



Arizona Gourds

May updates from the desert southwest...



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Welcome to the May issue of the Arizona Gourds newsletter!

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Learn the Truth about America's Fastest Growing "Miracle" Tea
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Indian Necklaces & Rings

Authentic American Indian Jewelry Low Prices On the Web Since 1997
www.UglyOtter.com

Special Notice: Shipments will be delayed from May14th - 18th while I am teaching in San Diego. Orders placed during this time will be held and filled just as soon as I return. All orders will be filled in the order they are received.

I was overwhelmed by the responses that I received last month after the newsletter with photos from Brazil went online. Even though there wasn't as much gourd content, people really seemed to enjoy seeing the travel photos. It got me thinking about all of the gourd friends I've made from all over the world. While I haven't actually met many of these people in person, our common interest in gourds has made the world a smaller place. With the help of social networking sites such as Facebook, the Gourd Art Enthusiasts website, and online language translators, it's easy to stay in touch with gourd friends from many different countries.

This month the featured article will introduce you to some gourders from other parts of the world. All of us share the same interest in gourd crafting, and although our tools, techniques and designs might differ, we have much in common. The photo at the upper right was taken in a garden in Croatia, but the gourd plants look no different than the ones you might find in your own back yard. Reader **Darlene Propp** sent me the second photo, taken by one of her friends while visiting in Greece. It's a small world when you enjoy gourds - I hope you'll enjoy meeting some of these world gourders.



Update: Gourd Classes

Classes in the San Diego area are filling fast, but there are still spaces available. This is my only scheduled trip to California this year, so I hope to see you there if you are in the area. Classes will be held on **May 14-17**. For more information, check the [Classes Page](#) - and for registration, contact our host, [Rosario Wilke](#). (rosariowilke@msn.com)

I will be teaching classes at the **Pennsylvania Gourd Festival** this June! Class listings are posted on the [Pennsylvania Gourd Society festival page](#), please check there for more information and to register for classes.

I will be teaching classes at the **Michigan Gourd Festival September 17-19**. Registration is available on their [festival website](#).

*Join the class updates list if you want to receive advance notice of classes. Get the news first and have the best opportunity to select your classes!



[Join The Class updates List](#)

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

3 New premium quality conchos! These are cast, heavy looking conchos with real depth to the designs. You will find them on the [Metals page](#).

Notice: The Patriot 1000 woodburner manufacturer has advised me of a price increase as of June 1st. Buy now and save before prices go up on the burner and pens!



One time only special - My best-selling project packet, FILIGREE CARVING, is now being offered with **ONE FREE filigree bur**. *These burs are normally sold as part of a 2 burs set - you'll receive the most popular smaller size bur. (While current supply lasts)

You may also want to try the [carving drill and the carbide pointed bur](#); but if you want to learn this technique and start inexpensively, then this is the time to give it a try. This packet was designed for those that are not able to attend one of my classes in person. It is fully illustrated with





able to attend one of my classes in person. It is fully illustrated with photographs and has complete start to finish instructions. You'll find this special on the [Project Packets page](#). Also, be sure to check out the [project packets page](#) for my newest tutorial packet, [Mask Making Techniques](#).

May Feature - Gourd Crafters Around the World

There are many fabulous gourd artists working around the world. I have enjoyed corresponding with artists from many different countries, and I thought my readers would also enjoy seeing their work. (If you missed it, you can also see work from a Turkish and an Israeli artist in the [January 2010 Newsletter](#).) Look for more world gourders next month - contact me if you are out of North America and want to be featured!



Chinese gourd artist Chen Chen shows one of her award winning pieces at the 2009 Huludao Gourd Festival.

Chen Chen is a gourd artist from China, who is very skilled in pyrography. She participates in gourd festivals and art work competitions in Huludao, Shandong and Tianjin China, and has won awards for her work.

Pyrography is very popular technique in China, but Chinese artists use other techniques such as growing gourds in molds, compression embossing, and miniature engraving.

Chen Chen enjoys making friends with gourd artists from different countries and really likes the American gourd culture. (If you are an AGS member, you can read an article about Chen Chen that was written by Betty Finch in the spring 2010 issue.)

Chen Chen is a member of Huludao Gourd Society. She has a [blog](#) (mainly written in Chinese) and invites you to visit her site.



Peonies - the National flower of China



Beautiful pyrography by Chen Chen

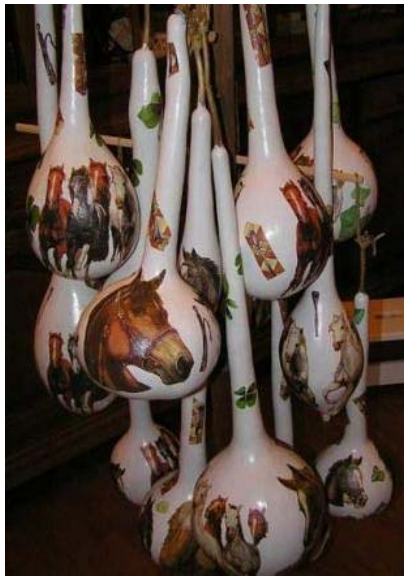


At the Huludao Gourd Festival



Vesna Martinjak lives in Koprivnica, Croatia. Her hobby is growing gourds and decorating them with painting or decoupage techniques. You can find Vesna on Facebook - she is a "fan" of the [Arizona Gourds page on Facebook](#).





Pascale Lambrechts is from Colfontaine, Belgium. Pascale has had no artistic training, but has been working with gourds for a little over 3 years - she says it was "love at first sight". She saw gourds at a craft exhibition and loved the beautiful colors, forms and materials of the crafted gourds. In Belgium (and most of northern Europe) there are very few people that work with or grow gourds, so it was very difficult for her to find classes. She learned how to make holes and turn gourds into lamps. After that, she bought some books and experimented a lot. Pascale is an active member of the [GAE website](#) and also has her own [gourd art website](#).



One of Pascale's lamps - showing it with the interior light on and off.



Mércia Maria is a gourd artist from São Paulo, Brazil. Mércia is very active in the Brazilian gourd world, and has appeared in local television craft shows as well as making DVD's about decorative painting and gourds for paint and brush manufacturers. Some short videos (in Portuguese) are available on You Tube. Mércia and I have corresponded for several years, and I was disappointed that our tour of Brazil did not allow for time in São Paulo. It would have been wonderful to visit her in person. Mércia's [website](#) has additional photos and videos.





Here's a craft video from Brazilian TV sponsored by Condor Acrilex Brushes and Paints that features Mercia.



Tip of the Month:

Using a Dremel Flexshaft and Keyless Chuck

There are many different carving tools that are used by gourd crafters, but Dremel is the most popular choice. Because Dremel tools are reasonably priced and readily available, they are the tool of choice for about 90% of my students.

The [Dremel Keyless Chuck](#) allows you to quickly and easily change accessories on your rotary tool without having to change collets. The chuck will hold bits with shanks that range from 1/32 inch to 1/8 inch. The keyless chuck will work on most Dremel tools (except for very old models), and in addition, may work on other brands of rotary tools if they use a standard Dremel collet nut. (I have had luck using these on Craftsman and Black and Decker tools, but they usually will not fit the inexpensive off-brand imported tools.)

To use a keyless chuck, simply unscrew the collet nut and collet, and replace them with the screw on chuck. The chuck may be tightened by hand, but if you have weaker hands you can use a collet wrench (there is a flat spot on the bottom that is made for this) or, keep a pair of regular pliers handy. Heavy carving may cause the bur to come loose; be sure to stop and retighten if the bur starts to creep out while you are carving. The springs in the keyless chuck may loosen over time. If the chuck no longer holds burs well, then it may be time to replace the chuck.

The [Dremel Flexshaft](#) is another great addition. This eliminates having to hold the large motor in your hand, and it's cooler, lighter weight and smaller to grip.

To attach a flexshaft, you must remove three items from the nose of the rotary tool - the plastic housing cap, the collet nut and the collet. With the flex shaft, you get a driver a nut with a small square hole in it. (It's easier to see the square hole if you hold the nut up to the light.) Thread the driver cap onto the bare metal threads of the rotary tool where the collet and collet nut were removed. Then, screw the flex shaft onto the body of the tool, being careful to insert the square inner drive shaft into the drive nut. Add collets and a collet nut OR a keyless chuck onto the end of the handpiece. The handpiece has a shaft lock button which will stop the threaded area from turning as you tighten burs.

After the first 20-30 hours of use, and then again every 10 hours, put a thin coating of lubricant (light grease, NOT oil) on the core. After removing the core of the flexible shaft from the casing, wipe it with a rag. Then place a small amount of lubricant on your fingertip and run it lightly up and down the core. Remove any excess lubricant. Remember, too much lubricant will cause the handpiece to get hot even under normal use.

Do you have a tip or tutorial we can feature here? Please contact me.



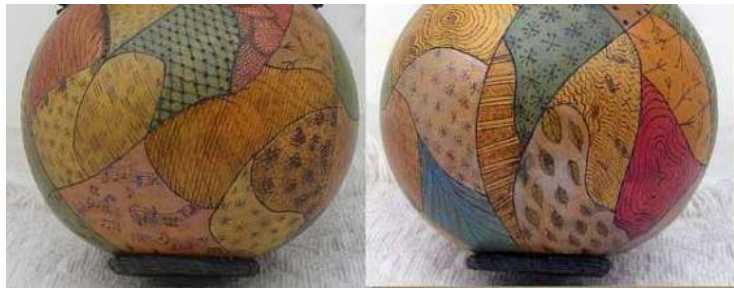
The Keyless Chuck eliminates the need for collets and make changing burs fast and easy.



The Dremel Flexshaft.

There are other brands of flexshaft (Proxxon, Milescraft) but these are poor substitutes for the Dremel flexshaft and I don't recommend their use..The Proxxon flexshaft is NOT rated for the higher speed of a Dremel tool.





Reader's Mailbag

Dear Bonnie,
 Enclosed are pictures of a gourd I did for Christmas for a niece. Thank you for the filigree carving "how to" series I bought from you including the carving burs. I really enjoyed carving the filigree gourd, and my niece was very pleased with the gourd also. I really enjoy your monthly e-mail and have told all my gourd friends. I especially like doing southwest designs and hope someday soon to be able to take a class with you. Sincerely, **Amy Huston**

Reader's Mailbag

Hey - you know the little video that Sue Walters had that you put in your newsletter last month? I grabbed my woodburner that night the newsletter came out and did one up and then colored each little area in with ink dyes. I hope lots of gourders give this a try. ... it took 2nd place in "dyed gourd" category at the recent Indiana Gourd Festival! Looking forward to seeing you in Pennsylvania ... ! Cheers - **Rita - Kalamazoo Michigan**



Reader's Mailbag

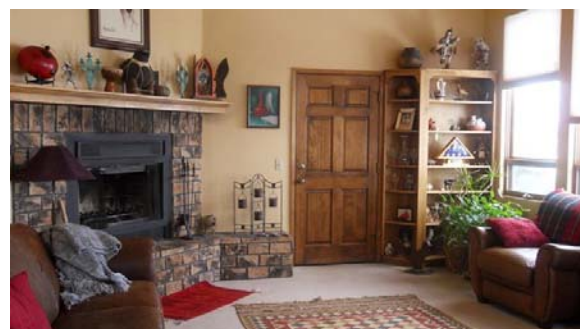
Hi Bonnie: Got your newsletter and while I was looking over your website it occurred to me that some of my favorite gourds were ones made with your [patina supplies](#).
Rosemary Reed - Hillsboro, OR (These are great pieces!)

Report: Classes at the After Midnight Art Ranch

I recently returned from teaching classes at the After Midnight Art Ranch in Sonoita, Arizona. It was a fun and interesting time - when I arrived on Friday, Sonoita had just had a surprising but beautiful snowfall that morning. (Sonoita is at 5000+ feet in elevation, so they get cooler weather than where I live in Tucson.) The weather warmed up quickly and the snow melted by late morning, and by the last couple of days, the weather was in the low 80's during the day and perfect for shorts and T-shirts. Classes were fun; we had students from Massachusetts, Wisconsin, California and Arizona. Plans are already underway for the 3rd annual retreat next April!



Left: Snow on the Lilac bushes!



Right: The living room at the After Midnight Art Ranch - the wooden door leads to a porch with great views.





While out on a walk, we spotted a neighbor's wreath made from barbed wire and horseshoes - and a gourd!



Nice panoramic view just outside of Sonoita. This was taken the same day as the morning snowfall.

Featured Gourd of the Month:

Lizard Pottery

These pieces were made as demonstrations in my recent Air Dry Clay classes. The lizards were sculpted from [Apoxie Clay](#), and then painted with Bronze [Patina Paint](#). Layers of thin acrylic washes create the illusion of old prehistoric pottery. (The large plaque is made from the cut out piece from a large ocean drum - it's about a foot wide.)



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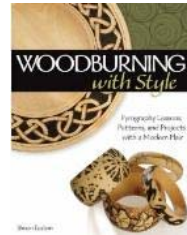
Thanks for checking out the latest news! Feel free to pass the newsletter link along to your friends.
<http://www.arizonagourds.com/May2010.html>

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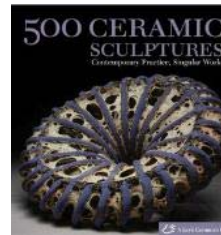
Note: It is important that you add bonniegibson@qwest.net to your "safe senders" list, as many emails bounce each month due to spam blockers.

If your email address changes, just sign up again with your new address - no need to email me the change, as I purge non-working addresses monthly.

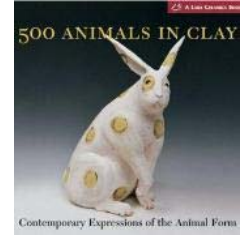
Featured Books of the Month:



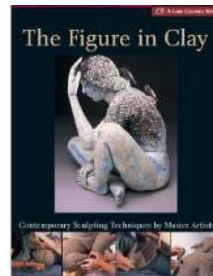
[Woodburning with Style](#)



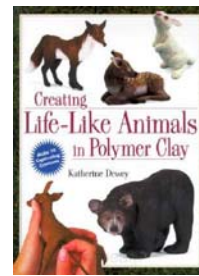
[500 Ceramic Sculptures](#)



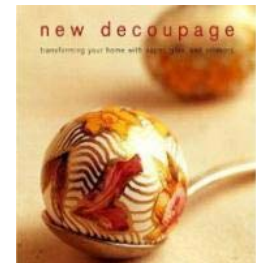
[500 Animals in Clay](#)



[The Figure in Clay](#)



[Creating Lifelike Animals in Polymer Clay](#)



[New Decoupage](#)

Woodburning with Style is available as a **pre-release** - it's the newest offering from Fox Chapel books, who specializes in woodworking related books.

Lark Books has a great "500" series, and **500 Ceramic Sculptures** and **500 Animals in Clay** are great books for designs and ideas. While they don't deal with gourds, they are fantastic for stimulating your creativity.

The Figure in Clay and *Creating Life-like Animals in Polymer Clay* are great reference books if you enjoy sculpting on gourds with clay. The techniques apply to any sort of clay - air dry, epoxy or polymer.

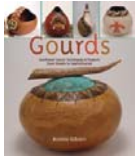
After seeing Vesna's decoupage gourds, I figured the book **New Decoupage** would be of interest. Many people use decoupage techniques to line the interior of gourds, but it's a great technique for adding elaborate (or simple) designs to the outside of gourds as well.



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(Click on book cover for ordering information.)

Gourds Southwest Gourd Techniques & Projects from Simple to Sophisticated by Bonnie Gibson

NOW OUT OF PRINT - supplies are limited. Last chance to get a copy before they are gone!

Arizona Gourds HOME

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