



Carving Newsletter

July 2022



Hello Carvers,

I want to encourage you to get involved with several events that are on the horizon.

Multnomah Days Street Fair, Saturday, August 20, 9:00-5:00, [register here](#) to volunteer.

This one-day annual event is spread over the four blocks of Capitol Hwy, running through the heart of Multnomah Village. Our club's 10x10 booth will promote carving with demonstrations, literature, and comfort birds.

We need two people for each of four shifts. One person will be a demonstrator, and the other will provide support by interacting with the public and selling comfort birds. Even if you can't volunteer, consider attending.

Art in the Pearl, Labor Day weekend, September 3-5, downtown Portland, [register here](#) to volunteer

This three-day Labor Day weekend event is very inspirational and a great way for us to promote carving. We'll do demonstrations, show off a variety of examples, and interact with visitors of all ages and cultures.

Annual club picnic, Saturday, August 13, 11:00 - 3:00, [click here](#)

This is purely a social opportunity that will give you a chance to meet others in the club you might only know on Zoom. Thanks to Jim and Susan Spitzer for hosting us at their home a bit north of Beaverton.

There has been a lot of interest to follow-up with Adam McIsaac and his focus on tribal carvings of the Columbia River Basin. I'm still hoping we can create a one-day event at Adam's studio in La Center, WA, after Labor Day. If interested, you can add your name to the Interest List [here](#).

I want to thank the [Tigard Woodcraft store](#) for providing classroom space to us. They are hosting a special—but sold out—chip carving class in July with Marty Leenhouts. We were able to partner with Woodcraft by us providing a 65" wide panel TV monitor to use for this and future classes.

Please join me in expressing condolences to Tony Rizzutto on the recent passing of his wife Julie after a considerable struggle with cancer. Tony is the immediate past president of our club and served longer in a variety of roles than anyone over the last fifty years.

Speaking of fifty years, our club was started in February 1973 when the four founders first met at the newly opened Western (World) Forestry Center. The club grew to 500 members within ten years during the heyday of carving. We'll be providing some retrospective looks at our past as we go forward.

Larry Wade

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Our Mission: Encourage carvers at all levels through education, fellowship, and mentoring

Upcoming Classes

Stropping for Beginners (small fee) — online and in-person

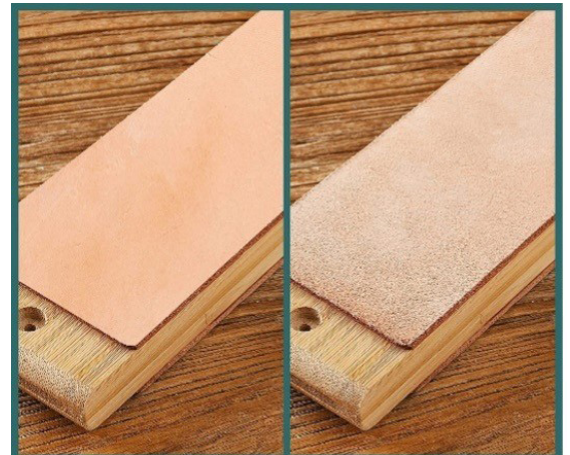
Taught by Roger Crooks, Larry Wade, or Terry Burnside

Click a date to register, [July 11](#), Monday 7:00pm - 9:00pm (note evening time) [August 10](#), Wednesday, 10:00am - 12:00pm

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 on-line, 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.



Leather Strops

Incised Carving Class (free) — online and in-person

Saturday, 9:30-noon To register, click on the desired date: [July 23](#), or [Sept 17](#)

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

The incised style carves lines into the surface of wood and can be done safely with one tool. This workshop is for those who have never carved or for carvers who have no incised experience. Students will be provided with free basswood, a loaner tool, patterns, and a carving mat. This workshop will be taught on-line with Zoom and simultaneously in-person, unless Covid gets much worse.



Dogs Welcome Sign

Students will carve the Dogs Welcome sign shown, and wood is provided for a second project afterwards. Students will use a parting (V) tool and will be shown how an Xacto knife or equivalent can also be used.

Small Bowls in Four Woods — online and in-person simultaneously

Taught by Larry Wade.

[Click here](#) to register, four Tuesdays: Sept 13, 20, 27, and Oct 4, 2:00 - 4:00pm

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, Alaska Yellow Cedar, Alder, Maple). The inside of the bowl will 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.



Woodcarving Class at the Elsie Stuhr Center through the Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District

Taught by Nancy Girard

Tuesdays 7/21-8/16. Weekly classes are from 10:45-12:15.

Classes continue year round. New carvers pay a start-up fee of \$20, which includes a safety glove and thumb guard, 3 projects and use of instructors tools for the term along with instruction.

Experienced carvers get new projects and/or help for their own projects. And all get the company of fellow carvers which is vitally beneficial. More information at THPRD.com or contact Nancy Girard at Girardaccessories.com.

Upcoming Programs

SUMMER BREAK

The Oregon Carvers Guild is taking the summer off from our monthly Zoom programs. It has been our experience that many of our members are traveling and/or going to carving rendezvous.

We will resume our 2nd Tuesday monthly meetings starting September 13th, 7:00 PM on Zoom.



Multnomah Days August 20th, Plan to Attend!



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Upcoming Events

JULY

NW Carving Academy
Ellensburg, WA July 11-15, 2022



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.

For registration information, [click here](#).

AUGUST

Oregon Carvers Guild Annual Picnic,
Beaverton area, Saturday, August 13, 11:00 - 3:00



This is purely a social opportunity and a chance to meet others in the club you might only know on Zoom. Thanks to Jim and Susan Spitzer for hosting us at their home a bit north of Beaverton. To register, [click here](#)

SEPTEMBER

The Oregon Woodcarver's Rendezvous
Canyonview Camp near Silverton, OR, September 8- 11, 2022



This year restarts a long tradition of the [Capitol Woodcarvers](#), after two years of pandemic delay. Many classes are offered on all days of the event. See the [registration form](#) for details.

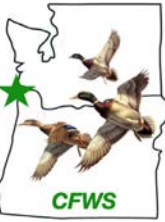
Tri-Valley Show & Competition
Veterans Memorial Hall, Pleasanton, CA, Sept. 10 & 11, 2022



The Tri-Valley Chapter of the California Carvers Guild is having their annual show, which happens to be their 50th Annual Wood Show.

For more information on categories to enter carvings, see their [website](#).

Columbia Flyway & Wildlife Show
Clatsop County Fairgrounds in Astoria, September 30, Oct 1 and 2



This is a significant local show featuring nationally known bird and animal carvers, scheduled at the Clatsop County Fairgrounds in Astoria.

Contact [Randy Martin](#) to exhibit; save the dates and monitor the [website](#) for updates.

JANUARY

Coastal Carver Artistry in Wood Show
Lincoln City, January 2023



This annual January carving show is a fixture in the state and well worth attending. Although they had to cancel the 2022 show because their venue was not taking reservations for group events, they hope to have their normal show in 2023. Check their [website](#) for current information.

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.



Tribal Carving with Adam McIsaac — Interest list only

DATES/TIMES/LOCATION - all to be determined. [Click here](#) to register interest



Adam is a serious professional carver in the style of the tribes of the Columbia River Basin. He often teaches and conducts workshops at his studio north of Vancouver in La Center off I-5 near exit 16.

This interest list is not a class, it is simply a way for you to put your name on the list to be contacted later and to see if there is enough interest to create a tour, class, workshop, or other activity.

Flat Plane Caricature Carving — Interest list only

Taught by Eric Owens, [Click here](#) to register interest



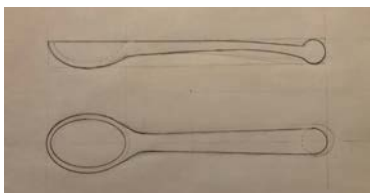
Eric Owens is a very experienced caricature carver from Boise and will be visiting Oregon. We have a chance to schedule a two-day class to tap into his wisdom on the last weekend of July or the first weekend of August. We need a minimum number of students to justify the class. It will be an intensive two days to experience carving one of a few models that he will prepare. The focus is on beginning caricature carvers but Eric is able to work with those with some experience who want to go farther.

The cost will be \$200 plus about \$20 for materials. Students will need to provide tools but some will be available to borrow.

Beginner Spoon Carving — Interest list only

Taught by Al Plasch. [Click here](#) to register

This is a class for beginners to learn the basics of carving spoons. Everyone will carve a simple shape first, then have options for exploring variations. Two Basswood blanks will be used with options to try a harder wood. Students are welcome to provide their own wood. Loaner tools are provided (knife, spoon gouge), but students are encouraged to purchase a hook knife (Morakniv 164 or similar) and a knife (Flexcut detail knife or Morakniv 106).



Remembering Ken Johnson

Ken Johnson Memorial by Ray Dodge

"Many people walk in and out of your life.

But only true friends will leave footprints in your heart."

(Author unknown)



Ken was a true friend. If you ever needed someone to feed your dog while you went fishing, or someone to repair a fishing rod, or help you carve a fish and loan you the tools to do it, or if you just needed someone to lift your spirits, Ken was the one to call.

Ken was a first responder, a firefighter in Cottage Grove who devoted his life to helping others. He moved to La Pine in 2012 to retire. He enjoyed hunting, fishing, and playing his guitar with friends and family around a campfire. He made a point to visit elder facilities to share his music and song. He knew when he had connected if it became a sing-along.

Ken also took up fish carving and became an accomplished carver and believed in the old adage, make the next fish better than the last.

Ken passed away September 5, 2021.

Suzanne Johnson, Ken's wife of 44 years, donated his carving tools to the Oregon Carvers Guild so others could appreciate them and realize they came from a person with a big heart and a desire to help others. And perhaps it would leave another footprint or two.



Memorial Tools

Living Memorial Tools by Larry Wade

We are very thankful to add Ken Johnson's set to our Tool Library to benefit current and future carvers. The Memorial Tool concept is to keep sets together to remember and honor the donor by helping emerging carvers get access to first-class tools that have been lovingly maintained.

We haven't had an opportunity to publicize these assets because of the pandemic and not having a central studio to see them, so some of you may be hearing of these for the first time. The memorial sets we have now are:

Michael Gedrose Estate, Redmond, Oregon, consisting of 150 mallet-ready tools that form the basis of the seven loaner kits that have been used in Chuck Rinehart's Classical Carving classes.

Leo Lambo Estate, Portland, Oregon, consisting of 50 mallet-ready tools that have been used for some classes and projects.

Mack Sutter Estate, Portland, Oregon, consisting of a wide variety of hundreds of tools. A subset of seven kits have been used for free by students of the Mack Sutter relief carving classes over the last 18 months. Some of the tools are highly specialized to do the deep relief floral carvings Mack was famous for, and many of the other tools are waiting for help to sharpen, inventory, and put into use.

Paul Thuerin Estate, Portland, Oregon and Berlin, Germany. This set of 60 mallet-ready tools was fully assembled by 1919 when Paul Thuerin the elder passed away during that pandemic at the age of 39. His son, Paul Thuerin the junior, inherited and used the tools for decades before, during, and after WW II, before he immigrated to Portland in 1956. This set is now out on loan for a year, after which it will continue to rotate to other carvers for use in perpetuity.

Ken Johnson Estate, La Pine, Oregon. And now we have this large set of tools that were used mainly for fish carving but can be used for a variety of projects. There are only a few hand tools, but the set includes a RAM micro motor system and many burrs plus a wood burning kit with a variety of tips. It also has a large collection of paint brushes, paints, an air brush system, and a set of the accessories an experienced carver accumulates. We must inventory this new collection before putting the assets into circulation.

It is clear we have a lot of assets already and are likely to accumulate more. Our heartfelt thanks to the donors who made this possible.

In the meantime, it is clear we need help to preserve, protect, and use these assets. The best terms I can think of are Tool Librarian and Tool Committee. If you would like to help in one of these roles, please let me know.



Hand-carved Comfort Bird

Step-by-step Carving a 2-fer Comfort Bird Set by Tom Siep

First I want to say that no particular way of removing wood is better than another. Be it chainsaw or micro-tool or CNC, it is the skill of the carver and the results of the carve that really matter. The difference between backpacking and jet travel is moot, once the journey is done. Some of us enjoy a bit of a slower trek from time-to-time.

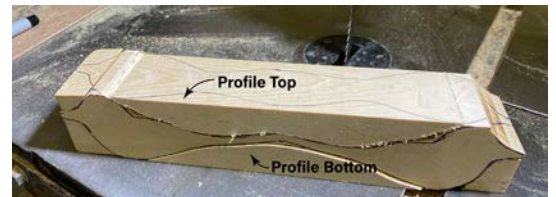
This particular journey tends more towards the backpacking side, but not completely. I did not use a hand saw to fell the Alaskan Yellow Cedar I used, nor did I rift-saw the lumber from the log with a logger's tool. All that was done before I got the cedar from Building Material Resources (<https://www.materialforless.com/>) in Tualatin.

Further, I did use a bandsaw to rough out the blanks, as will be shown below. OTHER THAN THAT, the comfort bird was reduced to its final form with knives, gouges, and sandpaper. Final finishing was done with a buffing wheel, though.

I started with a 2"x2" piece of cedar and traced the profile (side view) and the footprint (top view) of the carving with a Sharpie. I borrowed a technique from Jim Spitzer and traced two complete silhouettes, joined at the tail. Jim's technique of doing this 2-fer has the advantage of having a good handhold on one bird, whilst carving the other.



The beak-ends of the birds were separated from the block, and discarded because they would not have added to the stability of the next steps. The accuracy of the remaining cuts were not important, as long as I stayed outside the lines. Then the bodies were cut, first the profile, then the footprint.



After the two profile cuts (top and bottom) were made, I taped them back into place. Taping the cut pieces back gave me a stable base for cutting the footprint of the birds. Putting the top back on also gave me back the outline of the footprint.



A word of caution: although I assumed that I did not need the support at the beaks when cutting the footprint, I did run into a problem when the bandsaw caught on the beak and nearly cut a deep groove in the head of one of the birds. Hold the birds firmly!

No other power tools were used to remove wood, once the pair of birds was bandsawn. The key thing at this point is that the set of birds have nothing but sharp angles. Comfort birds should have nothing but round shapes between the beak and the tail. The rest of this article describes how that was done.



The edge tools I used were:

- » Flexcut KN12 Cutting Knife
- » Flexcut KN19 Mini-Pelican Knife
- » Flexcut FR364 3mm veiner
- » Long-handled gouge, 2.5 sweep, 8mm wide



Now the hand carving can begin. The first order of business was to remove sharp corners. Since we are carving a comfort bird, we need not worry about anything that has a right angle. Having cut two intersecting silhouettes, there are lots of corners. Paring each one to a 45 degree angle with a 1/2" flat is pretty safe. Note that I am using a grip on the knife that amounts to holding it in a not-quite-closed fist. The cutting stroke is closing that almost-fist into a proper fist. This cuts the wood towards my thumb, but you will notice that my thumb is protected by the bird's tail. The cut is short, but powerful and controlled.



After the initial 45 degree cuts, I moved the slices left and right to create our first rounded surface. I repeated the process for both sides and top and bottom of both birds as a first step, so that there were no sharp edges to hold on to whilst doing the rest of the carving. This is a MUCH more comfortable way to carve a comfort bird.



Soothing out the sharp edges was the first step in going from the square edges of the cutout, to the smooth edges of the finished comfort bird.

Grain plays an important part when defining the head. The way the blank was cut, the sides of the bird were parallel to the grain. Just about all wood species cleave easily along the grain. Cedar does so even more readily than most, so I had to take care when beginning to shape the head.



It is always a good idea to continually check for roundness when doing comfort birds. Looking at the bird from a bit of distance quickly shows that at this point not only was the bird still pretty square, it was also not symmetric.



Further smoothing the bird, I often used another knife-stroke, which is quite different that I used above. It is what I call a scissor-cut. The cut take two hands and it might not be apparent what is going on the the pictures below:



My left hand held the piece and provided a pivot point for the thumb on my right hand. The only motion my right hand made was to rotate clockwise. Forward motion of the blade was due solely to the pressure provided by my left thumb. The effect was to make a scissor-like motion through the wood, with the blade moving perpendicular to the cut. The point of contact moved up the blade.

I smoothed the bird more and more, using both types of cuts. Most people draw a center line from beak tip to tail to help in keeping symmetry. I tend not to do this for this simple of a shape.



Once I had the bird fairly round, the next thing I did was to add a detail that is not common to all comfort birds: the outline of wings.

To do this, I first use a pencil to mark where I wanted the wing outlines. Once marked, I used my gouge to incise the back and the breast.



A combination of chisel and knife work brought the back and the breast down to where they tucked under the wings, but retained the overall roundness of the bird.

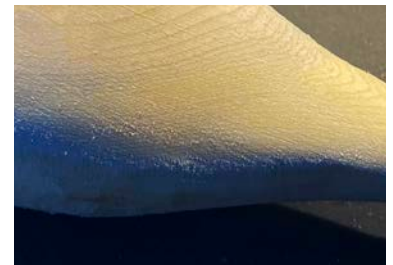


Knife work done, the bird was generally round-ish, but not smooth at all. Smoothing, of course, takes sanding. Sanding, to many of us, is our least favorite part of wood carving. However it is a vital part for most work and a critical part of obtaining a comforting feel to the creature.



I found that using a [Sanding Bow](#) from [Rockler](#) made the process much faster and easier.

The edge tools leave flat spots, or what are generally called *facets*. These facets must be smoothed out. It is easy to miss facets. The pictures below show the slow progression from a faceted surface to a smooth surface, using the Sanding Bow with 150 grit (100 grit would have been better). Not all parts of the bird could be sanded using the bow, so some 150 grit sandpaper was also used.



I like to smooth the whole body before I finish the tail, to maximize the utility of having the extra bird to hold onto. The first step in the separation is to trim the tail to its final shape, as indicated by the pencil lines below.



Then I needed to score and trim off the tail.



After trimming: MORE sanding! I used 220 grit on the sanding bow, then switched over to using foam sanding pads. I sanded with the grain, reverting back to 150 grit. The reason for going back to 150 is that the sanding bow worked across the grain and left some scratches that needed to be gotten rid of.



A quick visit to a buffing wheel and the product of all this effort is the bird below



Member Carvings



Alan Willis: This is a logo from a martial arts school. It's butternut wood (purchased from Larry Wade) and it is 8" wide by 1.25" thick.

Diameter of the circle is 7", finished with Formby's Tung Oil.

No special considerations, lots of stop cuts, detail on the face took a bit of care.



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
- » Any special techniques or considerations, if any
- » Background on why the subject was chosen
- » Time it took to carve (if you remember)

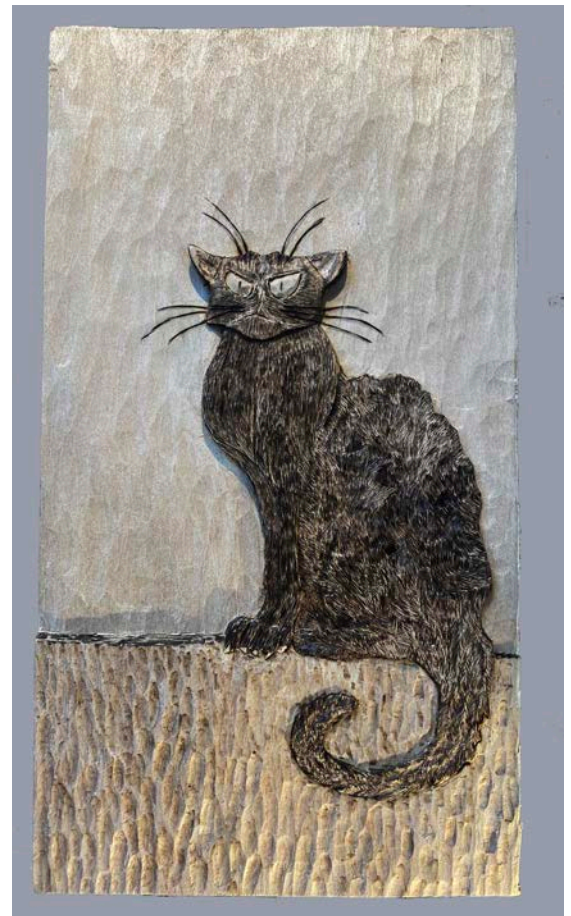
A few tips on taking photos:

- » 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

Clark Moss: "This is 3/4" thick cherry and the Bee is about 8"x5". It's the 4th panel I've done since starting carving last October when I took a Mack Sutter Relief Carving class taught by Larry Wade. The background was cleared by hand - no power tools were used. That helped increase the overall time to finish this project to just over 40 hours. The honey was outlined with a pyrography pen and colored with water color pencils. The finish is 5 coats of shellac."



Tom Siep: Modeled after Le Chat Noir, this relief carving was made from 11" x 6" x 1" basswood. The amount of relief varies from a maximum of .5" at the ears to .1" at the tail. Unpainted. The color and texturing on the cat and the fence was done with a woodburning stylus. Just the texturing of the cat fur took a LONG time; I've no idea how much.





Carving Newsletter

July 2022



Clubs and Guilds

Coastal Carvers — Lincoln City

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

Capitol Woodcarvers — Salem

For information, [click here](#). Their annual April carving show is well known, but it had to be cancelled for 2022. However, on their website, they announced that there will be a 2022 Virtual Show and Auction. More information and entry forms are to be posted soon on their website.

Vancouver / King's Way Carvers — weekly on Thursdays

Thursday evenings 6:00 - 9:00 PM (summer 9:00 - noon). Contact Jim Mather at 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, 8:00 - 11:00am 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 a group of carvers in and around Bend, for information, contact Scott Beyer at dxdevolt@gmail.com.

Olympia Woodworkers Guild— Olympia

They occasionally have interesting carving presenters for their monthly meetings. For information contact Bill Cogswell at info@owwg.org or see 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.

California Carvers Guild (CCG)

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





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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. [Website](#)

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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The Rockler logo icon, a stylized wood grain swirl.

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