

Carving tips for August

Skinny handles:

You can thin down the sides of your knife handles, especially on your detail knives. This will let you get *closer* to your work. Try it on an old knife, it really does help.

Kutzall burr cleaning:

To clean your Kutzall Burrs you can brush them out with a steel brush. If you used wood with pitch, resin, or lots of oil you might soak the burr in acetone or nail polish remover and then brush. After it has been cleaned to prevent further problems, spray your burr with a little "PAM"™ kitchen oil -- this helps keep the wood from lodging tightly in your burr. P.S. Easy Off Oven Cleaner™ also will help dissolve the wood and there is a commercial cleaner out that works very well!

More burr cleaning tips: Your Kutzalls clogged? Use a small torch to burn out the wood fibers. Doesn't harm the burr at all. You can also use oven cleaner. Spray it on and let sit for awhile and then use a wire brush to brush off the wood particles that the oven cleaner has brought to the top. Be careful using these methods and go outdoors to do it.

Tracing tip:

Put a piece of carbon paper under your pattern as usual. Place a piece of tissue over the pattern and trace it on your work piece. This will save your pattern, leaving it like new. You can also see where you have drawn and where you have not. Take that one step further and place a thumbtack or one of those long pins through the tissue paper, the pattern and the carbon paper so if you miss some of the lines you can reline up all three accurately sheets and complete the tracing. Changing the size of a pattern: When making a pattern from a carving, place the carving in front of a wall and parallel to it. Tape a piece of white paper on the wall and place a strong light in front of carving. The shadow on the paper leaves a detailed outline of the carving. Moving the lamp closer or further from the carving shrinks or enlarges the pattern.

Pattern material:

If you know of a Radiology Lab in your area or fortunate enough to have an X-Ray Technician in your family or as a friend, ask them to bring you exposed X-Ray film. It makes perfect patterns. It is also safe to use.

For really brittle woods, especially in undercuts on relief carvings: mix a solution of 5 parts water to 2 parts of white (Elmer's) glue. Paint this on the weakened areas of the carving and allow to dry. The glue will penetrate the dry wood and add some needed strength while you work the areas around and underneath the area.

If you need to darken a piece of black walnut that isn't quite dark enough, paint it with a 10% solution of lye to get proper effect. The best way to do this is to work the wood to the desired dimensions first and then wash or paint on the solution. After drying the piece should be polished with fine sandpaper. Care must be taken not to make the lye solution too strong. Don't forget the microwave oven can be used to dry small pieces of wood - at low temperature. Several sessions at a lower temperature are usually better than one time at high temperatures.

If you are working on a piece and you are worried about it checking or splitting, store it in a plastic bag along with some damp towels or cloths between carving sessions. Also, be sure to not store it where there are wide temperature variations.

Need to fill in a crack or check? Mix sawdust from your piece with glue and put into crack or check. When dry, carve or sand and finish as usual. A piece of the same kind of wood can be glued into a large crack or hole and then carved to fit.

Hairline crack in your carving? Pick up some acrylic paste from any art supply store. It can be colored to match any wood, using acrylic paints. This paste will fill in hairline cracks and can also be piled up to about 1/8" thick without cracking. It can then be carved and sanded like wood and will take any finish you wish.

Need a good wood filler? Use baking soda. Just fill in the crack or hole and add a drop or two of super glue. You can carve and paint it when it hardens.

Often logs or even large blocks of wood develop checks from drying stress. Checks often develop in the most undesirable places. The usual remedy of pushing in glue and sawdust mixture doesn't work well. Try putting in the glue first. Work the glue down into the checks with a thin knife blade, then sprinkle the area with sawdust and work it into the check.

When air drying wood, make sure you separate the layers of wood with a stringer so that air can circulate between the layers. Also, coat the ends of the boards with sealer. Commercial sealers are available but you can also use latex paint or wax. The sealing should be applied to the logs as soon as they are cut. If not, apply it as soon as possible. The sealing drives the moisture toward the center of the board or log. This keeps the wood from splitting on the ends and helps the wood to dry uniformly.

Staining tip:

Since most carpenters' glues are almost colorless when dry, it is often missed until the stain is applied. That tell-tale white spot or line shows up. To solve this problem, tint the glue with food coloring. A few drops of red or green will make any squeezed out glue highly visible and easier to sand off.

Use matte spray to seal your carvings before painting and after painting. Spraying on after painting will protect the paint when the carving is handled and will preserve the colors for years to come. Matte spray will not leave a shiny finish and dries quickly.

Gesso is a paste made by mixing glue with plaster of Paris, gypsum or whiting is used as a base for painting on canvas or wood. It is useful for several kinds of applications because it can be textured, sanded smooth or carved. It can be applied thick (if it is to be carved or used to fill cracks) or thinned with water for a thin, smooth coat. Gesso serves as a good bond because it is absorbent for both oil and water based coatings.

Gesso can be used for basecoat, say on a grey wolf. After burning the fur with a very hot tip, paint the fur with Gesso and while wet, scrub the fur with a tooth brush. The Gesso mixes with the charcoal and produces a nice shade of grey for your basecoat.

You can apply paint thinner to the wood before finishing and any scratch or other unwanted marks will show up. The thinner will not affect the wood. Secondly, take the piece out in the sunlight. The sunlight will show up these marks very well. Also use the sunlight to check out your paint finish. You will be shocked at what you see out in the sun.

Wax-based shoe polish is a great stain and filler for open-grained woods such as oak and walnut. Using a small jar place a small chunk of shoe polish with enough turpentine to liquefy. Rub the liquefied in and wipe off as with any other stain. Choose your shades and, of course, test on a piece of scrap first to confirm desired effect. This coating will not interfere with subsequent finishes.

Housekeeping notes

During June and July a lot of people sent me emails with points of interest that I have tried to include but am not sure I found all my notes. If I have forgotten anything please send me a new email so I can include it in the September issue.

As everyone is aware, postage has gone up again. Sometimes we need to send a message to the members and it would be faster and less expensive to use email. Over time a number of email addresses have been collected but we are still missing many members. If anyone has an email address that you would like to pass on for our list please email to Barbara Wade at her email address which you will find at the end of the newsletter under Maine Woodcarvers Assn. Officers. We would love to add it to the growing Email Address List.

Thanks.

Another reminder to all the members, Membership Dues need to be mailed to Barbara Wade our new secretary. It is getting that time of year that we have to remember to do this.

I again want to thank everyone for the patience with me as I am learning to do the newsletter.

Everyone mark their calendars for September 29 & 30 for the Maine Woodcarvers and Wildlife Art Show in Augusta. If you have a couple of hours and would like to volunteer you are always welcome. Volunteers are needed in many areas so come join the fun.

Complete competition rules and show details will be in the September Newsletter.

CARVING CLASSES & WORKSHOPS

Ed Hawkes is offering carving classes and workshops at his home studio in Bar Harbor, Maine. Group classes will be offered and private lessons can be arranged.

A 1-day workshop scheduled "*Carving Feather Pins*" (August 25). A 3-day bird carving class will be scheduled soon. Please send Ed suggestions for any workshops you would like to see offered.

If you would like to be added to his *Class Announcement Mailing List*, please send your e-mail address, mailing address, and phone number to carvered@prexar.com or to 52 County Rd, Bar Harbor,

2007 Carving dates to remember:

August 5	Nova Scotia Folk Art Festival	Lunenburg, NS
August 10, 11 & 12	New Brunswick Wood Carving Comp. & Show	St. Andrews, CA
August 18	Green Mountain Woodcarvers Annual Show	Morrisville, VT
August 11, 12 & 13	Mystic Carvers Shore Bird Seminar	Mystic, CT
August 24, 25 & 26	American Folk Art Festival	Bangor, ME
August 26 – Sept. 3	Windsor Fair	Windsor, ME
September 21, 22 & 23	Common Ground Fair	Unity, ME
September 28 – Oct 8	Topsfield Fair	Topsfield, MA
September 29 & 30	Maine Woodcarvers Association Annual Show	Augusta, ME
October 5, 6, 7 & 8	Woodcarver's Retreat	Mystic, CT
October 12 & 13	Chesapeake Wildfowl Expo	Salisbury, MD
October 21	NEWCA Spirit of Wood Annual Show	Bedford, MA
November 10 & 11	Wildlife Art Show	Topsfield, MA
November 9, 10, & 11	Waterfowl Carving Show	Easton, MD

MWCA CHAPTER * DATES, TIMES and LOCATIONS

CAPITAL CARVERS

Every Thursday, 6-7 PM

445-2688 or 445-2078

George Gunning's workshop

Legion Park Road, Windsor, ME

CARVER STREET CARVERS

Every Tuesday, 1-3 PM

Barbara McCutcheon 453-6048

Seton Village Senior Center, 1 Carver Street,
Waterville, ME

CENTRAL MAINE CARVERS

6-8 PM, 1st Wednesday, monthly

873-3370, Dave Brown

32 Burleigh St., Waterville, ME

COASTAL CARVERS

4th Saturday, 1 PM

563-2034, Jim Wade

D&L Printers, Route 1, Newcastle, ME

SOUTH COAST CARVERS

4th Tuesday, 7-8:30 PM

603-664-2813, George Calef

Crossings at Fox Run Mall, Goslin Rd,

Newington, NH

STREAKED MOUNTAIN WOOD CARVERS

2nd Saturday, 1 PM

388-2472, Bob Perry

Sumner, ME

**Check for possible changes in sched*

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Notice of publication

The Maine Carver is published monthly by the Maine Wood Carvers Association, a non-profit 501 (C)(3) organization dedicated to the education, promotion, and advancement of artists who express themselves in wood.

Please submit all material for *The Maine Carver* before the 25th of the month for the next month's publication.

Membership Fees: Individual Member: \$15, Family \$22.50, annually. All membership fees are due and payable by September 1.

The Maine Carver accepts advertisements without making any guarantees implied or otherwise as to the quality of products or services advertised, or delivery of these products/services. The Maine Wood Carvers Association shall not be held accountable for typos and other errors appearing in *The Maine Carver*.

Advertising in the MAINE CARVER

Members (non professional) are permitted one free 1/8 page advertisement in any month.

ALL other advertisements are charged according to the following schedule:

½ page ad = \$20 per month - \$240/yr
¼ page ad = \$10 per month - \$120/yr
⅛ page ad = \$5 per month - \$60/yr

½ pg = 3.25" x 9.5" or 6.5" x 4.75"
¼ pg = 3.25" x 4.75"
⅛ pg = 3.25" x 2.25"

[A non-professional does not sell carvings]

[A ⅛ page ad approximates a business size card]

Payment for advertising, made by check made out to Maine Woodcarvers Association, must be received in advance by; Barbara McCutcheon, Editor

13 Liberty Street
Fairfield, ME 04937



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HIGHLIGHTS !

In this issue

- Bird of the Month**
- Show Update**
- Carving Tips**