

# Carver's Corner



Capital Woodcarvers of Salem

November 2013

## President's Message

This time of the year there seems to be a lot of things that come at us all at once -- Thanksgiving, Christmas, friends and relatives visiting or our visiting them. What we really need to keep in mind the purpose of the holiday season and relax and enjoy the season and what opportunities we have to get together with friends and family and visit and laugh and share a few days or hours with them.

As a club, we have some business to attend to and take this time to remind you of what's coming up.

This news letter is the last one we will be mailing. Your newsletter will be available online monthly at [www.capitolwoodcarvers.org](http://www.capitolwoodcarvers.org). A few newsletters will be available at the meetings.

Election of officers is to be held this month, and you can refer to the October news letter (online) to see what offices are up for election.

We also have the ornament exchange to do this month and our fund raiser at the Albany fair grounds coming up at the first part of December.

The last club function of the year is held on New Year's Eve at the Roadhouse Grill at 5:30. We will be making reservations for the club members wanting to come and enjoy the evening, have a nice dinner and welcome in the New Year. If you plan to attend, call Dave Disselbrett at 503-390-9125 or let him know so he can add you to the reservation list.

As you know, this will be my last meeting as your president. I've had a great time working with all of you and sharing our hobby of wood carving. The time has come for me to step aside and let someone else steer the club and help it grow and get even better.

Fishing season is between fish runs currently. Fall salmon is winding down and winter steelhead are just beginning. It is one of my favorite times of the year because these fish are "hot" and great eating. I've been told that there will be a lot of big fish this year and I'm always looking for that 20 pounder.

I'm looking forward to seeing all of you at our meeting. If you can, bring a friend to the meeting or invite someone you know who you think will enjoy the hobby of wood carving also.

Don

Capitol Woodcarvers meets  
the last Tuesday of each  
month, except the months of  
August and December.  
Meetings are from 7 to 9P  
at the Center 50+

November

Burning on Paper with  
Cindy Adams  
Snacks: Sue Funk, Billie  
Faulkner, Laurie Cobb

December

No Meeting

**“Bored” Dinners and  
Breakfasts**

Dinner 6:00 PM, Friday  
(unless otherwise noted)

Dec 31  
Best Little Roadhouse

Breakfast 8:00 AM, Sat  
(unless otherwise noted)

Nov 30 – Annette’s

Dec 14 – Sassy Onion

# A Little Preparation Saves Chips, Checks, Crack

Borrowed from the website of the Smoky Mountain Wood-  
carvers at <http://woodcarvers.com/hints.htm>

## Using Denatured ALCOHOL to Soften Wood

Some woods, such as walnut or oak, are very tough and hard to carve. You can soften the wood up by applying de-natured alcohol to it. The alcohol will not cause the grain to raise like water will. The alcohol, of course, will evaporate with time. Works great on end grain as well.

## Stabilizing Wood With Shellac and Alcohol

Some woods will be pithy and will fuzz up (some basswood) when you cut it or grind it. I have found that when you mix 50% de-natured alcohol and 50% white shellac and coat the wood, it stabilizes the wood and makes it very smooth to cut and grind. This mixture will not hurt the wood or cause the grain to raise up. You can paint or burn the wood after you finish carving just like always. You will have to re-apply the mixture as you waste the wood.

## Help for Preventing Pieces from Checking

It is worth leaving wood in your shop for some time before carving it, whether it has been air or kiln dried, so as to allow it to acclimatize and settle down. Ideally the wood should be stored for awhile where the carving will finally reside but this is neither practical or very possible. Be aware of dry atmospheres such as centrally heated houses such as most of us have. Keeping wood in a damp out-building or garage, and then bringing it into a warm, very dry house is asking for trouble. Try to introduce what you need gradually - perhaps initially in a plastic bag- some time before you need it and keep an eye on it. Keep work covered in a plastic bag between carving sessions. Keeping damp rags or towels in the plastic bag with the wood also helps.

(Cont.)

### **Help for Brittle Wood**

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. (Editor's note: most any water soluble glue will work). Our thanks to John Mark Vaughn for this tip.

### **Darkening Wood**

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 the 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 use to dry small pieces of wood - at low temperature. Several sessions at a lower temperature are usually better than one time at high temperatures.

### **Splitting or Checking**

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. 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. Thanks to Bob Lowe for this tip.

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 into hairline cracks and can be piled up to about 1/8" thick without cracking. It can be carved and sanded like wood and will take any finish you wish. 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. The crevice will be more deeply filled.

# Area Classes and Open Carving to Keep You Busy

## Sunday (Dec 15)

9 AM -3 PM All ability levels and beginners are welcome. No registration required. Cost is \$15/session. Taught by Dave Disselbrett. Keizer Art Association, 980 Chemawa Rd NE, Keizer

## Mondays

9:30 AM -3 PM Everett Koontz (503.581.8428) hosts an open carving session at his house each Monday. Bring a sack lunch and a project to work on

7 -9 PM First 3 Mondays of the month. All ability levels and beginners are welcome. No registration required. Cost is \$5/session. Taught by Dave Disselbrett at the Keizer Art Association

## Tuesdays

Chip and Relief Carving with Sam Hutchinson at the Center 50+ craft room, 2615 Portland Road NE, Salem, OR 97301 503.588.6303 \$15/session, 9 - noon

## Wednesdays

9 am - noon \$7/session. Center 50+ craft room with Dave Disselbrett

## Thursdays

1 - 5 PM Kenny Wilson's Realistic Bird Woodcarving Class. Beginner through advanced, hand carving or power tools. Cost is \$20 per session plus cost of wood. Silverton Arts Association, 303 Coolidge St, Silverton, OR. 97381. Phone: 503.873.2480

## Fridays

1 -4 PM Center 50+ Open Carving upstairs in the craft room at the Center 50+

*There is no December Meeting.  
We wish you the best of holidays and  
will see you again after  
the New Year to kick off a  
fun filled 2014!*