



Arizona Gourds

May updates from the desert southwest...



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Welcome to the May issue of the Arizona Gourds newsletter!

Special Notice: May is going to be a busy month for me! I will be traveling to teach classes in California and in Texas. I will be away during these dates: May 9th - 19th and again from May 27th - June 1st. 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.



Just for fun - last month you saw a piece of my gourd art that appeared to be hung in an art museum. Here's some effects showing a gourd on a Rubik's cube and a jigsaw puzzle! Several people wrote to ask about this website. Want to try some of these photo manipulations yourself? Visit Dump.com to create your own free museum framed photos, Rubik's cube photos, "pencil drawings" from your own photos, and more.



Update: Gourd Classes

My classes at the [Leiser Gourd Festival](#) just outside of Sacramento, California are sold out. I will NOT have a booth at the festival, but will have supplies available for sale at all of my classes. Please stop by to say hello!

I am teaching for the first time at the [After Midnight Art Ranch](#), located in Sonoita, Arizona, from June 12-15th. Linda Hanson, is hosting us at her ranch in the scenic (and cooler) rolling hills of southern Arizona. I am trying to cut back on the classes I teach in Arizona, so this is a great opportunity to take several classes at one event. Sign up for these classes is on the After Midnight website. *You may sign up for any of the classes individually. If you need lodging nearby, please contact Linda for more information.*

Future class dates: Florida Gourd Retreat - September, Texas Gourd Show - October

*Join my 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?



New to the website - spools of Sea Grass. Each roll contains about 130 feet and is great for weaving projects. These spools are inexpensive and in limited supply, so stock up now. During the month of May these will be at a special price. You will find them on the [Kits, Displays and Miscellaneous Supplies page](#).

Also new to the web site - if you don't know how to wire wrap, but would like to turn a piece of dichroic glass into a beautiful pendant, try these new silver plated bails that are made for use with fused glass or other flat backed stones or cabochons. See them on the [Glass page](#). (I also have lots of



Back in Stock: [Dyed Pine Needles](#), [Diamond files](#), [Feathered and Beaded Cabochons](#), [Beaded Pins](#), [Wood Hardener](#), plus new [Turquoise Cabochons](#).

New - Reduced Prices on Structured Tooth Carbide Burs and Sets on the [carving burs page](#).



By request, the Blue Jay, Cardinal and Background Patterns are now available separately. Now you can purchase the **patterns only** (no written directions) instead of the complete project packet. They are on the [projects page](#).



May Feature - Southern Gourd Retreat

What is a "Gourd Retreat" anyway? A gourd retreat is smaller than a full blown show. It focuses on classes, camaraderie, friendships and does not include competitions or lots of vendors. Most people stay on-site and soak in the gourding atmosphere. Usually the size of the retreat location limits the numbers of participants. I've had the good fortune of attending a few retreats, and have had a wonderful time at each of them. It's almost like going to summer camp when you were a kid, but without the stuff you didn't like such as mean counselors and bed checks! Plus, you get to do what you love all day long (or relax and enjoy the surroundings.)

The **Southern Gourd Retreat** is held just outside of Savannah, Georgia. This event owes its existence to the hard work of Charlotte Durrence. In previous years, she was assisted by her good friend, Faye Davis who succumbed to cancer earlier this year. In honor of Faye, a special auction was held at the retreat, with all proceeds going to the Down's Syndrome charity (a charity that is dear to the heart of both of these ladies.) The auction featured donations from so many generous people that over \$2500 was raised! Bob James, the AGS President served as auctioneer and did a fabulous job. The high point of the auction was bidding on a fantastic hand painted and beautifully stitched gourd themed quilt, but there was also tons of gourd art, supplies and more - something for everyone!



Retreat Hostess Charlotte Durrence greets arriving guests and transports them on her chariot.



This way to the Gourd Retreat!



Dogwood trees bloom in front of the cabins.



Gourd growers brought piles of beautiful gourds.



Chow line - great southern cooking!



Retreat Center - main building.



My husband Ev and I were treated with true southern hospitality (and I gained a few pounds!)



Laraine Short shows off her carving class project.



Mary Ann Barnes works on her Peacock Feather gourd.



Carving with cutouts - class example.



These ladies are obviously having a good time!

Darlene Whitetree enjoys her basketry class.



Becky Folsom, Judy Poulson and Peggy Ash.



Charlotte (hiding in the bushes) spies on an ongoing class...



Peggy Hoffmaster donated two cute gourd sheep for the silent auction. She showed me how to make this one - it made a great Easter gift for my stepmom.



Speed drying painted raku gourds in the oven!



A finished raku gourd.



Just a few of the many wonderful auction donations. Everyone was very generous!



The auction highlight was this beautiful handpainted gourd quilt!



Laraine Short and I collaborated on this gourd. I carved it during class, and she painted it. It brought \$225 for the Down's Syndrome fund raiser.



Photographs courtesy of Becky Folsom

2007 World Record Long Gourd



Gourd slinger



Here is a video showing your friend, Urena of Napa, California. He has grown some amazing long gourds! The second video shows a surprising use for gourds - it looks like fun.



Reader's Mailbag

Subject: Such an inexpensive investment yields fantastic results!

Bonnie, I recently purchased the set of 3 diamond wheels. It has taken my carving to a whole new level. The carved images pop out now and the edges are crisp and professional. I never truly understood "undercutting" until I bought these wheels. Thanks!

Once inspiration and my new bits were in my hand (and head) I created this. Inspiration was a Carol Grigg watercolor, I love her work. It was a fun project. I rarely make art for myself. Mine mine mine~!

Susan Harkness-Williams - Sunriver, OR



[Set of 3 assorted Diamond Wheels](#)

Ceremonial Bear Spirit Shield by Sue Harkness-Williams.

This is the piece Sue was working on that prompted her to write me about the diamond wheels. This is a really innovative and beautiful use for a cut off top from a large gourd - Sue always does lovely work!

Tip of the Month:

Inexpensive replacements for Microlux jigsaws and disc sanders

The Microlux company has recently discontinued production of all of their mini power tools.

While a few suppliers may have some remaining saw blades and sanding discs, these are going to be hard to find in the future. Fortunately, there are inexpensive alternatives you can make yourself.

Instead of the regular replacement blades, you can also use scroll saw blades in the Microlux mini jig saws (regular flat plate saw and the cross saw ball foot) It really does not matter what brand or teeth type you choose as long as they will fit into the blade holder (the slot on the saw). Any brand of scroll saw blade will work, but it is important to find some in the same thickness as the original blade. Thinner blades may work but won't stay seated properly; thicker blades won't even fit into the slot. Take an old broken blade with you to the store for reference - the correct thickness is approximately .018. A package of scroll saw blades will normally contain 12 blades that are 5 inches in length and will run \$3 - \$6 depending on brand and where you purchase them. Look for the plain end type if possible; the pin end blades are usually packaged with fewer blades and cost more. You can find scroll saw blades at almost any hardware store.

Clip the blades to the appropriate length (approximately one inch, or you can even make them just a bit longer) with a pair of heavy wire cutters. You'll have to squeeze your cutters HARD!!! Alternatively, cut them with a small stone cutoff wheel mounted in a Dremel tool - these are the small stone discs that are found in almost every kit. They are used in conjunction with a screw mandrel. ***Be sure to wear safety glasses when cutting the blades!** You should get several mini blades from one scroll saw blade.

For the small disc sanders, purchase packs of 6" adhesive no-hole sanding discs. Use an old disc (or use a compass) to draw circles on the back of the discs, and then cut them out with scissors. You will



Here is one blade I've used with great success, **Olson's #4500 blade.**

[\(Click on the photo for details\)](#)

A pack of 12 blades is under \$5 and it will yield up to 36 replacements! There are other brands and types that will also work well.



be able to get 4 discs from one of the large 6" discs. These discs are easy to find at almost any hardware store or home improvement center, and they are easy to cut to size! They'll cost just a fraction of the pre-cut Microlux brand discs and they work just as well.

***I have not found a good substitute for the larger blades used in other brands of saws - most scroll saw blades are too thin for use in the Proxxon, Minicraft and Gourd Saws and don't perform as well. (I stock the regular replacement blades on the [Mini Tools](#) page.) You may also want to see [last month's newsletter](#) for the tip on quick sawing with filigree burs!**

**Do you have a tip or tutorial we can feature here? Please [contact me](#).*

6" Adhesive sanding discs (no-hole). **(Click on the photo for an example)**

Sometimes you may find a pack of assorted grits, but most often they are packed in individual grits. You'll get 4 mini sanding discs from each larger disc. If you have your sander set up with hook and loop sandpaper, you can still cut your own replacements from larger discs or rolls of hook and loop.

Reader's Mailbag

I am new to crafting with gourds and have learned mostly from books and online. I have long admired your work and would love to take some classes, however most are too far away. Is there any chance you might come to Oregon, specifically Portland? There does not seem to be a gourd society around here that I can find. Nancy

How about it, Oregon gourders? It's about time to band together and get a state chapter going!

Also, I do travel to teach. If your group is interested in having me come to your area, please contact me and we'll work together to make it happen.



Beautiful carved gourd by Phiny Musgrove. Phiny started this gourd at the Southern Gourd Retreat and sent me a photo of the finished results!



Another gourd from the Advanced carving class, this one is by Louise Leake. I think both of these gourds turned out great!



Another nice gourd by Phiny Musgrove. This one had an added piece of dichroic glass as an accent, and she also used some patina paints.



I really like this carved gourd by Mary Gehley! Mary took my basic power carving class and did some fantastic design work! It's very creative and beautifully done!

Reader's Mailbag

I just have to compliment you on your newsletters, but I can't find words strong enough!!! Not only is your art OUTSTANDING, your newsletters are right up there on par with your gourds!! Having had and maintained (on an erratic schedule ;-)) a website, I am truly incredulous at your ability to produce MONTHLY newsletters with the look of some of the finest websites!!! How do you do it!!!!???? You ARE "Fine Gourd Art" in my book!!!! Again, my compliments!!!! John Stacy - Texas

**This comment meant a lot to me, considering it comes from the original "Gourdfather". Many years ago, John started a gourd website called the Gourdpatch, where his online members were "Patch Pals". His website was one of the earliest gourd related sites and the one that introduced me to other gourders. I owe him a big thanks for his support when I was just getting started in the late 90's.*

Reader's Mailbag

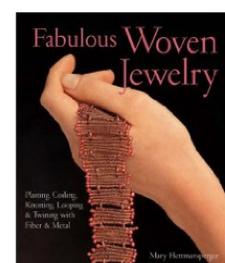
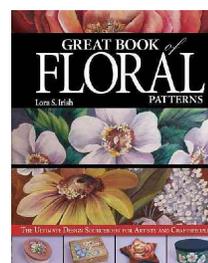
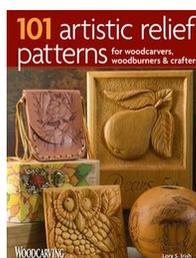
Hi Bonnie, I received my order, and wow, was I ever surprised! Thank you so much for all the freebies, I never expected you to "throw in" so many extras! Thank you so much, I really appreciate it, and thank you for working with me on this order and answering all my questions, and going the extra mile for me! I am never ever disappointed with the quality of the merchandise I get from you, and your service is top notch too! Sincerely, Vicki P - KY

Featured Gourd of the Month:

Art Deco Scarab

You have to look twice to see the scarab beetle hidden in this art deco style design. The body is accented with [dichroic glass](#), and the band of copper leafing adds some glitz to the design.. The added lid has a handle made from a [chopstick rest](#).

Featured Books of the Month:





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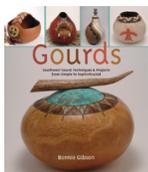
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<http://www.arizonagourds.com/May09.html>

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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.

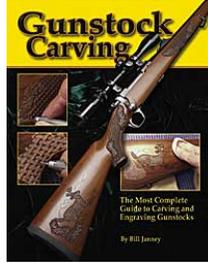


(Click on book cover for ordering information.)

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

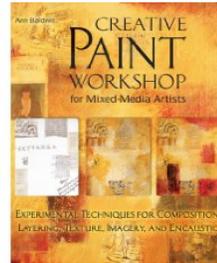
NOW OUT OF PRINT - supplies are limited. Last chance to get a copy before they are gone!

[101 Artistic Relief Patterns](#)



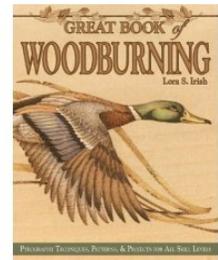
[Gunstock Carving](#)

[Great Book of Floral Patterns](#)



[Creative Paint Workshop for Mixed Media Artists](#)

[Fabulous Woven Jewelry](#)



[Great Book of Woodburning](#)

101 Artistic Relief Patterns and the **Great Book of Floral Patterns** are great books for designs and ideas. Plenty of line drawings as well as how-to's and ideas for applications of the designs.

I saw the book **Fabulous Woven Jewelry** while I was out at the Southern Gourd Retreat. The weaving techniques and other jewelry ideas have intriguing possibilities for uses on gourds as well as gourd jewelry.

Gunstock Carving shows how do do checkering and other intricate carving on gunstocks - but the ideas work on gourds as well. The author uses a Turbocarver for his work which makes for interesting reading.

The Creative Paint Workshop for Mixed Media Artists and the **Great Book of Woodburning** are good resource books on these subjects.



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