



# Carving Newsletter

December 2022



Hello Carvers,

We reached the 100-member milestone this month. Welcome new members and thank you for those renewing. I especially want to thank those giving their time as well as their finances.

Please consider attending a monthly Carving SIG meeting. These groups meet in person. The Evening group meets on the third and the Daytime group meets on the first Thursday. We're focusing on sharpening for a while, but topics will diversify over time.

Our monthly meetings are in a hybrid format now, with up to twenty gathering in-person at the Guild of Oregon Woodworkers' new classroom and everyone else on Zoom. If a speaker is on Zoom, those meeting in person will be watching on a 71" TV with good audio, while enjoying an opportunity to socialize.

Mary May will teach for us live in Portland the week of May 15th. To help prepare for that visit, she will also be the Zoom speaker at our February 16th monthly meeting, a rare treat. Normally we do monthly programs on the 2nd Tuesday, but since that is Valentine's, we'll meet two days later.



I'm trying to get my head around the next Gathering of the Guilds, which will be April 28-30. We expect to have a larger sales Gallery than last year along with a dedicated demonstration area across the aisle with lots of chips flying. To draw attention, we're considering displaying a half scale carousel horse in motion. We'll also carve and sell 100 comfort birds and animals as last year to cover our expenses.

The rubber meets the road with your time. We need carvers with products to sell, demonstrators, booth staff during the show, comfort animal makers, and team leaders. It is mostly a lot of fun and a dash of work, but it is worth it on many levels. Please offer to help. Call me at (503) 312-7745.

The Oregon Historical Society has a new carousel program running through April 30, called The Odyssey of the Historic Jantzen Beach Carousel. Check the [exhibit website](#).

Volunteers make our club work well. Please consider contributing photos, tidbits, articles, or book reviews to the newsletter; attend monthly programs; take or teach a class; help make Comfort Birds; sharpen some of our tools; research notable carvers; mentor newbies.

I encourage you to take a day on January 14 or 15 to attend the Coastal Carvers show in Lincoln City. It has a long history and is coming back after the pandemic pause. Details inside.

Thanks for being part of our community.

Larry

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**OUR MISSION: Encourage carvers at all levels through education, fellowship, and mentoring**

## Programs

### **JANUARY 10th PROGRAM - Carving Tool Storage / Best Practices — In-person or Zoom**

[Click here](#) to register whether for Zoom or in-person

Carvers usually collect a lot of tools and supplies. Storing, accessing, and transporting them safely can become a challenge. Beginner carvers usually don't have a problem, but what if you have 20 or 40 or 100 tools? With experience, we see carvers have a bewildering range of alternatives—some clever, some not—with many customized solutions.

Tool rolls are very common, but which features are the best? How many pockets (10, 15, 20, 30), what kinds of materials (cotton, canvas, leather), can they simultaneously hold long and palm handled tools, how to avoid tools falling out, should edges be covered? Should you store tools with cutting edge or handles in? Seems simple until you try to make or buy one.

Ruth Warbington is a woodworker, carver, and seamster. During the pandemic she tackled making tool rolls and she will share her results. Others will show theirs, and discuss the pros and cons, homemade or purchased.

We'll look at storage systems others have come up with. ArtBin pencil boxes from Blick, plastic trays from Woodcraft or Rockler, homemade wooden carousels, tackle boxes, stacking boxes on wheels with luggage handle. See Chuck Rinehart's custom crafted and elegant tool box with brass handles.

There is the added challenge of storing a working set of tools on your bench while working on a project. Do you let them rattle around, use a tray with a separator, or a round carousel? How do you organize power carving burrs and wood burning tips? How do you mark tools so they don't get mixed up with someone else's—or do you?

Come join the show and tell and share what you do, or what you would like to do. You might just learn something, and you just might help others avoid a lot of grief.



### **FEBRUARY 16th PROGRAM - special program Zoom with Mary May (details below)**

[Click here](#) to register whether for Zoom or in-person

### **MARCH 14th PROGRAM - Make a knife or Adze**

Two guest presenters describe how to make a knife from a jig saw blade or an adze from a file, along with their corresponding handles.

[Click here](#) to register whether for Zoom or in-person

## New Classes with Masa

### Texturing Techniques with Masa Nitani - In-person only

January 11, 2023, 1 – 5pm. [Click here](#) to register

Masa is an experienced Japanese carver and woodworker who taught workshops for us before the pandemic.

This class will cover a variety of texturing techniques that you can apply to your own projects later. The texturing in this photo shows examples of hair and scale patterns.

Basswood and Walnut will be provided, but students are welcome to bring their own wood. Most texturing will be done on Basswood, and we will use a Walnut board to create shallow textured channels following its grain patterns.



### Make Unique Tool Handles with Masa Nitani - In-person only

January 25, 2023, 1 – 5pm. [Click here](#) to register

Masa developed a unique handle that fits in the crotch of your hand between thumb and index finger that provides better control and drive. Students will make their own handles from supplied pre-cut Basswood blanks which they will shape to fit their own hand geometry.

A V-tool blade is included in the class price, students can provide their own blade too—either a V tool or a gouge. One source for blades is re-purposing an old tool by cutting off its handle.



### Bowl Making with Masa Nitani - In-person only

Two sessions: February 8 and 22, 2023, 1 – 5pm. [Click here](#) to register,

This carving workshop is limited to current members of the Guild of Oregon Woodworkers because of facility policy related to the use of power tools.

You will be provided with a sizable block of Walnut or another hardwood to create a unique bowl. The wood may be green or dry depending on our luck shopping. Masa likes to work with green wood because it is easier to work. It also presents challenges with cracking while it dries, but he will show various ways to handle these, along with the finishing steps.



## Classes

### ALMOST A CLASS - Carving Class with Monica Setziol Phillips - In-person only

March 11 and 12, 2023. [Click here](#) to join the Interest List.

There is a very large interest in a class with Monica, and we are moving ahead. The only remaining tasks are for Monica to check out the potential classroom and workbenches. The actual class will be posted by the end of December and those on the interest list will be given the first opportunity to sign up. We're hoping to schedule a second class later.

You can still add your name to the interest list; there is no obligation.

The workshop is designed to give students the opportunity to experiment and expand creative horizons based on explorations of possibilities in wood carving. Emphasis is on discovery. Students will work with a panel of alder approximately 10" x 16" that has been scored to form a grid. With this grid, students will be able to explore alternative inner patterns of their choosing.

**INSTRUCTOR/ARTIST BIO:** Monica Setziol-Phillips learned to carve in her father Leroy Setziol's shop. She has been seriously carving since 1986. She has exhibited her work in galleries around the state and her work is in private collections around the country. Public Art commissions include Sunriver Lodge, McMinnville Civic Hall, and Salishan Lodge. She has taught carving at Sitka Center for Art and Ecology for 11 years. Monica lives in Sheridan, OR.



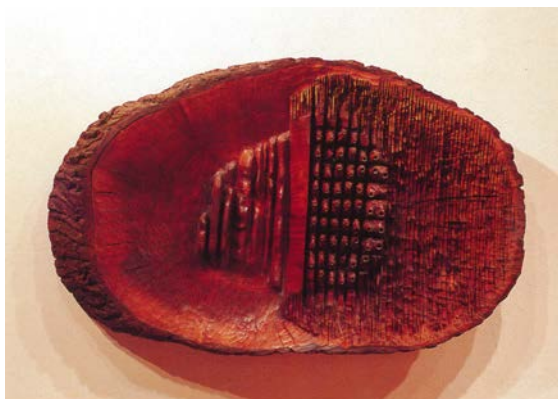
Large commission by Monica in Alaska Yellow Cedar



Examples of class project

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### Work by the artist's father, Leroy Setziol.



relief, end grain black walnut, 1969, 34 in. x 55 in. x 8 in., coll. of Oregon Cutting Systems, Division of Blount, Inc.

From [1991-Leroy Setziol Retrospective Exhibition.pdf](#), published by University of Oregon Museum of Art. (used with permission)

## Classes

### Stropping for Beginners (small fee) – in-person or online

Taught by Roger Crooks or Larry Wade

Click the desired date to register, [December 14](#), [January 11](#)

One of our main charters is to preserve the art of carving and to do so requires teaching beginners. We all know sharpening is critical. There are many articles and videos online, and they often show contradictory ways to sharpen. For a beginner with few tools, figuring out how to start sharpening is daunting.

Our philosophy is to start with good tools and keep them sharp with stropping. Reshaping tools, power sharpening, and using stones will be taught in future classes.

This beginner's class delivers information with a [handout](#), a [video](#), and hands-on coaching. There is a fine line between getting a sharp edge and rolling over the edge making it duller. Correcting stropping techniques in real time will start carvers on the right path to building muscle memory for sharpening. The class repeats monthly, and can be attended either in-person (preferably) or via Zoom.



Leather Strops

### Incised Carving Class (free) – in-person, optionally online

Saturday, 9:30am - noon. To register, click on the desired date: [January 14](#), [February 18](#)

This one-session, 2-1/2 hour class is for those new to carving or who want to try incised carving. This class repeats most months.

The incised style carves lines into the surface of wood and can be done safely with one tool. Students will be provided with Basswood, a loaner tool, patterns, and a carving mat. This workshop will be taught in-person (as long as COVID-19 numbers are low) or it can be taken via Zoom.



Dogs Welcome Sign

Students will carve the Dogs Welcome sign shown, and wood is available for a second project afterwards. Students will use a parting (V) tool and can continue borrowing it for a month.

## Mary May Returning

### HEADS UP - Mary May is coming back May 16-21, 2023



Mary May is one of the most well-known carving teachers in the United States. She was here twice before. The last time was just before the pandemic.

We'll have more specifics by the end of the year and post an interest list then, but we expect to have four opportunities to learn from her:

- » A free evening presentation
- » A demonstration session for a large group at low cost
- » One class for beginners
- » One class for more experienced carvers

Heidi McNamee will be the lead class coordinator.



**BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE - Mary May will also be our Zoom Monthly speaker on February 16th [click here](#) to register (free).**

Mary will join us from her studio in Charleston, SC to grease the skids for her upcoming week-long training sessions in May. This will be a chance to meet her, and to learn some of the fundamentals that she includes in most of her regular classes. To learn more about her at her Traditional School of Woodcarving, [click here](#). If you didn't know, she has eight free video lessons that are very useful to new carvers, especially her two on sharpening.

### Examples of Mary May's Art of Traditional Woodcarving



Carving Hands



Decorative Incised Lettering

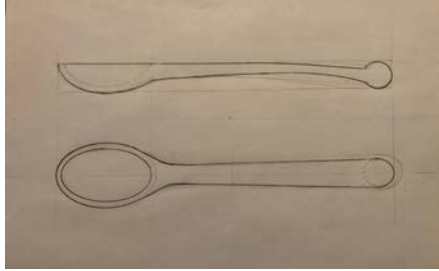


Tea Table Ball and Claw

## Beginner Spoon Carving (small fee) – Fridays, Feb 10 & 17, 10am - noon (Hybrid)

Taught by [Al Plasch](#). To register [click here](#)

This is a beginner's class on the basics of spoon carving. Everyone will carve a simple spoon first, then have options for exploring handle and bowl variations. Two Basswood blanks will be provided. Students need to supply two tools: a hook knife such as the Morakniv 164 and a sturdy straight knife such as the Morakniv 120 or Flexcut KN14. If you have similar tools already, talk to the instructor ([click here](#)) so we can see if you can use what you already have. They need to be sharp, so plan on putting in the effort ahead of time to strop them. The instructor will teach from his shop near Los Angeles, but students can be in-person at Larry Wade's shop near Beaverton or attend via Zoom.



## Small Bowls in Four Woods (small fee) – Hybrid (in-person & Zoom)

Taught by Larry Wade.

[Click here](#) to register, four Saturdays: February 4, 11, 18, 25, 10am to noon

This is a class for beginners to learn and practice carving small (4"), shallow bowls and experience a variety of soft and hard woods (Basswood, Butternut, Alder, Walnut). The inside of the bowl can be round or oval, shallow or deep. The outside of the bowl can be round, square, rectangular, or shaped. Learning to hold the work safely provides many lessons, and skills are transferable to spoon carving.



## Carving Special Interest Groups (SIGS) - in-person

Two groups meet monthly, one in the evening, one during the day, each two hours with an optional hour before to eat, work, or chat. Click on a link below to register for the respective series, even if you may attend sporadically.

- » **EVENINGS** at Guild of Woodworkers Studio (third Thirsdays), 7-9pm, [click here for the evening series](#)
- » **DAYTIMES** at Woodcraft in Tigard (1st Thursdays) 1-3pm, [click here for the daytime series](#)

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### Halloween Carving Retrospective

Ruth Holland carved this ghoulish centerpiece for last Halloween's festivities.



## More Learning Opportunities

### Woodcarving Class at the Beaverton Elsie Stuhr Senior Center through the Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District (ages 55 and above), tuition varies

Taught by Nancy Girard

Tuesdays January 2023. Weekly classes are from 10 - 11:30am.

Classes continue year round. New carvers pay a start-up fee of \$20, which includes a safety glove and thumb guard, three projects, and use of instructor's tools for the term along with instruction.

Experienced carvers get new projects and/or help for their own projects. All get the company of fellow carvers, which is vitally beneficial. More information at [THPRD.com](http://THPRD.com) or contact Nancy Girard at [girardaccessories.com](http://girardaccessories.com).



### Eastside Carver's Gathering — Tom Rich, coordinator

True North Studios 455 NE 71st Ave Portland, OR 97213

December 3, and January 11.

For this month's Eastside Carver's Gathering, I would like for everyone who attends to bring a carving. It should be one that you are currently working on—to show and tell and also to do some work on the project there at True North Studio.

For those who don't have a project, I will present a simple carving that can be done with one knife. It is called "The 5-Minute Wizard". It is similar to a project in the book "Whittling" by Fox Chapel Publishing. I will provide Basswood blanks and the blanks left over from Rick's class last month can be used too. Carvers will be encouraged to bring their own knife, if they have one. I will bring an assortment of carving knives for those who don't have one yet.

Following Rick's example, I will bring step-by-step carvings and pictures of each step so you can practice at home too.

If you are a wood carver or would like to learn, please join us every first Saturday of the month starting from Noon to 2pm. Please join us and please register by [clicking here](#).

We hope to form an "East-side Carver's Gathering" that will continue indefinitely at True North Studios. Questions? Contact Tom Rich. ([tom@tomrich.me](mailto:tom@tomrich.me))







# Upcoming Events

## GOING ON NOW

### TRANSFORMATIONS: The George and Colleen Hoyt Collection of Northwest Coast Art

Hallie Ford Museum of Art, Salem OR, September 17 – December 17, 2022,



Over the last thirty-five years, Oregon collectors George and Colleen Hoyt have amassed one of the finest private collections of contemporary Northwest Coast Native art in the United States.

For more information see the [exhibit website](#).

### The Odyssey of the Historic Jantzen Beach Carousel

Oregon Historical Society, Portland, OR, now through April 28, 2023,



For more information see the [exhibit website](#).

## JANUARY 2023

### Coastal Carvers Artistry in Wood Show

Chinook Winds Convention Center, Lincoln City, January 14 & 15, 2023



This annual January carving show is a fixture in the state and well worth attending. Although they had to cancel the 2022 show, they will have their normal show this year. Admission is FREE. More details on page 20. Check their [website](#) for current information.

## APRIL 2023

### Capitol Woodcarvers – Salem, OR



Their annual April carving show is well known, but it had to be canceled for 2022. More information and entry forms for the 2023 show are to be posted on the [Capitol Woodcarver site](#) soon.

### Idaho Artistry in Wood Show

2023 Wood and Gourd Art Show

Jack's Urban Meeting Place, Boise, ID. April 1 - 2, 2023



The Idaho Artistry in Wood 2023 Wood and Gourd Art Show will be held Saturday, April 1, 9am to 5pm and Sunday, April 2, 10am to 4pm at Boise's premier exhibition hall located on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor of JUMP (Jack's Urban Meeting Place) 1000 Myrtle St., Boise, ID 83702

Competitors from all skill levels (Novice to Expert) may submit their wood carving, turning, scroll work, fine wood working, CNC creations, gourd art, and pyrography entries for public display and judging. The show will feature demonstrations, vendors, raffles, an auction and banquet, as well as the opportunity for artists to sell their work. Their [website](#) will have more details soon.



# Carving Newsletter

December 2022



## APRIL 2023

### Oakhurst Woodcarver's Rendezvous

Community Center in Oakhurst, Ca. April date TBD



This special week of carving is guaranteed to be fun for the whole family, and they are extending a special invitation to you to come and join in. They generally have several different carving classes lined up. Classes range from Relief carving, power carving, bark carving, jewelry boxes, stepping stones, gourds and pine needle baskets, scroll saw, and others. One registration fee will allow you to attend as many classes as you like, or you may choose to spend the whole week in just one class. All classes will be on a first-come first-served basis. See the [California Carvers Guild website](#).

### The Gathering of the Guilds

Oregon Convention Center, Portland, April 28 - 30, 2023



Oregon Convention Center

Six Portland-area guilds with over 200 artists will join forces to exhibit and sell art and functional products. All of which are unique and of exceptional quality. Details on the [Gathering of the Guilds website](#).

**NOTE:** The Oregon Carvers Guild will have a large booth and encourages all members to consider offering their creations for sale at the show. Also, if you can help at the Gathering, please let [Larry](#) know.

## JULY 2023

### NW Carving Academy, Ellensburg, WA

Kittitas County Fairgrounds Event Center, July 10 - 14, 2023



This is a long-established, week-long educational opportunity with multiple instructors from around the region and country. The classes that are offered include hand and power carving, pyrography, painting and design, and baskets. Additionally, special interest classes are offered for spouses and partners.

Registration begins in November 2022, For more information, [click here](#).



Poinsettia - the Christmas Flower by Mack Sutter From the OCG Collection

## Interest Lists

### Walking Sticks & Wood Spirits — Interest list only

Taught by Terry Burnside. [Click here](#) to register interest

Terry will teach this class once there is enough interest. Add your name to the list if this is a future possibility for you. No obligation.



This class is designed for those not familiar with carving a wood spirit or face carving in general. Terry developed his techniques over 25 years, incorporating the methods of several well-known carving professionals.



### Call for Pictures of Your Carvings

One of the highlights of face-to-face meetings is doing a "show and tell" about carvings we have done. Each month we will include a brief narrative with pictures of members' work. When you send photos of your work to [OCG Newsletter Editor](#), please let us know some details, such as:

- » Wood used
- » Size, including thickness of stock
- » Finish, including coloration, if any
- » Special techniques or considerations, if any
- » Any other information of interest

#### A few tips on taking photos:

- » Position your camera (or phone) parallel to your work
- » Use natural light (sunlight) if possible
- » The only shadows you see should be in the work (not you)
- » Use a high contrast background so your work stands out



John Wheeler's flat plane carving from Terry Burnside's recent class



"Uncarved Block" (in Chinese), carving and woodburning by Tom Siep

## Carving on the Road

### Carving on the Road — Carver Wanted; and a Shop of Cape Cod Carvers

By Jim Spitzer

#### Local Carving Need

Part of a recent kayaking afternoon was my chance to get photographs of the sternboards and trailboards of a 50-foot two-masted sloop moored at Hayden Island on the Columbia River. The vessel's new owner changed the name and home port, and would like new boards. I offered to post his request in the Guild of Oregon Woodworker's 'Hire a Woodworker' distribution list.

While this is a woodworker's job, it is more specifically a carver's job. The request from the owner is printed at the end of this article. Please give him a call if interested.

This request got me thinking. How many professional carvers would take on such a task? Even the relatively simple carvings on this sloop? This led me to recall part of a 6-week journey that Susan and I took in 2018 to Miami, Colombia, Quebec, New England, and New York. A notable feature of coastal New England towns is the plethora of finely crafted carved signs and decorative details on businesses, villages, homes, and, yes, yachts and boats.



### CARVER WANTED

Want to make an offer to carve new boards for that 50-foot sloop? Here are the requests from the sloop's owner, Matteo Luccio:

- » Change or replace the two nameboards on the side of the bow with new ones, changing the name from "BLUE FINGER" to "GALILEO IV"
- » Change the upper nameboard on the transom, also from "BLUE FINGER" to "GALILEO IV"
- » Change the lower nameboard on the transom, from "NANAIMO. BC" to "PORTLAND, OR" (Check with Matteo on use of comma!)

For each nameboard, Matteo sees the following three options, but am open to additional ones:

- » Fill in the existing name / home port (in the case of the nameboards on the bow, leaving the decorations before and after the name), then carve the new name / home port
- » Make a smaller nameboard just with the new name / home port and attach it over the old nameboard, covering only the relevant part
- » Take off the entire name board and use it as a template to make a new one

Please let Matteo know if this is of interest to you.

Matteo Luccio, owner  
S/V GALILEO IVa 50-ft. wooden, two-masted,  
gaff-rigged schooner, sailing since 1974  
[sailing@palebluedotllc.com](mailto:sailing@palebluedotllc.com)  
541.543.0525



A Nondescript Treasure

## Cape Cod, MA

We were driving on Route 6A near Sandwich, on Cape Cod, when I noticed a nondescript Cape Cod-style home and a sign for a woodcarver.

What really caught my attention was the adjacent barn adorned with carvings accentuated in eye-popping gold leaf. We did a U-turn and dropped in for what turned out to be a wonderful tour of a first-class commercial carving operation.



Paul J. White in his Studio



Paul's Philosophy

What we had happened to discover was the studio of renowned carver Paul J. White and his associates. As we walked in, I was up front about being a new carver from out-of-state and not a potential customer. However, Paul generously gave us a tour of the inner workings of the studio as well as completed works and those still in production.

In the photo above, Paul is standing in a studio that is richly decorated with finished works. The many templates on the wall, the sander, and the radial arm saw indicate that works are being roughed out in this room.



Eagle Awaiting Gold Leaf

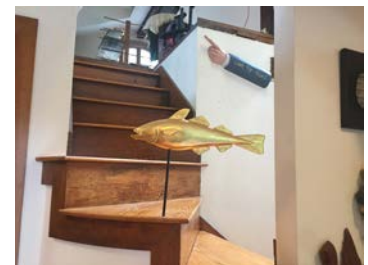
You've perhaps heard of the phrase "Done is Good?" The phrase carved above the fish at the left takes it up a notch.

Carved American eagles of many colonial designs are often seen on businesses and homes in the New England states. Eagles warrant a special page with prices on Paul's website at <https://paulwhitewoodcarving.com/eaglegallery1.htm>

In a storage room was a carved eagle which had been commissioned to replace the deteriorated one on an historic building in Boston. Alas, some payments were not made, therefore it was not yet finished in gold leaf.

Paul's business does not only carve the traditional way. Up these stairs is the machinery for CNC carving.

During our visit, Paul noted there were only 4 or 5 carving shops remaining on the Cape. He said that he was on the verge of retiring to the Southwest. I was pleasantly surprised that he is still in business. BTW, he has an excellent website: <https://paulwhitewoodcarving.com/entrypage.htm>



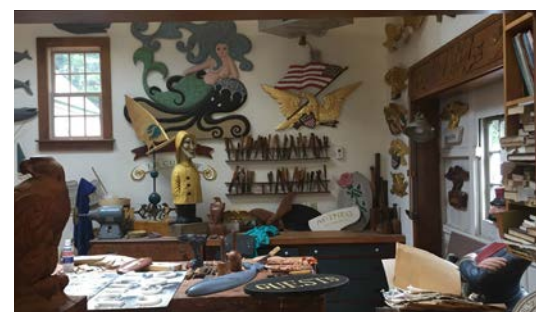
Paul's CNC Area

I purchased his book, *Carving a Traditional Cape Cod Sign* and I had him inscribe it. One day I may just take up a sign project. He also wrote *Carving An American*



*Eagle*, which has been sold at Woodcrafter's in Portland, Oregon.

I enjoyed meeting this talented woodcarver who was especially generous with his time. Keep your eyes peeled as you travel: you will find these talented people are almost everywhere.



## In case you missed it...

### November Program: Masa Nitani - Japanese Carving Techniques Presentation and demonstration

The Oregon Carvers Guild continued its transition from distance-meetings to in-person meetings by hosting Masa Nitani at the [Guild of Oregon Woodworkers](#) newly-completed classroom in Multnomah Village. A video of the session can be found [here](#).

Masa presented an overview of his work. The slide set he showed can be found [here](#). His work ranges from his incredibly detailed bear carvings, to seemingly simple display platforms, to highly textured vases, to elegant



A piece of "problem wood"

bowls. He often uses "problem wood", which has what some would call flaws, but which he uses as an opportunity for creative rendering.

After presenting a brief sampling of his work, Masa showed the tools that he uses. Masa has made – or remade – the handles of many of his hand tools, some of which are unique to this carving master.



Masa at the Guild of Oregon Woodworkers

Masa finished his session with a demonstration of some of the techniques he uses to make his art.

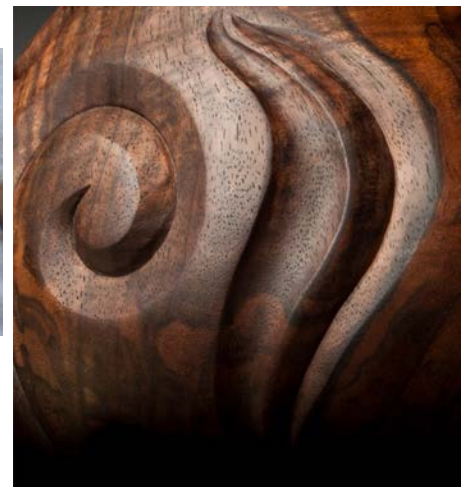
He invited one of the audience to follow his lead in using one of his unique gouges. The relaxed hands on the left of the *Master and Student* photo are Masa's. Shortly after this picture was taken, the tenseness shown in the student's hands was greatly relieved. Masa is also a great teacher.



Small Selection of Unique Tools



Master and Student



## Class with Adam Melsaac

### Columbia River Basin Native Carving Class with Adam Melsaac

By Jim Spitzer

The week before Thanksgiving Adam Melsaac, a carver with over 25 years of experience creating art in the style and form of Pacific northwest coast indigenous people, taught a two day class at his La Center, WA, shop.

Adam was featured in our March, 2022 program (Adam's portion of the [video](#) starts at about the 6 minute mark). In addition, there were articles in our [January](#) and [February](#) 2022 newsletters.

His emphasis is on the art of the lower Columbia River basin, roughly from The Dalles to the ocean and the Pacific Coast from Coos Bay, Oregon to Grays Harbor, Washington. Tribes in these areas include the Chinook, Shoalwater Bay, Confederated tribes of the Grand Ronde, Coquille, and Cowlitz.

The objective of the class was to carve a ceremonial bowl/ladle. Students started with a block of green (undried) alder that was kept in an ice chest to keep from drying out. The carving was to be done with traditional tools such as elbow adzes and crooked knives. Few members of the class owned these tools, so they were borrowed from the OCG Tool Library, several members, and Catlin Gabel School.

We also needed chopping blocks to rest the work on while using adzes. Alan Engstrom, the generous owner of several forested tracts around Kalama and Longview, offered to cut, haul, and donate the 18" diameter by 2 foot long chopping blocks.



Participants chose to carve a bowl/ladle with either a coyote or an eagle handle. Pictured are several of Adam's completed versions of the project.



Adam prepared top and side view patterns on tracing paper. We transferred those drawings onto the wood and blocked out the large areas to be removed first.

Most of the students were accustomed to make a series of bandsaw cuts to remove these large areas of wood. However, part of our challenge of the class was to develop the muscle memory needed to use traditional tools effectively. In addition, a large project, such as a totem pole, the use of a bandsaw would not be an option. So the students did all or most of the roughing-out using a variety of adzes.

While this was slower, the chopping sound was easy on the ears, allowing us to converse, hear gentle background music, and be regularly coached by Adam.



Adam holding an elbow adze and showing those who plan to make their own adzes how the angle between the line following the blade and the first finger on the handle should be 90 degrees at its apex on the cutting edge.

He would occasionally make stop or other bandsaw cuts for those wanting a little help catching up.

The patterns were repeatedly reapplied as the wood was pared down. Eventually crooked knives and gouges were used to refine the outside of the bowl, carve out the cavity, and shape the figure.

While none of us left with a completed project, we did leave with the knowledge to complete it and instructions for keeping the wood green and easier to carve (in plastic bag and then stored in freezer).

We completed the course with an excellent pot-luck dinner featuring elk and burgers! As the son of a fisheries biologist, Adam grew up in nature. If he lived during pioneer days he said he would likely be a mountain man. As an avid hunter and fisherman, he provided excellent meat and fish. It was expertly grilled by his delightful wife Mandi, as we socialized and then watched a video on carving indigenous art in Alaska.



I am not sure how many in the class will rush out to buy or make elbow adzes or crooked knives. For me, I just placed an order with Lee Valley for a set of crooked knife blades and look forward to carving and attaching handles to them.

There are many reference books on the art of Pacific Northwest Coastal indigenous peoples. One available in metro Portland library systems is *People of the River: Native Arts of the Oregon Territory* by Bill Mercer. Northwest museum's featuring native arts include the Burke Museum at the University of Washington, the Portland Art Museum, and museums on some native reservations.





## A Masa-style Carving Tool

### Creating a Masa-style Carving Tool

By Tom Siep

I was unable to attend Masa Nitani's presentation in person last month, but I did get to Zoom in. Masa's unique approach to making and using tools intrigued me, so I decided to try my hand at making one. I chose the style that was used in the master-student demonstration, shown in "Master and Student" on page 14. A close-up is shown in the photo at the right.

With only the Zoom footage to go by, I had to glean as much as I could from the video – and guess about any details that were not obvious.

#### Observations:

- » The handle is a single piece of wood that was highly carved
- » The stock for the wood seemed to be either a fairly strange branch or cut from a 1" board – I guessed a board
- » The center seemed to be half the thickness of the top and bottom
- » The center part thickness needs to match the geometry of the gap between the carver's thumb and first finger
- » The handle was wrapped with twine, then tape where the blade joined the haft – to add strength?

During the presentation, Masa said that he used soft wood for the handles. Given that, I chose basswood for my attempt at replicating his tool.

In order to expedite creating a Masa-style tool, I chose to buy blades that were designed for power carving. Had I waited for the [Woodcrafters Holiday Sale](#), I could have saved 20% of the cost of the blade set.

I traced an approximation of the handle of Masa's gouge on a piece of 1+ inch basswood and bandsawed it. Drilling on a curved surface seemed problematic, so I made the front of the cutout flat.

My first thought was to center the hole and drill straight in. However, with the blade's curve, that would have made using it awkward (at best). The starting point had to be lower. Further, the cutting edge of the gouge needs to be at the level of the bottom of the tool. With the blade I chose, the angle needed to be about 15 degrees from the bottom of the handle.



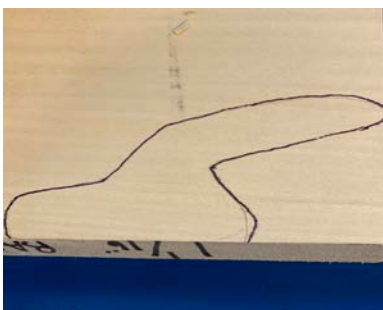
One of Masa's Hand-made Tools



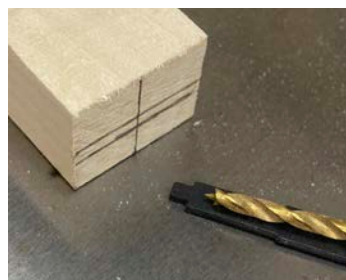
Masa Using One of His Tools



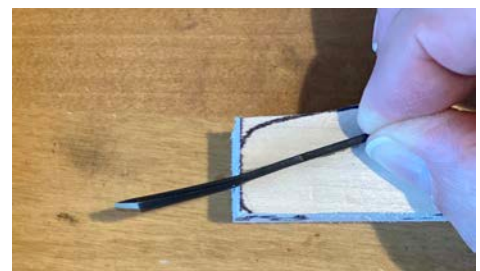
Power Gouge Set



Tool Outline on Basswood



Starting Point for Hole is Below Center



Blade Placement

The next decision was how big the hole should be to accept the shank of the blade. Since basswood is pretty soft, I decided to use a bit that was slightly smaller than the shank. The idea was that the blade could be pressed into the basswood if I made some small lateral notches in the hole, to get the blade insertion started.

When I drilled the hole, I went in at the angle right, but a bit off-center. This was not a big problem since I had more wood than I needed on the sides. I just carved a bit more on one side than the other to make the final effect a centered hole.

Carving the handle was pretty straightforward; I rounded both ends of the handle into cylinders. Then I scooped out the space between the two cylinders so that it fit the web between my thumb and forefinger.

When I thought that I was done with carving the handle, I realized that the binding that I needed to wrap around it would slip off easily. To prevent that, I cut a wide notch where the binding was to be wrapped. The notch was slightly tapered towards the end of the tool.



Drill Slightly Smaller than Blade



Drilling on an Angle



Hole With Notches Was Off-Center



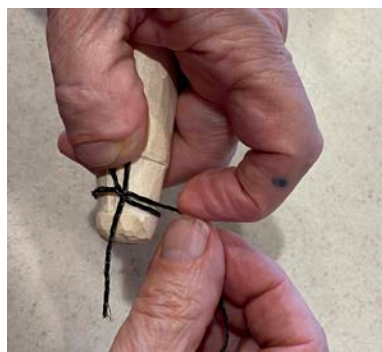
Initial Carving



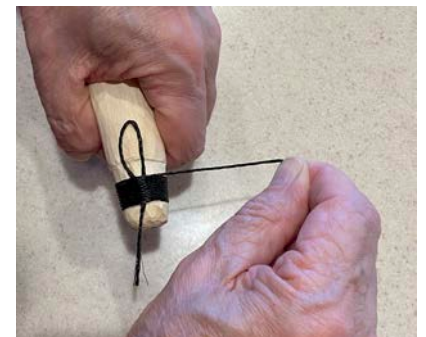
Modification to Keep Binding in Place



Using 1mm tarred nylon twine, I placed a loop overlapping the tapered notch



While holding the loop in place with my thumb, I loosely wrapped the twine around the handle at the end closest to the end of the tool



Once the twine has been wrapped a few times, I tightened wrapping. I then tightly wrapped the area of the rest of the notch



When the notch area was covered, I threaded the twine through the loop.



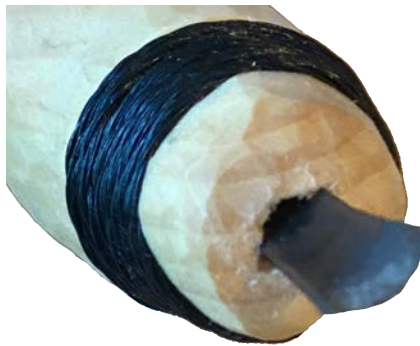
Keeping the wrapping tight, I pulled the free end of the loop.



Pulling the free end and drag the loop under the wrap



Once the loop end is about halfway through, I pulled both exposed ends as tightly as I could. Then trimmed the hanging threads



Wrapping completed, I placed the blade into the handle by positioning the blade shank at the drilled hole and installed it in by pushing it against the side of my bench



Completed Tool



Practice Texturing



Grain Highlighting

The binding method I used is similar to the method I have seen used to bind irons to adzes. Unlike the adzes, the twine is meant to provide grip and possibly to prevent the soft wood from breaking under the pressure of carving, not to hold the blade in place.

After completing the tool, I tried duplicating some of the woodworking techniques that Masa demonstrated. It took a little getting used to, but I was pleased that eventually I was able to do some decent work with it.

I completed my guess on how to construct a Masa-style tool before I found out that he is going to hold a class on its construction (see page 3). It will be very interesting to see how close I came to making the tool the way the master did.

## Coastal Carvers 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Show

Coastal Carvers 29<sup>th</sup> annual show will be January 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at the Chinook Winds Casino, Lincoln City, Oregon. The show is returning after a two-year hiatus due to the pandemic shutdown.

The featured artist for 2023 is Don Zuhlke from Tangent, Oregon. He is well known for his carvings of burls, Santas, and small carousel horses. In honor of Don, the theme for this year's show will be "Coastal Critters." The show is free and open to the public. More information is on the Coastal Carvers website: [www.coastalcarvers.org](http://www.coastalcarvers.org).



Registration for tables at the show are available with the registration form and show letter located on the website.

Every year the club supports a local charity and this year's charity is Landscaping With Love. This organization is helping victims of the Otis fires as they get their property ready to move back on after the fire clean up. It has been a several year process. There will be a Silent Auction on Saturday of the show only and a raffle that runs both days of the show that help with the show's expenses and the charity.



<https://www.cascaderelief.org/landscapingwithlove>

People can enter the non-juried "People's Choice Galleries" that include the General Gallery, Theme Gallery, Beginner's Gallery, and Youth Gallery. The galleries are free to enter for Coastal Carver members or \$5.00 an entry for a maximum of 3 entries for non-members. There is a special award for the Beginners Gallery in honor of Andy Anderson with a monetary award for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place winners. Beginners designation indicates two year's experience or less. Andy Anderson was a founding member of Coastal Carvers and gave a lot of support to beginning carvers. There is also a name tag contest in honor of Will Hayden. He was a caricature carver and was well known for his name tags. Will had been a great supporter of Coastal Carvers.



A variety of free classes are presented for both kids and adults. Classes include demonstrations and carve-alongs and are offered both Saturday and Sunday of the Show.





# Carving Newsletter

December 2022



## Clubs and Guilds

### Coastal Carvers — Lincoln City

The club meets at the Lincoln City SDA School. Monthly meetings are usually held the first Sunday of October through May, at 1:30pm. Club members also meet weekly on Tuesday evenings, from 6 - 8pm for unstructured carving. For details, [click here](#).

### Capitol Woodcarvers — Salem

Meets the last Tuesday of each month, except the months of August and December. Meetings are from 7 - 9pm. Meetings are held at the Salem Center 50+ located at 2615 Portland RD NE, Salem, OR. For more information, [click here](#).

### Vancouver / King's Way Carvers — weekly on Thursdays

Thursday evenings 6 - 9pm (summer 9am - noon). Contact Jim Mather ([jimmatherxx@gmail.com](mailto:jimmatherxx@gmail.com) or 360-931-0079). This group has been meeting since 2007 in a first class art room at a large private high school at 3606 NE 78th in Vancouver (Hazel Dell). The facility is locked so call ahead for the access code. They are a friendly and experienced group of carvers with a variety of interests.

### Milwaukie Woodcarvers — Milwaukie

This established group has recently restarted in-person carving sessions weekly on Wednesdays, 8 - 11am at the Milwaukie Center. Drop-ins welcome for a small fee of \$1 or \$2 fee per session. Support for beginning carvers is provided. The address is 5440 SE Kellogg Creek Dr, Milwaukie, OR 97222 (off Hwy 224 near Rusk Rd).

### Central Oregon Wood Carvers — Bend

Central Oregon Wood Carvers is group of carvers in and around Bend. For information, contact Scott Beyer at [dxdevolt@gmail.com](mailto:dxdevolt@gmail.com).

### Madras High Desert Carvers — Madras

Meets weekly on Thursdays 4:30-7pm, drop-ins welcome, 224 SW 5<sup>th</sup> Street Madras, OR 97741, contact Sharon Miller, [madrasnana25@live.com](mailto:madrasnana25@live.com), 541-550-6355, or Royce Embanks, [royce@btstys.org](mailto:royce@btstys.org), 541-325-1586.

### Olympia Woodworkers Guild— Olympia

They occasionally have interesting carving presenters for their monthly meetings. For information contact Bill Cogswell at [info@owwg.org](mailto:info@owwg.org) or see [owwg.org/blog](http://owwg.org/blog).

### Idaho Carvers Guild

This is a long-established group of carvers in and around Boise that have some meetings online and some in person. For information, contact Eric Owens at [idahowoodcarvers@gmail.com](mailto:idahowoodcarvers@gmail.com).

### California Carvers Guild (CCG)

This statewide umbrella organization supports over 40 local clubs throughout the state and has a very long and deep history. The local clubs produce a variety of notable shows and events. The CCG produces a comprehensive newsletter called *The Log*, and trains judges for shows. Click here for their [website](#).





# Carving Newsletter

December 2022



## Educational Opportunities

### Wildcraft Studio

A multi-arts non-profit that frequently has carving classes—[click here](#) for their website then scroll through their calendar. Rose Holdorf frequently teaches carving classes on the Scandinavian Dala Horse, spoons, and kitchen utensils. Their classroom is now at 50th and SE Division, Portland, OR.

### Port Townsend School of Woodworking

A very important regional resource that frequently has visiting carving professionals, including Mary May. For information, see the [Port Townsend School of Woodworking](#) website.

### Sitka Center for Art and Ecology

Among the many workshops the Sitka Center offers, there are 2 woodcarving classes and a pyrography class. You can check out the classes at the [Sitka Center website](#).

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