



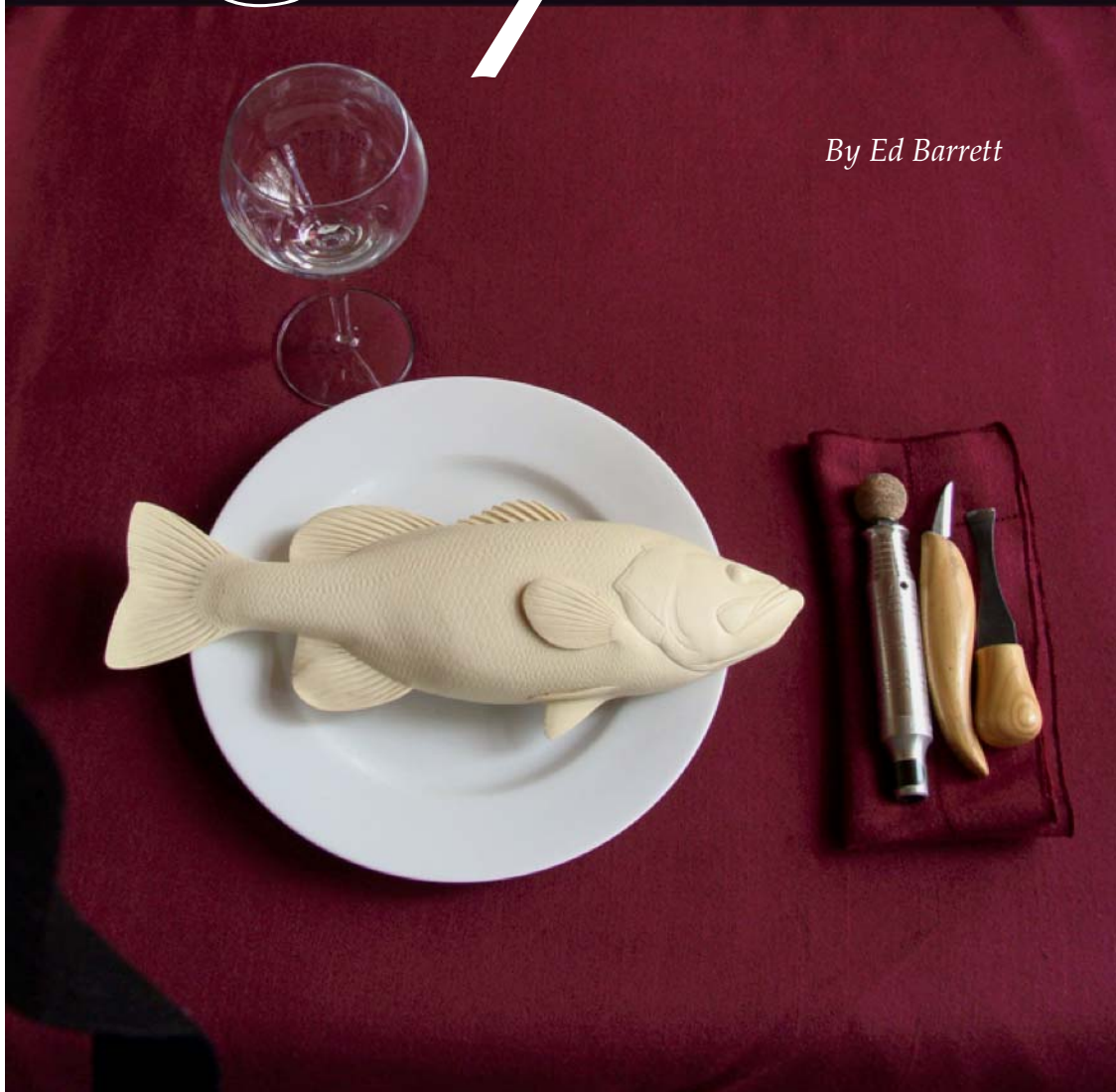
NFCG JOURNAL

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NFCG Carving Class

Etiquette

By Ed Barrett



Getting Started

Attending a Fish Carving class is a great way to learn from a qualified instructor who can walk you through a difficult project and have you share your experiences with fellow carvers. Most beginner and intermediate carvers are astonished at what they accomplish in a classroom setting. To make the experience even more successful I would like to share some ideas on what you need to do to prepare for your class, tell you which tools and supplies are minimal essentials and give you some friendly reminders for class etiquette.

To prepare for your class, let's talk about where you are in your carving skills. For example, if you are a beginner make sure the class is geared for you. It is not fun when your skills are not developed well enough for you to keep up with the class. Classes sometimes last 5-7 days to carve and paint the subject. Attempting to work in a base/habitat in the same time frame can really test you so there isn't much time to learn the basic carving skills if you don't already have them.

There is hand carving and power-carving techniques used which will require a substantial investment in equipment.

Power: dust collectors, heavy-duty grinders, micro-motors and an assortment of bits and knives just to name a few. Assuming you have the proper experience and equipment, the next most important consideration is what it's going to cost you. Typically class fees will range from \$350-\$800 for a five day session. It depends on who the instructor is and the scope of the project. Couple this with travel, lodging and food expenses this five day class is now going to cost you another \$750 bear minimum for a total of \$1100-1550. You have to be committed and I don't mean to an institution but to your art. It is an excellent way to learn from others who have knowledge and experience. Consider it learning on the fast track. Okay, you have the experience, the time and the money to take this class. Now what do you need to be prepared? Get reference materials. The subject, say a Smallmouth Bass, should be studied through the use of quality photographs, and castings if available to learn all you can about the fish and it's habitats. Last, check out scientific reference that can give you anatomical details or other factoids that will inspire your effort.

A few more things to cover to help you be ready.

It has been my experience that for the most part folks bring way more equipment and supplies than they will ever use in the class. They take up lots of room and prevent keeping things neat and orderly. Follow your instructor's class equipment and supplies list or if one is not made available you can follow the one we have listed. Shown in the photo below is a readily available compact container to transport your tools easily. I will also show you another compact container that I use to transport all my painting supplies.



All of the carving equipment listed will fit into the container shown. It is a Stanley product I picked up at home Depot and runs approximately \$45. It is on wheels and comes with two large compartments and several small trays and pouches. It is small and does not take up much room to keep your tools organized.

CARVING EQUIPMENT SUPPLIES LIST

- 2-3 bench knives
- Rasp/micro file
- Strap with rouge
- V-Gouge 1/8 to 1/4 inch
- Assorted Swiss sand paper 80/120/180/220/400
- Foredom grinder and table mount
- Assorted Kutzall/Typhoon bits 1/4 shank
- 3/4" Ball/ 3/4x3" cylinder/ cone
- 1"x3" soft sanding drum
- Micro motor with assorted bits, 1/8, 3/32 shanks
- Diamond grit cylinder, ball that range in sizes 1/8 to 3/8 diameter
- Wood burner set for scales/detailing
- Incandescent swing arm table light
- Plug-in strip for power equipment
- Layout tools
- Calipers-outside, flexible ruler, pencils, push pens, compass
- Safety equipment
- Dust collector a MUST HAVE!
- Dust mask/safety glasses, hand protection when using knives or gouges
- Miscellaneous Items such as.
- Foredom tool holder, extra foredoom cable
- Scissors, table clamps, super glue

The following photos show smaller containers that I use in the upper compartment to hold knives, gouges, sandpapers and other smaller items. I was able to go to my local tackle shop and get just the right sizes to fit the compartment. I did have to remove the tray in the upper compartment for things to fit.



Tools in upper compartment



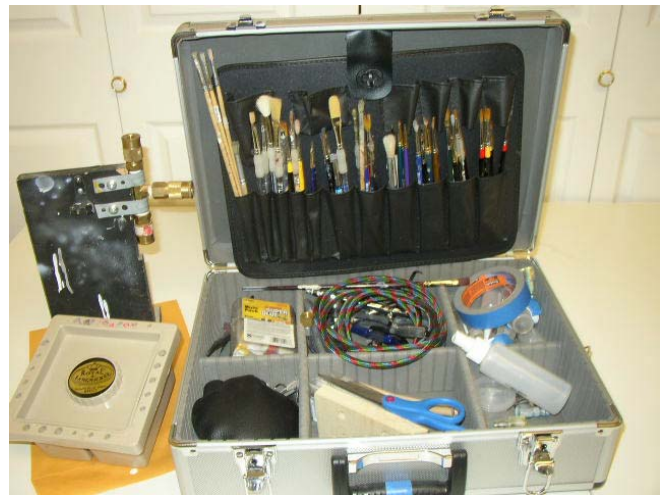
Tools in mid compartment



Tools in lower compartment

For the painting supplies I recommend the following as a suggested minimum.

- **Air Source** can be on site hookups but if you don't have that your choices will be a mini compressor or bottled CO2 or Nitrogen. At the classes we put on we have tables with electricity and air plumbed into each station. If I am at home most of the time I use CO2 because it is quiet and I don't have a compressor going off.
- **Assortment of paint brushes** in flats 4-8s, rounds 00-1-2-3-4-6s, and liners 2-4s. Brushes as you see don't take up a lot of room so a few extras are OK.
- **Paper towels– squirt bottle** for cleaning solution
- **Air brush cleaner** with a stiff bristled brush to clean the tip.
- **Small palette**
- **A couple of air brushes** with extra tips
- **Manifold** for running two air brushes if you use a general spray and detail gun
- **Blue tape and a manila envelope** to cut out templates, which I use to prevent overspray.
- **Reservoir to hold water** to flush the airbrush
- **The instructors generally provide the paints** but if you have rub-on shimmers and metallics, they are nice to have along.



I use a small aluminum suitcase to store and organize my paint supplies. It's lightweight and has internal compartments that adjust.

A CO2 air system is made up of a CO2 bottle a set of pressure gauges. One gauge measures the lbs of pressure in the tank and the other gauge measures the pressure set for your airbrush. These supplies can be purchased at most welding supply store. You can purchase a steel tank for around \$60 and for another \$20 you can get a lighter aluminum tank. The gauges run another \$65 or there about. The system is portable, noiseless, but remember not to test for leaks in your system by leaving your bottle valve open over night. It has been our experience that it's the quickest way to spend another \$12 to get your bottle refilled.





If you are heading off to a fish carving class and you are being mindful not to bring too much gear, it should look something like this.

Taking a class will accelerate your learning and not only will you learn from your instructor, you will learn from other students. If you are interested in taking a class, or you would like to make arrangements to have a class, the NFCG can assist you. Email me at Edwin_barrett42@msn.com and we can give you a list of classes at Krausman's (www.referencephoto's.com/classschedule.htm) or any of our 2010 NFCG classes. If you are interested in having a class in your area we can also put you in touch with any of your World Fish Carving Champions.

Etiquette

Fish Carving Class Etiquette

- Never borrow tools unless you have permission and when you finish give them back to that person in hand.
- Avoid being rude, never challenge methods or techniques the instructor is teaching. If you think your idea is better then use it and keep it to yourself. The last thing a class needs is someone confusing the class with an extended dissertation on how they do it differently. Remember you are the student not the instructor.
- Resist the temptation to forge ahead of the instruction being given. Your neighbors will see what you are doing and they may follow your lead. If you are wrong they will be too.
- If you don't understand something then ask the instructor. If someone asks you for instruction refer him or her to the instructor unless you have been given permission to assist
- I have seen power equipment used in classes that create unhealthy and irritating situations. Consider everyone's health. Dust collectors are an absolute essential piece of power carving equipment.



Shown above is a freestanding tripod mounted dust collector.

For folks who think they don't need a dust collector consider yourself one-step closer to your grave at each non-use. Yes, they are an expense. However, is \$150-300 a small price to pay for your health down the road? Okay let's say for the sake of argument you do agree. The right dust collector for the job would be either a laptop or freestanding unit like the ones mounted on a tripod. I made my lap top collector from Ed Wilicki's web site, <http://www.Fishcarver.com> for \$135.



Above is a Wikicki lap top dust collector and if I had a choice I would take the laptop for heavy power carving situation.

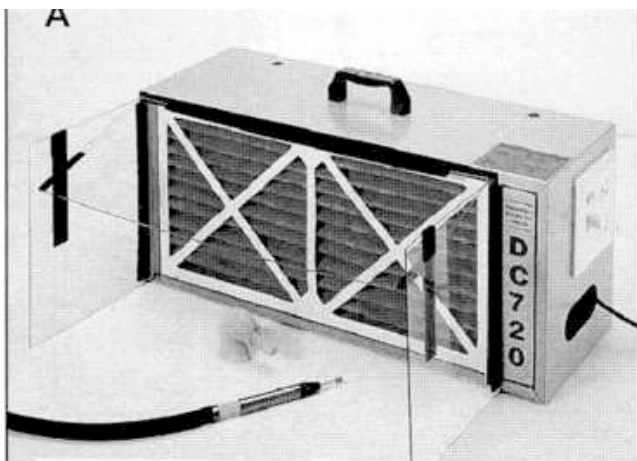


Table Top Dust Collector

Tabletop models are fine unless you have a neighbor sitting directly across from you. I guarantee they will not appreciate you blowing your dust into their face. I guess if you have one the best alternative is try to redirect the discharge air flow or sit somewhere so it won't affect your neighbor.

Do not use a shop vac as your dust collector. Normal conversation is at 55-60 decibels. Shop vacs run in excess of 100 decibels, which equates to 4 times louder than normal conversation. So using a shop vac in a classroom is like having your neighbor continuously yelling in your ear. It is the quickest way to have a negative influence on your peers.

The bottom line is that dust collectors are a must to maintain healthy lungs, avoid lymphoma's that could result from long-term exposures to sawdust. In some woods allergies or skin irritation are a major factor. Using a dust collector can minimize their effect.

Last, it's wise to throw into your gear a set of coveralls and a good dust mask for use during the heavy roughing out stages of power carving.

Most of what we have covered in this Journal is common sense. Our hope is that it will help make your next class more productive and enjoyable for everyone.

Explore the NFCG web site for more useful information on fish carving, theNFCG.com.