

CHIPPINGS

December Issue 2009

Volume IV



Projects for the Holidays

It is the Season to be jolly... You woodworkers, this is the time to nestle down in your workshop and carve something for a friend that they'll remember, and you'll be glad they remember. Make something for someone; give a gift, because isn't that what makes the season "jolly?"

For those of you who are making an excuse, saying "I don't know where to start," think of the last carving you did. Okay, we're not talking about the "slackers," but again, we are. Whether you only carved once this whole year, or just spent a couple of minutes thinking about what you carved and how it made you feel, isn't that enough already to get you started this Christmas Season?

Some of you have been carving birds, or simple animals. Some of you don't carve caricatures of three-dimensional images; you carve in low relief. Both are great and both can be just as good. Whatever you do, whatever types of wood you carve in remember there's someone who especially likes your type of work. Don't get discouraged or overanxious, whatever you make is going to be rewarding and you're certain to warm a heart.

Remember, you're also developing your skills as a woodcarver. No matter how much the gift surprises or saddens (that will never happen) the heart of the receiver, your work is never wasted. Just think of being able to be rehired next year by your current boss, because the terrible work you did last year will be replaced by the wonderfully improved work you do this year. You know your work is never repulsive in any way. All you create, everything



you attempt, each stroke of the blade, makes up who you are or how you may be feeling at the moment. It tells you to some degree who you are. Of course your skills can be seen, but the woodcarving expresses who you are. You wouldn't throw yourself down the drain, so don't feel bad about what you create. All the really fine woodcarving experts out there know the best result takes patience, practice and hard work. So keep carving "chips" and don't be surprised if you really surprise someone this Christmas Season along with making someone else and yourself feel more "jolly."

The Chipping Man

Spotlight: Interview with Wendel J Petersen

How did I get started in woodcarving? My Holder brothers were in the garage (tumble-down single car garage), and my father was in World War II, and he had a little wooden chest where he kept keepsakes, letters, a German dagger, amid some other things. Well in this box were two or three little wooden chains that had little rectangular cages with balls in them. He carved those while he was sick or disabled (I don't remember which). Anyway, he was home. When I saw those and realized my dad had made those out of wood and out of a pocketknife, boy that did it. I had to do that. It was like I want to do that. I would think about it and I didn't have a knife.

I don't know how much time went by; it was a lengthy time, maybe about a year. I finally asked my dad if he would show me how to carve a chain. So when I was young I carved a lot of chains. The longest one I did was about 10 feet long, which I still have; it's a whole double handful of links. I put lacquer on it too so it would keep it from getting dirty. So in my early years I carved trinkets.

I was fascinated with puzzles and interlocking gadgetry that I'd whittle out of wood. I was fascinated with the different textures, smells and tastes of wood. Whenever I whittled wood I would always first taste it. Woods have different tastes, they have different smells they have different textures and colors and qualities. It's always been fascinating to me; in wood the properties themselves have always interested me. I think wood is beautiful; it's something you can shape and create some new thing out of it.

Changing from childhood to adolescence, as a teenager, maybe as a Freshman somewhere in High School, there was a book in the Library (I wasn't interested in any particular subject—Eighth Grade I remember now) as a class we went to check out a book. The Librarian wanted to know what I was interested in and I said I was interested in woodcarving. She said I think we have a book on carving. She got it and it was a popular mechanics book. I checked it out and was totally enthralled in it. I didn't read it but I looked at all the pictures and I was completely amazed at all these pictures of carving tools that I never had seen before: gouges, back bent gouges, straight ones and curved ones and all different sizes and shapes. My head was spinning. The only place I knew where to buy wood was a lumberyard near Gilbert Arizona and they didn't have anything like that, ha.

Some time went by and for Christmas my parents bought me an x-acto set sheet metal blades that had been bent into different shapes; they'd slide into a handle and it was in a little wooden chest. I carved a picture. One of my father's contractors saw what I was carving. That was my first set. Then I got some of Miller Fall's brand; I think there were five or six tools. I would progress slowly; once or twice a year I would carve something, but it just accelerated; by the time I was a Junior or Senior in High School I spent a lot of my holidays or weekends carving—Fall was

Continued on page...4

Interview

page 1 & 4



X-MAS Potluck

page 3



President Greetings

page 2





Holiday Greetings From The Pres.

The 29th Show has come and gone. Now it's time to do the paper work, and get the raffle items delivered. That's what I have been doing the last few days since the Show. For those that didn't come to the show this year, we opened the show in the Restaurant Building in Corona. It is about half the size of the Pavilion, so we didn't have as many vendors as we've had before. The ones that I talked to said they did pretty good. I know that by the time we had the trailer loaded and ready to go to storage at Rich's house I was "dog tired," and I think everyone else was too. But all in all it was a good day.

The Raffle had just below 200 items. There were only a few that weren't claimed. The Auctioned items went to Richie Rich (Scroll Saw), Larry Smart (Bench Lathe)

and Joyce Sees (Drill Press). The kids from Wilson High School did a good job with their work. They should be very proud! Ethan Petersen should be commended on earning his Eagle Scout Award. His last merit badge was woodcarving. My son Ethan carved this tiny chain which completely amazed me!

Richard was the Featured artist. Way to Go! Richard Joet and Tommy Boy had a flute competition going on across the room from each other. It was very interesting to hear the differences in their playing. That's the kind of thing that makes the



show fun (especially when you play it yourself). David, Brad and Joyce Template supplied food for the work crew. It was very good as day. Thanks!

Neal Johnson told me that we have 6 new members. Make them feel welcome. I'll try not to scare them off by putting them to work too soon. While I'm talking about members, it's time (if you didn't renew at the show) to renew your membership.

We had a visitor from ABC News with his camera. The footage he shot of us ran on the nightly news

Sunday night and on Channel 11 News several times on Monday. He got Richard Joet with his flute, my 2nd Place duck, Mr. Chipping Man. How about that! He also got a shot of the Gallery.

I won't have any money figures until sometime in January, so I won't have anything until at least the February meeting to report. Bah Humbug...

December's meeting is potluck as normal and gift exchange for those who want to join us. Bring a gift; get a gift—That's all for now. Remember...JUST KEEP ON CARVING!

All the Best, Joseph W. Petersen



FAQ

"I really think I'd like to try wood carving, but...I have questions"

I've never carved before. How do I start?

I would suggest you first set up a support system and find a wood carving supply store. By that I mean find someone to assist you in locating wood and tools when the time comes that you need them. Regardless of your age, contact the local Senior Center, Jr. College, or Community College, to see if they have wood carving classes. Get the name and phone number of their instructor. Talk with this person about where to get carving wood and supplies and also about lessons should you decide at some point to join one of our numerous class sessions.

Do I need a special kind of wood and where do I get it?

The following woods are soft and easy to carve: basswood, aspen and butternut—with basswood the preferred wood for beginners. Basswood and aspen

are white and butternut is brown. Simple basswood cutouts are available at most craft stores and would be a good "first" project. After that you will probably want to go on to something a little more complex. As you move on you will want to find a source to buy basswood. Carving supply stores and specialty wood stores sell carving wood. There are many supply catalogs available for free from some of our links. Don't start carving on an old piece of lumber from the garage or other "found" wood as you will probably just get discouraged; I would also suggest that you don't start with a hardwood, such as walnut. Wood has something known as grain, which runs vertical up the tree. When you carve you need to know which way it runs. If you're carving an animal the grain should run up and down on the fragile areas, (like animal legs). On a picture (relief carving) the grain should run vertically.

Will carving require a lot of tools before I can start?

You do not need a lot of tools to start carving. One knife will get you started until you decide if you really want to keep on carving. An X-Acto Knife from a craft store is a good place to start. Don't buy a whole set—just a handle and a package of #11 blades. It's really not a good idea to start with a kitchen knife or a jack knife. An alternative to the X-Acto Knife would be a good wood carving knife but you won't really know which one you want until after you've worked



on a few simple projects. Carving supply catalogs have carving knives when the time comes. Very soon after you start you will want to expand your tools, but do not buy any "sets." You will want to buy 3

basic tools. A 45-degree angle "V" tool, a 1/2 inch gouge and a 1/4 inch gouge. Any tools you use must be very sharp. Dull tools will cause you an endless amount of trouble. Your wood will rip and tear and you will cut yourself from having to push too hard on the dull tool. Sharp tools take less effort, make a clean cut, and let you have more control. With the X-Acto Knife, when the blade is dull you can replace it. If you use a Wood Carving Knife you will have to learn to sharpen your tool. Sunset Magazine has a book on basic beginning woodcarving that might be of help. It has a section on the process of sharpening also. Wood carving books are available at your local library, Online or in the bookstore.

Christmas Potluck



Where: Elk's Club Corona
 Address: 123 Main Street
 Time: 6pm - 8pm
 Date: 12-17-2009
 RSVP 951-333-1234

Finest woodcarving Sculpture and Design



305 Blackpine Dr. Corona, CA 92879 • 951-272-6867 • e-mail: frobrojo@sbcglobal.net

Is a pattern used? How do I use it and where can I get them?

Almost all wood carvers use patterns. Transfer your pattern onto the wood with graphite paper. With graphite instead of carbon paper you can erase your lines with a regular eraser without making smudges. You want to keep your wood clean, free of smudges, and free of lotion or food stains, and preferably blood stains!

Start with a very simple pattern—what we call a stylized pattern—so it is easy to work with. You want to have fun while you are learning. You can get the feel of the wood grain and how to work with it. You can make your patterns from anything you like. Some very good beginning patterns come from a small child's coloring book. Copiers make it very easy to make a pattern the size you want.

Do you have a simple project to help me get started?

Yes, we have a stylized pattern for you to start your wood carving and some simple instructions. This pattern will make a very nice

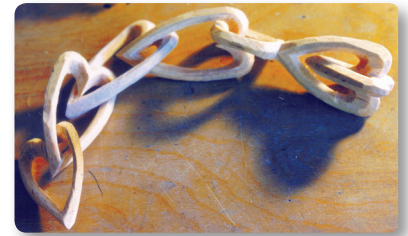
key chain trinket. You can use the same instructions with any cutout that you might purchase from a craft store or with a piece that has your own pattern on it. Transfer our fish pattern or your own pattern to the wood and use a band saw to cut out the outline. Christmas decorations are usually made with thinner wood (3/8 inch) while small animals can be three-dimensional out of thicker pieces.

I'm just a kid...Do I start the same way?

No, a young person, 12 years old or less who does not have a wood carver to help them should not try to start carving with an X-Acto knife or carving knife unless they have a lot of previous experience using a paring knife or a jack knife with a parent. First, decide if the beginner will have lots of patience. Second—will the beginner be attentive to safety rules. Very nice statues can be carved using a bar of Ivory Soap and a knife modified from a plastic cutlery knife. Use a sander or sandpaper to sharpen the edge of the plastic knife. Use the same type of pattern as shown (simple and basic). Use short cutting strokes to

remove the excess soap around the pattern; then, continue rounding the edges as described. Smooth the carving by cutting and rubbing it by hand. Use as a statue. Save your chips for the bath. The plastic knife should be safe but REMEMBER—woodcarvers do not “play around” with their tools or make unnecessary motions in the air with the tools. The beginner must stop their work if horseplay takes place with the tools, even when working with plastic. After several projects

about \$1.50 each from supply stores (probably only one will be needed). There is also a tape called Vet Tape (from the Vet's



We have added Christmas Patterns to our Site. After you have finished this project you might want to look at the Articles and Patterns Pages.

such as this the beginner may be ready to progress to wood and a carving knife. If they are ready there are thumb and finger guards available that are

office or a woodcarving supply store) that is wrapped around the vulnerable thumb or finger. If you have a Boy Scout or are one already and need to work on the wood carving badge, try to find a wood carver to assist you. The principles above would apply and a neckerchief ring could be attached to the back of the simple project piece.

Timeless Treasure Sales
A market of handcrafted gifts and memories

Gift Certificates
Buy 2
 A shopping experience that will warm your heart and bring happiness to all that receive one of J's fine crafted wood carvings this Christmas.
 Come join the fun!
and get the 3rd for Free!
 for information call: (951) 272-6867

\$60 Gift Certificates
1/2 off Sale:
 December 9-12th
 Wednesday-Friday
 10am-8pm
 Saturday-9am to 1:30pm

Free Parking and Admission
No Strollers Please

Just west of the 91 and 15 Freeways
 305 Blackpine Dr. Corona, CA 92879

Chippings

J's Designer Woodcarving 305
Blackpine Dr.
Corona, CA 928719

PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
RIVERSIDE, CA
PERMIT No. 2289

Continued from page...1

especially being my favorite time to carve.

I was always looking for pretty kinds of woods—all different kinds of woods. The next thing that really influenced me was through reading popular mechanics books or science books our parents got us. One was like an encyclopedia. One was about sculpture and there was an article on it—work from a modern sculptor whom I don't remember now (around the nineteen hundreds).

And so that's the first sculpture I did. It's sitting at this moment on a chest in my living room. I used the Miller Tools my

father bought me and a half-inch wide kind of carpenter chisel that I still have. I took a half-round file and made a gouge; and my dad had a gouge he wasn't using. I sharpened it up and used those tools. I made a couple different sculptures that were inspired by the man I've forgotten. Anyway my pieces were all original; they weren't copies.

I carved in a lot of different types of wood, but I always wondered about these designs done in leather working; I did some leather working while I was a Freshman in High School. They had these floral designs for a belt. I wanted to know how to draw it and implement it in woodcarving. So carving in a sense "just started."

I taught myself how to sharpen. My brothers showed me how to polish a knife with jeweler's rouge to get my knife even sharper. When I learned how to sharpen tools and get them razor sharp that's when I "took off." Up until then I spent seven or eight years learning how to sharpen tools.

Why is sharpening so important? Well, you can't do any better work than the

quality of your cutting edge. Sharp tools make all the difference. When you buy tools get the best ones you can afford. If you're serious or even if your just somewhat interested, always buy quality tools. Hobby tools are all right for a hobby, such as xacto knives for carving balsa or

So don't feel that you have to copy everything. Doing your own thing is good.

"Sharp tools make all the difference."

Many have asked what (as a seasoned woodcarver) I feel I've mastered. Well, I don't want to compare myself to other people or have others compared to me, but I think what



bass woods, but you need to invest in sharpening; learn to sharpen your tools. When I started carving, there wasn't a lot of information, but now there is. There are also better products and helpful information from catalogues, the Internet and Online.

I've been asked what makes a good woodcarver. He must have an interest in what he's doing or a passion. It's not something you can master quickly. It's like someone saying they want to play the piano, but then after a few weeks they lose interest. It's that way with woodcarving. A lot of people ask me to teach them. By the time I get done explaining what they need to do they're already discouraged. So I think for a beginner, just have some fun. Just enjoy what you're working on; don't try to climb Mount Everest first. Do a simple project; enjoy your tools; enjoy the wood; enjoy carving.

A bit of opinion: focus on where your passion is. Strive for originality. I'm not saying you shouldn't model after others because you can learn a great deal from other people; and hopefully we will learn from others, but we each have something unique to contribute.

sets my work apart from similar types of work professionally, is that I'm sensitive to irregular curves. Ornamental work for example, motifs or cures are mostly present; there aren't many straight lines involved. Curves need to be smooth; they shouldn't be lumpy. Also, for beautiful ornamentation there are certain laws of design, such as lines radiating they should radiate, or converge all to one point. So your lines need to radiate and flow back together back to one common point;



curves do that. I'm real sensitive to that and I've certainly mastered it. I don't enjoy rustic carving as well. My pieces are mostly very refined, where cuts are clean, curves are smooth, round things are round. Relief carving is done much more than three-dimensional. I love sculpture but most of my work is not in that dimension, because there's not as much a demand for it. So if you're doing woodwork professionally, you need to compromise what you want with what the customer wants.

I've been in the business of woodcarving for two decades. My ending comments to woodworkers are simply this: "make chips."