



Arizona Gourds

January updates from the desert southwest...

Printable PDF File

Welcome to the January issue of the Arizona Gourds newsletter!

Welcome to a new year, a new decade, and some resolutions for 2010! Now that the holiday activities are finally drawing to a close, use that free time to enjoy a few new books or gourd related gifts you may have received.

Here's something that's not gourd related, but is still quite interesting! Remember the photos of our local saguaro cactus cell tower that I posted a few months ago? This photo was sent to me by my daughter, who lives in northern California. Up in their beautiful redwood forests, this is how they disguise the cell towers. (I really had to look hard to see that this wasn't a real tree!) I guess now we need a cell tower disguised as a tree with climbing gourd vines?



On a related topic, I just read a great book about the redwoods and the people that climb and study them. If you are into nature you might enjoy reading "[Wild Trees](#)" by Richard Preston. This is non-fiction that reads like fiction; it's hard to imagine there are people crazy enough to climb trees that are 350 feet tall!



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Quincy Tahoma, Navajo
Life & art of noted Indian painter. Quincy Tahoma of Santa Fe.
www.tahoma.info

Update: Gourd Classes

Join me for classes at the second **Gourd Retreat** at the **After Midnight Art Ranch in Sonoita, AZ next April**. There will be 5 days of gourd classes, including two with Maria Dellos, author of the book *Gourd Art with Ink Dyes*, and three days of classes with me. The stay-onsite retreat spaces are now full, but there are still some spaces in all of the classes. Register for classes on the [After Midnight website](#). If you need lodging nearby, contact [Linda Hanson](#).

I will be teaching two days of classes next September 11-12th in Cape Cod. This mini retreat is sponsored by Marcia Rothwell and will be held on the grounds of her Bed and Breakfast. There will be some spaces for people to stay on site, or you are welcome to take individual classes and commute or stay nearby in other lodgings. (What could be better than to enjoy the beautiful scenery, pleasant fall weather, and non-sourdining?)

[CapeCodRetreat.pdf](#)

You may see photos of the retreat site [here](#). You can also [email Marcia](#) or call her at 860-563-8180.

Interested? View class details and signup information in this downloadable pdf file.

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

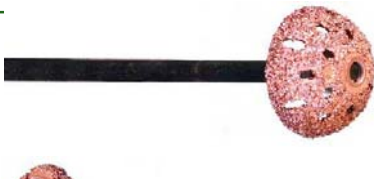
*Join the class updates list if you want to receive advance notice of classes. Get the news first and have the best opportunity to select your classes!



[Join The Class updates List](#)

January Sale

This month, **Carbide Gourd Cleaners** are **on sale!** You'll find them on the [Tools page](#). These tough carbide tools will never need replacing - **they won't wear out or break if you drop them!** Find out how fast you can clean a gourd with one of these, and you'll never go back to the old style ball cleaners.



I'm pleased to announce the launching of a new online gourd art networking site! **Gourd Art Enthusiasts** is a site where you can visit with other gourd artists; share photos, chat, ask and answer gourd crafting questions, and much more. The site is free to use, and easy to join. This site is sponsored and moderated by Arizona Gourds as a service to our readers. Give it a try; you'll be amazed at the photos and activities going on. You are welcome to post your own photos, events or join in on the discussions.

Here's a sample screen shot of the site - you can even customize the site colors and make it more personal. Have fun!





Pre-order Adjustable Tool Hanger

Here's a great hanger for your dremel tool - and unlike regular dremel stands, this one will fit almost any table. It has a trigger clamp to adjust easily to different tables. If necessary, the hanging hook can be removed for travel.

I will have these at the Wuerztz festival. If you want to preorder, you will receive \$2 off the regular price. (\$18). The discount will only apply to preorders. [Send me an email](#) if you want to reserve one. They'll be available for pick up at the festival.



To visit or join, click on the photo or use this link:

<http://gourdartenthusiasts.ning.com/>



New - Elk Ivories

Although these are not real teeth or bone (they are cast from resin), these are the most realistic elk ivories I've seen, and they are available at a great price! They are available on the [Embellishments page](#).

These are great accents on Native American style gourds!



[Gourd shirts and sweatshirts!](#)



January Feature: "A Few Gourd Men"

In my travels, I get to meet gourd artists from all over, and it's fun to see what interesting new things people are trying! There aren't as many men active in our hobby, but the ones that are tend to come up with some interesting ideas and styles. This month I'm featuring a few you may not be familiar with, many thanks to all of the guys that participated. (These are just a few of our male gourders; there are many more out there!)



Hudi Jay Sandgren - Georgia Gourds and Music!

I got to meet Hudi Sandgren when I was at the Ohio show a couple of years ago. Hudi does a lot of fine line detail work on his gourd pieces. If you want to see more gourd work from Hudi, please visit his website at <http://www.hudistudios.com/>

In addition to working on gourds, Hudi is a very talented musician. His website features his artwork and his music. There is a sample selection here called "Children of the Earth" - just click on the play arrow to hear the music. If you enjoy it, you may want to visit Hudi's website and order a CD.



From Hudi's website: Raised near the Yakima Indian Reservation in Southeast Washington State, Hudi has always loved and been inspired by the Native American culture of the Pacific Northwest. His design and artwork exemplify the majesty and beauty of all Native American heritage. His original artwork includes styles from many of the Native American nations across the United States and Canada.

Primarily an artist of pen and ink, his works also include designs in water color, wood and glass. In addition to his art, HUDI is an





Alan Boggs - Seneca, South Carolina

Many people enjoyed the sculpture done by Alan that was shown in last month's newsletter. From Alan: "Art is a journey, continually changing as I go through life. Working with gourds has opened a whole new world of visual expression for me. To actually use a natural object as a working medium is both challenging and rewarding. As a self taught artist, I have worked with pastels, pen and ink, water color, and polymer clay. These mediums have helped stretch my imagination as I prepare to create a new piece of art. I have a special interest in natural subjects with a focus on Native American art.

My best critic is my wife Mary, who also takes on many of the steps in creating a piece. I have many goals for the future, but none will be realized without hard work, dedication, and a lot of love for my family and friends."



Yair Blashtein - Israel

Yair also had a piece featured in last month's newsletter. Yair is one of few gourd artists in Israel - where he lives in the northern part of Israel, in the town of Bezet in the western Galilee. Yair worked as a graphic designer before moving onto gourds 3 years ago. He now grows 1.5 acres of gourds as well as teaching gourd workshops for children and selling raw gourds and some finished gourd art. It's great to see some younger male artists taking an interest in gourds! Yair hopes to travel to the US sometime so he can participate in some of our gourd workshops!





Babur Benderlioglu - Turkey

Babur is from Turkey but also lived in Australia for 13 years. He began making abstract gourd sculptures in 2001 and began exhibiting in 2003. He has participated in many prestigious shows and exhibitions in Turkey, and some of his work is on display at the Hacettepe University Art Gallery. Babur stays connected with the gourd scene around the world by belonging to the American, Australian, Canadian gourd societies as well as a few US state groups.



James Ozburn ("Oz") - Bremerton, WA

Oz works by day on submarine and torpedo parts; during his free time he does gourds as a stress reliever. Despite a tree trimming accident that put him into a wheelchair 15 years ago, Oz uses his skills and imagination to create some really great gourd pieces. He has a website (www.ozgourds.com) which shows off some of his gourds, shadowboxes and woodwork, and he also serves as webmaster for the Washington patch as well as other gourd websites.





Global Gourd Sighting!

Sue Berger took these photos of gourds on a recent cruise to Turkey. Holes were drilled into the gourds and filled with small beads. It looked like the holes were conical shaped, larger on top, narrow inside. The work was nicely done.

The town of Bodrum is a charming resort area with an underwater archaeological museum in an old castle.



Building a Drum

In December, I built this celtic bodhran drum for my son as a Christmas gift. He's a professional percussionist, and I've made him other musical gifts in the past. I used a commercially prepared wooden hoop, then built and added the cross pieces on the back. I used a lathe to turn the manzanita wood "tipper" (mallet). The skin is the same [goatskin rawhide](#) that I sell for use on gourd drums. (See *related article below*) The celtic design was added with permanent markers.

My next project will be to build a similar drum from a large gourd. I'll hope to have it done to show in my booth at the Wuerztz Festival. Want to build your own?

Complete instructions on building this style of gourd drum are in the [August 2006 newsletter](#), courtesy of Babette Metheny.



The skin is stapled on while damp. A leather strip and decorative nails hide the staples.



Drum and Tipper



Back side of drum - the design shows through the skin.

facebook



Follow Arizona Gourds on Facebook and Twitter! I offer occasional specials for my facebook fans.

Tip of the Month: Working with Goatskin Drumheads

Because I posted the information about the drum I recently built, this seems like a good time to talk about drum skins and how to use them.

Most skins used for gourd drums are either goatskin or deerhide. Goatskin is used for gourd musical instruments because it is thinner than cowhide or other types of rawhide pelts. Large timpani drums used in an orchestral setting or other large drums with metal fittings often use calf skin, but that type of hide is not appropriate for gourds - not only because of the weight, but because of the excessive tension it would place on a gourd shell as the skin shrinks during the stretching/drying process. Deer hide may be used for larger gourd drums such as ocean drums, but it's harder to find and much more expensive than goatskin rawhide.

Goatskin rawhide is available as entire hides or as precut rounds. The precut rounds are usually imported from Pakistan, where goat is a primary food source. To keep the skins in good, dry condition during overseas shipping, the skins are dusted with a drying powder. This powder is harmless and will wash off easily when you soak the skin. The skin must be soaked prior to stretching it over the gourd shell. Use only room temperature water, as hot water may damage the skin's collagen fibers. Soak the skin until it is soft or supple. This usually doesn't take too long unless it is an exceptionally thick skin.

Mounting the hide may be done in one of many ways depending on if you wish to make the skin tension adjustable. One way to mount the skin is by lacing the skin to either a ring or to a second skin at the bottom of the drum. (There are [complete instructions for making this type of drum on the Arizona Gourds website](#) - and lots of other drum making information as well.) Another method which is the easiest and also looks nice is by stapling the skin to the gourd shell with a staple gun. Staples are placed in an alternating fashion; add a staple at 12 o'clock, then at 6 o'clock, then at 9 and 3 o'clock. Stretch the skin as you go to eliminate any wrinkles. Keep adding staples in opposing quadrants until the skin is securely fastened. Later, the row of staples is hidden by adding a strip of leather or braid over top and some decorative upholstery tacks to hold it in place. *The bodhran drum pictured above shows an example of a head mounted with this method.*

The skin will shrink as it dries; don't be tempted to bang on the drum head until after it is totally dry. When it is time to play the drum, some adjustments can be made to the tone by either moistening or drying the skin (especially if you are in a humid climate). To dry the skin and get a higher pitch, heat the skin briefly with a hair dryer. To moisten and achieve a lower tone, simply mist the head lightly using a spray bottle. You can also tighten the skin by adding small wooden pegs under the laces or by adding an extra row of lacing called "twitching" (see photo above - the center lace snugs the other lacings.)

I stock drumskins in sizes ranging from 12" to 20". Larger 24" skins are available as a special order.

To order skins or for more information, please visit the [musical supplies page](#).

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



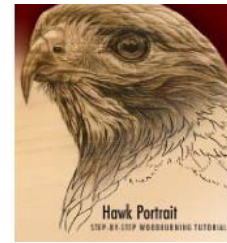
Reader's Gallery

Evelyn Montaudouin of





California enjoys doing a wide variety of gourd projects - here are three of her pieces, all using different techniques and materials.



Sue Walters has released a "[Pyrography Workshop](#)" instructional DVD on her woodburning techniques! Learn from one of the acknowledged masters of the craft!

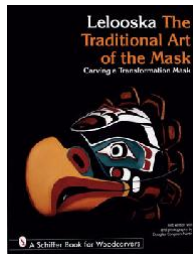
Featured Gourd of the Month:

"Circumlocution"
Simple but complex all at the same time... Mixed influences from Southwest Pueblos and Northwest Coast. Carved, with multiple inlaid turquoise cabochons. Finished with a leather like wood dye finish.

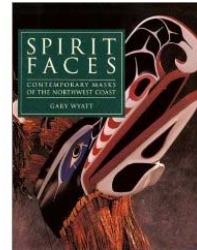


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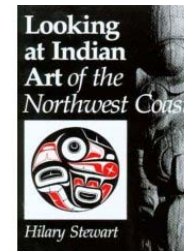
Featured Books of the Month:



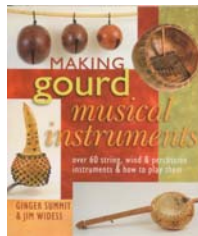
[The Traditional Art of the Mask](#)



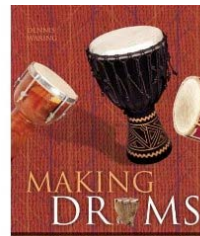
[Spirit Faces: Contemporary Masks of the Northwest Coast](#)



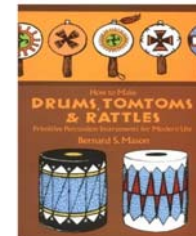
[Looking at Indian Art of the Northwest Coast](#)



[Making Gourd Musical Instruments](#)



[Making Drums](#)



[How to Make Drums, Tomtoms and Rattles](#)

Because the featured gourd this month has a bit of a Northwest Coast feel, I'm highlighting some NW Coast art books this month. If you enjoy making masks, **The Traditional Art of the Mask** and **Spirit Faces** will give you some new insights into mask making and a new direction you might want to pursue. **Looking at the Indian Art of the Northwest Coast** is one of the books that I bought for myself when I was looking for a good reference book on art from this region. It is still one of my favorites.

The bottom row of books are good reference if you are interested in making your own gourd drums or other musical instruments. **Making Gourd Musical Instruments** is still the most popular reference book for gourders - and it has lots of photos, tips and instructions for many instruments. **Making Drums** is the most comprehensive book I've found so far for making drums of many types. **How to Make Drums, Tomtoms and Rattles** is a Dover release that was originally published in the late 30's, but it still has plenty of very good information for making these instruments. Since this was written so long ago, they discuss ways of making some instruments without mentioning mini jigsaws or any of the modern tools we are used to!

Do you have a book recommendation? I hope to start publishing some book reviews from my newsletter readers. It can be a good review or a bad review - your honest input is valuable to others that might be considering a purchase. I enjoy hearing about books I'm unaware of, so if you have one you like please send me the title and author so we may share your information with others.



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<http://www.arizonagourds.com/Jan10.html>

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Arizona Gourds HOME



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A note about emails:

Many of us have come to rely on email correspondence in our personal and professional lives. However, unlike traditional mail, email has a much greater tendency to become lost without anyone ever knowing it. Email can be sent and simply "disappear" into cyberspace. The worst part is - you won't know it, and neither will anybody else. There are a lot of variables that play into email transmission, including your Internet service provider, your computer anti-virus and spam software, and even your email application. Sometimes we think that as long as we have our own junk mail filters set appropriately then everything will come and go just as we intend it. But once you send an email, it has to pass through several different portals and filters before it reaches its final destination. Not getting the newsletter? **Be sure you have added messages from bonniegibson@qwest.net to your safe sender list.**

If you have sent me an email and have not heard back within a few days, then the chances are I never received your correspondence. Even when traveling, I try to be very diligent with all email communication and I even scan the junk mail filters for legitimate emails that slip by. If you have tried contacting me and have not received a timely response, you may reach me at **1.520.444.8330**. Be aware that I am on Mountain Standard time (the correct Tucson time is displayed on my home page) and that I may not answer the phone if I am outside carving gourds, but I will return your call if you leave a message.

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