



Arizona Gourds

February updates from the desert southwest...



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Welcome to the February issue of the Arizona Gourds newsletter!

Special Notice: I will be attending the Wuertz Gourd Festival from February 4 through February 8th. Orders placed during this time will be held and shipped on February 9th. All orders will be filled in the order they are received. If you will be at the festival, please be sure to stop by to say hello. My booth will be at space D8, (the same location as previous years.) I'll also be there on Thursday the 5th to teach classes and will have tools and supplies available at my class location. Space in my booth is limited, so if you don't see what you want, just ask and I'll pull it out for you. (Some things may be tucked away under the tables!)

Update: Gourd Classes

I have a few new Tucson classes scheduled in February and March. I've added a Raku Critter class, this is the first time I will teach this class in Tucson. I've also added another session of Feather Carving, and there are a few openings in the Pottery Shards class. Please check the [Classes](#) page for dates and full details.

Almost time for the Southern Gourd Retreat in Georgia! (March 26-29th) Visit www.webgourds.com/southern for more information about the retreat in general and about the classes offered. **Classes are filling fast, so please don't delay in registering.**

New!! I will be teaching classes at the Woodcraft of Boise, Idaho! (located in the Overland Park Shopping Center, 6883 West Overland Road) Classes will be held on **Friday, April 24th through Sunday, April 26th.** You can e-mail the Woodcraft store at: boise-retail@woodcraft.com or call them at (208) 338-1190 to learn how to register. [Classes offered](#) include Basic Gourd Power Carving, 3-D Feather Carving, Filigree Carving, Inlaid Inlay, and Advanced 3-D Relief Power Carving. ***Because these are taught at a Woodcraft store, I will not be bringing any tools or supplies to these classes. Carving burs and tools may be preordered from my site, or you may purchase items from the Woodcraft store.**

My classes at the [Leiser Gourd Festival](#) just outside of Sacramento, California are almost sold out. Classes will be held Wednesday to Friday, May 13 - 15th, with the festival following on Saturday and Sunday. I will NOT have a booth at the festival, but will have supplies available at all of my classes. *(These are my only California class offerings this year, I will NOT be teaching at the Welburn Festival this summer.)* This year, Leiser's will also be hosting the first ever [California Gourd Society Northern California Section Gourd Show](#).

Also, I am also teaching for the first time at the After Midnight Art Ranch, located in Sonoita, Arizona, from June 12-15th. Our host, Linda Hanson, is the owner of After Midnight Art Stamps, and her ranch is a wonderful scenic area located in the cooler rolling hills of southern Arizona. You can sign up for these classes on the After Midnight website. *(The stay-on-site retreat is full, but you may sign up for any of the classes individually. If you need lodging nearby, Linda will help you find a place.)*

If you would like to receive advance notice of classes, please add your name to my classes updates email list. Get the news first and have the best opportunity to select your classes!



[Join The Class updates List](#)



Check the Arizona Gourds [Home Page](#) to see another view of this new gourd!

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

Just for fun, I'm testing a possible new chat feature this month. This chat box will allow you to interact with me and with other visitors. Of course, I can't monitor this all of the time, so this won't be a moderated chat. **This chat feature may not function properly with your firewall program.* If this is a feature enough people like, then I will consider adding it permanently somewhere on the website.

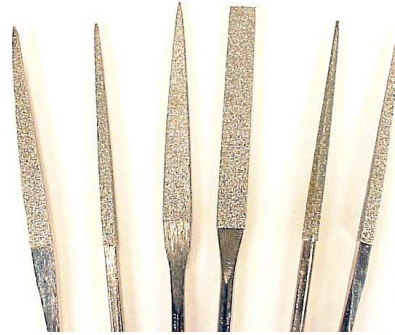
Another possible addition will allow you to review various products found on the Arizona Gourds website. This way, if you really liked a certain tool, or you didn't like a particular book, you would have the option of leaving a review. This could be a great benefit for others that might have questions about the item. Just to test things out, I have placed one of the "Product Review" boxes to the left, please feel free to leave comments about both of these possible new website features. You may leave as much or as little information as you choose.

NEW this month:

I've added a new set of [Double Ended Diamond Needle Files](#).

These are finer than regular riffler files, and work great for smoothing out filigree holes and other hard to reach spots.

*Going to the Wuerz Festival? I will have other new items available at the show!



Do you use Antlers in your gourd art?

Betsey Sloan is looking for examples of gourd art and basketry that incorporates antlers for a new book she is writing. For more information, please contact Betsey at basketsvt@aol.com and she will fill you in on the photo requirements and other details.



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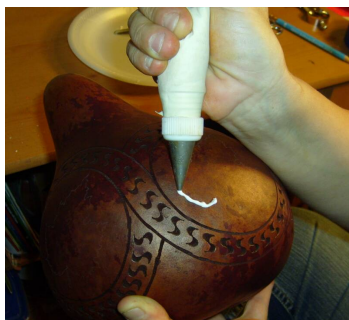
Reader's Mailbag

Bonnie, Thank you so much for your email about your classes in Boise, I have signed up for three. I have been bugging everyone in the neighboring states to get you closer to Montana! I am so excited and signed up before I even asked my boss for the time off and told my husband after that.... so looking forward to meeting you and taking your classes.
Debbie - Victor, MT

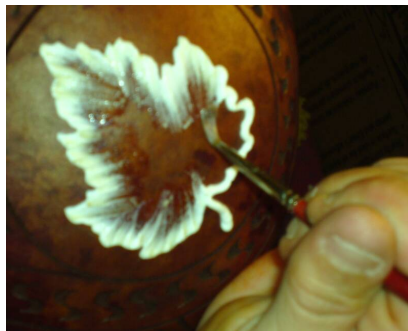
January Feature - Crossover Artists

After displaying some of my scrimshaw last month, I asked if any others considered themselves to be "crossover artists" - using skills used in one craft or hobby and incorporating those skills into gourd work.

Kathy Gordon of the Pennsylvania Gourd Society was employed as a cake decorator for several years. She started working with gourds 2 years ago and found products that reminded her of icing, so she got out her cake decorating bags to see what would happen. Kathy uses Golden's light molding paste or Decoart decorating paste, thins it with faux glazing medium and applies it like icing. The technique that she uses is called brush embroidery in the cake world; she calls it texture painting. When it's used over leather dye, it picks up color when using a brush-on varnish.



Step One - applying the texture paint



Step Two - Brushing out the paint



Finished Results!

Marianne Barnes of Greenville, South Carolina was a basket weaver for 10 years before she started working on gourds. She enjoys combining her two loves; the texture

of the added weaving really accents the gourd. Gourds and weaving just naturally seem to go together, there is something about the natural, earthy combination that just works wonderfully.

Sending a big THANK YOU to the three crossover artists that shared their lovely work for this article!



Joan Vonglis of New York combines her interest in work contemporary feeling, and she really does a nice job mel

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Reader's Mailbag

I appreciate all your newsletters, and all the tips, articles, etc. I have been meaning to write for months, to thank you for the article on your work space. I wasn't happy with my rather small work space on our enclosed front porch. After reading about yours, it made me realize that if you could produce from your area, I could from mine. I can see that I am lucky to have it, as I know many don't have any designated area to work from, and end up on the kitchen table, etc. In the Summer and Fall I am able to work outside, which is really nice. You keep me, any many others inspired!

Mary Helen - Santa Fe, NM



Becky Rezac of Arizona did a nice job incorporating philodendron sheaths and a [feathered cabochon](#) into this gourd design.



Reader's Mailbag

Dear Bonnie, Every month I look up your newsletter and it is getting better all the time. I love your work and the filigree work is haunting me!! I will have to figure it out:) I wish you all the best for 2009 and cannot wait to see the next newsletter.

Este Wiggill from Windhoek - Namibia.

Clint Appelt of Nevada started this gourd in a filigree class. He added some leafing to make the leaves stand out.



Phiny Musgrove of Georgia took my classes last fall at the Florida Retreat. I love the way she took what she learned and used it creatively.

Many people enjoyed last month's YouTube videos of Fantasy Film application. Here are a couple more videos you might enjoy, featuring the Richmond Indigenous Gourd Orchestra. These guys may be crazy, but they make some pretty interesting gourd music videos, and they really know how to have fun!

The Richmond Indigenous Gourd Orchestr...



The Richmond Indigenous Gourd Orchestra ...



t One

There are many different types of techn...
most common uses are to to add dimensional effects and to disguise gourd naws or
blend where gourd pieces have been joined. Many different brands are available at
local craft stores and from gourd crafting suppliers. Some types of clay work better
for particular techniques than others, such as adding feathers to masks. Some very
strong epoxy based clays work well when strength is needed, but these clays are
more expensive. What they all have in common is that they will dry naturally upon
exposure to air; no kiln or oven is needed. There are so many different brands of air
drying clays that I can't mention all of them. I will confine my comments here to two
very popular and easy to find brands for general sculpting, "Creative Paper Clay"
and "Das" clay. More on other types of clay will follow in a future newsletter.

I like both of these brands but I use Das more often. (I have also tried some of the
less expensive brands of air dry clay but they do not perform as well. The less
expensive clays are pulpier and do not give a smooth finish.) To make sure your
added clay stays on the gourd, spread a bit of white glue on the gourd surface prior
to pressing on the clay. Most air dry clays are made from cellulose fibers and contain
a lot of moisture. They require a lengthy drying time (especially when they are
applied heavily) but when they are dry they are lightweight and sturdy. Trying to
hurry it the drying time with a heat tool or oven drying often causes cracks and
shrinkage problems. These cracks are easily repaired by "smooshing in" additional
clay that has been thinned a bit with water. If you are building an elaborate
sculpture or have fragile areas, consider adding some sort of armature. Toothpicks,
wire, aluminum foil or any other kind of bulky material that is firmly fastened to
the gourd surface can add strength. Glue on your armature and then add the paper
clay over top. This will add a lot of strength once the clay has dried. Once the clay
has dried thoroughly, it can be sanded to a smooth finish. Seal the dry clay (I use a
light spray of Deft lacquer), and then paint or decorate as desired.

If you want more information, you might check my "Gourds" book - several of the chapters
use air dry clay for sculptural techniques.

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



This gourd has sculpted lizards made from Das clay. I painted them with [patina paints](#) for an interesting effect.

Reader's Mailbag

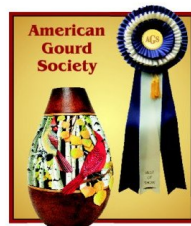
Q: After reading last month's newsletter, I have a safety question about dust masks. How do you know when it is time to discard a used mask for a new one? I use the 3M mask with the little exhaust vent. After using it a few times I smell that wonderful "gourd" smell. Is there any rule of thumb about how many times I should continue using it? **Bonnie - Sun City West, Arizona**

A: There is no hard and fast rule about how many times you can use a disposable dust mask, or how long you can use a filter in a respirator. My rule of thumb is that if the mask looks filthy on the inside, smells bad, has become more difficult to breath through or it has a broken strap, then it is time to replace it. It probably isn't protecting you too much if you use it with one of those problems. Dust masks are relatively inexpensive and should be replaced frequently. When you are not using the mask, store it inside a plastic ziplock bag so it will stay as clean as possible between uses.

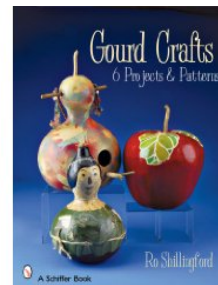
Featured Gourd of the Month:

Wall Masks

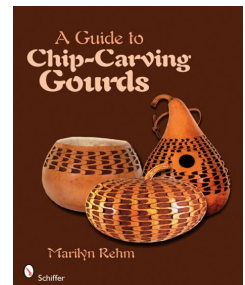
Using the same techniques as in my "[Masquerade Vase](#)" Project Packet, I created a series of wall hangings with small masks. These are on pieces of old, weathered barn wood. Their vertical shape and smaller size makes them perfect for narrow spaces where normal paintings wouldn't fit.



JUDGING HANDBOOK
[AGS Judging Handbook](#)



[Gourd Crafts 6 Projects & Patterns](#)



[A Guide to Chip-Carving Gourds](#)

Featured Books of the Month:



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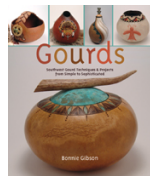
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Note: It is important that you add bonniegibson@qwest.net to your "safe senders" list, as many emails bounce each month due to spam blockers.

If your email address changes, just sign up again with your new address - no need to email me the change, as I purge non-working addresses monthly.

[Arizona Gourds HOME](#)



(Click on book cover for ordering information.)

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



I am honored that the **American Gourd Society** has chosen photos of my Cardinals and Aspens gourd on the cover of the Judging Handbook!

Gourd Crafts: 6 Projects and Patterns by Ro Shillingford was released in 2008, but I haven't yet seen a copy. There are no reviews on Amazon, so perhaps if you have the book you might want to leave a review.

Last month to get the special pre-release price on **Chip-Carving Gourds**. This title is due for release during February.

And just for fun, some books that relate to our crossover art feature. Clay Art for all seasons is by a Hawaiian author that does absolutely fabulous lifelike florals with air dry clay. They are incredibly lifelike! The book is even spiral bound so it will lay flay on your table while you work. **The Art of Polymer Clay - Complete Surface Techniques** by Donna Kato is by a master of the uses of polymer clays. This book focuses on surface embellishments such as the use of sculpting, inks, stencils and stamping. **Hello, Cupcake!** makes me want to take up cake decorating again! I enjoyed making decorative cakes when my kids were growing up and these decorative treats look fantastic.

**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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[Newsletter Index](#) - article and tip index from all the past newsletters
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- Gourds - General
- Patterns and Designs
- Gourds - Misc.
- Musical Instruments
- Pyrography Books
- Carving Books
- Weaving
- Decorative Painting

- Home Amazon Search Site Map About the Artist Classes
- Links Gourd Art for Sale Gourd Books Project Packets Drum & Musical
- Bone Beads Special Embellishments Earrings & More Glass Supplies Inlay Supplies
- Metals Misc Supplies Patina Paints Apoxie Sculpt Glues and Adhesives
- Tools Woodburners Mini Saws Carving Burs Freedom Tools
- Rotary Tool Accessories Micro-Pro Carver 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 Gourd Puzzles Images - Before and After Images - Gourd Magic Newsletter Index
- Shipping Policies

