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# Arizona Gourds

Updates from the desert southwest...

Printable PDF File

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

**Almost time for the Wuertz Gourd Festival in Casa Grande, AZ!** I will not have a booth this year, but will have supplies that are carving and class related for sale at my class location so feel free to stop by where you will be greeted by my son, Paul Gibson and gourdng friend, Lollie Yancey.

**I am also accepting preorders for pickup at the festival if you want specific items (things like drum skins, beads, kalimba kits or other non-carving class related items) that I probably won't be bringing.** Just email your order list to [bonnie@arizonagourds.com](mailto:bonnie@arizonagourds.com), and indicate which day you intend to pick up your order.

**"Raven Entanglement"** This gourd will be offered as a fundraiser for the AGS Artistry award. Look for details below.



### Class updates

I have started posting classes for 2018 and will continue to add more as they are set up, including some in Tucson. Keep an eye on the classes page for more offerings - they will be posted as soon as details are finalized. Here are some that are currently on the schedule:

**Feb 20 Basic Power Carving Class in Gold Canyon, AZ** contact Suzanne Blomme for information and registration. [SBLOMME2005@msn.com](mailto:SBLOMME2005@msn.com)

**Feb 21 Carved Textures class in Apache Junction, AZ** contact Julie Hathaway for information and registration. [navajored@gmail.com](mailto:navajored@gmail.com)

**March 22-25 Folsom/Amador (northern California) classes.** Please contact Barbara Rippetoe for more information. [bjrippetoe@sbcglobal.net](mailto:bjrippetoe@sbcglobal.net) Classes will include Basic Power Carving, Doodles and Glass, Fancy Filigree and Carved Textures.

**March 27-28 Classes in San Jose, CA area.** Please contact Jody Dingivan for more information [adolplace@hotmail.com](mailto:adolplace@hotmail.com) Classes include Carved Textures, Swept Ashore (woven filigree) and Spiral Carving.

**May 7-8 Indiana Workshop.** I will teach 2 day workshop on May 7-8 in Westville, IN. Please contact Ida Kennedy for more information. [IKENNEDY5@msn.com](mailto:IKENNEDY5@msn.com) Workshop classes will include Filigree/Spiral Carving and Pueblo Ladies. Note: I will NOT be at the Indiana gourd show.

**May 18-20 3 day workshop in Boise, Idaho.** Please contact Chris Peters for more information at [bonniegclass@gmail.com](mailto:bonniegclass@gmail.com) Classes will include Basic Power Carving, Swept Ashore and Carved Textures.

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



\*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 American Gourd Society Artistry Award. 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.



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

**New - Beautiful glass cabochons** for your next gourd project! These are also great for jewelry, simply glue on a jewelry bail or add one of the metal backins shown below, and they make beautiful pendants. Check them out on the [Inlay Supplies page](#) or on the [Glass page](#) (or stop by my class location at the Wuertz Festival to see them in person.)

**Back in Stock -** African Porcupine Quills in several lengths. Nice thick ones in most sizes. Also, a limited supply of pheasant pelts. Both on the [Special embellishments](#) page.



Native Treasures" Project Packet is available on the [Project Packets page](#).



**Half price special on Feathered Cabochons!** See details of the offer on the [Special Embellishments page](#)



**New Copper concho designs** include 1" Celtic, Flower, and Rope Edge designs as well as a small (5/8") Rope Edge. On the [Metals page](#).



**Back in Stock** - Stone fans on the [Inlay supplies page](#), and Thunder drum springs sold individually or in discounted packs of 5. On the [Musical Supplies page](#).



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**Arizona Gourds Newsletter Index**  
See all our old newsletters with indexed articles and tips from the past 10 years!  
**NOTE: Older web based Newsletters are being gradually phased out and converted to PDF Files.**  
Eventually, only the most recent 5 years will remain live on the web, while older issues will only be available in PDF format. (Currently, Newsletters from 2006-2009 are available as PDFs only. Additional years will be gradually converted as well.) I apologize for this change; the quantity of files and photos on the website has made keeping everything web based difficult.  
[Newsletter Index](#)

**NOTICE:** I will not be shipping from February 7-12 while I am teaching at the Wuertz Gourd Festival. Items ordered during this time will be shipped beginning on Feb. 13th. Orders will be sent out in the order received. If you need items quickly, please order before these dates.

*\*Please keep in mind that some items sell out at the festival and this might delay your shipment. (I will send an email to advise of any shortages.)*

**"Raven Entanglement" Silent Auction to benefit the American Gourd Society Excellence in Artistry Award**  
Profits from this silent auction will be donated to the AGS Artistry award fund. The gourd may be seen at the Wuertz Festival, where it will be available for viewing and bidding in the competition building .



Bidding is now open to all, including from those who will not be attending the festival. Off-site bids will be accepted up to midnight, Saturday, Feb 10th (On-site bids may be made until 2 PM on Sunday.)

\*If necessary, shipping cost is extra and not included in your bid.

This gourd is valued at approximately \$3500 retail value, and bidding starts at \$500. Bids may be texted to 520 444 8330, (please no phone calls Feb 8-10 as I will be teaching classes during the festival) or email your bid to [bonnie@arizonagourds.com](mailto:bonnie@arizonagourds.com). Please include the amount of your bid, your name, mailing address, email address and/or telephone number. You may bid now or at any time up until the deadline.

\*With special thanks to the Arizona Gourd Society for providing display space!

## Feature: Creating "Raven Entanglement"

This gourd is the largest gourd I have ever worked on and it provided plenty of challenges along the way. One of my students purchased two large gourds several years ago from a Texas grower (who no longer grows gourds). She wasn't sure what to do with them, and sold one to me because she thought I would enjoy working on it. She had already cut an opening and cleaned the gourd a bit inside.



When I cleaned it further, I discovered that while the top part of the gourd was almost a half inch thick, the bottom third of the gourd was fairly thin and needed to be stabilized and strengthened.

For this, I used [Apoxie Paste](#). It has a pancake batter-like consistency, and when cured, is extremely strong. To use, you combine equal parts of the paste and of the hardener. When mixing, you can add different coloring agents to tint the paste. The natural color is a greyish white; I used transtint dye to make it more gourd colored. Use a wooden stick and disposable plastic containers for easy cleanup. Gloves are also a good idea as the uncured paste is very sticky. After spreading the paste, I wet my gloved hand and smoothed the paste as much as possible. I let the paste cure overnight, and the next day I used a sander and smoothed any remaining ridges. Note: Apoxie Paste is also waterproof and can be used to coat the interior of a gourd that will be exposed to moisture.



I also strengthened the inside with an application of [Durham's Rock Hard Water Putty](#). Once the water putty has cured, it is extremely hard and durable. However, you need to use caution if you use anything water based inside the gourd, because if there are any cracks, the moisture can cause them to run or create new cracks.



The actual carving of this gourd wasn't much different from any other thick gourd, other than the unwieldiness of handling such a big gourd. I usually work with the gourd in my lap; for this one I had to prop it up on a trash can between my legs!

The ravens were designed over the woven filigree areas and were not added, they are carved directly onto the gourd. All detailing was carved, no woodburning on this one. I painted them with acrylic paints.

I spent many hours cleaning, smoothing and sanding the entire gourd. I used [Abranet sanding mesh](#) of various grits and files for the cut out holes. (Both are on the Tools page)

The darker portion near the bottom in this photo is the uncarved skin - the bottom was eventually sprayed with a colored lacquer, and you

can't even tell that anything was added to the bottom to strengthen it!

"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.)

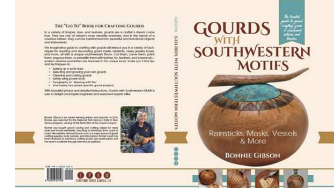
**\*NEW GROUP on Facebook - "Gourding Destash". This is the place to sell your used gourd tools and excess supplies. No fees to sell your surplus supplies and raw gourds.\***

Follow us on 

Like 9.1K people like this. Sign Up to see what your friends like.

### **"Gourds with Southwestern Motifs" - Revised Edition with added Filigree Carving chapter and updated Gallery.**

The book has changed a bit - including a new lower cover price! Also, it now has an added "Filigree Carving" chapter, and an updated gallery section with newer work. (The original edition received nothing but 5 star reviews on Amazon.) Gourds with Southwestern Motifs [on Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com)



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I also post the link on the Arizona Gourds Facebook page, but Facebook is changing their algorithm and you may not see the posts. Facebook announced on January 11 that posts from friends and family will have a much higher priority than posts from business and organization pages. Already, the average 'business' page post is seen by only 5-7% of its fans.

If you want to see posts from the Arizona Gourds page, visit our page directly, then click the "Follow" dropdown. Select "See First" and be sure that NOTIFICATIONS is ON.

**IF ALL ELSE FAILS**, Visit [www.arizonagourds.com](http://www.arizonagourds.com), as there is always a link to the most recent newsletter there. The only other option is to start using constant contact, but that is an expensive monthly option when you have thousands of subscribers. This would also mean prices would have to go up to support this added expense. **Are our newsletters and website of value to you? Please consider supporting our free newsletter by shopping at ArizonaGourds.com**

## Feature: Young Gourd Artist

Our hobby generally is populated by retired folks who have some time on their hands and are looking for something fun to try - but it is important to encourage younger artists to work with gourds so there will be someone around to carry it into the future! I was excited to see some nice work from one younger artist, and she has given me permission to share some of her gourd art with you. The following bio was written by her mother, **Devon Cameron**, who is a gourd artist herself. I had the pleasure of meeting Devon 10 years ago, when I traveled to Sugar Loaf, NY to teach classes at her gourd shop. (If you'd like to read about it, it was in the [May 2017 newsletter](#).) Thanks to both Devon and Camryn.

**Camryn Alwang** has spent most of her 18 years helping to organize, paint, ship and sell gourds for her mother's business, Gourdaments. Hence it is no surprise that she has developed her own "gourd" style that reflects her unique talent and the joy of creating in partnership with Mother Nature. Camryn's favorite muse is Nature—butterflies, flowers, trees and leaves. She loves to capture the intricate beauty of a butterfly's wing and the delicate veins of a leaf. Camryn is currently a freshman in the honors program at SUNY New Paltz majoring in visual arts. Though her studies keep her busy, she always makes time for painting gourds.





### Repeat Feature: Pointers to help you enjoy a gourd show!

I usually post this every year right before the Wuertz festival - some of these tips will save your feet, your pocketbook, and help you to enjoy the festival fully!

- 1) Make a list of what raw gourds and supplies you REALLY need. Make a list, and write down everything you can think of. Then, prioritize which items you must purchase and the ones that you can live without. If you need any tools or books, add them to the list too. Write down specific questions you want to ask vendors about tool use, glues, materials, etc. Set a budget and plan to stick to it.
- 2) Be prepared to walk a lot, and take a fold up shopping bag and drinking water with you. You may also want to pack a light healthy snack to avoid the temptation to buy expensive, fattening goodies. Walk around the show area first, just checking it out and asking prices, and making mental notes of where you saw things of interest. Then do a second round and buy the things on the top of your list first. (However, if you see something truly exceptional and one of a kind, you may have to make a snap decision or risk losing out!)
- 3) When choosing what to wear to the show, add a gourd name tag or other gourd jewelry. These items are eye-catchers, which will lead to compliments and comments, and is a great way to make new friends. You may even want to wear your favorite gourding T-Shirt to connect with others. Dress in layers as it may be cold in the morning and heat up later in the day. Wear comfortable shoes, as many show venues are on hard concrete or uneven gravel.
- 4) Be prepared with cash and checks as well as credit cards, as smaller vendors very often do not accept credit cards. If you use a credit card, please be aware that venue may not be accessible to good cell signals and it may be difficult for the vendor to complete a transaction. Always carry some cash or checks as alternate methods of payment just in case. *(Note - this is definitely true at the Wuertz festival - cell access is poor and a lot of the vendors do not take credit cards.)*
- 5) When you ask prices on finished gourd art, make sure you take into account factors such as quality of the work, originality, and your own gut feeling. Remember that many new artists often make the mistake of pricing their work too low. Their first show may be your only

opportunity to purchase a particular artists' piece at a low price.

6) Allow yourself some splurge money, but determine how much before arriving at the show. After you have done all your priority shopping, then you can just buy what you like, but only up to your preset max. If you can, take a break halfway through the show and evaluate your current purchases. Have you ever realized halfway through the show that you bought certain items twice, at different vendors?

7) Shows are the best place to actually try out tools to see which woodburner, saw or other tool really works well for you. Don't just take the word of the vendor that their tool is "the best". Whenever possible, try it yourself. Does the tool meet your needs, is it within your budget? Ask other gourders you meet at classes or at the show for their opinion. People that actually use these tools day to day will give you a more honest assessment than you may get from an inexperienced but eager sales person.

8) When purchasing, ask the name of the vendor for their card or write the cost of the item and the name of the supplier on the package, business card or receipt. This helps you to remember the cost of certain items, where to buy more of a specific or hard to find item from a supplier in the future; and to write accurate descriptions of the materials used in your gourd creations. Remember, most of the vendors are people who love gourds just like you do, and they can become good friends. Later on, you can contact them and buy needed items direct.

9) Always ask first before taking photographs at a show. Some vendors will have a sign posted if they do not want you to take pictures. Never assume that it is ok; it only takes a few seconds to ask, and the vendor will appreciate the courtesy.

10) Finally, wash your hands after leaving the show. Handling raw gourds and even supplies all day can leave you feeling grubby. When leaving, ask for a "return pass" at the exit if you intend to return, most shows allow re-entry later that day.

**And a special tip for the Wuertz Festival - consider visiting the competition building later in the day, when the crowds have thinned. Most of all, remember to have fun... !!!**

### Tip of the Month: Soldering Brass Embellishments

People have asked me how the brass butterflies and dragonflies that are available on the [Metals page](#) are attached to my gourds. In some cases, they can be glued on with epoxy or other glue, or adhered with Apoxie Sculpt, but for a stronger connection, I take the extra step of soldering them to a metal post. Then you can drill a hole in the gourd for the post and glue the butterfly on without worrying that it will come off.

For the ones shown below, I used a regular soldering iron and stained glass type lead solder (60/40 Tin/Lead). You can also use electrical type rosin core solder. Whatever you have will probably work, as long as the metal has been cleaned well. Flux is a chemical for soldering that helps to prevent oxidation and to allow the solder to flow properly. It's definitely worth using to get a good solder joint! Flux is available as a liquid, gel or paste and any of these should work ok. I use large paper clips for the posts. They are inexpensive and strong, and can be snipped to any length you wish. (However, it is best to solder them while using the full length instead of short pieces. It gives you something to hold on to and keeps the heat further away from your hands.)



Left: Stained glass type 60/40 solder. Right: Rosin core electronic solder

Clean both the brass piece and the paper clip with steel wool. This removes oxidation so the solder will adhere to the metal. Don't skip this step. Brush a bit of flux on the metals where they will be soldered together.

Clean and "tin" the soldering iron tip by wiping the hot iron across a damp sponge, then melting a small amount of solder onto the tip. Next, place the two parts together and heat until the solder flows.

Use steel wool to clean off any residue, then leave plain, or use an oxidizing patina solution or paint to add color. Because these stampings have an embossed design, you can lightly sand over the painted areas to expose the brass where it is raised.





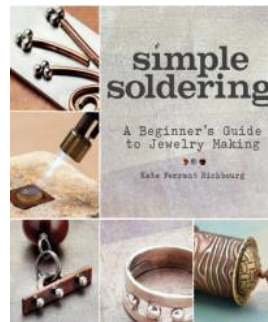
This brass butterfly was patinaed with an oxidizing solution, then painted with black and white acrylic paints. A light sandir finished piece was sprayed with a matte sealer before gluing into the predrilled hole in the gourd. Below - some of the bra

**Featured Books:**

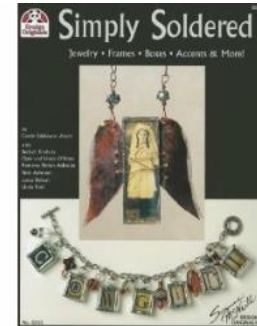
This gourd has a carved, pebble lined stream bed and an added metal butterfly. The gourd was colored with wood dyes. The butterfly was lightly oxidized with a [patina solution](#) and then highlighted with acrylic paints.



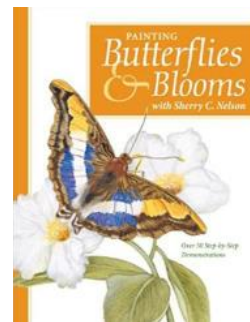
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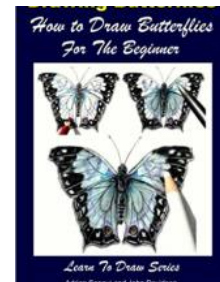
[Simple Soldering](#)



[Simply Soldered](#)



[Painting Butterflies and Blooms](#)



[How to Draw Butterflies for the Beginner](#)

I usually try to choose books that are new or are related to some of the subjects in the newsletter. Ultimately, some of these titles may give you the inspiration to try something new in your own gourd work.

**Let me know if you have a non-gourd art book that you find especially useful to you (a technique, a product, an new skill - anything that helps you with your gourd projects.. I'd love to showcase some of your favorites in the next newsletter! Drop me a note with the title/author of the book, your name, and why you like the book.**

Thanks for checking out the latest news! Feel free to pass the newsletter link along to your friends.  
<http://www.arizonagourds.com/Feb18.html>

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

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**\*The current issue is always available from our home page.**

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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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