



# The Curling Chip

## September / October 2024

Our normal Fall meetings and Whittle-ins began again after the summer break. The club participated in many demonstration tables at events - from street fairs to Buckstop Junction. A huge Thank You to those that helped with tables! The 54th Annual Woodcarving Show was held in October, which was followed almost immediately by the Beginner Carving classes. Ufda!

Have an idea for an article? Did you take woodcarving photos on a trip? Please send them to Becky at [thewoodwurm@gmail.com](mailto:thewoodwurm@gmail.com)

Newsletter Editor: Becky Barnes

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FlickertailWoodcarvers



[makerspace.social/@FlickertailWoodcarvers](https://makerspace.social/@FlickertailWoodcarvers)



FlickertailWoodcarvers

## 2024 Leadership

President: Cliff Orgaard  
President Elect: Becky Weisgerber  
Past President: Becky Barnes  
Programs: Eric Gaasland  
Treasurer: Warren Schlecht  
Secretary: Becky Barnes  
Librarian: Todd Engelstad  
Historian: Clara Sherman Yonker  
Membership: Doug Smith  
Annual Show: Eric Gaasland  
Property: Becky Weisgerber  
Publicity: Becky Weisgerber  
Buckstop Gallery: Mike Knudson, Doug Emerson  
Facebook: Eric Gaasland  
Pinterest: Cindy Roth  
Mastodon & Instagram: Becky Barnes  
Website: Becky Barnes



NORTH DAKOTA COUNCIL ON THE ARTS

# Monthly Meeting Minutes for Flickertail Woodcarvers

September 7, 2024

**Call to Order** by President-Elect Becky Weisgerber  
9 members were present



**Secretary's Report:** Becky Barnes

Secretary's Report – Motioned as read by Eric Gaasland, seconded by Diane Lehman-Turck.

**Treasurer's Report:** Warren Schlecht

Warren was unable to attend the meeting. He submitted a report that the balance was \$6,477.82 with all bills paid. The only check that has not been cashed is reimbursement for the raffle tickets. We received a check for \$1,600 from the ND Council on the Arts from the grant Eric had applied for. Thank you Eric! Motion to accept the Treasurer's Report by Anna Wright, seconded by Doug Emerson.

## Committee Reports

**Membership** (Doug Smith): Not present.

**Programs** (Eric Gaasland): Caricature carver Barry Bowers is now set as our Featured Carver for the October show. His class as of September 8th has 3 spots still open. Derek Epping's bark carving class still has 11 spots open. Becky Barnes' cross-stitch class still has 3 spots open.

[Wesley Hathaway](#) is tentatively scheduled for the 2025 Spring carving class, for either an acanthus or relief project. [Carol Leavy](#) is tentatively scheduled for the 2025 Fall class, depending on how her surgery recovery goes.

Two events left for summer / fall carving demonstrations. September 13-14 is the [Downtown Street Fair](#), with Friday 10am-8pm, and Saturday 9am-6pm. However - we've had difficulty getting in touch with the organizer - we don't have a setup time or date yet. Bob P. will try to drop by and get the information, but if we don't get it fast enough, we may just have to back out of the event this year, and try again next year. [Apple Jam](#) is scheduled for September 22nd, from 10am-5pm.

**Publicity** (Becky Weisgerber): The October show is now listed on the Bismarck Tribune calendar. We had a lot of good public interaction over the summer with our demonstration tables. Jill Wiese helped promote the carvers during the Bluegrass Gone Pink event. Capital A'Fair had many people stop and chat. The Hootenanny at Buckstop Junction was a little

confusing with their start and end times... but the carvers were there during their allotted time. The event rebranding probably adds to confusion. Apple Jam was Apple Fest, Hootenanny was Corn Fest.

**Property** (Becky Weisgerber): Did you know we have a whole box of rasps for the snow snakes? We do! When we work on the snakes again, feel free to use them.

**Library** (Todd Engelstad): Three people have books out right now - make sure to check in if you still need them, or bring them back if you don't.

**Historian** (Clara Yonker): Not present.

**Facebook** (Eric Gaasland): Still getting more Likes and Follows. Just updated with a video of Cliff showing the new display case at Buckstop Junction.

**Website** (Becky Barnes): New people still using the digital forms for membership, and email notices - it's nice to see it working.

**Buckstop Junction Upgrades** (Doug Emerson, Bob Pedigo, Mike Knudson, Warren Schlecht, Cliff Orgaard, Todd Engelstad): The glass shelving just came in for the case, and will need to be installed. Discussion was had to have a small plaque made thanking Troy, the cabinet shop and the volunteers who worked on the case. Motioned by Bob Pedigo, seconded by Eric Gaasland. Put to a vote, and passed.

## Old Business

Remember the "Prehistoric" themed carving display table we are going to have at the Annual Show. You are encouraged to create a carving that represents someone or something from that era. All creations will be on display on one table for the public to view during the Annual Show. This is not a competition, and no prizes will be awarded. This is just for fun!

Bismarck Public Library had a conflict of displays (they forgot to write us down), so all chip carvings have been returned to their carvers for now. The club was offered the spring slot, however we believed that the August-October slot is a better time of year to advertise the October show. We'll need many more pieces for next fall! The chip carving tends to be small, and we need to fill the case if possible.

## New Business

**Whittle-In Project:** Thank you Eric G. for bringing in "Stuck Santas", and to Becky B. for doing a painting techniques demonstration.

Bob Pedigo would like to remind the group that with our 501c3 status we cannot purchase

food using club funds. The group started as a 501c7 status, which at the time was good for grant writing, but then reapplied for the 501c3 status in 2007 as grant policies change.

Doug Emerson brought up a question about this and future shows. As people get older and begin to retire from their vendor status for carving shows, we need to look into figuring out how to make sure that the vendors who are coming, keep wanting to come back. We're unsure if our club status would allow us to offer a housing or travel stipend to our vendors, like what is done for the Featured Carver(s). It could be argued that without the vendors who sell knives, tools, or wood, there wouldn't BE any carving. We will need to look into this - and contact our vendors to see if this might even be a thing that would tip the scales in our favor of them returning.

Becky Barnes made a motion to send a request in the next information email, that new carvers bring in their pieces to the October show. Even if they don't have enough pieces for a table themselves, having a "New Carvers" table would be a great opportunity to show off their work, and encourage others. Seconded by Eric Gaasland. Put to a vote, and passed.

## **Show and Tell**

Vince Bitz brought in an in-the-round dog carving, as well as a prehistoric bark monster we dubbed the Barkosuchus. It looked like it belonged in a swamp, with beady eyes. He also brought in a number of his carving patterns.

Bob Pedigo brought in a chip-carving plaque of the Brick Oven Bakery logo, which he plans to gift to the business.

Becky Weisgerber brought in her toasted marshmallows. She made the base stick larger to better balance the marshmallows by adding graham cracker and chocolate ingredients for s'mores.

Eric Gaasland showed his finished "ugly fish" and his toasted marshmallows as well.

**Meeting was adjourned.**



## **September 7, 2024 - Whittle-In Stuck Santas by Eric Gaasland**

Santa carvings are generally pretty popular. You can pick out his jolly face and white beard at craft shows and gift shops everywhere - so Eric put a twist on it and had us carving Santa's other

half. No, I don't mean Mrs. Claus... I mean his derriere! Santa had a little trouble fitting down some of those smaller chimneys, and may have gotten a little stuck, with his feet flailing up above the roof tops.

Meanwhile Becky B. brought along some acrylic paints for an impromptu painting demo. With



the October show just around the corner, she needed to work through some of those PhD (Projects Half Done) subjects.



Above: Santa's toy sack, flailing feet, and head, all stuck in those pesky chimneys.

Below: Becky W's witch, toasted marshmallows (with added graham cracker and chocolate weight), and lady in a blue dress and apron, all sporting slightly modified painting touch-ups. Pushing the shadows a little darker, and adding some light color dry-brushing.



Above: Vince B brought in his "Prehistoric" contribution - a bark monster with beady eyes. We dubbed it the "Barkosuchus" (-suchus meaning crocodile).



Above: An "Ugly fish" carved and painted by Eric G.  
Below: Two snowmen carved by Cathy L - she even knit a tiny hat and scarf with toothpicks!



Above Left: Eric G's toasted marshmallows.  
Above Right: Vince B's in-the-round dog.





Above: Bob P chip-carved the Brick Oven Bakery logo, and said he would be gifting it to them.



September 12-14, 2024  
Downtown Street Fair

This was the Flickertail's first time demonstrating at the Bismarck Downtown Street Fair. They sat through wind and drizzle, but had a fair number of people walk by. Todd E., River P., Dennis R., Bob P., Doug E., Vince B., Becky W., and Cathy L. were part of the group sitting and chatting with people. Apologies if I've left anyone out!



### Carvings from the Collections: Woodworking from the Heritage Center and State Museum

This is a new section for the Curling Chip that I'm starting with the help of museum curator Jenny Yearous. As with many museums, what is on display is only a fraction of the items housed in collections. I contacted Jenny Yearous to see if I could photograph and describe some of the items she cares for – and she agreed! Knowing some of the history of the Flickertail Woodcarvers, she thought the marionettes carved by Telle Rudser would be a great starting point. Thelma Alvina "Telle" Rudser, for those that don't know, was tapped early on to providing carving lessons and expertise to the Flickertail Woodcarvers – before there was even a club. Clara Yonker told me that different club members would rotate on driving her to and from events, because Telle herself didn't drive.

She was known for her Scandinavian-inspired carvings, and Clara laughed at how she was a scrounger, not letting small usable pieces of wood out of her grasp when something could be made from it. A longer writeup by UND archive follows this one, covering more of Telle's history.



Jenny took me through the shelves in collections – and believe me, we’ll have plenty of items to look at in the future! Moving a rolling step-ladder to reach a plastic-draped wooden frame high above, gloves on hand, we checked out the marionettes. There were 14 people carved representing characters from the book “Uncle Tom’s Cabin.” Gently moving the puppet clothing, we could see that the main carved parts were faces, hand, and feet / lower legs, with the remainder of the body made up from cloth and leather, stitched or glued together. The puppet set was made and used in North Dakota under the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in the 1930’s, and was cataloged into the collections in 1976.

Author’s note: I’ll admit it’s a difficult thing trying to tackle historical artwork that has problematic stereotypes or themes. Artwork comes and goes, often with racist themes, or prejudiced and discriminatory views, that we try to ignore or pretend didn’t happen. I believe there is a difference between acknowledging the art, and glorifying it however. An old civil war statue of a slave-owning general is good to study, to be aware of its history, but perhaps not in the middle of a public park. Or a recent example: trading out a college mascot that reduces Native Americans and First Peoples into stereotypical archetypes (i.e. “Redskins” to “Commanders” and “Fighting Sioux” to “Fighting Hawks”). I’m about as Caucasian as white can get – all my ancestry (historical and DNA) came back as Nordic, and northern European – so I may not be the best person to get on a soapbox talking about problematic artwork... but here we are.

The book, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, by Harriet Beecher Stowe, was published in 1852 as an anti-slavery novel. The characters represented are slaves (Old and Young Uncle Tom, Eliza, George, Topsy, Emmeline), cruel slave owners

(Simon Legree, Auctioneer), “Christian” slave owner (Augustine and Evangeline St. Clare), a slave hunter (Tom Loker), anti-slave cousin (Miss Ophelia), and two unknown characters (Gardenia, Camille). The carvings follow stereotypes of the time with exaggerated features (large eyes, red lips) for the black slaves. The marionette of Simon Legree sports a whip, and a scruffy-looking 5 o’clock shadow. While most of the marionettes wood portions are painted, the legs of some where they hook onto the body were left plain, and look to be fashioned from pine or fir. The clothing was carefully fashioned, with many small details. Felted hats with brims, corduroy suits, denim work clothing, dresses with slips and under-skirts, leather chaps, and all the tiny decorations that would go with them.



Above: Old Uncle Tom (left), crafted with thinning hair, wrinkled forehead, and denim clothing. George (right) with darker complexion, full face, and smooth skin. George: 1976.00143.00009  
Tom: 1976.00143.00002

Right: Simon Legree, with a leather whip, felted hat, and multi-piece clothing suit. 1976.00143.00003





Left: Elisa, with woven hat, trimmed dress, and shawl.

1976.00143.00010

Below: An arm, pinned with small metal brads onto flexible leather. Legs with shoes painted on, constructed with wooden hinged knees.



## Thelma Alvina “Telle” Rudser From the UND Dept. of Special Collections, Chester Fritz Library

Thelma Alvina “Telle” Rudser was born October 6, 1910 in Grand Forks. She was the youngest of eight children. She graduated from Grand Forks Central High School in 1929. She attended the University of North Dakota (UND) and graduated in June 1934 with a Bachelor of Science in Education, as well as a Bachelor’s Diploma in Teaching. She sold wood carvings, mainly of dogs, to earn extra money while at UND.

Following graduation, she worked for the Grand Forks parks system as a recreation leader, primarily teaching arts and crafts to children. In 1937, she became a specialist in Craft Work for the Works Progress Administration. Telle entered the United States Navy on November 18, 1943. While in training at Hunter College, New York City, all of her pieces were stolen on the eve of an exhibition. During World War II, she was an Aviation Machinist’s Mate 2 in the Women’s Navy (WAVE). She separated from the Navy on November 16, 1945.

I’m thankful that Jenny and the Heritage Center & State Museum are here to preserve these works so they’re not forgotten. A catalog number is associated with each marionette, and the data and stories behind them typed up and archived. As I’ve seen written many times, if studying history doesn’t disturb you at times, then you’re not reading history. Uncle Tom’s Cabin shines a light on those uncomfortable dark spots of our nation’s history – but just because it makes us sad, or mad, doesn’t mean it should be forgotten – lest the future repeat, or “rhyme”, as Mark Twain says.



After the war, she opened “Telle’s Hobby Lab” in McKenzie, North Dakota. Her Norwegian inspired wood carvings brought her national attention. Her work was featured at the Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum in Decorah, Iowa and the Pittsburgh Folk Festival. Orders for her work came from both the east and west coasts. In 1954, she was given the American Art Week Award by the Bismarck Art Association and was cited by the American Artists Professional League “for her individual achievement in the fine craftsmanship of authentic Norwegian woodcarving and for the high standard she has maintained in her



profession.” She was also a member of the National Wood Carvers Association. Her expertise was not limited to wood carvings, as she won first place for pen and ink drawings at UND’s art show in 1957.

In 1971, Telle moved to Bismarck to help care for her ailing sister, Ruth, who died in January 1974. Telle Rudser died July 17, 1981, in Bismarck.

[More details are available on the UND website.](#)



**Title:** Telle Rudser at Telle’s Hobby Lab, McKenzie (N.D.)

**Date:** 1945

**Collection:** 2019-P-127 - Telle Rudser

**Summary:** Single story white wood frame building, sign on roof says, “Woodcarvings” . Sign on front says “Telle’s Hobby Lab McKenzie N.D.” The side wall has a window and a awning is shading the window. A wagon wheel and a flower bed is on the left side of the front door and a railing and chairs are one the right side of door. A dog is sitting in front of the door, There is a woman sitting in one chair holding a dog that is sitting in the other chair. Thelma Alvina “Telle” Rudser opened this craft store just after World War II.

## September 17, 2024 - Whittle-In Dragonfly by Becky Weisgerber

Unfortunately we don’t have any photos of Becky’s project. The project was a dragonfly - the body was a 1x1 about 8 inches long, with wings about 10” total printed on acrylic transparency sheets to be cut apart and glued into the finished body.

Apologies - much like Gandalf, I have no memory of this place... I blame a Mammoth.



## October 5, 2024 - Whittle-In 1 “Carrot” Necklace by Eric Gaasland

Show someone you really love them, and give them a 1-carrot necklace. Or even 1 carrot earrings! No, we don’t mean carat... Eric brought out some humor with this carving project - a tiny carrot painted orange and green.



Above Left: Eric’s 1 carrot - although it might be big enough to be a 2 carrot!

Above Right: Anna W’s tushroom colony.

# Monthly Meeting Minutes for Flickertail Woodcarvers

October 5, 2024

**Call to Order** by President Cliff Orgaard

9 members were present



**Secretary's Report:** Becky Barnes

Secretary's report was not read.

**Treasurer's Report:** Warren Schlecht

\$6,355.40 in the bank, with all bills paid.

## Committee Reports

**Membership** (Doug Smith): Not present.

**Programs** (Eric Gaasland): Eric is starting a new Whittle-in signup sheet because he lost the old one. Please sign up for a session! Remember - the club has wood if you need blanks for club projects.

[Wesley Hathaway](#) is scheduled for the 2025 Spring carving class. He provided three Norse options to choose from, and we needed to vote as a group for one of them. The group selected a 3-dimensional Viking dragon head.

## Annual show notes:

- Bowers' class is full, and will meet at 8:30am at the United Church of Christ in the basement on Friday, and the 2nd and 3rd day at the BPS Career Academy.
- There are 8 slots left for Epping's bark house class.
- The Potluck will be available for setup around 5pm, with dinner starting around 6pm. It is located at the Hampton Inn on Schafer Street this year. Remember - you don't have to be signed up for a class to join us at the potluck!
- The Saturday Banquet is at the Bismarck Elks. Arrive around 5:30pm, with food orders going in around 6:15pm. Go through the front door, and head to the right. Bob will bring a microphone.
- Don't forget to bring your "Prehistoric" items.
- Don't forget to bring your raffle donation, and your tickets
- There will be a carving exchange at the Banquet
- The raffle table will be at the front of the Career Academy. Diane will help.
- Add the show agenda to the website, with locations.



**Beginning Carving Class:** All the classes are covered with an instructor. Cliff will have a table at the show for just this, showcasing some of the projects, and have sign-up sheets on hand.

**Publicity** (Becky Weisgerber): Could add more online calendar sign-ups.

**Property** (Becky Weisgerber): No change

**Facebook** (Eric Gaasland): Looks good

Thank you Eric Gaasland for bringing in your 1-Carrot project for the group today.

**The meeting was adjourned.**



## October 11-13, 2024 54th Annual Woodcarving Show

A huge THANK YOU to everyone involved with this years' show. We wouldn't have a show without you! To the raffle-ticket sellers, the organizers, instructors, class participants, vendors, display tables, snack wranglers - we thank you.

A generous helping of photos from the show are now on the website, under "[Annual Show](#)". Please go check them out!

Barry Bowers, our featured carver, began his class on Friday. Friday night the potluck was held, with plenty of food to go around. No one left hungry!

Saturday morning dawned to a little chaos - there were fewer long rectangle tables than we anticipated for classes, but we organized with what we were given. Show-and-tell tables were set up, along with vendors, and classes were off and running. Or carving. Or stitching! The morning seemed filled with a combination of quiet concentration, and animated chatting.



Barry Bowers, a caricature carver hailing from Great Bend, Kansas, seemed to be a soft spoken, kind, patient teacher. He joked that his job as a CPA used one side of his brain, while carving used the other side. Above is a long-view shot of his class tables. Whenever I took a brief break to walk around during and after classes, I would find people working either at his class tables, or at their show-and-tell tables, on his class projects.





Right: The non-carving class this year was taught by Becky Barnes, and was “Cross-stitching on wood”. Instead of a fabric background, embroidery floss was used in combination of different types of wood, drilled out with holes to accommodate the needle and thread.



Left: The 2-day carving class was taught by Derek Epping out of Fargo, ND. He taught different techniques for carving houses and their decorations out of cottonwood bark.



Bottom: The 3-day featured carving class was taught by Barry Bowers, from Great Bend, Kansas. He taught caricature carving techniques, with an emphasis on Santas.

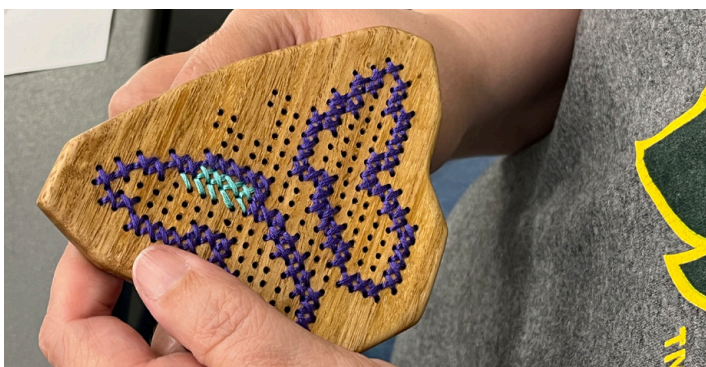






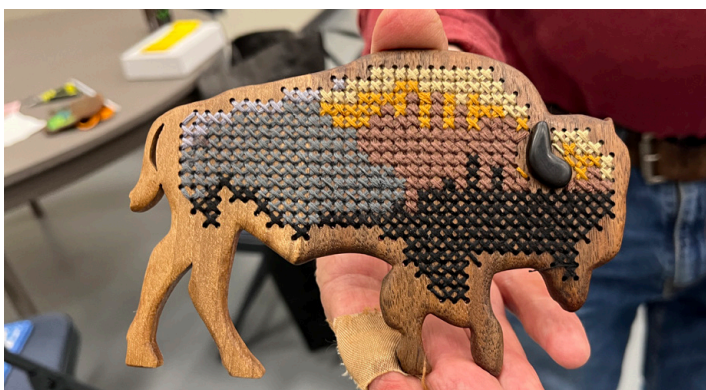
Above: Epping's bark carving class is really getting into the spirit of things!

Below: Matt H. tries to concentrate on his carving while I hover over his shoulder.



Above: A cross-stitched butterfly on Teak wood is coming along nicely.

Below: Bob P's bison almost looks like a landscape.



The Saturday evening banquet was held at the Bismarck Elk's club this year. A new venue, it was very spacious and allowed for many tables, as well as ordering from a menu with many selections available. A carving exchange was held, with many participants. There were many fun and unique carvings in the mix - but Becky W's "Fir Trapper" (below) definitely received a lot of good-natured laughter. The 'coon-skin hat was a delightful touch!



Above: Barry Bowers gives a little speech during the Banquet on Saturday night.



October 15, 2024 - Whittle-In  
Plague Doctor or Pumpkin-man  
by Becky Barnes  
AND Week 1 Beginner Carving

Such a busy night, right after the Annual Woodcarving Show! Club members kept up the momentum of carving and teaching with about a dozen people attending - not counting the new carvers. Becky Barnes introduced a couple of carving projects for the Whittle-In, dependent upon the carvers' interest. One option was a cute Plague Doctor caricature. The other was a stack of three pumpkins, with the top pumpkin carved as a Jack-o-lantern - so similar to a snowman, but a pumpkin-man instead! A suggestion was made to add little stick-arms to it, which would be adorable.

Doug Emerson led the first Beginning Carving class, talking about club history, tools, safety, and more.



Above: Gretchen and Michaela measure out their Plague Doctors.

