



CWCA NEWSLETTER

March, 2026

Connecticut Wood Carvers Association

Upcoming Events

- Mar. 1 - * **CWCA Club Meeting & Elections** 10am-2pm at CFPA. [Back at our usual location!](#)
- Mar. 19 - * **Evening Carving Night** 5-8pm - at Bristol Carousel Museum (usually 3rd Thurs.)
- Mar. 21 - **Parkerville Wood Maker Event** - 9-2 580 Parker St., Manchester, Ct
- Mar. 28-29 - **Woodworker Showcase** - at Saratoga Springs N.Y. 9-4
- Apr. 12 - * **CWCA Club Meeting** 10am-2pm - at CFPA. (Moved due to Easter. Usually 1st Sun.)
- Apr. 16 - * **Evening Carving Night** 5-8pm - at Bristol Carousel Museum (usually 3rd Thurs.)
- Apr. 25 - **Berlin Peck Memorial Library** maker event 10-2
- Apr. 26 - * **Barkhamsted Nature Day** more information later.
- May 1-2 - **Fine Woodworking Show** CT School of Woodworking more information later.
- May 3 - * **CWCA Club Meeting** 10am-2pm - location TBD (usually CFPA on 1st Sun.)
- May 16 - * **Carving Competition & Decoy Show** Westbrook CT
- June 7 - * **CWCA Club Meeting** 10am-2pm - location TBD (usually CFPA on 1st Sun.)
- June 27 - **Meriden Library** maker event 9:30-3:30
- Sept. 18 - 21 - **Woodcarving Retreat** at Wisdom Retreat House in Litchfield. More info later.

Check the club calendar for updates & more info. Hold *control* & right click: [Calendar](#)

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Letter from 'The Prez'

Greetings Fellow Carvers,

With your knife or gouge in hand and wood ready, may the joy of creating a unique carving start your journey to a new piece of pride. No matter if your creation is held in your hand or as a stand alone piece, it is your human power of ability and pride that is yours to feel and enjoy. This accomplishment is felt whether it is the first carving or last one of a series of carvings that span a sense of time over your carving career.

Power carving, whether it is gas, electric or other form of rotary or reciprocating tool, the satisfaction of creating something by your own skill and power that can not be compared with the aid of a rotor or reciprocating tool. For some this may be the only way they can produce a carving. Whatever your choice is, the wood will be the determining factor.

Remember, Safety first, sharp tools and clean cuts and keep the chips falling!

Your pres

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Sanding Without Losing Carving Character

If done carefully and selectively, you can sand without losing tool marks, contours, and texture which give carved wood its handmade appeal.

- Stick to hand sanding for control and finesse. - Power sanders can quickly erase detail.
- Use higher grit (180–320) to avoid aggressive material removal. Avoid coarse grits (below 120), which can flatten details and round edges.
- Spot sand only areas that need smoothing - rough tool marks, splinters, or fuzz. Leave intentional chisel marks or knife cuts untouched to retain the carved aesthetic. In a caricature, sand only areas like cheeks, noses, or hats where a smooth surface enhances contrast.
- Go for precision - Use micro sanding tools to reach tight curves and recesses: sanding needles, sticks, wrapped toothpicks for tight corners, etc.
- Be Grain Aware - Sand *with grain* to avoid cross-scratches that distract from the carving.

Historic notes:

- Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans used natural abrasives like pumice, emery, and sand for smoothing surfaces. The earliest known sandpaper in 13th-century China used crushed shells, seeds, and sand glued to parchment with natural gum. Shark skin and horsetail plants were used for polishing,
- The Industrial Revolution gave birth to modern coated abrasives and various grit numbering systems. The first production of commercial grit-backed abrasive was 1833: John Oakey in London pioneered mass production of “glasspaper” using crushed glass.
- Natural Abrasives have been used for centuries and are still valued for certain applications: Emery, Garnet, Pumice, and Flint.
- Garnet in Connecticut was found in metamorphic rock formations across the state. These sites were mapped and reported in *The Garnet Trail*, a series mapped by a state geologist.
- Grit scales and methods were driven by technological advances and manufacturing needs.
- Synthetic abrasives were engineered for consistency and performance.

Is Horse Butt Leather Really Better?

Many of the best strops are stamped “Genuine Horse Butt.” If horse butt leather is generally considered superior for sharpening woodworking tools, what is the reason ?

It's naturally dense and firm with tight fiber structure, higher density, & more uniform grain. This firmness keeps strop flat, which is crucial for woodworking tools. Because it compresses less under pressure, it maintains a consistent angle & avoids rounding the edge.

Horse butt has a tighter grain than cowhide, so it loads compound evenly and gives a cleaner, more predictable polish. This is especially noticeable when honing high carbon steel or PM V11 steels.

Some people believe that this leather contains more silica, adding to its' effectiveness when used as a strop without polishing compound. But it's not the *only* good option. A kangaroo leather strop or even a hard-mounted cowhide strop may perform just as well for many people. The real key is firmness and flatness, more than the animal of origin.

Upcoming spring classes/monthly projects:

- Quick Carve Snowman – we have a small one for night carve, a larger for stand-alone class
 - Hummingbird and Crane ornaments
 - Stylized Shorebird and chickadee
 - Wonky Whittled Ladybugs
 - Flag Pin
 - Shelf sitting cat
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R U paid up for '26? Please send \$25.00 to Mark Austin to renew your membership.

Checks should be made to 'CWCA' and mailed with following form to: **CWCA Membership, 258 Campville Road, Northfield, CT 06778**

Name _____ New Member? Yes

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____