



# CWCA NEWSLETTER

April, 2024

Connecticut Wood Carvers Association

## Upcoming Events

April 7 **CWCA Club Meeting** 10 - 2 at CFPA

April 18-**Evening Carving Night 5-8pm** -Bristol Carousel Museum (usually 3rd Thurs.)

Apr. 20 **Goodwin Nature Center**. Demo-Walking sticks. More info later.

Apr. 20 **Bird Carving**. At CFPA. More info later.

April 26-27 **CT School of Woodworking-** Tool Sale & Demo

Apr. 28 **Barkhamsted Nature Day-** noon -5pm More info later.

May 5 **CWCA Club Meeting** 10 - 2 at CFPA.

May 16 **Evening Carving Night CANCELLED due to unavailability of venue on this date**

May 18 **Westbrook Decoy Show** More info later.

May 18 **Flanders Farm Day**

June 1-2 **Five Points Big Ink demo & June club meeting**. More info later.

June 20 **Evening Carving Night 5-8pm** -Bristol Carousel Museum (usually 3rd Thurs.)

JULY or AUGUST- **CWCA Picnic** to be determined

July 18 **Evening Carving Night 5-8pm** -Bristol Carousel Museum (usually 3rd Thurs.)

Aug 15 **Evening Carving Night 5-8pm** -Bristol Carousel Museum (usually 3rd Thurs.)

Sept 8- **CWCA Club Meeting** 10 - 2 at CFPA

Sept 19-**Evening Carving Night 5-8pm** -Bristol Carousel Museum (usually 3rd Thurs.)

Sept. 27-30 **Woodcarving Retreat of New England**. Wisdom Retreat House. More info later.

Oct.18 & 20 **Spirit of Wood** at the Carousel Museum. More info later.

Sept. 27,28,29,30 **Woodcarving Retreat of New England**. Wisdom Retreat House. More info later.

Oct.11,12,13 **Spirit of Wood** at the New England Carousel Museum. More info later.

June 9 **Eleanor Buck Wolf Nature Center** . 156 Prospect St., Wethersfield Sat 10-2 Fearie wands

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

Greetings Fellow carvers,

First I would like to welcome all the New Members and thank you for your interest in the Art of Carving!! And if you have any thought or suggestion on how we may help you to create, improve or even to develop an idea or vision, then we are here for you!!

Sometimes a few words may be able to take you to a level where you can start or complete what you have in your mind's eye to give it a chance to be created!! Like all that found wood that has been brought down by storm damage or from pruning Remember that large or small, a carving of some type or style, whether in "the round, abstract, chip" or whatever style you may choose, your mind's eye is where it all begins. With this in mind.....

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

Your prez, Leo

## Hunting for Wood

Inevitably when I'm travelling, my thoughts return to my workshop at home . . . Planning next steps in a project that is waiting for my return . . . Or thinking about the next project I want to start. I might also wonder about what materials I would want to use on a project if I lived in the area I'm visiting.

Once while vacationing in Hawaii, I learned about Koa wood and spent time thinking about things I could make with it. Ahh, the daydreams of a woodworking nerd. I shipped boxes of it home before I left the island.

But if I'm visiting a treeless region, I start wondering what a woodworker would have to do to source wood for projects. Obviously green wood projects would be out of the question. But in that situation any seasoned wood would be so expensive!

As an exercise in empathy, I started asking that question in places that I visited. In Iceland, which has been treeless since shortly after the Vikings settled there in 641ad, it turns out there are far fewer artisans who endeavor to work in wood. But surprisingly, those who do woodwork are still able to get it locally.

Here are some of the sources for wood in treeless areas where I asked questions:



**Reclaimed wood** from deserted old structures and even old furniture that has outlived its' usefulness. In times past, furniture was routinely made with solid wood. Cherry, oak, mahogany, maple, beech, acacia, elm... the list is quite long. People throw things away when they no longer need them and, for a wood carver, that discarded furniture can be a gold mine. Carvers searching for oak might focus on finding old tables and chairs. Those who prefer to carve beech often look for baby cribs and highchairs. Most of these woods are suitable for recycling into utensils and have become quite valuable to carvers and other makers.

**Branch wood** – great for whittling and very small carvings. It's a good idea to select branches that are at least a few inches thick so you can avoid problems with the pith. It also pays to be mindful that branches can crack as they dry.



## Hunting for Wood (continued)

**Less suitable woods** like sappy pine, standing dead wood, or overgrown vines. More advanced wood carvers often select pieces with knots or other interesting aspects. These woods can create completed pieces with beautiful accents but they're usually harder or trickier to carve and often require special care, techniques, and tools. Knots are very hard while the surrounding wood is usually significantly softer. The deformation of the fibers around knots increases the probability of cracks and additional deformations in the finished product.

**New techniques** may be necessary for some difficult woods. A carver and turner on Kawaii in the Hawaiian Islands developed a way to prevent difficult wood from splitting by submerging it in a soap solution. His Norfolk Pine bowls are in great demand and a pleasure to behold.

**Repurpose pallets & crates.** I spoke to a woodworker who lived near a seaport. He showed me carvings and turning made from exotic hardwoods he salvaged from pallets that were intended for a chipper. Pallets from some exporting locations may consider such woods commonplace.

There are many reasons to use recycled wood. They're stable and already dried so they're less likely to crack during the carving process. However, they can sometimes be as hard as stone. With a little patience and care, however, they can still be carved into new vibrant creations.

Many buyers appreciate the idea of items carved from recycled wood and actively search for such pieces. They like the idea that the carver took time to salvage usable wood rather than kill a growing tree. They like that recycling reduces the amount of trash being dumped in landfills which, in turn, reduces the amount of land devoted to storing trash. And many like the fact that the wood has a history. The stories about the previous lifetime of a carved piece of wood can enhance the appeal of your work.

**Scraps & small pieces** can make interesting glue-ups and interesting pairings in pieces that have multiple parts.

**Resurrected wood** that was submerged in water or mud. In Iceland gifts from the sea often float over from Siberia and can arrive in storms in quantities large enough to build houses. There is a cult following of Bog Oak – which is sometimes determined to be thousands of years old, but still suitable for woodworking. It's so expensive that I can only afford pieces big enough for a pen.

**Waste not** – when a tree falls, the word goes out to woodworkers in surrounding locals so nothing is wasted.

One last positive about wood scarce areas: When wood is scarce in an area, people don't waste time debating that nagging age-old question: "How much wood could a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood?"

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PAGE 4

CWCA dues is due every January. Please use form below and make check payable to Connecticut Wood Carvers Association or CWCA. Forward your **\$25 dues payment to: Connecticut Wood Carvers Association, c/o Mark Austin, 258 Campville Road, Northfield, CT 06778-2218** or bring it to the next monthly meeting.

\_\_\_\_\_ Renewal Membership      \_\_\_\_\_ New Member

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: home - \_\_\_\_\_ cell \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_ for newsletter.