

# *Intarsia 2023 pt 1*

*Presented by Rolf & Bob*

*Power point created by Rolf*



# *What is Intarsia*

- Intarsia is a woodworking technique that uses varied shapes, sizes, and species of wood fitted together to create a mosaic-like picture with an illusion of depth
  - True Intarsia is not painted or stained. Although sometimes you have no choice when you need a specific color. The grain should remain visible.

# Objective

An introduction to the [Intarsia Artform](#)  
For those of you that may want to give it  
a try.

For our members that have already done  
Intarsia and have any tips or suggestions  
they would be greatly appreciated.

# Safety concerns: Intarsia shaping creates a lot of dust

- The big one is **Wood Toxicity** especially in the form of sawdust! This is a concern for all of us as woodworkers
- <https://www.wood-database.com/wood-articles/wood-allergies-and-toxicity/>
- Minimum
  - Good dust mask
- Better, good dust collection
- You can carve with knives **but** many of the most colorful woods are like concrete and don't cut easily with traditional tools.

# 1.Segmentation

- Cut out of **one piece of wood no regard for grain direction**
- Following lines not as critical
- Only one pattern is necessary
- Pieces automatically fit together

This is a great way to learn shaping !

Cheap wood, no fit issues

The colored exotic woods come later.

## 2. Modified segmentation

Cut from one piece of wood but **cutting individual pieces taking grain direction into consideration.**

- a. Precise cutting important. As pieces don't automatically fit together.
- b. Multiple duplicates of pattern as you will be cutting them up for each individual piece.



# Segmentation samples







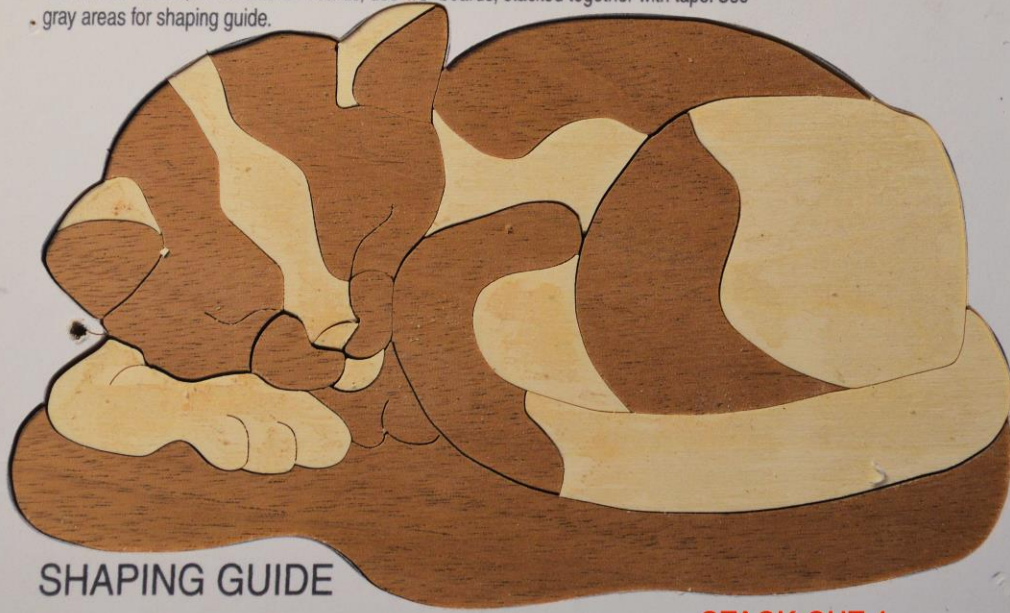


# Two wood segmentation

- **Stack two different woods and cut at the same time then mix the parts. Bonus you get two with only one cutting.**



Cut on red dotted line for Backer Boards, use 1/8" boards, stacked together with tape. Use gray areas for shaping guide.



SHAPING GUIDE

STACK CUT 1

STACK CUT TWO WOODS  
SAPELE AND BASSWOOD

EXCHANGED SOME  
PARTS  
STILL NEED TO BE  
SHAPED



STACK CUT 2

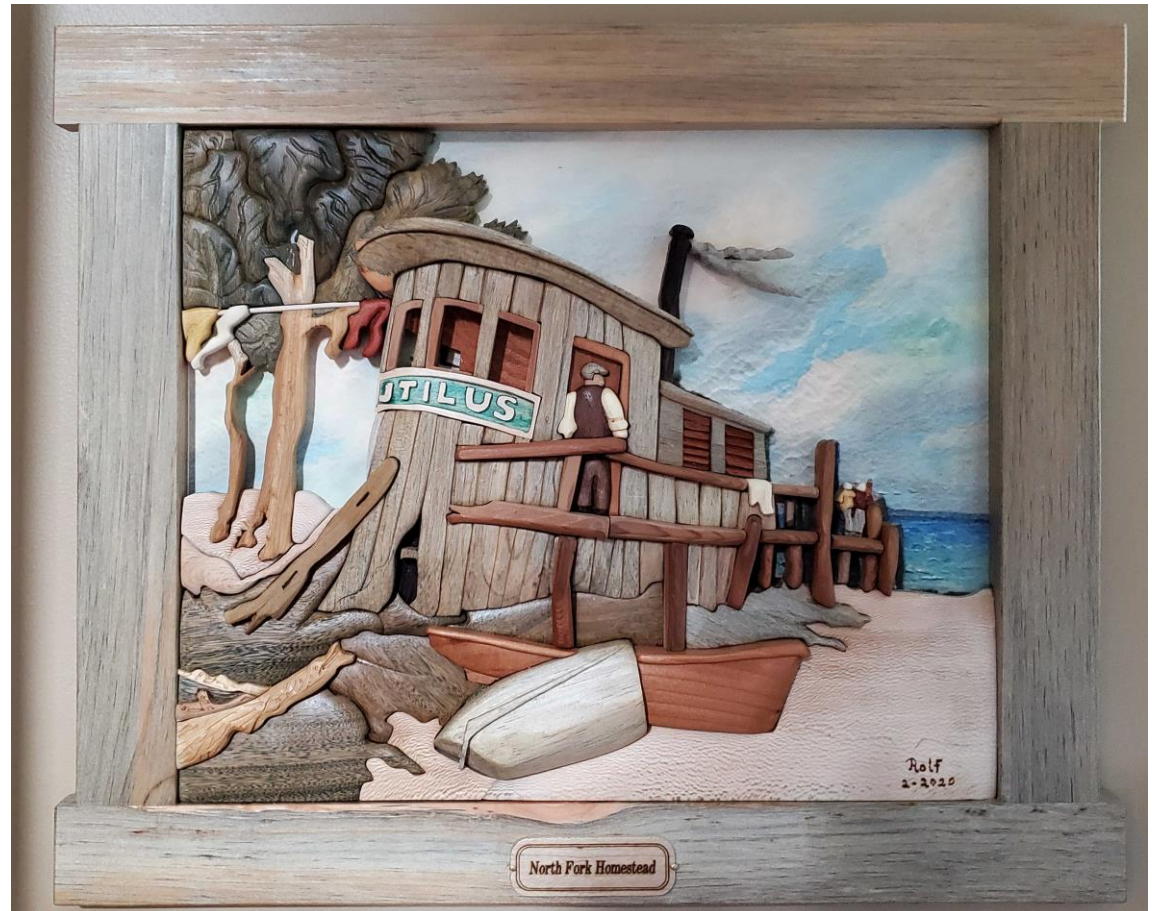


# The Goal

Sailboat is a Kathy Wise  
pattern



Tugboat pattern  
created by Rolf from  
a 1922 painting





# A couple more from Bob



Motorcycle has to be seen in person  
it is amazing. Lots of tiny pieces!

Created from a  
Norman Rockwell  
image by  
Bob Carpentier



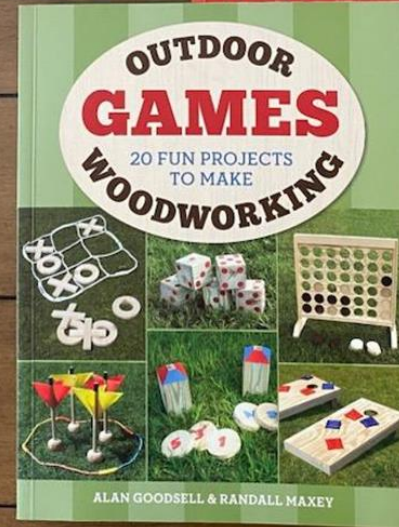
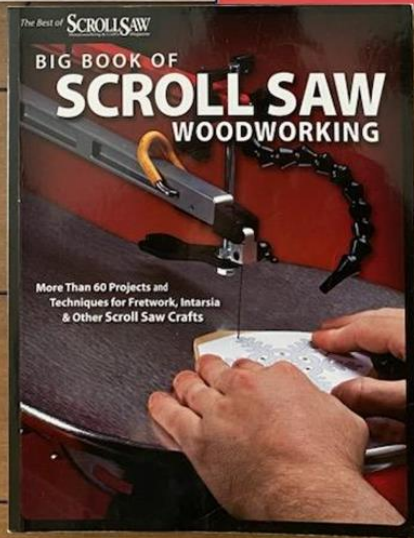
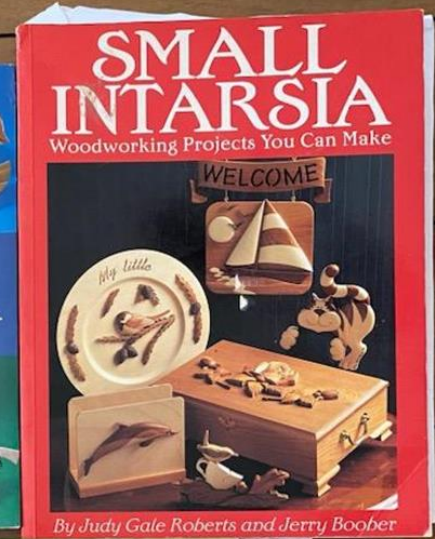
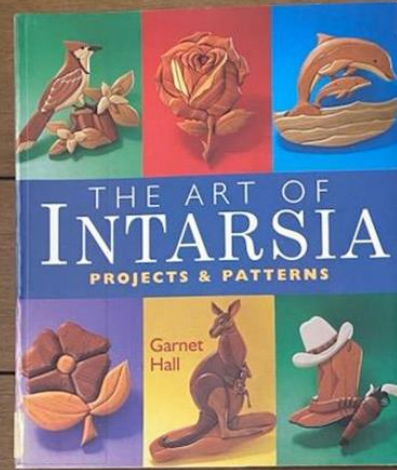
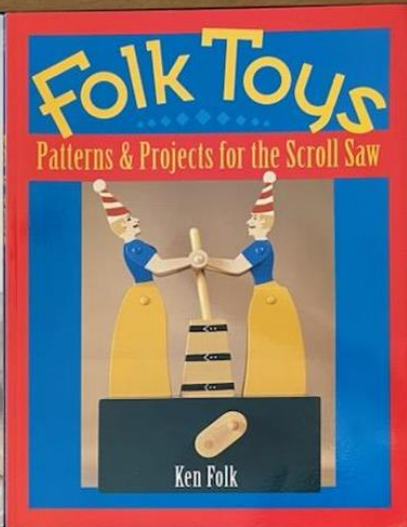
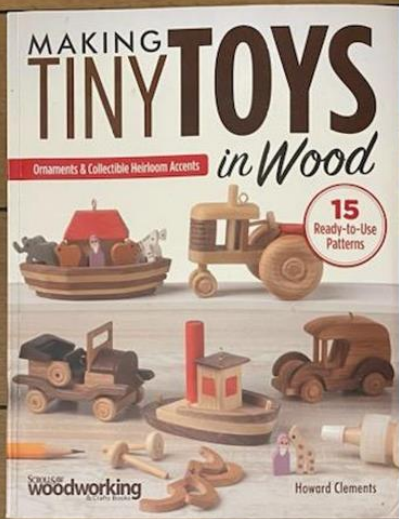
# The Basics, getting started

- Pattern sources and design ideas.
  - Start simple
    - Coloring books
    - Scrollsaw Woodworking and crafts Magazines
    - Photos, paintings
- **Or go nuts and design your own.** That would be a different presentation.



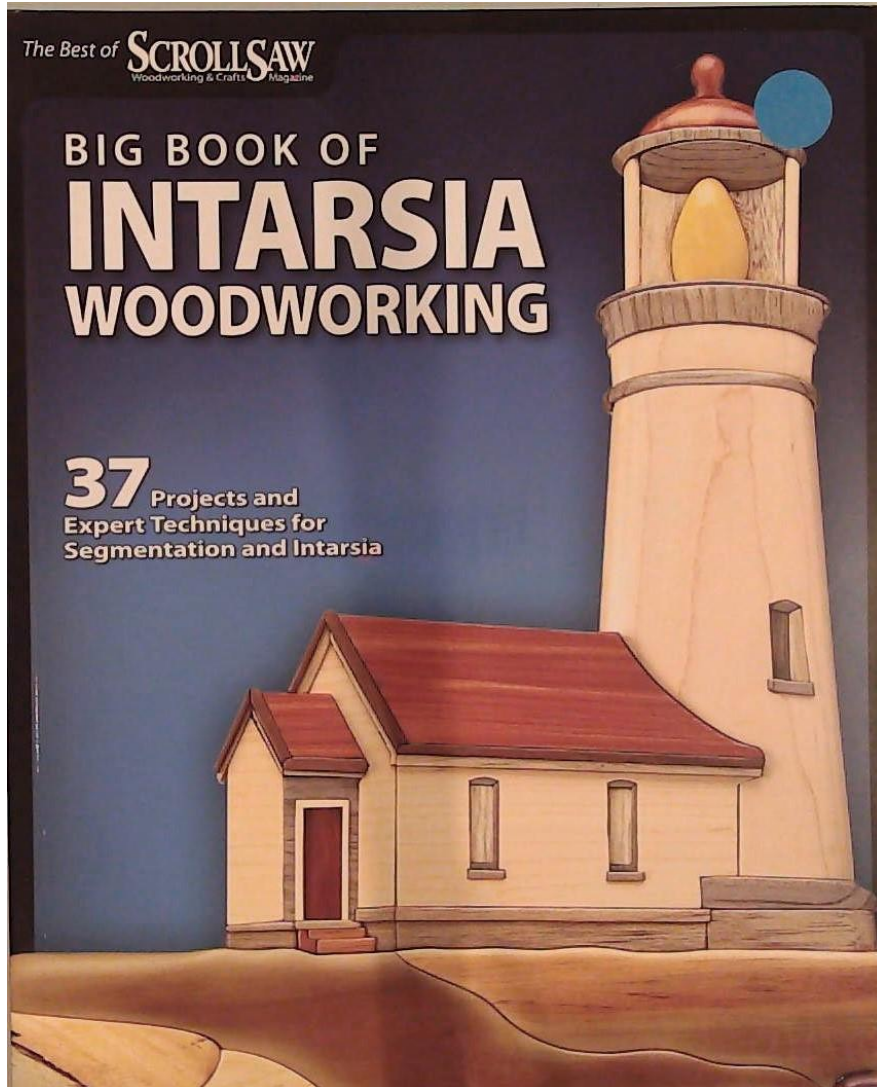


# Some Idea Books





# This is a great book with many of the designers.



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# Sources cont.

- Some of my **favorite Designers**
  - Judy Gale Roberts                      Bruce Worthington
  - Jannette Square
  - Kathy Wise
  - Steve Good also has a variety of patterns **FREE**  
our club donates to him annually.

# WOOD!

Most Colorful woods are Imported, and some can be found locally.

- Exotic woods in East Northport
- Amazon
- There are also domestic woods that are great
  - orange yellows, Mulberry
  - Green, Poplar some
  - White, Holly and Aspen
  - Cedars, Pines, Maples, Sycamore (especially quarter sawn)



# Wood cont.

- Cherry , Walnut
- You would be surprised what you can find in the local stores
- **Warning!** Most of the strong colors **will** change in time. The reds will brown as will the green Poplar.
- Keep your projects out of Direct sunlight

# Dramatic color Change!



11 years later

# The Technical Stuff

- The blade **MUST** be square to the table
- Do **NOT** push sideways when cutting.
- The blade removes wood (Kerf) so consider that when cutting adjoining pieces.
- I **try** to split the pattern line. Be consistent with this.
- Precision is crucial. Take your time!



# Blades

We all have our favorites:

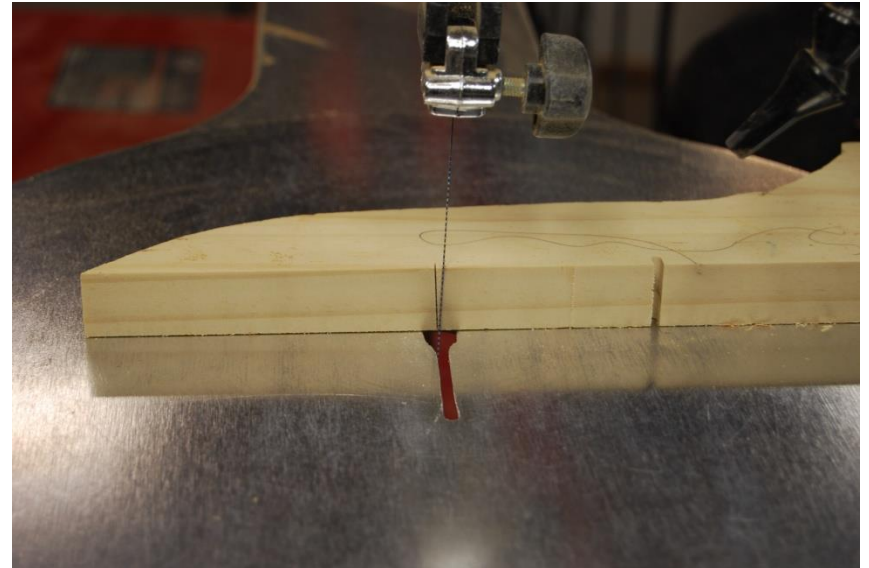
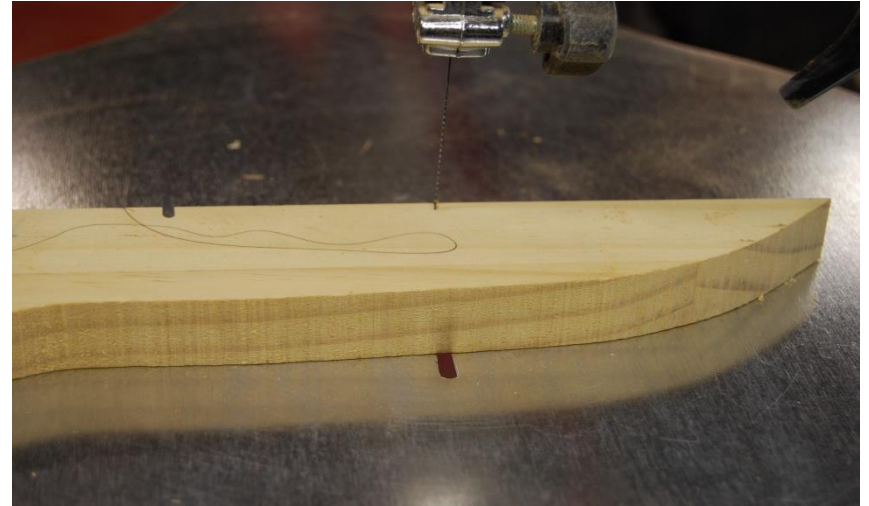
I currently use the Pegas brand. MGT blades.

I use the thinnest blade I can get away with for the type and thickness of the wood.

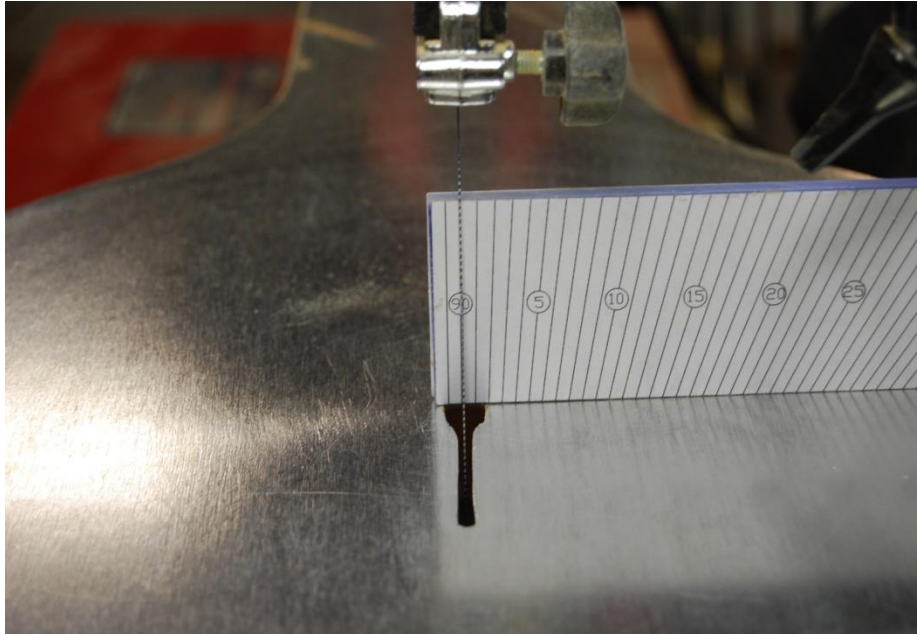
You do not need to use reverse tooth blades.

# Initial saw alignment

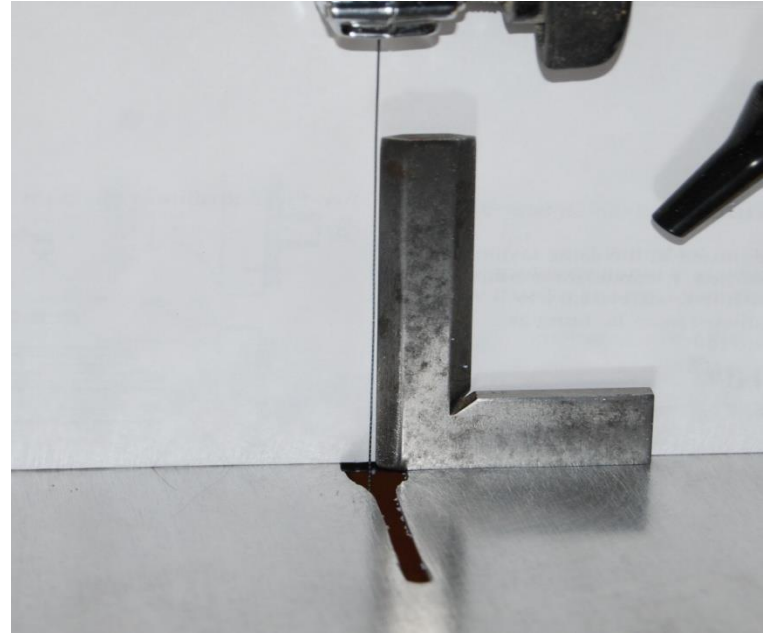
- This is the way I check it.
- Cut into the back of a piece of scrap 1/16 deep
- Swing it around and the blade should slip into the slot. In this picture I exaggerated the misalignment to make it easier to see.



# Alternative Alignment methods



Home made Gauge



Small Machinist square

A piece of white paper behind the blade gives better contrast

# Patterns

- Printing
  - Printer settings
    - Do **not** print to FIT.
    - Set printer to Print actual size.
    - all patterns for a project on the same printer.
    - Some print on Velum so that you can see the grain through the paper as you place the pattern on the wood.
    - Another suggestion is to use a highlighter on the pattern lines that do not have adjoining pieces. A less critical cut.



# Attaching the pattern to the wood.

- For Intarsia I attach the pattern directly to the wood since I sand the pattern off as I shape the wood.
  - I mostly use a Xyron Machine
  - 3m 77 spray adhesive is very reliable if you follow the directions
  - For small pieces I have used a glue Stick.

# Some Terminology

To get the full impact of Intarsia we need to create the illusion of depth. To do this we Sand, Shape, contour the wood.

As most wood is  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch thick that may or may not be enough for the effects we are looking for.

We cheat by using “**Risers**”. or **Raising Shims**  
Additional layers of wood or hardboard to bring the elevation of a piece up.

# Risers



This is an example of using Risers

It is all cut from  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch wood .

As you see I have four elevations.

Use caution when shaping so as not to go below the lower levels.

Another view, with a bit of shaping





# Completed

Almost done



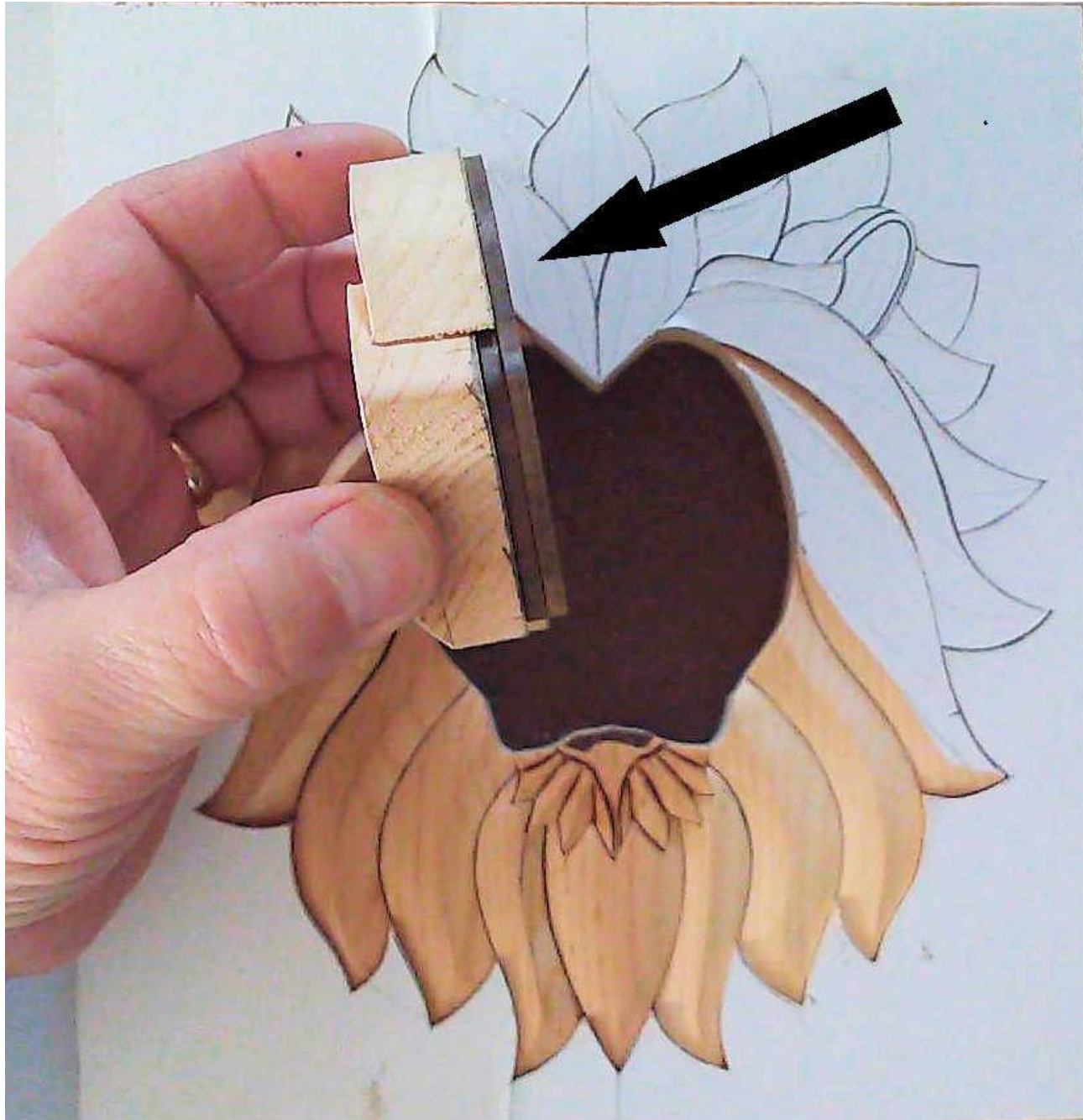
Done





This is a many year work in progress. An example of Segmentation and risers. The image is from an Adult coloring book. Design by Ben Kwok. About 9 inches.





Risers in place  
to bring the nose  
of the lion up

# Sanding Shims

- Judy Gale Roberts web site has a **free** download explaining how to use the shims.
- <https://intarsia.com/>
- There are times when you have adjoining pieces that need to be smooth. No height difference.
- I also use the sanding shim for shaping very small pieces without sanding down my fingers.



This is an excerpt from Judy's download as is the next page, showing how she uses Sanding and Riser shims.



- I use an inexpensive “light duty” carpet tape. You will need at least two pieces of tape to hold each part down. It is best to put the tape on the back of the parts, it is easier to see where to put the tape. Otherwise you practically have to cover the entire surface of the sanding shim with tape to ensure each part has tape. **I really do not like to use that much tape, it makes it much harder to take the parts off the shim without breaking anything. JGR**

# Cutting and Fitting

- - Selecting blades use your favorites and size appropriate for the wood that you are cutting.
- I use the thinnest blade that I can get away with.
  - - Choosing the right wood
  - - Making pieces fit together tightly
    - Don't obsess over this, some gaps actually enhance the overall effect.



# *Bobs great tips !!!*

- After cutting, always **wipe off** brightly colored woods such as any red woods, purple-heart etc. before test fitting them against any other woods. They could stain adjacent wood to the point where you may have to lightly re-sand a piece and risk ruining its shape. I have had padauk permanently stain a shirt! -also wipe off your saw table before cutting a different color wood.

## 2

- Don't be so quick to remove the pattern from a piece you have just cut. I have found that when fitting pieces together, if something doesn't fit well, the pattern may tell you where the problem is by showing that you may have swerved off the line somewhere.

# 3

- Assemble and test fit on a flat surface.  
Remove fuzzies on the edges first!
  - I found a granite slab
  - I also use a flat porcelain tile
- Hold adjoining pieces up to the light to show gaps.
- Test fitting may be done on a lightbox.  
Look for light coming through any joining pieces. Some light will almost always be coming through, and you will have to decide what's acceptable.

THE END of  
PART ONE