

## Interview with Kent Ellison

Carver: How long have you been carving? Kent: 31/2 years.

Carver: How much time do you usually spend carving? Kent: two to three hours per day.

Carver: Do you have a special carving room, area, separate? Kent: No, I don't have a special place. I usually sit in the recliner in front of the TV. I guess that's my workshop.

Carver: How did you get started in carving? Kent: Well, my brother-in-law is Bill Smoke. He was taking a class from Ed Brockelbank over at Furman. It was the first time that Ed was teaching. I had been through back surgeries and some personal issues and was about as low as I could be. Bill asked me to go to class with him. I said, "no". He asked me several more times. Finally, I agreed, just to shut him up. It was about the third week of class. When I went to class, Ed Asked me if I carved. I told him that I didn't and that I would just watch. Ed told me "nope" and handed me a block of wood and a knife.

At the end of class, I handed back the knife and he told me to take it home and finish the carving. I took it home and finished it and have been hooked on carving ever since.

Carver: What sort of things do you carve? Kent: Anything I can get my hands on. Once, I didn't have any wood. So, I sawed a limb and carved a wood spirit. I carve more caricatures than anything else.

Carver: Do you have a favorite tool or tools? Kent: Yes. A #3 X 1" Denny gouge. It removes wood fast. It keeps a good edge and stays sharp. I have had it for about two years.

Carver: What is your favorite brand of tools and why? Kent: Denny. The handles are comfortable and they are easy to keep sharp. Most of my tools are Denny brand. I like Denny knives too. Ed buys blades and makes handles.

Carver: Do you wish that you had others, same brand or different? Kent: I have a couple of Flexcut V-tools. Denny v-tools are the "soft" v-tools rounded at the bottom. They don't make a sharp angled v-tool.

Carver: What plays the biggest roll for you in buying a tool? Cost? Past use? Recommendation? Kent: Cost is always a factor. If need be, I would wait longer and save the money to buy a Denny. I started using the Denny v-tool after taking Wayne Shinlever's class.

Carver: How do you sharpen your tools? Kent: Very carefully. I use a diamond plate. I got a four-sided diamond plate from Harbor Freight. And, I use a grinder with an 8" buffing wheel and green compound. I learned that in sharpening knives on the diamond plate, the sharp edge trails. But sharpening gouges, the sharp edge leads. That seems to give me a lot more control in getting the right angle on my gouges. Pete LeClair uses a 600 grit diamond plate in the morning before he carves. He strokes his tools three or four strokes then strops for the rest of the day. I don't use a flat strop anymore, just the buffing wheel. The wheel is more convenient. And with the buffing wheel, I can get the inside of my gouges too.

Carver: Are you satisfied with how sharp your tools are? I think that it is the biggest impact in my carving. Many people have commented on the clean cuts in my carvings. Clean lines come from sharp tools.

Carver: What carver(s) have had the most influence on how you carve and how you want to carve? Kent: Pete LeClair.

Carver: What carving classes have you taken? Kent: Ed in the beginning. Pete LeClair twice and Wayne Shinlever.

Carver: Do you know of any carving instructors that you wish our club would bring in for a workshop? Kent: Phil and Vicky Bishop. He carves. She paints.



Kent with his first and most recent carving.

## Interview with Ed Brockelbank

Carver: How long have you been carving? Ed: I started when I was in grade school but quit. After college and three kids, I started carving a chain. Then I took a carving class in 1971 from Rev. Shirley at Clemson. After that, I carved day and night, every chance that I could get. I went to shows and sold small carvings.

Carver: How much time do you usually spend carving? Ed: At least 4 hrs. every night. I sit in front of the TV with my wife and carve, usually from 8:00 'til midnight. During the day, I cut stuff out. I spend 6-8 hrs. a week on the band saw. I teach at Clemson, Furman, and at the Boy Scout Camp.

Carver: Do you have a special carving room or separate area? Ed: Usually it is in my big easy chair in front of the TV.

Carver: What sort of things do you carve? Ed: I enjoy carving the easier things like little dogs or eggs or bark. The hardest is the bust which I have done seven or eight with Larry Rogers. Totem Poles are easy because the art is easy.

Carver: Do you have a favorite tool or tools? Ed: The knife. I used a pocket knife for years. Right now I am using Denny knives. I like their thin blades.

Carver: What is your favorite brand(s) of tools? Ed: For hand tools I like Denny. For mallet tools I like Swiss.

Carver: Why do you like those more than the others? Ed: I think they have good steel and they are thin.

Carver: What brands do you own and are you happy with them. Ed: Most of my hand tools are Denny. I also have some Ramelson tools and of course the Swiss mallet tools. Yes, I am happy with them.

Carver: What plays the biggest role for you in buying a tool? Ed: Need. Different projects require different size tools. I never really used a #3 gouge until I took Tom Gow's bark carving class. When I was carving totems, the most used tool was a #7x11/2".

Carver: How do you sharpen your tools? Ed: I used a Burke for years; like the club has, then a flat surface with carborundum. I strop with Aluminum oxide (white) on leather because it is a little faster.

Carver: Are you satisfied with how sharp your tools are? Ed: Well, I'm sure that I am like most people. I would rather carve than sharpen. So, am I satisfied with how sharp my tools are? Yes, when I take the time to sharpen them. But I am dissatisfied that I don't take enough time. I keep a piece of Tupelo next to my sharpening gear. Because Tupelo is pithy, it's a good test for sharpness. Another thing, I learned in bark carving that the outside part of the bark can turn the edges on a gouge. That outside layer is hard.

Carver: What carver has had the most influence on how you carve and how you want to carve? Ed: Well, I guess the *most* influence was my first teacher, Rev. Shirley. It was the simple things, like using a centerline. I spent eight weeks with him in class.

Carver: What carving classes have you taken? Ed: Rev. Shirley, John Burke, Larry Rogers (8 times), Wayne Shinlever, Helen Gibson, Pete LeClair, and Joe Dance from Canada.

Carver: Who is your favorite carver? Ed: Pete LeClair.

Carver: Do you know of any carving instructors that you wish our club would bring in for a Workshop? Yes, Allen Goodman from Smoky Mountain Woodcarvers, Carol Jean Boyd, and Desiree Hanjay.

Ed with Pete LeClair at March '07 class.

Working in classroom 17 after May meeting

