

IDAHO WOODCARVERS GUILD

July 2025

Newsletter

Guild Officers

President: Cathy Carson

Vice President: Phil Kelly

Treasurer: Nate Meeks

Secretary: Nate Meeks acting

Trustees:

- Jairus Taylor
- Issac Bradfield
- John Greener

Newsletter:

- Jerry Robertson

IAW Reps:

- John Greener
- Issac Bradfield

Websites:

- Eric Owens
- Michael Chamberlain



MEETINGS

Summer Recess Our regular business meetings are in recess for the summer, and will resume in September. However, open carving sessions will continue throughout the summer season! Join us at Woodcraft on Thursday evenings and at the Meridian Senior Center on Tuesday afternoons to keep the creativity flowing.

Enjoy your summer, and happy carving!

Important Update: New Venue Needed for Thursday Carving Sessions

For years, Woodcraft has generously welcomed us into their store for our Thursday evening carving sessions, and we're incredibly grateful for their support. However, due to a personal matter affecting the employee who stays late on our behalf, the store will now be closing at 7:00 p.m. This leaves us with only one hour—unfortunately, not quite enough time for a meaningful session.

We're now searching for an alternative venue that's **centrally located in the Treasure Valley** and, ideally, **available at little or no cost**. If you have any suggestions or know of a potential space, please reach out to **Eric Owens or anyone on the executive committee**.

Your help in finding a new home for our Thursday gathering is much appreciated!

Getting to Know your Guild vice-president



Phil Kelly grew up in Detroit, MI and is proud to be from Motown. He is currently serving as vice-president of IWG and has been carving for almost three years. Below are Phil's two truths and a lie. Reply and tell us which is the lie.

- 1) Shared a bologna sandwich with Rosa Parks.
- 2) Was once booed by 40,000 people.
- 3) Was valedictorian of his graduating class in 1982.

Monthly Contest

No one quite spotted the hidden Waldo in last month's newsletter—though hats off to Dave Robbins for coming the closest! (Hint: it was tucked into the *Tips* section.) This month's challenge: **can you sniff out Phil Kelly's fib?** Reply to this email with your best guess, and you could win a free knife sharpening from an IWG expert. Let the truth-hunting begin!

Mark Your Calendar



The IWG annual picnic is tentatively planned for Saturday, September 20. The time will be 6:00 pm. More details including the location to be announced later.

The Western Idaho Fair is coming up and it's time to share our love of carving with the attendees of the fair. Below you will find a link to click on for a sign-up sheet. We've broken the time into two-hour blocks with two people for each block. The carving demonstrators will be in the air-conditioned arts/crafts building, so no worries about the heat.

All demonstrators will be given free passes for the days that you are demonstrating. We can't quite confirm it yet, but we may be able to provide passes for a family member as well. we'll confirm that and let you know.

[CLICK HERE TO SIGN UP.](#)

Please just type your name into the time slots that work for you! Thank you in advance for signing up.



Some thoughts about our craft

Wood carving is more than just shaping wood—it's about creating something tangible from raw material, turning imagination into reality. Many carvers love the tactile experience, the smell of fresh-cut wood, and the satisfaction of seeing a project evolve from a rough block to a refined masterpiece. The rhythmic motion of carving can be meditative, offering an escape from daily stress.

It's also a deeply personal and expressive art form. Each cut reflects the artist's touch, and the grain of the wood adds its own unique character to every piece. There's something rewarding about working with a natural material and embracing its imperfections rather than forcing it into an exact mold.

For some, it's about tradition and craftsmanship, keeping ancient skills alive. Others enjoy the challenge of mastering new techniques, whether intricate relief carvings or whimsical figures. And then there's the joy of sharing—the delight in gifting a hand-carved item or seeing someone admire their work.

1. Connection to Nature

Wood is a natural, living material. Many carvers appreciate the unique character of each piece—grain patterns, textures, and even knots—which gives each project a sense of individuality.

2. Tactile Satisfaction

The physical act of carving—shaping wood with hands and tools—is deeply satisfying. The resistance of the material and the feeling of tools moving through it can be meditative.

3. Creativity and Expression

Carving allows for personal expression and storytelling. Whether it's a detailed sculpture or a simple spoon, the final piece often reflects the artist's vision and personality.

4. Visible Progress

There's something inherently rewarding about transforming a raw block of wood into something recognizable and beautiful. The progress is tangible and gratifying.

5. Tradition and Legacy

Many wood carvers feel connected to a long tradition. It's a craft that spans generations and cultures, giving a sense of continuity and shared heritage.

6. Problem Solving

Each piece presents challenges: flaws in the wood, design limitations, or tool control. Finding creative solutions keeps the process engaging and mentally stimulating.

7. Calming and Therapeutic

Like other hands-on crafts, carving can be deeply relaxing. The focus it requires can offer a break from stress, anxiety, and the rush of daily life—almost like a form of active meditation.

8. Pride in Craftsmanship

Finishing a well-made carving gives a strong sense of pride. It's something physical, enduring, and often appreciated by others.

In short, wood carving is rewarding because it blends artistry, physicality, and a connection to something timeless. For many carvers, it's more than a hobby—it's a way of life.

MONTHLY PROJECTS

The Guild is dedicated to fostering and promoting the art of woodcarving, pyrography (wood-burning), and other wood artistry forms. Our weekly open carving sessions are an excellent opportunity for beginners to learn about tools, safety, basic techniques, and the types of wood used.

Guild leaders are available to provide an introduction to woodcarving. Our open carving sessions are held weekly at the following times and locations:

1. **Thursday Evenings:** 6:00-8:00 p.m. at Woodcraft. This session is ideal for those who work during the day or live in the eastern part of the valley.
2. **Tuesday Afternoons:** 12:30-3:30 p.m. at the Senior Center at Kleiner Park, 1920 Records Way, Meridian. The Senior Center requests a donation of \$2 for members and \$5 for non-members per session to help cover costs. This session is perfect for those who prefer daytime gatherings or live west of downtown Boise.

Each month, we plan a project to help novice carvers try new techniques and improve their skills. An experienced member will lead the project and provide one-on-one assistance as needed. Loaner tools are available, and materials will be provided whenever possible.

We look forward to seeing you at our sessions and helping you develop your woodcarving skills!

FESTIVAL OF TREES

For 41 years now the Saint Alphonsus Festival of Trees has kicked off the holiday season in the Treasure Valley. This year the Guild has announced our participation in the festival. We will be contributing a tabletop tree, and we need your creativity to make it shine.

We encourage all members to craft hand-carved ornaments, each within a 3–4-inch size limit. There's no designated theme, so let your imagination run wild and create designs that truly inspire you.

Cathy has collected about 30 ornaments but about 100 ornaments are needed. You can submit your completed ornaments to Cathy Carson or Jairus Taylor before November 1st. If you need pattern ideas, Cathy is more than happy to assist. The Guild will provide the wood for your creations. Eric will provide cutouts for the Thursday group. Larry Crist will provide cutouts for those attending sessions at the senior center. [Click here](#) for some additional ornament patterns.

Thank you for your creativity and support in making this event a success! Let's make our tree the talk of the festival.



These are some of Tom Henscheid's contributions to our IWG tree.



IWG Scholarship Program

Thanks largely to the proceeds from past Idaho Woodcarvers Guild and Idaho Artistry in Wood shows, the Guild has some surplus funds available that should be used in keeping with our status as a non-profit educational organization. With this in mind, the IWG provides a scholarship program that allows club members to apply for partial reimbursement of money spent on a class, seminar or workshop that helps them improve their carving, painting or other artistic skills used in producing wood carvings. Members who are up to date with their club dues may apply once each year for a scholarship to reimburse them for up to ½ the cost of a course they have completed. The amount approved cannot exceed the dues paid by the member since joining the Guild. Those who receive this support should plan to share what they learned with others at a future meeting. Scholarship applications may be submitted at any time during the calendar year to be reviewed by the Executive Committee for approval. The Board may limit scholarship funding each year to maintain sufficient reserves to keep the club in a healthy financial position.

Application for IWG Scholarship

Name: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Course, class or program attended: _____

Provider: _____ Location: _____

Brief description of instruction received:

Amount paid: _____ Year: _____

For Board Use

Executive Committee action: Approved: _____ Not approved: _____ Date: _____

Date awarded: _____



Tony didn't want me to post this picture of his Cutthroat Trout because it is still a work in progress. But you can see that he is proud of it.



I got this roughout from Larry Crist. Someone else, I don't know who, had already started carving it. They didn't get very far and my guess is that it had sat in Larry's shop for quite a while before I got it. I put chaps on this little guy and that added interesting layers and details. I had a lot of fun with it.

-- Jerry Robertson

One of our recent projects at the senior center was spoon carving. Larry supplied the material and ideas. This spoon was carved by Tom Henscheid. Note the chain link at the top and the ball-in-a-cage below.



Open Carving Opportunities

Boise

Open Carving at Woodcraft is held on Thursday evenings from 6-8 p.m. with Eric Owens in charge. Bring your own project and enjoy the fellowship. We are working on making some carving projects available for those who are new to woodcarving.

Meridian

Open Carving at the Senior Center is held on Tuesday afternoons from 12:30-3:30 p.m. in the center at Kleiner Park, 1920 N Records Way, Meridian. Club leaders provide instruction for new carvers. Experienced carvers can bring their own projects. The Senior Center asks participants to make a donation when they sign in of \$2 for members, \$5 for non-members to help cover their expenses.

Tips from the Experts



- Get the basic shape of the carving completed before you attempt to carve the details. Don't be too anxious to add the details, enjoy the complete process. ~ Eldon Humphreys
- Pay attention to realistic proportions especially the head; then, carve caricatures that deviate from these proportions. ~ Marv Kaisersatt



I stayed up all night wondering when the sun would rise, then it dawned on me.

Media

Website: <http://idahowoodcarversguild.org/>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSYHBkob1WFSPgMaydZ7Yfw>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Idaho-Woodcarvers-Guild-254983304512338/>

Archive: <https://jerryrobertson.com/iwg/>