gourd artists create!



**Reader's Mailbag**

From reader **Stacy Annon of Washington:** I know I am tooting my own horn here, but here is an article about my gourds: ["Artist's Canvas Grows on a Vine"](#).

This is a really nice writeup about Stacy and her gourds and I'm happy to see our hobby getting some good press! Here's a photo of one of her gourds. (Right)



The [Gourd Art Enthusiasts site](#) continues to grow! We now have 1400 members and over 4700 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 a quick answer to a gourd question! [Check out our two great new GAE T-Shirt designs!](#)

**Tip of the Month: Cleaning the interior of a gourd**



Tip: Run at LOW speed for best results and control.



"While at the Wuertz Gourd Festival this year, my mom bought one of your gourds to give to me for my birthday. I love it. I also work on gourds. My question is: How do you get the inside so beautifully smooth? Is there a specific too that you use/sell? I clean it best I can, (scrape, sand, etc) but it sure doesn't look like the inside of your gourd. Can you give me any tips/insight or suggest a tool I might buy? Thank you for your time." **Sandy**

As Sandy noticed, cleaning the interior of the gourd is very important to me. It seems silly to spend hours and hours creating a beautiful piece, only to leave big chunks of gourd pulp on the inside! A gourd that is beautifully finished both inside and out looks professional, and it really doesn't take that long to do if you have a few good tools.

Everyone has their own favorite cleaning tools - and they can vary from inexpensive found items such as canning jar lids as scrapers, to fancy long handled gourd scrapers, to power tools.

I like to get the job done as quickly as possible. For that reason, I use carbide





[3M Finishing Sander](#)

I like to get the job done as quickly as possible. For that reason, I use carbide gourd cleaners mounted into a variable speed drill. (These cleaners may also be used in a drill press if you want two handed cleaning.) The carbide grit is extra tough, cleans the gourd quickly and won't wear out like grit coated sanding balls.

If I want a really smooth finish, I use a 3M brand scotchbrite/sandpaper finishing flap sander from the hardware store. They are made by 3M and are about 1 1/2" x 3" or so in size. I use it with a drill bit extender so I can get down deep inside the gourd. There are other sanding options as well, but this works very well, and one of these sanders usually lasts a long time.

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

**Featured Gourd of the Month:**

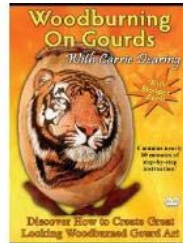
**"Elusive Quarry"**

This piece was inspired by cholla cactus skeletons in my yard, lizards living in my garage, and by a lovely shaped gourd that had some cracks and flaws. The surface texture was carved with a "D" profile Rotary Chisel, and the holes with a Carving Drill. (See carving burs page) The lizard was sculpted from bronze Apoxie Sculpt.

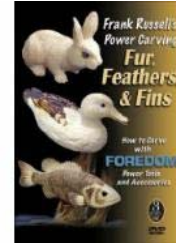


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**Featured Media of the Month:**



[DVD - Woodburning on Gourds](#)



[DVD - Fur, Feathers & Fins](#)



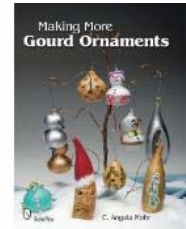
[DVD Basket Weaving Essentials](#)



[DVD - Pyrography Workshop](#)



[Painting Christmas Gourds](#)



[Making More Gourd Ornaments](#)

This month, we've included some DVD's for those of you that prefer learning video style.

The first video deals specifically with gourds, while the other three are related craft videos that should prove helpful to gourders. I have seen the **Fur, Feathers and Fins** video and it has some very good information, even though it is targeted towards wood carvers. The **Basket Weaving Essentials** video looks very intriguing. Nadine Spier is a well known weaver that does a lot with pine needles. Sue Walters has some fabulous woodburning technique books - enjoy her work DVD style with this Hawk Portrait demo and workshop!

The two books will get you in the mood for making some holiday decorations. Sammie Crawford's **Painting Christmas Gourds** has some classic holiday designs. **"Making More Gourd Ornaments"** is available as a pre-release (it's due out later this month.) Pre-releases may be ordered at a special price and will be shipped as soon as they are available.

Thanks for checking out the latest news! Feel free to pass the newsletter link along to your friends. <http://www.arizonagourds.com/Nov2010.html>

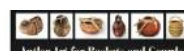
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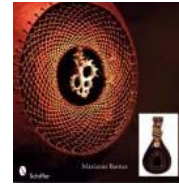
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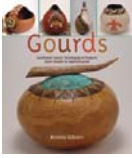
New releases. Weaving on Gourds is NOW AVAILABLE - Antler Art for Baskets and Gourds is scheduled for release on December 28th.



Antler Art for Baskets and Gourds



Weaving on Gourds



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.)

\*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.

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Arizona Gourds HOME

Newsletter Index - article and tip index from all the past newsletters
Newsletter Index

- Home 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 Patina Paints
Tools Woodburners Mini Saws Carving Burs
Foredom Rotary Tool Accessories High Speed Air Tools High Speed Dental Burs
Tutorial - Carving/ Inlay Tutorial - Drum Making Tutorial - Lids 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

