

Quick-Carve Snowmen

Cheery holiday decorations anyone can make

By Cyndi Joslyn



With simple adjustments to the scarf and hat, you can give your snowmen a variety of cheerful looks.

When it's time for holiday carving, many turn to the Jolly Old Elf as a subject. This year, consider these cheery little snowmen. Fun to make and fun to give, they are great stocking stuffers.

Understanding what you'll see in the photographs and text of this demonstration will help a lot to ensure success with this quick-carve project. First, all the photos are taken from the carver's perspective, which makes it easier for you to compare your hand positions with mine. I strongly recommend the use of a Kevlar-reinforced carving glove and a carving apron to ensure your safety carving. A thumb guard is optional.

To assist in ensuring you remove wood in the proper areas, I suggest adding "removal lines" to the wood as you work. You'll see photos throughout the demonstration that show these lines.

Paint colors are referenced in *italics*. All paints are Delta Ceramcoat unless otherwise noted.



Materials & Tools

MATERIALS:

Wood:
4½" by 2" by 2" basswood block for each snowman

TOOLS:

No. 3 7/8" gouge
Carving knife with a 1¼"-long blade
Detail knife
Imm V tool

ACCESSORIES:

See-through flexible ruler
Stylus with fine point
Tracing paper
Carbon or graphite paper
Soft cloth used for antiquing

FINISHING MATERIALS:

Acrylic paint - colors per color chart
No.6 flat paintbrush
No.1 liner brush
Waterbased varnish (satin finish)
Antiquing medium/retarder (Jo Sonja's recommended)

Tips

Dry Brush Technique

Wet a flat paintbrush and stroke it back and forth on a paper towel to remove most of the water from it. Dip the very edge of the brush into the paint. Again stroke the brush back and forth a few times on the paper towel to remove most of the paint. Then brush lightly over the carving to add just a hint of color.



About the Author

Cyndi Joslyn is a professional woodcarver who lives in Missoula, Montana. Her second book, *North Woods Nativity*, was published in September 2004. Her work will be for sale at the Wisconsin Holiday Market at the American Club in Kohler, Wisconsin November 12-14, 2004. Much inspiration for her work comes from hiking, mountain biking and cross-country skiing through the Montana countryside. Her favorite carved subjects include Santa Claus, Halloween figures, angels and Uncle Sam. Visit her website at www.cyndijoslyn.com.

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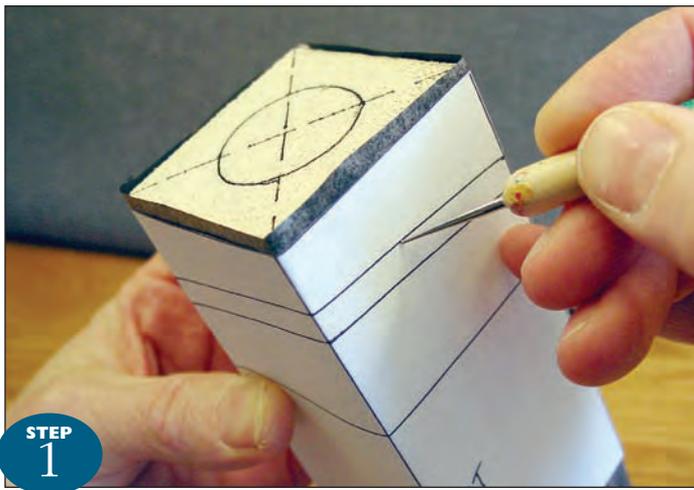
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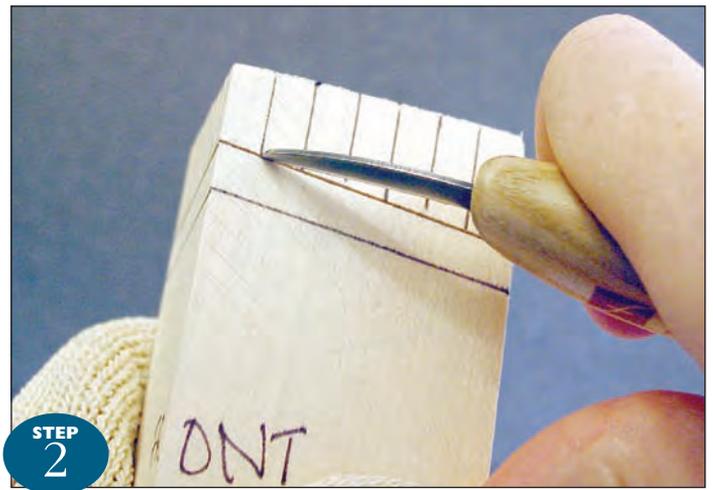
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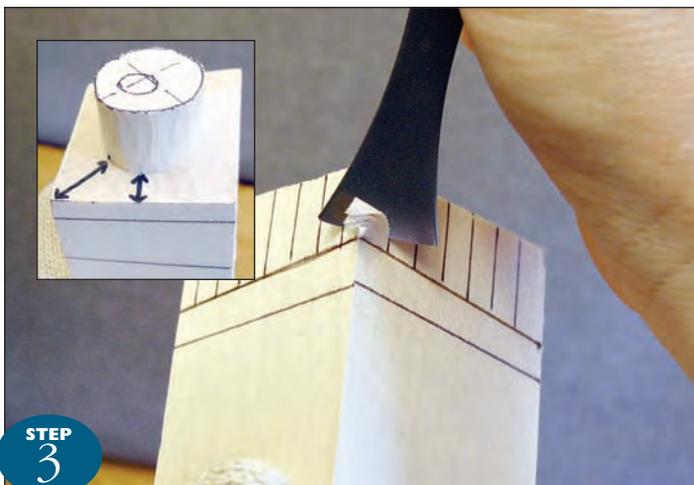
STEP 1

Transfer the patterns onto the sides, top and bottom of wood with a stylus. Use a pencil to add wood removal lines from the outer circle across the top of the block and down to the first line from the top. Add a little circle inside the larger one on the hat to represent the pom-pom.



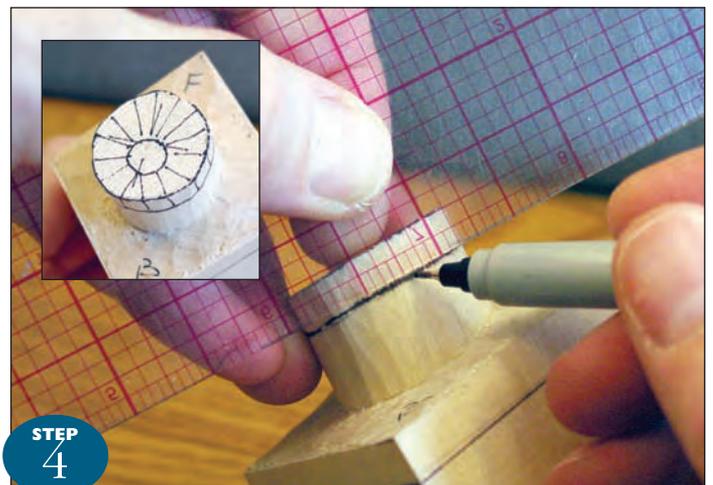
STEP 2

To begin the removal process, stop-cut the top line on all four sides of the wood with a carving knife.



STEP 3

Carve back to the stop cut with a no. 3 $\frac{7}{8}$ " gouge, removing thin layers of wood with each carving stroke. Continue removing thin layers of wood until you have defined a cylinder, which represents the snowman's hat. Evenly rounded is the goal. Note how much more wood you must remove from the corners than from the sides of the wood to achieve "round."



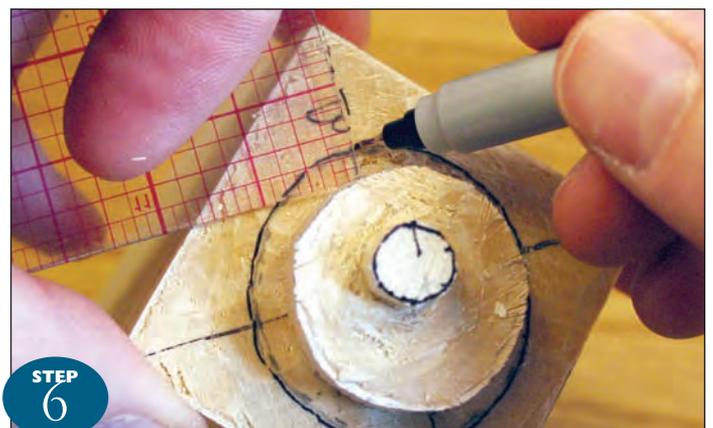
STEP 4

Draw a line $\frac{1}{4}$ " down from the top of the cylinder, circling it to define the hat. Add removal lines that begin at the circle, go across the wood and down to the line you just created. In the remaining steps, instructions to "add removal lines" won't be present. Assume that if you see them in the photo, you may add them to your carving.



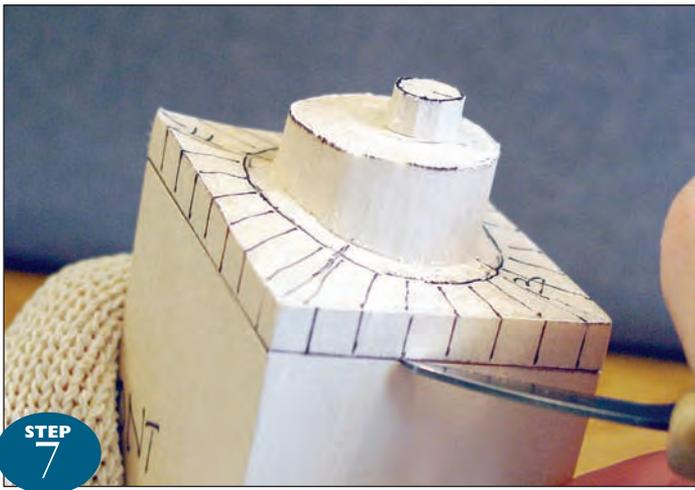
STEP 5

Stop-cut the line on the side of the cylinder with the carving knife and carve back with the no. 3 $\frac{7}{8}$ " gouge to define the pom-pom on top of the hat. Use the same thin-layer technique as described in Step 3.

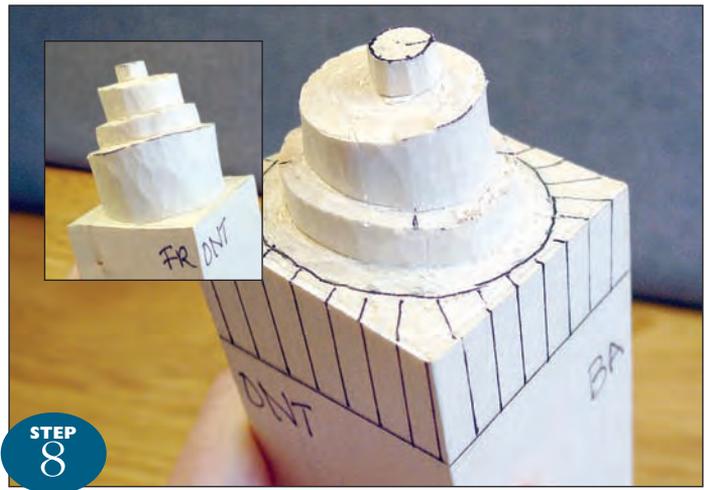


STEP 6

Measure out $\frac{1}{8}$ " from the base of the cylinder and draw a circle around it.



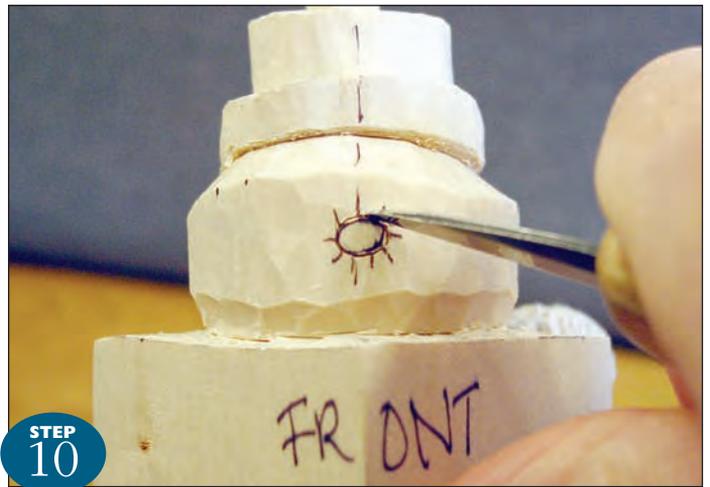
Stop-cut the next line down on the pattern and remove the wood in the lined area to create the hat trim.



Measure out $\frac{3}{16}$ " from the base of the hat trim and draw a circle around the cylinder. Use the no. 3 $\frac{7}{8}$ " gouge to carve away wood. The area that remains will be the snowman's head.



Using the gouge, carve away the edge of the wood at an angle, recessing the snowman's head just slightly under the edge of the hat. Remove wood at the base of the snowman's head in a similar fashion.



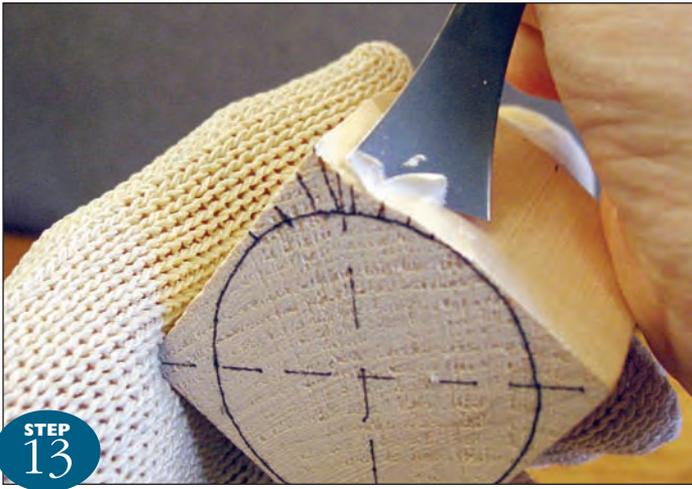
Draw in a small oval approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ " wide by $\frac{1}{4}$ " high for the snowman's nose. Using a detail knife, carefully stop-cut around this circle and remove a small amount of wood to define the nose.



Again with the detail knife, round the edges on the top and bottom of the pom-pom, the top of the hat, top and bottom of the hat trim and continue to round the top and bottom of the snowman's head. The edge of the neck should be in approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ " from each corner.



Now round the lined area on the top of the snowman's body. Round the top 1" of the snowman's body. The no. 3 $\frac{7}{8}$ " gouge works well for rounding this area. Also, you will find it easier to carve toward the head. Check your carving to ensure it is round and has no square edges.



STEP 13
Again using the gouge, remove the wood to the circle on the bottom of the snowman's body. Continue working with the gouge to round the sides of the snowman.



STEP 14
Both sides should be evenly rounded as you can see on the right side of the photo.



STEP 15
Measure and mark a line $\frac{3}{8}$ " below the snowman's neck for the scarf.



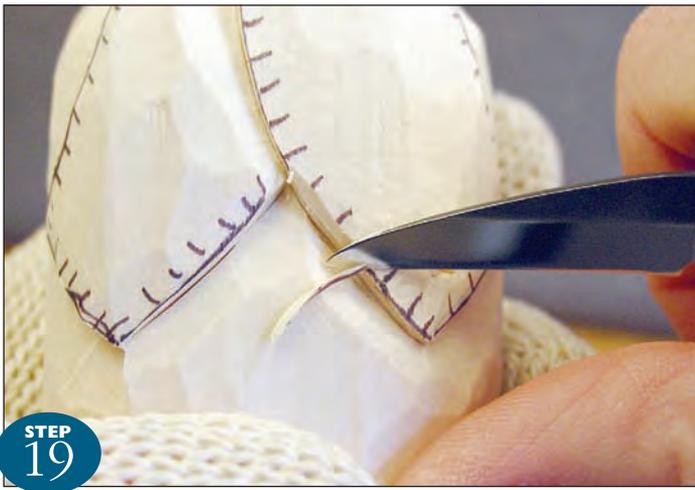
STEP 16
Draw in the snowman's scarf as shown.



STEP 17
Score around all the lines of the scarf and remove the wood in the lined areas.

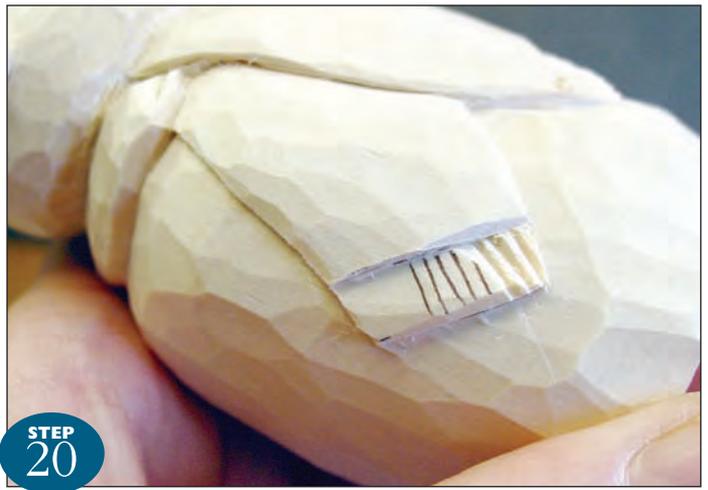


STEP 18
The scarf is tied/looped/knotted as shown in the photo.



STEP
19

Round all the edges of the scarf with the detail knife.



STEP
20

To add fringe detail to the scarf, draw a line $\frac{1}{4}$ " up from the bottom of each scarf end (not edge!!!!). Stop-cut the line and remove a thin layer of wood up to the line with the gouge. Then with a 1mm V tool, carve tiny lines perpendicular to the line scored to resemble fringe.



STEP
21

Finish rounding the snowman's body and base. Again check the roundness of your snowman and make adjustments as necessary. Be careful if you remove more wood. Do it in very small increments. A little adjustment can go a long way.



STEP
22

Paint the snowman with two coats of acrylic paint per color chart, allowing the first coat to dry thoroughly before adding the second. Add *Light Ivory* dots to red areas of the scarf and hat using a stylus. With a liner brush paint eyes (*Black*) and mouth (*Adobe*). Add sparkles to the right side of each eye using a stylus and *Light Ivory*. Using a dry brush technique with a no.6 flat brush, add a hint of blush to the cheeks with *Adobe*. Allow to dry thoroughly.



STEP
23

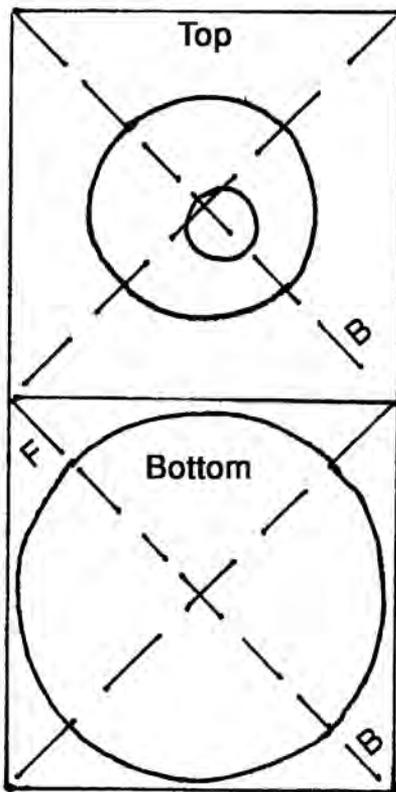
Mix equal parts of waterbased varnish and water. Coat the snowman with two coats of this mixture, allowing the first coat to dry 15 minutes before applying the second. Let the varnish dry thoroughly, preferably overnight before antiquing. Mix a small amount of *Light Ivory* + *Blue Haze* to achieve an icy blue color. Add an equal amount of antiquing/retarder medium to the color mix. Coat the entire snowman with this antiquing mixture.



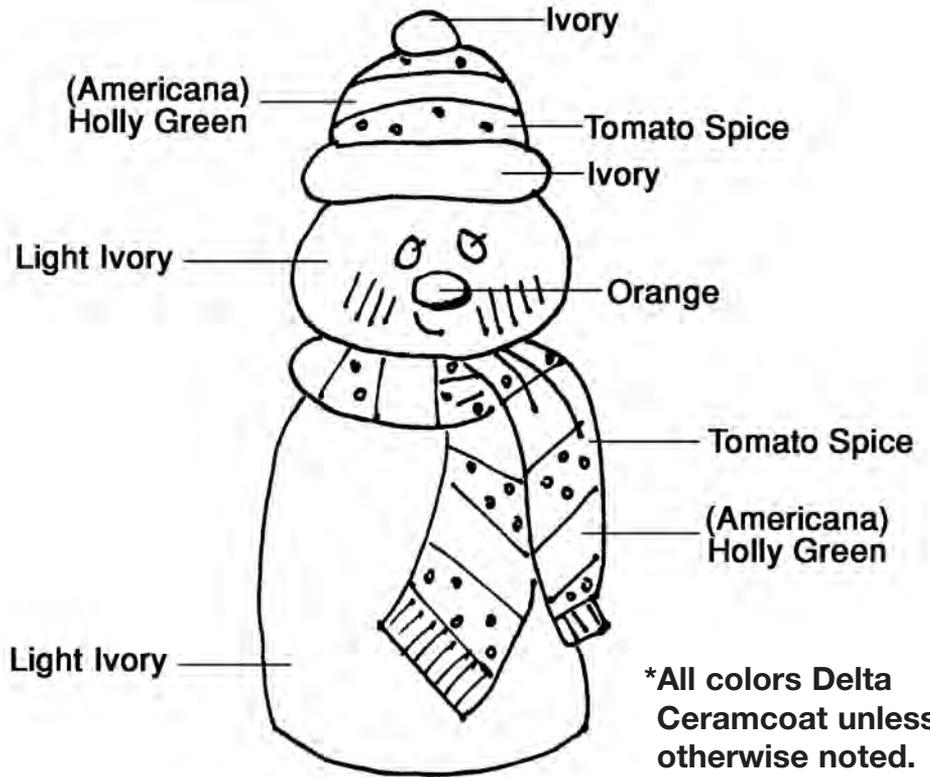
STEP
24

Working quickly, remove the antiquing mixture with a soft cloth until you reach the desired antiqued effect. Hold the snowman in a cloth as you work to avoid getting fingerprints on the wet antiquing. Allow to dry thoroughly.

design and illustrations
by Cyndi Joslyn



Snowman



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		Pom-Pom Hat	
		Hat Trim	
		Head	
		Body	
Back	Front		Back