



CWCA NEWSLETTER

February 2023

Connecticut WoodCarvers Association

Ready for action at NE Woodworking Show on January 13



It was great to be seen again at a major event. Public and vendor participation was a bit below pre-Covid levels, but club member participation was very high. This summer is looking like it will be much like the good old days where our club will be out in the public 'doing it's thing'. We want to be sure that we are looking our best; and planning will be key. If you were at the booth during the event, club officers and planning group members are looking for your input at the 2/5/23 monthly meeting.

Message from the Prez,

A little explanation of fulfilling the goals of CWCA & the Springfield WoodWorking Show: As many of you know, CWCA participates in outside events with the major goal of spreading the artistry and crafts that CWCA members have to share. With that in mind, during the last four Springfield Big E Woodworking Shows, CWCA has been a major feature, including being part of their TV promos, and given complimentary space to participate each year. Next year we have already been told we will have a larger floor space than this year.

During these events we also give information on how to get started to carve. This year, a vendor came over to thank the CT Woodcarvers for sending customers to them so carvers could get started or expand their tools! So we are definitely doing something right!!

I would at this point, like to thank all of you that either helped organize the event, cut sticks, helped set up, or attended and participated as we promote wood artistry.

With the sharing of our carvings, our display attracted attention and brought compliments and questions about carving as well as the CWCA club itself. 200 fliers and business cards were given out giving specifics about our club meetings. Hopefully we will see some of those faces at our next meeting!

The show is about woodworking, including furniture, cabinetry, turning, pattern making and of course carving. All said, we must promote the art of carving for the next generation so they can pass it on to another generation and know we did our part. We need to remember that sharing is not necessarily about what "I" carve but what the attendees would like to carve or create.

Also the Mystic and New England WoodCarvers are part of us in that we all need to work together as a team to keep carving moving forward. Virtual is fine but does not have the human touch that keeps us moving forward.

So....Do we still go out to events?? We will Show! We will Demonstrate! We will Promote the Art and skill of Carving!! and hope to see any and all of you!!!

Remember..Safety first, a keen edge, check your cuts and Happy Carving . . .

Your Pres.



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Upcoming Events

CWCA Club Meeting – Feb. 5, 10 am to 2 pm. (usually 1st Sunday of month).

Open Carving Night – Feb. 16, 7-9 pm at Bristol Carousel Museum (usually 3rd Thurs.)

Barkhamsted Nature Day - April 30 at Peoples State Forest Pavillion. More details to follow.

Flanders Annual Festival – May 20, Carve, display, sell. Under tent. More info coming.

Wood Carvers New England Retreat – Litchfield, CT. Sept. 15-18. This is new generation of the Mystic Carvers retreat. Mark your calendar. Details to follow.

White Memorial Earth Day - Sept 23. Hold the date. More info to follow.

For additional info on a calendar events, check club web site.



Carving and Wood Grain



All grain types except straight grain can be a blessing or a curse because it can accent your carving or weaken it. It can definitely frustrate the carver who doesn't know how to work with it, and sometimes do the same to an experienced carver.

With new carvers joining CWCA to learn the basics, it doesn't hurt to check your understanding of this characteristic of wood. Being able to explain it well will make it easier to prevent frustration and injury of a novice carver.

Under a microscope, the cross section of a tree is primarily composed of long cells – similar to straws. These straws carry water and minerals from the roots to the crown of a tree. Collectively, the arrangement of these cells is referred to as 'the wood grain'.

Variation in size of these vertical cells matters to carvers. We say "fine-grained" & "coarse-grained" to describe the 'texture' of wood. Another characteristic of wood that matters is other wood cells which go in alternate directions to strengthen the tree, to form branches, and to help the tree to deal with insects, gravity, and a variety of injuries. These other cells bring good & bad effects . . .

How Grain Affects Carving



As a carver, you know that grain affects every cut you make. For example, if a knife goes between vertical cells, those fibers may tear apart. If controlled, that tear (aka split) can separate sections of the piece you are working with, and help you by removing a larger unwanted section. But, if you lose control of a split, it can easily ruin a carving, or at least delay progress (time to break out the glue). Effective carving technique requires that you 'work with the grain'. Other considerations with respect to grain in carving are strength & beauty. The easiest to carve types of wood may be weak and lackluster.

In some cases, it may be very important to lay out a project so the wood grain runs the length of the most fragile regions of the piece - to maximize strength. It may also be important to locate the impressive grain features front and center in a carving - if you are planning on a natural finish.

Whenever you are carving there are transition points where you need to change the direction of your cut. There are areas you must cut away from, and others you must cut toward, so your tool will not go between the cells and cause an unwanted split.

When facing knots, burls, and dense-grained wood, you may need to dig deeper into your repertoire of knife cuts. Sweeping / shearing cuts can help you to get across end grain and thru chaotic grains.

Or you can dig deeper into your tool box for different types of blades - i.e. swept, hooked, & bent. Or different classes of tools like chisels and gouges. And that is the all-important justification for buying that special tool - you know that some day it will be well worth whatever you paid for it!