

St. Charles Area Woodcarvers



www.stcharlesareawoodcarvers.com

We meet at the Department of Energy Weldon Spring Site; 7295 Highway 94 South (~2 miles South of I64/40 on Hwy 94) on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month at 7:00 pm and at the St. Charles Senior Center (1455 Fairgrounds) every Monday at 9:00am. Visitors are always welcome. Carvers under 18 years of age must be accompanied by their parents.

Soap Sculpture

Carving soap is fun and safe for kids of all ages. Ivory soap is the brand that we recommend but Irish Spring and Tone also work fine. The soap should be fresh. Even when it is wrapped it will dry out and become brittle over a long period of time. After handling the soap, you need to wash your hands before rubbing your eyes or eating.

Use a plastic knife or wooden tool for the carving. If you have a knife with serrated edges, it can be used to carve hair. Scale the patterns to fit the soap you are using. Working over a soda flat (cardboard that holds 24 cans) makes for easy clean-up.

First, transfer the pattern to a stiff material for a template. We usually use poster-board or plastic for the template. Then, cut out the template and place it on the bar of soap with the bottom along one long side. Next, trace around the outline of the template with a pencil or other pointed instrument. It does not need to be too deep, just deep enough to make a visible mark. Now you are ready to start carving. **MAKE SMALL CUTS.** If you try to cut too much at once the likelihood of breaking off a piece increases. And it usually breaks where you do not want the soap to be removed.

When you have the figure roughed out, mark a center line all the way around the outside edge. Begin rounding the figure by cutting corners at about 45 degrees. Continue rounding each side up to the center line. Always cut toward the body of the figure. If you cut toward the edges, you have a pretty good chance of breaking it off the body.

When your figure is rounded, you can leave the knife marks, use the serrated blade to gently scrape the figure to make hair, or rub it with your fingers or a wet cotton swab to make it very smooth.

The waste soap can be packed into the toe of a nylon hose. Tie the top and then rub the outside with wet hands to get enough soap for washing. Tie it up at the hand-washing station when camping.

