



April, 2016 Newsletter

GENESEE VALLEY WOODCARVERS

Meetings are held from 7 to 9 PM on the 2nd Monday of the month (except July and August) at:
The 40 & 8 Club (across the street from Gleason Works)
933 University Avenue, Rochester, New York
Web site: <http://gvwoodcarvers.com/>

Important Disclosure: Wood carving and whittling may be habit forming and could prevent you from engaging in household chores and other unpleasant tasks. Carving is enjoyable and you may be prone to share it with others: thus, causing them to experience the same distractions from less pleasant tasks as you may have experience yourself

GVW OFFICER: Co-**Presidents:** Alison Currie & Harry Patrick; **Treasurer:** Mel Connell ; **Web:** Alison Currie; **Show Chair:** Chris Nilsen; **Membership:** Anthony Filetti; **At Large:** Anthony Filletti; **Newsletter:** Floyd Lombardi

❖ **GVW 2015/2016 MEETING & ACTIVITY SCHEDULE**

➤ **President's Corner: (April, 2016)**

Well, here we are... Spring has arrived and our carving show is a only couple of weeks away. Member entry registration is Friday April 15th from 3:30 to 6 PM. The current rules can be viewed on our website at:

<http://gvwoodcarvers.com/CompetitionRules2016Final.pdf>
<http://gvwoodcarvers.com/ChampagneDivisionRules2016.pdf>

The show opens on Saturday April 16 at 10 AM. We hope everyone has been busy finishing carvings to enter or display in the show. We kindly ask all club members to bring in a couple of their favorite carvings for the club display tables. Let's all work together to make this year's show one of our best! Area clubs have been invited to participate so it's important that the *Genesee Valley Woodcarvers* have a good showing. Remember to talk up the show with your friends, neighbors, and colleagues. All are welcome!

Alison has created a Facebook event page for the show. If you are a Facebook user, please use it to invite your friends! Search for the event page using the name **32nd Annual Genesee Valley Woodcarvers Show and Competition** or use this direct link:

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1144931548873849/>

Currently we have 63 active members. Five new members joined in 2015 and so far in 2016 we've gained two more new members. One of our club goals is to increase membership so, at our season end meeting in June, we will host a brain-storming session to gather ideas on how to increase membership. New members are the life blood of any organization and, unfortunately, our total membership continues to decrease. Instead of thinking outside the box, let's just get rid of the box. All ideas are welcome. As with last year's survey, Alison & I will meet afterwards, tabulate the results, and forward them to the membership for consideration.

Regards, Harry and Alison

➤ **Meeting Schedule & format:**

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6:30-7:00 PM: Open time for socializing, informal coaching or critiquing, browse the library, & the informal "Show & Ask Me" table.

7:00-7:15 PM: Welcome new members and guests, announcements.

7:00-9:00 PM: Open carving time and/or demos.

9:00-9:30 PM: Room cleanup

April 16: Annual Show.

May 9: Show postmortem and critiques.

June 13: Name tags, social, and elections.

July or August: Carving social at a county park.

❖ MEMBER INFORMATION

- As everyone knows, we said farewell to two of our carving friends and alumni this past month (Charles Mirabella & Bob Carafice). They will be missed but their presence will always be felt! I received a thank you on behalf of the Genesee Valley Woodcarver from the Mirabella family thanking us all for our support of our friend Charlie.

❖ 2 ARTICLES: FUR AND HAIR: I have heard some interest in how to effectively carve Fur or Hair in your carving so it looks realistic. Here are a couple of approaches to this subject matter!

- *Fur Texturing (About How I Do It) : - Wood Carving Blog, by Walter Wharton (posted by waltswoods, 2009)*
Since this blog was posted in 2009, the author would like to know if this page was of any use to you and if so how. Please let him know via the comment block or by email at wj8107gre@att.net.
- Over the years the author, Walter Wharton, has had many people, admirers and fellow carvers ask how he does the fur on my animals and make them so life like. He thought you might be interested. He doesn't say that this is how you should do it as there are many ways to texture fur on your animal carvings, this is just the way he does it. There is another method he uses when I cannot use power in a class.

First the tool I use to do my fur texturing is a 9/32 flat disk (1/4" will do to) diamond burr. I stress flat disk as you can get them tapered also. I prefer the flat disk as I get a clean delineation of the fur. The tapered disk gives a cut similar to that of a "V" tool which I do not like as well. I have pictures of the process that follow this article which I hope show up in the order that I discuss the process.



(1/4th inch diamond disk for fur texturing)

Our carving is a Bear Bust that I have taught in my classes. I use this animal because it allows me to discuss three levels of texturing, from the soft velvety feel of the nose to the full mane of the neck and chest. The first step is to make sure that I have carved in all the rolls of skin and made allowances for areas where the fur may come into a cowlick. Note that animals, with the exception of the human animal, do not generally have parts in their hair, changes of direction occur around cowlicks. My next step is to mark the hair pattern on my carving, the flow of the hair is not the same on all animals so it is best to study the animal you are carving to insure you have the correct pattern. Once the pattern is set I am ready to start the process of texturing. Note that I have used a dark ink to mark the hair pattern on this example, I recommend using pencil for your work.



(Bear Bust used in the example)



(Bust marked for texturing)

I start with the nose as that is where the lightest texturing is going to take place. Here I start with my power and flat disk at a fairly high speed. I start right at the nose and work back toward the brow with a light "tap" of the tool on the bridge of the nose as I do not want a deep cut. All the while I am tapping I am changing, very slightly, the direction of the cuts so that the cuts do not line up like combed hair. I will work a straight line of 1/16" to 1/8" wide straight back to the eye brow. From this line I will gently change my direction over the side of the nose following the flow pattern I have drawn on my carving. I will use the same tapping stroke for the fur around the eyes with special notice of how the hair at the inside of the eye curves from the corner of the eye around and up over the eye brow. This, just barely visible in the picture below but clearer in the pictures showing the wood burning around the eyes.



Nose texturing

Once the nose is done I move to the top of the head where the hair is now a little longer. I show this by moving to a different stroke, rather than tapping the disk on the wood I now move to back and forth motion of the tool allowing the tool to cut a longer cut in the wood and also going a little bit deeper into the wood giving us a look of thicker fur. I still continue to change the direction of the tool so that I don't develop parallel lines. The next picture is an attempt to show what the different depths of cut do to portray the varying thickness of fur. The thicker fur on the neck and chest are accomplished by going even deeper into the wood with the disk, I go as deep as the shank of the tool at times.



(Showing varying depth of cut)

I mentioned earlier that you constantly change the direction of the tool as you are texturing, this is very important to the quality of the finished product. Failing to accomplish this will give you an animal with combed hair. In next two picture's I have shown the result of cutting and burning the combed look.



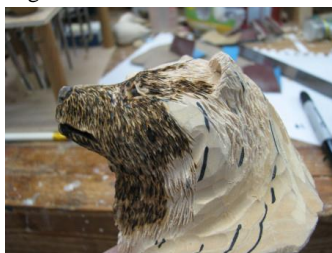
(Developing the combed look - Combed look burned for emphasis)

Compare them with the burned hair in the next picture. It is obvious which is the more realistic look. The change in direction should not be great, just slight, enough to prevent the parallel lines and to keep from getting the "X" look.



(Burned hair pattern)

When I have finished the texturing, I then burn the carving using a round tip, shading tip, that I have modified to burn the hair. To modify the tip I got it red hot and with pliers I bent the tip about 30 degrees. With that bending of the tip I can hold it like a pencil and work with both a forward and backward stroke, using the edge of the tip as opposed to the flat shading area. I follow the same pattern in burning that I used in texturing and as you can see I burn it quite dark. I use washes to paint my carvings and this dark burning gives depth and highlight to the final product. When burning I do not pay any attention to the cuts I have previously put in the carving, my burning may be in the valley or ridge of a cut. I am using the hair pattern, not the cut of my texture, hence I may be crossing the texture pattern. The following pictures show the results of texturing and burn.



This method is not easy as it would appear, the end result is worth the effort. The control of the texturing tool is key to good results and this takes patience. The problems encountered include; not changing direction with each stroke, getting too much change of direction and making X's, using too long a stroke (wanting to get through in a hurry) all strokes should be no longer than 1/4" and impatience (wanting to get through in a hurry). I suggest that you practice a good bit before you start off on one of your good carvings. (If you would like more detailed instruction contact the author)

- **Carving Hair and Fur – Internet** (<http://www.woodworkersinstitute.com/page.asp?p=4805>) posted: Thursday Nov 13, 2014 - Peter Benson provides us with some helpful hints and tips on carving hair and fur, which will make your carvings much more realistic



This photo of a practice head shows detail done with a small V-tool at the top. Below the headband was done with a very small veiner and gives a softer effect.

How you go about this and, in fact, whether you do this at all will depend on the size of your carving. You must remember that you are trying to represent hair or fur and, if the carving is too small, this can be almost impossible to do effectively and it might be better to do nothing at all. Someone once asked me what all the scratches were on one of my netsuke carvings and I replied that they were meant to be fur. He then asked if they looked like fur and I couldn't do anything but reply that they didn't. His response was to ask why I had done them at all then. There was no answer to that.

Carving hair: As most head carvings that are produced are much less than full size there is necessarily a need for a degree of stylizing in any hair carving that is added. What the carver is actually aiming at is to give the impression of hair rather than to make it realistic.

There are many ways to achieve this and all of them work so it is really just a matter of choosing the method that works best for you. For the smallest heads I tend to use different sizes of parting or 'V' tools and, for the larger heads, I would add a small veiner or even a macaroni. These will give a softer look and can also produce a layering effect. If you are carving full size or similar you might like to use a variety of bull-nosed gouges working in a sideways, slicing motion to give you the various sweeps of the hair. This can be very impressive and can result in some really dramatic hair effects but does need a considerable amount of practice to get it right. The smaller the head, though, the more difficult it is to do.

Softening the effect: Once I am happy with the initial blocks I have formed I go over them with a finer tool until it looks right. Sometimes the result gives a hard effect and, if this is the case, I will go over it with a very fine veiner to soften the cuts. I would recommend, if you are not sure how it will look, that you practice on a spare piece of wood. I have a collection of part-carved heads that I use to practice carving eyes, noses, mouths and hair. It doesn't take long to do one of these in something like jelutong (*Dyera costulata*) or bass wood and it can save you a lot of frustration and heartache when carving your 'masterpiece'. The main rule about carving hair is that you don't want any straight lines, each cut should be an elongated 'S', in either direction. Don't be worried if they overlap each other. This will actually add to the effect.

Carving fur: This is not too different from carving hair except that the whole surface is much smoother, generally without the clumps of hair that you would carve on a head. Your cuts should still be the elongated 'S' shape but may well be very much shorter. For very short-coated animals you may even just cut short, almost straight lines. You will mostly use a very small 'V' tool or veiner for this. You will need to be aware of the grain direction throughout the process and, ideally, you want to be carving from the base of the fur to the outside as this will give a finer finish but this will not always be possible. Always take care that the corners of the 'V' tool don't get buried in the wood - sometimes you may be better using a larger tool with a shallow cut than a smaller one.

Important points: There are, however, two important things to remember. Firstly, you need to prepare the surface before you start carving the fur. It needs to be carefully finished to the final shape that you require - once you have carved the fur you cannot do anything else to the carving. Don't leave it rough under the impression that carving the fur will put it right - it won't. Many carvers I know will actually sand the finish before texturing it but I think that careful tooling is generally enough. Whichever you choose, do make sure it is clean.

The second point is that all animals have a correct hair tract. This means that the hair goes in a specific direction around the body with little spirals in certain places where changes of direction occur. You must study these before starting to texture. Look at your dog or cat, stroke it and feel which direction the hair goes and you are well on your way. Many animal carving books will show you the correct hair tracts - study these if you can. There is nothing worse in a carving than to see a lot of straight lines carved in totally the wrong direction supposedly representing fur.

Other methods: I recommend that you first establish the hair tract pattern with a small veiner going over it with progressively smaller 'V' tools until it looks right. It can be a long drawn-out process but will be worth it for the end result.

If you are more interested in carving netsuke or other miniatures you can get a very effective hair or fur effect with a pyrography tool. This needs to be the small scalpel type blade that the bird carvers use to produce feathers. If the heat is turned right down, a very fine cut is produced that won't close up as it would if done with a scalpel. By following the same lines as with the 'V' tool you will end up with a similar effect but much finer. As mentioned earlier, the harder the wood the more effective the result. As with all skills, for success you need to practice - you cannot hope to get it right first time.

Top tips:

1. One small tip here is that it is much more difficult to get a smooth tidy hairstyle on a carving than it is to produce an untidy or curly style. Trying to produce straight hair can often result in it looking like straw or as if the subject is wearing a motorcycle helmet
2. The most obvious way to get the pattern right for the style you wish to carve is to draw it onto the head and then use this drawing as a guide for carving. Unfortunately this can result in some of the pencil lines remaining when you have finished. Also the graphite from the pencil can make the whole carving very dirty. Although you can avoid this by using something like a ball pen instead of a pencil, you can still have some lines left at the end. I recommend that you try to carve the hair without doing any drawing at all. Once you 'get into the flow' you will not find this too difficult
3. In doing very small heads I use a series of small 'V' tools down to 1/32in. I do the initial shaping with a larger tool carving a series of 'blocks' of hair, something like the shape of the tiny little pieces that make up the segments of an orange. With larger heads the basic principle is the same but you just use different or larger tools depending on your individual preference
4. Every head that you carve will have some kind of hairstyle and you need to decide this before you start. You need to be aware of where the hairline is, where the crown is and in what direction the hair lies on the head. Also, remember that the parting in any hairstyle will show the scalp and thus will follow the lines of the head. I have seen many heads with the parting way off the surface of the scalp and it results in the appearance of a very badly fitting wig

❖ **Critique Your Own Woodcarvings: (posted on the net by Michael Keller Woodcarving Jan 5,2011)**

As we reach the final stages of our carvings and get close to our carving show where we will be putting our carving skills on display to fellow carvers and the general public, I thought this article might help you, in some way, before you consider your carving finished and in the presentation of them. As far as I am concerned, any and all the carvings will be great. (*Floyd*)

(*Michael Keller*) Like me, if you have been carving for any length of time, you have probably learned that it is a lot easier to critique another carver's work, while it's more difficult to get a true objective look at our own work. Some of us are way too hard on ourselves and keep "over carving" a carving when it was just fine a few hours or days before. There are also those personalities who overrate their own work – ignoring the fact that the piece has its shortcomings. The rest of us fall somewhere in between the two extremes. So, let's take a look at our own work objectively.

Look At Your Work Objectively: We're all different in our approaches to carving. Some plan, make models and sketches — others just get straight into carving from start to finish. There's no sense in comparing yourself to other carvers. You will always find carvers both better than you and not as skilled as you. What works for you IS what works for you and what works for others, works equally well for them. Accept your own approach and grow with it.

- **When it** comes down to a final self-critique, before a carving is declared finished or goes off to a show, it is important that we have and use a set of principles to judge our work by. Take your feelings out of the process, because feelings aren't always accurate and can change from day to day.
- **Originality aside**, here are some techniques and principles that may be useful in critiquing your own work:
- **Stand back** from your work every so often. It helps to work standing up sometimes; otherwise I tend to get lazy and resist taking a look from a distance.
- **When you** get out of bed in the morning, immediately go to your carving and look at it with the day's fresh perspective. My bet is that it will appear differently than when you last worked on it.
- **Turn your carving** upside down and sideways, look at it in a mirror, or photograph it and flip it backwards in your computer's photo-editor. You'll be amazed at how different the composition looks, and furthermore, problems that other viewers would see (because they're seeing it for the first time) will become quickly apparent. Look for balance. "Out-of-whack" composition will become obvious when a carving is upside down or on its side. Unequal eye or "off" perspective facial features become obvious.
- **Look for a "squared"** appearance. Unless we are carving a box, most things are not squared off. Animals, birds, and human bodies are rounded yet it is easy to make them square. If you are carving a human, hold a photo of a real human up against your carving... what do you see?
- **Does your carving** have a center of interest (not all carvings need one) and does it should stand out as a focal point?
- **Are your cuts** clean or are burrs, chips, and sanding scratches apparent? Are the cuts deep and crisp or shallow and vague?
- **Detail:** In my opinion, good detail is a real eye catcher. How is your detail presented and finished? Is the detail clear and in proportion to the balance of the carving?

❖ **Member's Corner & Contributions:**

- **From Anthony Filetti** : Dylan Goodson has finally finished his video on Carving Eyes! Dylan is quite the accomplished carver (he took Best of Show in Charlotte) having won multiple awards at Congress. The video made its debut at the Showcase of Woodcarvings in Charlotte, NC last week. [You can order it directly off of my website by clicking here.](#) Or by copying the following link in your browser - (<http://oldoakenterprises.com/product-carving-eyes-dylan-goodson-dvd/>). You can also watch a short sample of it there. The CD is selling for \$20.00 plus USPS Flat shipping rate of \$6.80.



- **From Dave Hockenberry**: I received the following notes from Ann Kay referencing the progress of Jim Hotaling. Jim is doing well. Will be going to Cardiac rehab starting tomorrow (March 3rd). It will be a couple of months before he is strong enough to try some carving. His doctors call him a miracle, as they didn't think he would make it. Thank the Lord I didn't know it at the time - I knew he was very critical but always thought he would make it if he came out of the surgery. Very pleased to hear that Jim is making his way through this. Our Prayers are with him.

- **From Anthony Filetti**: In the current issue of Chip chats, March/April 2016, Volume 63 No.2, our own James Butlin was recognized for his "Lazy Day" carving during the National CCA Competition, Seminar. Congratulations Jim on a marvelous carving – every time I see it I want to put my head down and just take a nap!



- **Lucina Brogan**: This past W/E Rex McHail celebrated his 90th Birthday. His celebration took place in Florida surrounded by family and friends. Our congratulations to Rex for reaching this milestone that the rest of us can only pray that we are blessed enough to reach it also. We wish you many more!



MISC INFO, MEMBER PIC'S & TIDBITS

❖ **Editor's Request: "Don't forget those carving images for the Monthly Newsletter!"**

For the Newsletter I'm requesting pics or images of your favorite carvings, **any carving**, to add to the title line and bottom of the monthly newsletters. The images at the top and bottom of the newsletter are old news and I need something fresh and from our carvers. I would like to post and periodically switch off with images of club members creations which shows off the creativity and talent of club members. So, let's show some pride in your creations!

Remember: It's still your newsletter, about YOU, for YOU and what YOU want to know - so just drop me a line & I will do my best to get answers to those questions, your interests in woodcarving into the newsletter and let's not forget those Pics, Tips & or Tidbits! "Just remember I'm interested in helping you and I'm always Listening"

SEE YOU ALL @ the APRIL 16th SHOW & COMPETITION!

"Approach each carving with possibilities instead of limitations"

Floyd Lombardi, Editor (Lombardi_floyd@yahoo.com)

