

MARCH 2021

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Hello Carvers,

During the pandemic we've not been able to hold a regular meeting, but I want to announce that there will be one on Wednesday April 21st at 7:00 PM (online). The meeting is open to everyone, but only members of the Western Woodcarvers Association, aka the Oregon Carvers Guild, will be able to vote. Nothing has been "regular" this past year, but we'll treat this as one for purposes of conducting business. I'll try to move the voting along so we can have time for reflection and discussion.

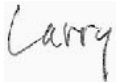
The agenda includes officially changing our name to the Oregon Carvers Guild, adding language so we eventually can become a 501c3 charitable nonprofit, revising the bylaws in their entirety, and electing officers. Please register, [click here](#). Before the meeting I'll email the link and documents to review to all members. The paperwork process with the State is straightforward, but it takes a member vote at a regular meeting.

Right now we are a generic c7 type of nonprofit which provides no benefit to donors. It will nominally take another six months to get IRS approval to become a c3.

The fiscal year is July through June. In order to avoid a separate meeting in June, we will elect officers at this meeting. Our proposed slate is that current officers (see below) be the same for another year. We welcome new additions to the board so if you have qualifications and interest, please (please) let me know.

All are invited to this meeting.

A big thanks to current (and former) WWA members for their support.



[Larry Wade](#), 503-312-7745 President
On behalf of the Board

[Roger Crooks](#), Vice President

[Jerry Boone](#), Treasurer

[Terry Burnside](#), Secretary

[Marty Lawrence](#), Membership Development

Mission: Encourage carvers at all levels in the pursuit of this art through education, fellowship and mentoring

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

➔ **FREE Power Carving Tools 101— APR 13, 7:00 PM** [Click here](#) to register

APR Roger Crooks will show a wide variety of power carving tools from angle grinders with special attachments to low cost Dremel rotary tools and specialized power carving tools, from powerful Foredom flex shaft carvers to fine detailed micromotor carving tools. Depending if you have a lot of wood to remove or doing fine detail work, there is a power carver available to make the work quick and easy.

This program will describe the most common tools and their uses. Other members will contribute their own experiences and preferences.



➔ **FREE Wednesday APR 21 7:00 PM — A regular membership meeting but open to all.** [Click here](#) to register and to get the link. This is an important meeting to update our legal framework, enable us to become a 501c3 nonprofit, elect officers and discuss the future.

➔ **FREE Tuesday, APR 27; Mary May; Carving on Furniture, Social @ 6:30, program @ 7:00 PM**

APR The Olympia Woodworkers Guild is having Mary May do a presentation on carving on furniture, and we are invited to join. [Click here](#) to register and to get the link.

➔ **FREE Finishing with Acrylic Paints— MAY 11 & 18, 7:00 PM** [Click here](#) to register

MAY Sometimes natural wood just isn't enough.

But for many carvers, pulling out bottles of acrylics and sorting through myriad types of brushes is a daunting...and sometimes downright frightening task. What brush to use? What colors to mix? How to prepare the wood? How to apply the paint so it doesn't look like your hour's worth of carving has been dipped in plastic?

Jeff Harness, veteran artist, teacher and carving judge, will be guest presenter in May for two sessions on how to prepare and paint carvings using acrylics. He'll take students from a completed raw basswood carving through the process of sealing and preparing the wood, adding color and finally applying an antique finish.

Harness began his artistic career as a painter but began concentrating on carving after taking lessons from some of the most well-respected teachers in the Pacific Northwest. His passion spawned his home-based enterprise, the Flying Pig Studio, where students competed to attend one of his classes.

An accomplished carver in a variety of media, he has served as an instructor for the Coastal carvers, the Oregon Carving Rendezvous, the Pacific Northwest Carving Academy and others as well as being a judge in numerous shows.

He recently relocated to the Phoenix, AZ, area, where he will re-launch classes in the post Covid-19 year.



➔ **NOTICE We had to cancel the scheduled June soap carving program because the speaker is facing an extended health recovery.**

JUNE

We hope to have a replacement program for June 8th, our regular 2nd Tuesday of the month program. Please stay tuned.



UPCOMING CLASSES

Woodspirit Carving Class (free) — Thursdays, 4/15 & 4/22 at 10:00 am

Taught by Terry Burnside, [click here](#) to register

This class is designed for beginner or more advanced carvers not familiar with carving a woodspirit, delivered in two live Zoom sessions a week apart. Terry developed his techniques over 20 years, learning from two different carving professionals. Students need a carving glove, strop and three carving tools - a carving knife, V tool and a deepish gouge gouges (like #11, #9 or #8) in 1/4 or 3/16 widths), palm or long handled. If you need tools, glove or strop, maybe we can find loaners. The class outline is:

1. Introduction to carving and history of woodspirit carving
2. Proportions of facial features for the size of the material
3. Sharpening demonstration
4. A demonstration of each step followed by carving time and QA
 – NOTE – This will occupy the most time
5. Recap and list of wood spirit carving guides and materials
6. Explore interest in future projects, such as canes and Green Man



Relief Carving Class (free) — Mondays 4/19 to 5/24 at 1:00 PM

Taught by Larry Wade, [click here](#) to register

This workshop carves three projects of progressive difficulty. The designs were created and originally taught by Mack Sutter for forty years and are the first of 12 patterns in what was a three-course series. Tuition is free, as are loaner tools (until we run out). Your cost will be \$10 for four prepared Basswood blanks and perhaps a \$15.50 shipping charge if you don't want to or can't pick them up near Beaverton. You will also need a strop, available for \$20 if you don't have one, plus honing compound or paste (\$12). Beginners and above are welcome, a little Zoom experience required.

There are three projects, all 7" x 8 1/2" carved in Basswood. To see all the patterns created by Mack Sutter and to see the original articles he wrote for Chip Chats, [click here](#).



CARVING WOODS

What Wood Should I Carve? - Part 2

By Jim Spitzer

I interviewed two outstanding local carvers and summarize their preferences below. Please share your favorite carving woods, wood characteristics, and your tips for carving that wood. Send an email to Jim Spitzer, [click here](#).

Preferred Carving Woods – Rob Artman

Clackamas, OR, (robartmanfinewoodboxes.com); Member, Guild of Oregon Woodworkers

Background. Rob has been a woodworker/carver for a long time. For about ten years he carved stunning masks inspired by the art of Northwest Coast Native peoples and contemporary New Zealand Maori woodcarvers. Now his emphasis is on more traditional joinery and exploring the possibilities of wood, color, and carving on hand-built boxes and chests.

For tribal masks Rob prefers carving either Red Alder or Port Orford Cedar. His preference is green wood which is easier to carve. He would split a 12” long by approximately 10” diameter piece of wood in half for the raw material for carving two masks, then rough out the inside and the basic outside features at the same time to prevent checking as the green wood dries rapidly. For quite a different grain pattern he sometimes carves the inside of the mask from the outside of the wood.

For chest and boxes he prefers carving dried European Pear, Limewood, European Linden, or Honduras Mahogany (or a similar but not so finely grained Mahogany from Fiji). Lime and Linden are soft, white woods often described as the same as Basswood. However, the former holds better detail and tools make a smoother cut than on Basswood, including across the grain with a slicing cut. After a year or so Lime/Linden and Port Orford Cedar take on a nicer color than Basswood, a color similar to ivory. Rob also enjoys carving European Pear that comes from old, large trees. He says most domestic pear, walnut, and some other species planted in orchards since pioneer days are hybrids grafted to the root stock, and the quality of the wood is not as good. Rob notes that air dried wood is usually of better color and carving quality than kiln dried.

Sources. While often buying wood at Crosscut Hardwoods, he will frequently also make the rounds of Woodcrafters, Gilmer Wood, and Goby Walnut Hardwoods (all in Portland) in pursuit of just the right wood.



Photo by Rob Artman

“T”ang Mask”. I carved the face on the inside surface rather than the outside surface. Port Orford cedar (started the carving in green wood, used crooked and straight knives) with brass pins and old mahjong pieces scavenged at a street market on a trip to Bali years ago.

CARVING WOODS

Preferred Carving Woods – Chuck Rinehart

West Lynn, OR; Member and Carving Instructor, Guild of Oregon Woodworkers

Background. Since retiring decades ago Chuck began traveling the world to learn relief carving under the guidance of many masters. And now, as a master himself, he has taught many carving courses in Rochester, New York and now in Portland since moving west several years ago. Much of his carving is incorporated into furniture, borders, and moldings.

For instruction Chuck prefers Basswood for teaching carving to beginners because it carves easily.

For furniture and border carving Chuck prefers that the grain of the wood does not interfere with the furniture design and the carving pattern. In his carving explorations of many gothic style church and government buildings in Europe, Chuck noted that much of the relief carving was done in White Oak. He likes the gloss on Oak left after a clean cut with a sharp tool.

He generally prefers rift sawn wood, or flat sawn with minimal grain pattern. Chuck generally avoids quarter sawn wood, especially in the oaks and other species with prominent rays that will distract from the carved image. Other favorite woods that carve beautifully are Butternut, Cherry, and Walnut. For softwoods he likes carving White Pine, however, as an eastern wood it is not commonly available here. He notes that Sugar Pine can be a good alternative, however, the more commonly available Ponderosa Pine often carves poorly and requires exceptionally sharp tools.

Chuck prefers air dried wood as it generally has better color than kiln dried.

Sources. Crosscut Hardwoods in Portland is his main source with the caveat that the availability of woods he is seeking often depends on the day he goes there.

Board Warping and Cupping

[Click here](#) to see an article by Roman Chernikov from the Santa Clara Valley Carving Club for dealing with thin woods that have a tendency to warp and cup.



Members of the Woodcarving Illustrated Message Board choose their top carving woods

[Click here](#)

Toxic Woods

[Click here](#)

Wood	Class (Irritant or Sensitizer)	Reaction Type	Potency	Source	Incidence
Alder	Irritant*	Respiratory, eye and skin	No info†	Dust	No info
Ash	Irritant	Respiratory	No info	Dust	No info
Avodire	Irritant	Respiratory, eye and skin	No info	Dust	No info
Baldypress	Sensitizer**	Respiratory	Small	Dust	Rare
Beech	Sensitizer	Respiratory	Great	Dust	Rare
Birch	Sensitizer	Respiratory, nausea	Great	Dust	Rare
Black locust	Irritant	Nausea	Great	Dust	Rare
Bubinga	Irritant	Eye and skin	No info	Dust	No info
Red cedar, Eastern	Irritant	Respiratory, eye and skin	No info	Dust	Common
Red cedar, western	Sensitizer	Respiratory	Great	Dust; leaves & bark	Common
Cocobolo	Irritant	Respiratory, eye and skin	Great	Dust & wood	Common
Ebony	Irritant & sensitizer	Respiratory, eye and skin	Great	Dust & wood	Common
Elm	Irritant	Eye and skin	Small	Dust	Rare
Goncalo alves	Sensitizer	Eye and skin	Small	Dust & wood	Rare
Greenheart	Sensitizer	Respiratory, eye and skin	Extreme	Dust & wood	Common
Ipe	Irritant	Respiratory, eye and skin	No info	No info	No info
Mahogany	Irritant	Respiratory, eye and skin	Small	Dust	Rare
Maple (small-leaf species)	Sensitizer	Respiratory	Great	Dust	Rare
Oak, red	Irritant	Nasal	Great	Dust	Rare
Padouk	Irritant	Respiratory, eye, skin, and nausea	Extreme	Dust & wood	Common
Purpleheart	Sensitizer	Eye and skin, nausea	Small	Dust & wood	Rare
Rosewood	Irritant & sensitizer	Respiratory, eye and skin	Extreme	Dust & wood	Common
Sassafras	Sensitizer	Respiratory, nausea, and nasal cancer	Small	Dust & wood	Rare
Teak	Sensitizer	Eye and skin	Extreme	Dust	Common
Walnut, black	Sensitizer	Eye and skin	Great	Leaves & bark	Common
Willow	Sensitizer	Nasal cancer	Great	Dust	Common

 FREE RESOURCES**Beginner Resources**

The information below is provided to students in the Mack Sutter Relief Carving workshops, but it is generally useful to most carvers. If you spot an errors or omissions please send email to Larry Wade ([click here](#)).

The links and resources below are quite valuable and could take you a long time to work through. The first references help with tool identification and sizes. In general pay attention to anything written by Chris Pye, Mary May or Lora Irish. (There are many other great authors, past and present).

"All About Chisels, Goggles, and V-tools"

Part 1 at <http://woodcarvingillustrated.com/blog/2017/04/18/all-about-chisels-gouges-and-v-tools-part-1/>

Part 2 at <http://woodcarvingillustrated.com/blog/2017/04/20/all-about-chisels-gouges-and-v-tools-part-2/>

Sweep Charts for Identifying unmarked tools, see [Carving Tools Profile Chart](#) by Frank Mittermeier

[The Sheffield List](#) (via Chris Pye)

[Sheffield List vs Pfeil Comparison](#) (via Chris Pye)

[Ashley Illes Catalog](#) with Sweep Charts (large, 20 MB)

[Mary May Comments on tool sweeps](#) (see link inside)

Woodcarving Illustrated is the main general carving magazine in the US, and they have a wealth of free information posted on their website. A particularly good set of resources is:

"Tools of the Trade"

<http://woodcarvingillustrated.com/blog/2017/09/25/tools-of-the-trade/>

"The Basics of Sharpening" (a knife)

<http://woodcarvingillustrated.com/blog/2017/09/08/basics-sharpening/>

"Sharpening a Gouge"

<http://woodcarvingillustrated.com/blog/2017/11/24/sharpening-a-gouge-2/>

"Sharpening V-Tools"

<http://woodcarvingillustrated.com/blog/2017/09/27/sharpening-v-tools-2/>

For V-Tools a "must watch" are the two **sharpening videos by Mary May**, which are free once you register at <https://www.marymaycarving.com/carvingschool/beginning-carving-lessons-available-to-free-members/>

"Sharpening With Power"

<http://woodcarvingillustrated.com/blog/2012/04/10/sharpening-with-power/>

"Tool Control" by Chris Pye (proper techniques for safe and efficient use)

<http://woodcarvingillustrated.com/blog/2017/10/11/tool-control/>

 FREE RESOURCES

"**Maintaining a Sharp Edge**" (power buffing)

<http://woodcarvingillustrated.com/blog/2017/10/06/maintaining-a-sharp-edge/>

Link to Woodcarving Illustrated's "**Get Started Carving**" vast resource pages at

<http://woodcarvingillustrated.com/blog/category/get-started-carving/>

"**Basic Relief Techniques**" by Chris Pye (foundational)

<http://woodcarvingillustrated.com/blog/2017/11/27/basic-relief-techniques/>

"**Clean Joint Lines for Relief Carvers**" by Lora Irish

<http://woodcarvingillustrated.com/blog/2017/10/18/clean-joint-lines-for-relief-carvers/>

Choosing Power Carving Bits

<http://woodcarvingillustrated.com/blog/2017/10/23/choosing-power-carving-bits/>

ARCHITECTURAL CARVING

Walking Miles and Miles for Carved Wood Outdoors (Or It's the Season to Carve a Sculpture for Your Garden)

By Jim Spitzer

This COVID era has eliminated or tightened the boundaries on many activities that we enjoy: socializing; restaurants; concerts; festivals; and even breathing. But it also compelled my wife and I to fill the gaps. One thing we started early, usually with a small and varied group of friends, is exploring metro Portland neighborhoods on foot, each walk guided by Lara Foster's books (Portland Hill Walks, Portland Stair Book). There are over two dozen walks and we have done many of them twice. This helped fill socialization and exercise gaps (we go for at least 5 miles on every walk), and we learned so much more about the metro area that we have lived in for over two decades.

But the woodworker and carver's eye catches much more than Foster's wonderful descriptions of history, geology, heritage trees, and architecture. I also honed in on creative fence designs, doors, garden art...particularly those of wood that might inspire me one day. We seldom had an opportunity to talk to owners about details, but here are some a few pictures that may inspire your work...especially carved garden art since we are entering the gardening season...and are ALWAYS in the carving season! Search Pinterest or the web for so many more ideas.

Carve your own garden art, front door, or house number. Place it out front to share the aesthetics of your skill and creativity with the neighborhood!



The most striking carved doors and entry that we have seen on these Hill Walks was on a modern home near the Vista Bridge. Setziol-like but I am not aware of Setziol incorporating copper and stone in his work



Close-ups



Overview

ARCHITECTURAL CARVING



A simple but dramatic carved piece tucked into a corner in the front yard of a West Hills home with an extensively landscaped but shallow front yard.



A gate from the Setziol property in Sheridan Confession, I only saw this in the 1990's Setziol Retrospective book



A modest home half way up the north flank of Mt. Scott with a nice totem sculpture



About 8 ft. high, a large band saw must have cut this simple but impressive outdoor sculpture near Ainsworth elementary school



I carved this piece of garden art for a friend from the stump of a Cherry tree and torched it, a Japanese technique called Shou Sugi Ban



A 5 1/2 ft high garden sculpture in my yard carved years after I found the 6x12 header/beam in the discard pile at a construction site. It is coated with Epifanes, a premium spar varnish with high UV resistance.

For a striking entry, carve the front door. This one in a smaller home is about a half mile south of Reed college in a neighborhood served by trolleys a hundred years ago



House numbers...an attractive but simple project most any wood carver could do

MEET OUR INSTRUCTORS



By Marty Lawrence

We enjoyed conducting an email interview with Masa Nitani, an expert wood carver from Japan, last month. His daughter, Lian, assisted us in interpreting and responding to our email, and we are grateful for her assistance.

Masa is Japanese. He learned the art of wood carving in Nibutani, located in Hokkaido, Japan, where he was born. He first encountered the craft when he took on a part-time job at an Ainu souvenir shop at age 12. He assisted with sanding and staining wood tasks. He was hired for this job because "everyone knew each other in the village."

Carving was taught to Masa in Japan as an apprenticeship after middle school. Education was mandatory until middle school in Japan when he was young. Those with money were able to attend high school. After Masa graduated from middle school, he became a woodcarving apprentice under Araki's mentorship, where Masa lived with him for 2 years. While there, Masa learned techniques and skills

that became the foundation of his artistry today.

There are several styles of woodcarving in Japan, including netsuke (miniature sculpture), itto-bori (one chisel cut style), and kamakura-bori (a form of lacquerware), among others. While there are ways to learn woodcarving through classes and art school, the professional practice of learning woodcarving is through an apprenticeship. As in becoming a sushi chef, one pays to learn at a school or under a master.

When asked if Masa has certain pieces that he has carved that he considers to be the best or the most important ones that express his style, skill, and or artistic interpretation in wood, Masa states, "I haven't made a piece that I have considered my best. Each time I think that I've made something that's my best, I think that I can do better." On crafting a commission versus doing his own work, he discriminated between the two, stating, "There's a difference between making something with a customer in mind and making something just for my own, and he says that he's looking forward to having the time to be able to do more in the future."



Masa lives in Portland, OR. When we asked him whether he had been influenced by art and carving in the Pacific Northwest, he related a story that few others can tell. He says, "I came to Oregon on a cargo ship carrying Cedar and Douglas fir logs. As you know, the Pacific Northwest has many trees, Black Walnut and Oak trees are everywhere and they are all cheap and plentiful. All of the trees and nature have inspired me to carve bears, such as the one displayed at the World Forestry Center." When asked about his place of curiosity in his own carving he enjoys, he expresses appreciation for the individual process and new ideas that spring to mind during the creative process. He enjoys going in new directions as he works, observing how the end result is always different from how it was originally designed in the beginning. "If everything went exactly the way you imagined, making art would be too easy. I enjoy that I am never fully satisfied with my work and that there's always something to improve upon. That mentality drives me to do better next time and to create something that's one step closer to what I am imagining. These days I enjoy that I can think about wood carving all I want."

He considers his areas of expertise to be bear and wood bowl carving.

Currently, he is a member of the Oregon Carvers Guild, and in the past he belonged to the Western Wood Carvers Association.

Masa creates commissioned work for places such as Timberline Lodge, and also has done restoration work there over the years.

When approaching a new piece, he inspects the wood, looking at it and imagining how to carve it. He relates, "When you look at logs, you'll notice that they're all similar, but by looking closely, you'll see that there are holes and other characteristics that make each one unique." Masa imagines how he'll incorporate the different characteristics into his pieces. Frequently friends will let him know if they come across any wood as potential material to carve. He will examine the pieces and examine them to see if he can use them.

When asked what carvers have influenced him or have been mentors? He states that there have been many, not any one person.

Masa states that he doesn't look for inspiration from books or the internet.

He considers other experts in his field to be his wood carving teacher and mentor Kaizawa Moriyuki. He was also his second cousin.

Other crafts he is interested in include working and sculpting with other materials such as clay, glass, and bronze, but realistically he says I am not interested enough to do so. He focuses his creativity onto wood carving.

Masa can be found on social media at <https://www.facebook.com/masamichi.nitani.9>.

Masa has taught carving for the Guild of Oregon Woodworkers several times, and we welcome his return to teaching and carving with us soon!

