

Dayton Carvers Guild

June, 2025

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News from Marshall Stearns, anti-hero of the chip carve art world.

June Program: Relief Carving by Dick Belcher

The June program will be on how to relief carve, anything and everything you want to know about relief carving.

This is the program we planned for May but due to circumstances it was delayed till June.

In May Dick had to be absent so our meeting was a lot of discussion on things such as how to finish relief carvings. It turned out to be a very productive meeting with lots of exchanging of information. Ask two carvers how to finish and you get three different ways, all good.

Who we are.

We, The Dayton Carvers Guild, are wood carving enthusiasts. Some are experts and some are beginners.

Carvers and folks who might be interested in carving are invited to come to our meetings. Serendipitous encounters with other carvers spark creativity.

At a typical meeting we start with Show and Tell. We break for coffee and cookies and then have a program. It might be a "how to" demonstration or a presentation of something related to carving. Ideas flow.

If you have questions, please see our website, you may email to the address above or call Marshall Stearns at (937) 837-0728.

Meeting Instructions:

Park in the front or in the nearby parking lot. Enter the United Rehabilitation Services building through the front door, the door that faces to the south. It's the door where all the buses and vans are parked. From there bear left. If you are late and encounter a locked door, press the buzzer on a carved stand.

We are to clean up the chips, put tables and chairs back, and depart prior to 8:30.

Next Dayton Carvers Guild Meeting: Tuesday, June 24th. The club meetings are at 6:30 p.m. on the 4th Tuesday of the month except there is none in December. We meet at United Rehabilitation Services building, 4710 Troy Pike (corner of Needmore Road), Dayton, Ohio.

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June Cookie Contributors: Dan Richardson and Rob Liptak

Barb Belcher Passes



Barb died suddenly in May. She was a “doer,” the person who quietly made the club function. For years she served as Secretary and Treasurer. Everyone loved Barb.

Carvers Luncheon at Marion's

At Marion's you carvers may enjoy lunching with all kinds, from the cute bird carvers to the polished chip carvers.

We meet at noon on every first Wednesday of the month. The site is Marion's Piazza North, 3443 North Dixie Drive in Dayton. You can call in your order ahead of time. 937 277-6553. Seniors get a discount but not on the special.

Raffling of Library Materials

We will skip the raffling away of what's in the club library in June but resume after that.

May meeting guest



Nick Chibis from Springboro came with general questions about carving in this region and with a relief carving he had been working on. He previously lived and carved in Columbus. The pyrography here is by Nick. Welcome, Nick, to the Dayton carving community.

Relief Carving samples by Bruce Henn

The first is a very, very shallow relief.

The second is special because, except for the water, the finish is by oils and antiquing.



About Making Shellac

I enjoy the finishing process and sometimes I use shellac. It's good for sealing wood, raising the fuzzies for easy smoothing and, for some applications, a finish coat.

Years ago, I wrote an article for this newsletter about shellac. It was on, "Can you use Everclear as a solvent to make shellac?" Everclear is a liquor, and it comes in two strengths, 190-proof available only in some places and, elsewhere, 151-proof. The article conclusion was no, you can't, at least not in Ohio because you can't buy the strong stuff in Ohio. I did the experiment, and the Ohio 151-proof didn't fully dissolve the shellac flakes.

You dissolve shellac flakes in alcohol to make shellac. You vary the ratio of flakes-to-alcohol to get the intended concentration of shellac. A 1-pound cut of shellac means the ratio of shellac to alcohol is one pound of shellac flakes per gallon of alcohol.

WOOD Magazine had a great article on this in its July 2025 issue. The following info comes from that article.

Alcohol comes in different forms:

- Ethanol, also known as ethyl alcohol, is the basic alcohol we use. It's in gasoline.
- Denatured alcohol is ethanol with an additive to make it unfit to drink. That exempts it from liquor tax and makes it salable in the home centers. The hardware store denatured alcohol contains up to 30% water, which can yield inconsistent results in how well the shellac dissolves, dries and hardens. WOOD Magazine was making 2-pound cut shellac. I have used it to make 1-pound and 1 ½ -pound cuts of shellac and it has worked OK for that.

- Shellac reducer is a purer form of denatured alcohol that contains less water and, therefore dissolves the shellac more effectively. It is available as Mohawk Finishes Shellac Reducer at Woodcraft for \$26 a quart.
- Everclear is a grain alcohol liquor. The 190-proof Everclear is 95% pure ethanol. It is a good shellac solvent. Don't use 151-proof Everclear to dissolve shellac flakes. The 190 Everclear costs \$22 for 750 mL which is the equivalent of \$28 per quart.
- Food-grade ethanol is sold for culinary or laboratory use. It is a good solvent for shellac. It is available as Food-grade Ethanol from Culinary Solvent for \$44 a quart.
- Isopropyl alcohol, also labeled as isopropanol and more commonly know as rubbing alcohol is a similar but different chemical compound than ethyl alcohol. The rubbing alcohol from the drugstore contains a high proportion of water. Instead of rubbing alcohol from the drugstore, chose the 99% pure isopropyl alcohol from Amazon for \$8 a pint (= \$16 a quart). The number 195515034883 gets you to that product.

WOOD Magazine tested 1) Everclear 190, 2) food-grade ethanol and 3) 99% isopropyl alcohol, to make two-pound cut shellac. They all dissolved the flakes well and the shellac dried quickly to form a hard finish.



I'll have to try the Amazon isopropyl alcohol and save my half-full gallon can of home center ethanol just for cleanup.

$\text{CH}_3\text{CH}_2\text{OH}$ is ethanol.

$\text{CH}_3\text{CHOHCH}_3$ is isopropanol.

Now you know more than anyone else.

/ Marshall