



The finished letter bar and hearts dress up the carved door topper.

Carving the Hearts and Letter Board

Personalize your door topper with these simple accents

By Betty Padden

It's easy to carve hearts and a simple bar to embellish your door topper. The painted letters are easy to add and save time spent carving difficult letters. This addition to the door topper allows you to personalize the project for any home.



HEART & LETTER BAR: CARVING THE PIECES

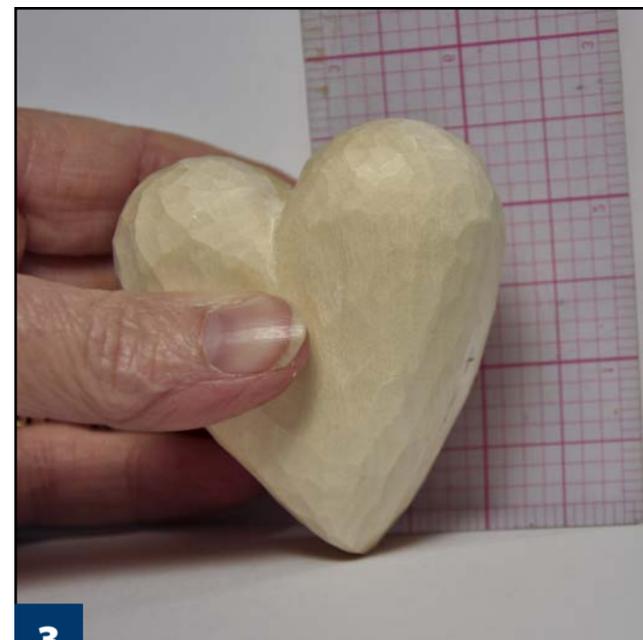


1 Prepare the letter board. Cut the board to size and sand it smooth. Figure out what you want to say, and then mark in $1\frac{1}{2}$ " (38mm)-wide blocks for letters and $1\frac{5}{16}$ " (24mm)-wide blocks for the spaces between letters. Carve along each of the lines with a $\frac{1}{4}$ " (6mm) 45° V-tool to separate each of the blocks.



2 Carve the hearts. Cut the perimeter of the hearts and draw a centerline along the edges. Place the heart on a non-skid mat, clamp the bottom to the bench, and use a $\frac{3}{4}$ " (or 20mm) #3 fishtail gouge to round the top. Refine the line between the two halves with a $\frac{1}{4}$ " (6mm) 45° V-tool. Repeat the process on both sides. Then, brace the heart on a non-skid pad and round the bottom of the heart.

HEART & LETTER BAR: PAINTING THE HEART



3 Add the attachment wires to the hearts. Hold the heart upright and mark the side 1" (25mm) up from the bottom. Drill a $\frac{1}{16}$ " (2mm)-diameter hole at the mark. Repeat the process on the second heart. On the letter bar, mark the two ends 1" (25mm) up from the bottom and drill $\frac{1}{16}$ " (2mm)-diameter holes. Insert wire into the holes in the hearts to use to hold and hang the hearts while painting; after painting, we will trim off the excess wire and use the wire to attach the hearts to the letter bar.



4 Begin painting the hearts. Paint the center of the hearts with a mixture of $\frac{1}{2}$ part alizarin crimson to 5 parts cadmium yellow pale.



5

Continue painting the hearts. Using unthinned alizarin crimson, paint the rest of the heart, and blend these colors with the orange applied in step 4.



6

Darken the edges of the hearts. Paint the edges of the heart using a mixture of a mix of 1/2 part black to 10 parts alizarin crimson. Blend this with the two other colors.

HEART & LETTER BAR: PAINTING THE LETTER BAR

Paint the letter bar with thinned raw sienna oil paint and let it dry thoroughly. Use dressmaker's carbon paper to transfer the letters into the appropriate square. I've provided letters for the saying I used, but you can also print out letters to make your own saying using a word processing program. I use the font Andalus for my letters; you should be able to find it as a free download for both PC and Mac computers.

I use acrylic paint for the letters. I created a country red by mixing cadmium red with a little yellow and a little black. You can create your own color to match your room décor if you like. Acrylic paint dries faster than oil, which makes it easier to paint crisp lines for the letters. When the paint is dry, trim the wires to length and attach the hearts to the letter bar.

materials & tools

MATERIALS:

- Basswood, 1 1/4" (32mm)-thick: letter bar, 1 1/4" x 36" (32mm x 914mm); hearts, 2 each 2 1/2" x 2 3/4" (64mm x 70mm)
- Dressmakers carbon paper
- Black wire: 1/16" (2mm)-thick
- Oil paints: alizarin crimson, cadmium yellow pale, lamp black, raw sienna
- Acrylic paints: cadmium red, yellow, black
- Sandpaper: 220 grit

TOOLS:

- Ruler
- 45° V-tool: 1/4" (6mm)
- #3 fishtail gouge: 3/4" (or 20mm)
- Non-skid pad
- Drill with bit: 1/16" (2mm)-diameter
- C clamp
- Paintbrushes of choice

The author used these products for the project. Substitute your choice of brands, tools, and materials as desired.



Betty Padden and her husband, Bob, are the owners of the Wooden Apple Signmakers in Auburn, Mass., and have been professional sign carvers for 35 years. They have been teaching their craft to students in their studio for more than 30 years. In addition, they created SantaCarls®, a unique figure, which has been sold at Disney parks and Busch Gardens. Betty also designs and paints for Ne'Qwa Art and Blossom Bucket, as well as many other companies. See more of Betty's work at www.WoodenAppleSignmakers.com.

Letterboard patterns

Home is where
the heart is

H	O	M	E	I	S
W	H	E	R	E	
T	H	E	H	E	A
R	T	I	S		