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Arizona Gourds

Updates from the desert southwest...

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Welcome to the January/February issue of the Arizona Gourds newsletter!

Wuertz Farm's 14th Annual "Running of the Gourds"

Gourd Festival



February 10-11-12, 2017
at the Pinal Fairgrounds
Casa Grande, Arizona

Friday & Saturday 9am-5pm
Sunday 10am-3pm

Admission \$8 (Kids FREE)

Hard to believe that another year has flown by, and it's almost time for the Wuertz Festival again! Classes start on the 9th, and the festival runs Fri -Sunday, Feb 10-12.

This year will be the first year where I will NOT have a booth - instead, I will be teaching 4 days of classes. I will have a sales table at my classes where I will sell burs, tools and other items related to my class projects, and you are welcome to stop by if you need to purchase something. Or, if you would like to preorder embellishments or other items and pick them up at the show, that is also possible - just send me an email with the list of items. **Keep in mind that if you are from out of state, you may save on the shipping cost, but you will have to pay sales tax when you pick things up at the show - sometimes shipping is less than the tax!*

I would love to have a teaching assistant at each of my classes to lend a hand with registrations and sales of supplies. Let me know if you are interested - you can listen in or participate if time permits..

Class updates

Tucson classes will be offered again in the spring. Keep an eye on the [Classes page](#) for more info - or email me with your requests for specific classes. Anyone interested in a pine needle weaving with a cabochon class?

Scheduled classes with openings:

3 day gourd retreat in Temecula, California May 2-4 2017 Information on the classes page. Leather Tooling, Inlance Inlay, and Added Handles/Patinas and Textures. Please contact me to register or for on site lodging information.

Classes in the **Portland, Oregon** area May 20-21st, 2017 - Basic Power Carivng and River Bed Gourd - contact Joan Arens at jjarens@centurytel.net for more information or to register.

3 day gourd retreat in Page, Arizona October 21st - 23rd. Information on the classes page. Please contact Marcia Krickhahn at marciakrick@hotmail.com to register. Retreat will be a hummingbird gourd project and the Native Treasures gourd project. **NOTE:** This is an all inclusive retreat with lodging, food, gourds and instruction for an extremely low package price.

Enter your email address into the text box, and hit the submit button to join the **class updates notification list**.

Submit

*Please consider doing some of your online shopping through our Amazon link. ALL Amazon purchases made through site links and the search box help support Arizona Gourds and the Gourd Art Enthusiasts websites, and it costs you nothing extra!

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



Special - for the first 10 orders. Buy a set of 5 engraving burs, and get a free small bur holder at no extra charge. (bur holder shown to the left) On the [Carving Burs page](#).

NEW - Sets of 3 small diamond inverted cone burs, and sets of 5 thin diamond wheels. These burs are great for undercutting, lines, setting stones and much more. On the [Carving Burs page](#).



NEW LOWER PRICING on all **stone studs** in all colors and sizes! On the [Metals page](#). Also on the metals page, new "**Man in the Maze**" **metal beads** - drilled top to bottom for stringing but flat on both sides for inlay - and new **Turtle Charms!**



of black, dark bro
at a fraction of the cost of regular deer lace.
Each bag contains approximately 10 laces.
On the [Special Embellishments page](#).

New to the website - packs of 25 fine tip applicators for use with ink or alcohol dyes or even paint. You get more in each pack and they are priced lower than on some other websites. Also, a new **keyless chuck pin vise** with drill bits - for drilling on the go when power isn't available. You can also chuck diamond burs in it and use it as a hand held sanding tool. In addition, we have 4 types of **carbide gourd cleaners** - (and we have had these for many years on our website!) On the [Tools page](#).



Thank you! Your purchases made from Arizona Gourds and from our Amazon links enable us to keep these free newsletters and the Gourd Art Enthusiasts site available. We sincerely appreciate your business.

NOTICE: I will be teaching classes at the Wuertz Festival and will not be shipping from February 8th - 12th. Orders placed during this time will be held and will go out in the order they were received starting on February 13th. I may be out of some items - you may want to order prior to these dates if you need something right away. Thank you for your understanding.

Feature: Composition and Creativity - Composition Skills

Something I spend time on when teaching a gourd class is composition skills. In my classes, students have the use of patterns and reference material, but they are encouraged and shown how to modify and change designs to make them their own. It's always more satisfying to go home with a project with a bit of your own creativity in place instead of looking exactly like the one the teacher made.

There are many art textbooks that will explain composition rules and formulas for painters; gourd artists have the additional concern of working with a three dimensional item. No matter which medium is used, an artist will strive to create works that draw the eye to focal points of interest. A successful piece will unconsciously direct the eye from one interesting area to another, so that the entire piece is seen as a cohesive and pleasing whole.

There are decisions that need to be made at the beginning of any project. How will the finished piece be displayed, and will it be designed with one or more points of interest? A gourd vessel or sculpture that will be placed in a niche or corner can be designed with only one main focal area of interest, and the decoration of less exposed areas can be kept to a minimum. Conversely, other gourds are more effective when decorated with a series of patterns and focal points that allow the gourd to be turned or viewed from all sides. Will the gourd have cutouts, filigree, or other carving techniques that will make the gourd more fragile? How can the design be composed to render the finished project as structurally sound as possible?

Tools such as changes in rhythm, contrast, color, or depth can capture the viewer's attention and lead the eye from one area of the gourd to another. A composition that is created in the round can be unified by balancing focal points with areas of repetition.

The **rhythm** of a piece provides continuity, and can be established by the use of intervals of recurring or related elements. The repeated use of patterns, color, shapes or textures, when combined with a judicious use of dissimilar elements or embellishments, can be used to accent some areas and shift the eye from place to place.

Contrast is used to attract the eye and emphasize focal points. Contrast is achieved by adding areas of differences, such as light against dark, dissimilar textures, lines that change directions or cross, or varying sizes. Areas where contrast is minimized will be de-emphasized, helping the design to flow and allowing the eye to move towards the next focal area.

Color can be used to emphasize or minimize attention. Bold colors will attract the eye, while muted or pale colors will recede into the distance. Complex compositions will often look better with a limited palette of colors; use similar hues throughout to sooth the eye and allow for compatibility between the areas of emphasis.

Depth changes provide additional areas of contrast that can emphasize design elements. Negative space can be utilized by cutting out portions of the gourd surface or by adding irregularly shaped openings. Dimensional additives such as embellishments, built up areas or added gourd pieces can draw attention and provide eye-catching focal areas.

Generally, art will look more pleasing to the eye when the focal points are not placed at the exact center of the piece. Often, moving the design slightly above or below center will be more attractive. Off centered areas can be balanced with other areas of dominance. Symmetry is a useful tool in design, but asymmetrical patterns or unexpected line directions can add a fresh element to the overall composition.

There are no hard and fast rules that govern the way an artist should interpret a subject. With some experimentation and some practice, a person's own style will emerge. Placing elements of design together into pleasing compositions is only one step along the road to creativity. The true creative process should combine composition with a meaningful statement and the use of innovation and experimentation.



Example of a design with a composition that has visual interest.

Contrast: Note some areas are very dark, others are lighter. The gold/turquoise band around the middle provides additional contrast, and at the same time it provides a **rhythm** to the design, pulling together the differences between the ripples and the square designs. The **focal points** on this piece are located on the upper third with a few eye-catching stones on the bottom for an **asymmetrical** feel. There is a **depth** change where carved areas meet uncarved areas, and the added heishi and stones provide additional depth and interest.



Left: This piece has a design that flows around the entire gourd. Can you look at the example and see evidence of rhythm, depth, contrast and asymmetry? Where do they occur?

The piece to the right is a one sided design, which works well when the gourd will be placed in a location where only one side can be seen. You can focus your energies into one side and still have a nice design. What is the first thing you see when you look at the design? Does your eye travel from area to area?



Review: Instructional DVD - "The Art of the Brand" by Molly Winton

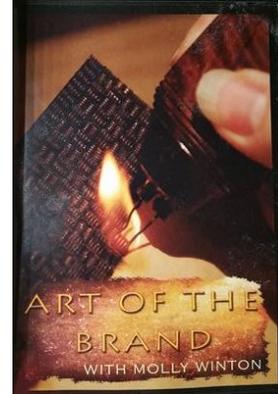
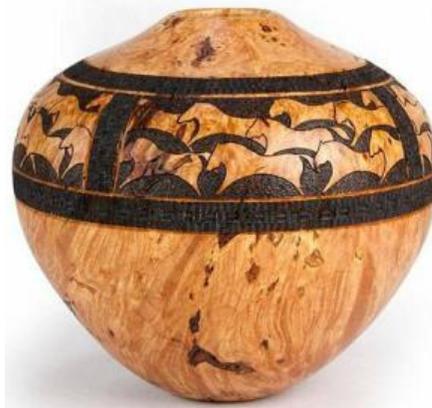
There is a lot of crossover between gourders and wood workers, since the two mediums are so similar. Molly Winton is probably best known for her woodturning and wood burning, but she also works on gourds. This DVD is her first, and it features instructions on

making your own specialized woodburning tips. She discusses tools, safety, and materials, and demonstrates making basketweave, spirals, rope designs and a star shaped brand from hi-temperature wire and copper nails. This is NOT a how to woodburn video, although she demonstrates and mentions several good tips along the way. This is a how to make your own tools video with extra info thrown in. She has a pleasant, easy to understand way of presenting material so that it is very clear. Anyone who wants to make some of these woodburning brands should have no problems doing so with her instructions and information.

*Note - She recommends using these home made brands in a high power burner. Some of the smaller units with less power (razertip, lower end models of Colwood or Nibsburner for example) may not generate enough heat for this type of burning. She suggests using a burnmaster pen with these types of homemade interchangeable tips. Also, keep in mind that the cord is the item that will fail the quickest when using very high heat. (Please check our [woodburner page](#) if you would like to purchase a burnmaster pen as shown in the DVD.)

The DVD is \$29.95 To order, contact Molly via email and PayPal through mollywinton@hotmail.com.

25.743.3770. She will accept checks One of Molly's signature horse design/basketweave vessels.



"Like" Arizona Gourds on Facebook to get special offers, up to the minute news about new products and classes, and other gourding updates. (Just a note - I don't add gourd friends on my personal page, I save that for family and non-gourding friends.)

NEW GROUP on Facebook - "Gourding Destash". This is the place to sell your used gourd tools and excess supplies. No fees to sell your surplus supplies and raw gourds.



The [Gourd Art Enthusiasts site](#) has about 5200 members, with gourd enthusiasts from all over the world! The site also has state groups, event listings, a Q&A forum and a chat feature.

Like 8.6K people like this. Sign Up to see what your friends like.



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Readers Mailbag:
Dear Bonnie, I think my husband and I finally got some good pictures of my gourds. I am sending some along. The rose sculpture is made entirely out of gourd pieces. **Madonna Watermon - MO**





Readers Mailbag:
 Dear Bonnie, Here is my official first piece of gourd art! The carbide burr I got from you was perfect! Thank you!
 Diana Farmer - NC



Tip of the Month: Uses for Compressed Air

Do you use an air driven tool such as a Shofu or a Turbocarver? If so, you may not be getting full use out of a tool you already own - an air compressor. Most [Air Compressors](#) can be easily rigged with a "quick disconnect" fitting and an air gun. The air gun is really handy for all sorts of clean up jobs including blowing unwanted dust away from your work area. I use my compressor to blow off my work desk top and drawers, then finish by blowing myself off as well! It's a great way to get rid of most of the dust so you won't cart it inside to the clean house and saves you lots of extra work. It is also really handy for blowing out dust from carved surfaces or cleaned gourd interiors prior to painting. Be sure to wear a good dust mask when using compressed air.

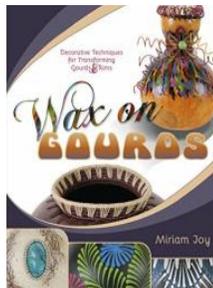
Don't have an air compressor? Small cans of compressed air are very handy when kept at your work area. These cans work best when used in short bursts, the cans get amazingly cold when used for longer periods. They are also useful for blowing dust out of small hard to clean areas like computer keyboards. Click on the photos to find out more about the different brands of compressed air.



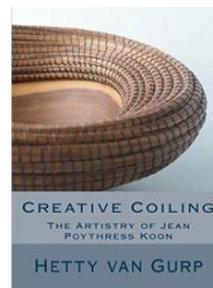
Featured Gourd of the Month:

This is an older piece I did many years ago, but one that shows quite a bit of woodburning. In addition, it has inlaid inlay in the deer hooves pattern, and inset stones.

Featured Books:



[The Art & Craft of Pyrography](#)



[Big Book of Pyrography Projects](#)



[Pyrography Workbook](#)



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above are some of the highest rated with the best reviews on Amazon. Some focus mostly on techniques (DVD - Pryrography Workshop, Learn to Burn, Pyrography Workbook), while others focus more on patterns. The gourd pyrography book has less on technique than some of the others, but it shows examples of many gourd artists work.

If you learn more visually, the Sue Walters DVD "Pyrography Workshop" is a good choice.

**Want to see my listing of top gourd books? Here is my ["Listmania" listing on Amazon](#)*



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- Decorative Painting

I often get questions about shipping costs that are added to shopping cart sales. To clarify things, I've added a new page to the website, [Shipping Policies](#).

I am using a no-frills shopping cart program that has limitations and little flexibility. By not paying for expensive software, I can offer you lower prices on the website merchandise. **I'm not looking to make a profit on shipping; if you order lightweight items you will likely get a refund or some freebies to make up for it.** Please take a minute to look at the shipping policies page for clarification and explanation of how things work. If you ever have any questions, please feel free to email me directly. I value your business!

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