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VIKING Woodcarvers
Minneapolis, Minnesota
Vol. 32 No. 2

PRESIDENT

- Don Groen

VICE PRESIDENTS

- Jim Ayers
- Myron Asper

SECRETARY

- Lynne Medgaarden

TREASURER

- Leo Mielke

PROGRAM COMMITTEE

- Jim Ayers
- Myron Asper

COFFEE COMMITTEE

- Keith Fredrickson
- Leonard Kampa

SHOW CHAIR

- Russell Scott

Viking Web Site - <http://www.russcott.com/~rscott/vwca/>

- **Meeting Location – Knights of Columbus, 1114 W 79th St., Bloomington,**
- **4th Monday – February 27 – Meeting Time – 7:00 PM**

February Presentation: Tom Flemming, Master duck carver.

Meeting Minutes of Viking Woodcarver's Meeting

January 23, 2006

By Nancy Dardis (for Lynne Medgaarden)

President Jim Forrey finally got the microphone and opened the January meeting. We had 44 members present and two guests: Cindy Carter –Duane Edwards' daughter, and Lew Boyco (from Chaska).

Treasury/Meeting Minutes – Leo Mielke reported that our checkbook balance slipped just under \$3,000 this month costing us a \$5 monthly fee at the bank. Must be Jim Forrey's upcoming run to Mexico! MEMBERSHIP DUES need to be paid as soon as possible. The new membership year starts on February 1. The previous newsletter posted the names of the individuals who are delinquent on their dues. If you are on that list and did not pay your dues at tonight's meeting, you are off the list for getting the newsletter. Be sure to contact Leo Mielke at: 10223 Johnson Circle, Bloomington MN 55437 OR 952-831-6907 to get reinstated on the roster. Membership dues are \$15.

The Meeting Minutes and Treasurer's Report as printed in the previous newsletter were approved and seconded.

Newsletter Editor and Show Chair Report – There was no newsletter last month since we opted to cancel our December meeting. Check this month's newsletter for your application for the Spring Viking Show at Har Mar. The show will be on April 8 and 9. If you are interested in offering a carving mini-class during the show, let Russ know. He would like to set up a class area in the center of one of the table squares.

New Officers (The Good News) – Leo Mielke (Treasurer), Lynne Medgaarden (Secretary), and Russell Scott (Newsletter Editor and Show Chair) have agreed to retain their posts for the upcoming year. In addition, Don Groen has agreed to take on the role of President. These nominations were accepted and seconded.

New Officers (The Bad News) – Jim Ayers has done a fabulous job as Vice President and Program Chairman. However, he will NOT be continuing in this function. WE NEED YOU to volunteer for this

position. It is not as difficult as you may think, but it is vital to the continuation of this club. Jim has a list of over 30 possible speakers. You only need to arrange 9-10 programs for the entire year. One of these can be the 'Butcher's Buffet' (members demo their work for the other members who 'shop' from table to table). We also have a possible field trip to tour a Minneapolis clock museum. Members regularly provide suggestions, you can pick up ideas from the newspaper or internet, members of our club and other area clubs can be encouraged to provide a brief demo on a new technique...and you aren't limited to carving. We've had presentations on types of wood, framing/display, and stone carving. One artistic endeavor can easily re-energize another. Help stretch your own artistic interests while you help your club! Call Jim Forrey (952-831-2758) to volunteer you and a friend.

Snow Daze Update - Dennis Schuster gave a quick update on the Snow Daze Carve-in held at the Green Lake Bible Camp in Spicer, MN January 6-8. This is the sixth annual event. This year nearly 100 carvers attended – the biggest ever. There were a dozen classes ranging from Acanthus to wood burning – even Fabric Arts for those non-carvers in your family. You eat, sleep and attend classes under one roof making it very convenient. The Camp staff handles everything from setup to that extra pillow you forgot to bring. All you need to do is eat, sleep, eat, carve, and eat...you get the picture. You can take time to 'tour' the other class sessions, pick up new ideas, purchase blanks and patterns, and harass your friends. There is an on-site vendor; John Krantz comes up with a load of wood, and even a masseuse to sooth those aching muscles. All in all, it was a very enjoyable session with something for everyone.

Needing Your Thoughts and Prayers –

Marnie Whillock is starting cancer treatments again. Martin 'Gus' Fabel continues to have treatment for stomach problems that have plagued him this year.

Upcoming Classes

Sign Carving – Four two-hour sessions – Wed Feb 1, 8, 15, 22 (7-9 PM). George Effrem will show you how to make a sign from simple to fancy. Class cost \$30 plus materials. Additional expense in tool purchase, if needed – estimate \$115.00. Contact George to sign up 612-927-7491, 3056 Excelsior Blvd, Minneapolis.

The following classes are offered through the Lakesarea Woodcarving Club. Contact Esther Allen 651-464-2087 for more information and registration.

February 13 - Acanthus – Charlie Jahn's class costs \$45 + materials.

February 25-26 - Leaf Face Caricatures – Gen Jensen provides a 2 day class. Cost \$50 + material cost (\$1.75-\$2.75 per leaf)

March 18-19 - Chip Carving – Walt Grittner offers his workshop on carving a plate.

March 25-26 - Bird Carving – Carol Andre Michaletz gives a class on Hummingbird carving. Cost is \$135 + materials.

March 30 - Icicle Carving - Barry McKenzie will provide this workshop. Cost is \$45, includes materials.

April 8-9 – Flat Plane Carving – Becky Lusk teaches her techniques. Cost \$75 + materials. A \$40 deposit is required.

April 22-23 – Bark Whimsy Houses – Karen Henderson leads this session. Cost \$45 + materials.

Vendors

John Krantz was down with the flu. Dick Allen was kind enough to bring in the wood tonight.

George Effrem had his usual array of nice tools and books for sale.

Lou Forsmark brought a small band saw for sale (\$45 – includes extra blade).

Jim Forrey is heading to Mexico again next month. He and his wife made a trip to the doctor for a little pre-vacation checkup. Jim was pleased with his results and smugly asked his wife how her checkup went. She announced 'The doctor thought everything from my blood pressure to my hair color was perfect!' Jim replied 'Really, what did he say about your fat ass?' She shrugged and replied 'Gee, he never mentioned you at all.' Have a nice trip, Jim!

January Presentation – 'The Art of Working Decoys' – Ken Brown

Ken comes to us again from the Rochester club. He has a variety of interests and always gives a well-organized and researched presentation. This month, Ken shares with us his fascination with antique hunting decoys. Now, these aren't the decorative decoys you see when you attend competitions. These are the well-worn, buckshot-nicked floaters that have brought many a duck to their demise. Ken's first introduction to decoys was at an estate sale where he saw a wooden duck. He figured he could part with \$20 for that little character. On inspection, he found the duck priced at \$2,000. That started him on an educational journey into the world of Mason Decoys.

Factory Production - Mason emigrated from Ireland to Detroit and started a decoy factory in 1895. The word *Decoy* comes from the Dutch word meaning 'to catch or cage birds'. The early factory created two models: Premier (detailed painting and carved nail on bill) and Challenger (painted nail and less detail). Before it closed in 1924, the Mason factory added 'Detroit' models with a glass eye, tack eye and painted eye.

In the late 19th century, hunters called 'gunners' would set out 300+ decoys and shoot anything that flew past. From 1850 to 1915, there were no limits on numbers or species – from ducks to songbirds. The immigrants along with the East coast were a prime market for this inexpensive meat. By 1918, killing wild fowl for sale was outlawed, but this was too late for many of the species that were literally shot to extinction. Since these gunners used so many decoys, the challenge was to make them realistic enough to fool the birds, but light enough to allow the hunter to carry 300-400 decoys for a day's work. As Mason's factory started producing more and more decoys, they started making the decoys hollow, using cork (covered in sawdust and glue to smooth the surface), and making 'tip-ups' (just the tail feathers mounted on a weight to look like a feeding duck). Large birds and shorebirds with long necks generally had removable heads for ease of transport and setup.

Other Decoy Styles – Indians made the earliest known decoys from reeds wrapped around straw. The materials were cheap and readily available, however these decoys obviously weren't made to last. Only one of these is known still in existence.

Other hunters began carving their own decoys. Ship captains produced some of the nicer examples of wooden decoys during the early 1900's. Decoys do not need to be ducks. Many hunters use 'confidence' decoys such as heron, crows and other shorebirds. Ducks that see the easily spooked shorebirds calmly standing in an area will more likely be lured in, thinking the area is safe. As the decoy carvers became more creative, they started making 'knot-heads' (the bird's head is a tree knot with an attached branch used as the beak), 'Peg bills' (a dowel-like peg bill driven through a hole from the back of the head), and in Nantucket, whale baleen was used for bills due to its flexibility.

In 1981, the National Shorebird Museum recognized the decoys as Folk Art and rated the existing decoys. Ken had several slides of these antique decoys, including the top-rated decoys in the nation – some hand-made, some factory-made. These decoys originally sold for as little as \$1 each or \$21/dozen. Now, they rarely sell for less than \$300,000!

Carving a Decoy – The challenge in carving a decoy is to make it look old. Ken enjoys making shorebirds and tundra swans. Both have simple shapes that lend themselves nicely to the minimalist detail techniques. He starts by pasting up several pieces of 1 x 6 to create the body block. In addition, he pastes up wood and rough saws the head and neck shape. Ken leaves a 2-3" 'handle' on the top and bottom of the body block to allow him to clamp the piece in a vice. He carves the bottom first, leaving the lower handle in place, then clamps that handle into the vice to finish the upper portion of the body. He saws the upper handle off when the body shaping is complete and mounts the carved head in place.

Finishing - Several decoy makers use a combed-paint finish to simulate feathering. There are two main styles: diver (ocean-going species, generally black and white paint), dabbler (inland lakes and rivers, more colorful). Ken's favorite finish is the antique crackle. He has used both 'Jo Sonja' and 'Weathered Wood' brands. He noted that the Jo Sonja brand works best with Jo Sonja paints.

To create the aged look, paint the entire bird with a dark brown. Thoroughly shellac the bird to seal the dark undercoat in place. Add 2 or 3 coats of white paint over the top to ensure coverage. Once the paint is dry, apply the crackle medium. As it dries, the crackle adheres to the paint and shrinks, pulling the

paint with it. Ken uses a scraper, wire brush or scrubbing pad to remove the loose paint chips. An antiquing lacquer is the last coat. Finally, saw off the lower handle and use a joiner to clean up the bottom of the bird.

Although Ken generally uses basswood for its ease of carving and antiquing, he brought samples of shorebirds in chestnut and cedar. The chestnut bird was finished with simple wax. The cedar bird was blow-torched to enhance the grain, then brushed and sanded to accentuate the burning. Thanks, Ken, for giving us all a reason to check the garage rafters for one of those \$300,000 decoys capturing dust – or maybe making a fouler of our own!

A Note from Your New President – Don Groen

At the February meeting I will conduct my first meeting as your new President. As some of you know, I am fairly new to woodcarving as well as being a member of VIKING Woodcarvers. From day one I have been impressed with the meetings, quality of programs and the shows as well as the loyalty of so many of you. With your help this can continue.

As a part of the agenda for our next meeting, I want to hear from you. Please bring any ideas that you feel will make our club even more meaningful for each one of our members. If we haven't met, take a minute to introduce yourself to me. You can all help me out by wearing your nametags if you have one.

My biggest concern at this time is that we do need a new Vice President. Jim Ayers has requested that he be able to step down from this role. As you know this involves scheduling future programs. Jim has an excellent file with prospective speakers to make your job easier. I would welcome anyone that would like to give back to the club by taking on this role. If we need to put together a committee to assist the vice president, we will give that consideration.

Look forward to seeing you at the meeting, and if you haven't already renewed your membership for 2006, please come prepared to take care of this matter.

Correction for January newsletter: Karen Randall's friend, the bowl maker, is Mike Combs. His web site is www.bowlman.com/

VIKING MAGNUM OPUS (SHOW AND TELL) – January, 2006

NAME	CARVING	WOOD	FINISH	COMMENTS
Swede Bengtson	Intarsia	Mix	Polyurethane	March to the Penguins
Lew Forsmark	Wood Burning –Wolf Pup	Basswood	Brise Wax	
	Tomte	Basswood	Acrylics	Water Base Poly
Barb Gritche	Frog Wood Burning	Basswood	Acrylics	Wax
Clarence Moe	Back Seat Driver	Basswood	Acrylics	
Gerry Erickson	Spiral Icicles	Butternut	Stain/Deft	Carving different from Carv III.
Jim Kuepper	Western Santa	Basswood	Acrylics	
Leo Mielke	Kitchen Utensils	Buckthorn	Oil	Frank Foltz Class
Jim Weber	Violin Player	Butternut	Oil	Ian Norbury Design
Charles Eiler	Moose Antler		Unfinished	
Nancy Dardis	Frog on Lily Pad	Basswood	Acrylics/Poly	
Jim Forrey	Kochina	CW Root	Oil	Purchased in Leavenworth WA
Len Kampa	Old World Santa	Basswood	Unfinished	Nov. Wood Carving III.
John Mitchell	Chip Carving	Basswood	Polyurethane	Framed Picture
Ivan Amman	Trout	Canarywood	Polyurethane	Also Yellow Heart & Ebony
Russell Scott	Indian Bust	Basswood	Unfinished	Stu Martin Pattern
	Indian Bust	Hond Mahog	Unfinished	From Rossitor Ruff-Out

Chip Carving Class with BARRY McKENZIE – Thursday, March 30, 2006 -Forest Lake Senior Center.

Barry will cover the full basic fundamentals in the mechanics of why chip carving works the way it does in wood then practice how to remove chips from the wood surface. Barry will discuss straight line or circular line cut, often used for lettering - geometric angular cutting methods - shallow chip carving often used in dense woods - "old world" style - leaf design. The class will practice with ornaments and icicles. The cost for the full day is \$45 and includes everything. Barry has pre-sharpened knives for loan or sale. Beginners and experienced carvers welcome. Anyone interested can contact Esther Allen (651)-464-2087 or John Krantz (651) 464-5632.