**MICHIGAN GOURD SOCIETY**

**Theta Chapter of the American Gourd Society**

•\*¨\*•♫♪ •\*¨\*• **End of Year Notes** •\*¨\*•♫♪ •\*¨\*•

Your new board members:

**President - Tammy Braunscheidel**

**Vice President - Julie Glover** (returning)

**Secretary - Sharon Berg**

**Membership - Rita Heller** (returning)

We all thank you for your votes of confidence and look forward to serving you.

You may contact any of us at MichiganGourdSociety@gmail.com .

Here are a couple of notes (♫) from your new President and Secretary.

¨\*•♫♪ •\*¨\*•. I am a homemaker; wife to Jeff, who is a fisheries biologist, wood turner/worker, hunter, fisherman, and helps me with cutting gourds; mother of 4 adult children; and Nana to Markus and Olivia (age 6).  I started out weaving baskets about 16 years ago and added working with gourds after attending a class at the Indiana State Basket Convention probably 10 or 11 years ago.  The class was taught by Marla Helton and we coiled a danish cord rim onto a prepaired gourd.  It was love at first sight and I have been playing with gourds ever since.  I also coil pine needle bowls and baskets.   Currently I care for my grandkids part time, help out at their school, try to keep my house in order (and that is no small feat with all the gourd supplies everywhere!), do as much gourd, pine needle and basketry projects as time will allow.  Jeff and I also work in at least one evening a week to square and/or round dance.

I attended the very first gourd meetings in Holt even before MGS was formed and a few after.  That is where I met some other gourders who love gourds as much as I do and we have been getting together and teaching each other what we know ever since.  I know it is impossible for some of our membership to attend a statewide meeting/get together on a regular basis, that is why our smaller, more local "Patches" are so important.  There are a few patches currently having get togethers.  Currently, I know of patches in Rockwood, Pentwater. There is also a group that meets in Jackson, but currently isn't an “official” MGS patch.  If there isn't one in your area we can always help you start one.  You would be surprised how many people live close enough to attend a quarterly or monthly get together.   I currently attend the Jackson area gourd group once a month to continue learning new things to do with gourds.  I also host and attend other smaller gourd get togethers at fellow gourders homes.

I decided to accept the nomination for president because I didn't see much of anything happening within the group and, with everyone's help,  I hope to be able to change that.  This is NOT my group; this is YOUR group and together we can do great things right here close to home in Michigan. Things I would like to see done would be more public awareness.  You would be surprised the people who only think of bird houses when they think of a gourd!  They are so surprised when they learn there is so much more that can be done with a dried gourd, and are amazed at how beautiful they can become when they become a piece of art.  Talks at local garden clubs, maybe booths at craft shows/art fairs to pass out fliers and/or sell member's gourd art,  maybe talking with area botanical gardens (ie. Meijer Gardens or MatthaeiBotanical Gardens in Ann Arbor) about doing something to increase public awareness.  Lastly, I would love to see a co-op style weekend Michigan Gourd Gathering, so that we can get together, relax, get to know one another and share our talents with each other.

I know there are places, groups, and individuals around the state that I don't know about that might be interested in learning more about gourds and gourd art.  If you know of any place you think might be interested, please feel free to contact them and make arrangements or get an officer or board member their contact information and one of us can contact them.

I hope this tells you a little bit about myself and my vision for MGS in the coming years.  If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to get in touch with me at MichiganGourdSociety@gmail.com .
Tammy Goll-Braunscheidel

**Our new Secretary …..**

¨\*•♫♪ •\*¨\*•. My name is Sharon Berg, and I live in Byron Center, MI.  I have been working on gourds for 4 or 5 years.  The last three years I have gone to art shows and sold my gourds.  I really  got excited about doing them after attending a gourd show in Albuquerque. NewMexico.  I met some very talented people, like Robert Rivera, and also learned some interesting techniques.  Working on gourds is so satisfying, as each gourd seems to have a personality of its own.    Being a member of the Michigan Gourd Society is wonderful, because you meet so many great people and it is also an opportunity to learn from each other.

My husband and I love to travel and camp in our fifth wheel.  We go to Florida for three months and I even bring my gourds to work on and sell them at our craft sale in the park. We recently went on a 14 day cruise to the Western Carribean and some of the things that I brought home were of course gourds. I believe they were Peruvian wood burned gourds. I think that the people selling them wanted me to believe that they hand crafted them.

 I won't be going to any art shows this summer, as we will be traveling to Alaska for the summer, and of course I will be looking for gourds!

Sharon Berg

♪♫•\*¨\*•.¸¸.•\*¨\*•♫♪,¸.•\*¨\*•♫♪ •\*¨\*•.¸¸.♪♫•\*¨\*•.¸¸.•\*¨\*•♫♪,¸.•\*¨\*•♫♪ •\*¨\*•.¸¸.♪♫•\*¨\*•.¸¸

As you play with your gourds in the warmth of your homes this winter you might want to check out gourd artist **Maria Dellos**. Snowbirds - any time you are in the Tucson area you should see if she is offering classes while you are there. On Maria’s website <http://www.mariasartcreations.com/> you will find many of videos on different ideas that she shares for free – they are right there in the Techniques area of her website short videos that you can check and try out the ideas for yourself. One of the books I have is by Maria and it is called Gourd Art With Ink Dyes. If she doesn’t know something about working with Ink Dyes I can’t imagine what it would be! Just think - learning a new technique from the comfort of home! Recently I made up a gourd using the pigment powders and then the broken egg shells. After watching both those free lessons videos both turned out really well and were so easy. She is an excellent teacher and very thorough in her instructions as you will see. Maria will have booths and demos at the Wuertz Gourd Festival the first weekend in February in Casa Grande AZ.

Another Gourd Artist you will enjoy is **Hellen Martin** from Texas. Her website is <http://www.paintingsbyhellen.com/> .

Hellen’s site has many photos of the different techniques that she teaches and she has written many instructional books that are absolutely chock full of information – it’s like having her hold your hand. You just have to go over to her site because mere descriptions do not do justice to her photos - and altho the photos are wonderful eye candy to see her work in person is just amazing. It’d be incredible if we could get Hellen to travel up to Michigan to put on a retreat for the Michigan Gourd Society, so after you check out her site you can drop us an email at MichiganGourdSociety@gmail.com and let us know if you would be interested in taking classes from her and we will see what we can arrange. Sorry we can’t post photos in here because of copywrite and as this is being written it is waaaay too late (early morning) to phone her and ask!

If you are willing to learn be assured that Hellen can teach you just about anything your heart desires!

**Another Snowbird alert** – Hellen will be teaching classes at Wuertz Gourd Festival the first weekend in February.

So there you have it – the last 2012 newsletter from your Michigan Gourd Society – how quickly the year has passed.

Don’t forget to renew your membership for 2013 - $12 a year (that’s 25 cents a week!) and send it to:

Michigan Gourd Society, c/- 3810 Robin Lane, Kalamazoo MI 49008 - Thanks to those who already have!

Gourd groups are meeting in the following areas: Pentwater - contact Julie *nanners19884@yahoo.com* or Lyn *natureswonders3@aol.com* ; Rockford - contact *Joanne* *ruby.be@hotmail.com* and Jackson contact LuAnn *wlalex@frontiernet.net* .

If you have a tutorial you would like to share with the group or would like to teach at one of the gourd meetings be sure to contact us or one of the group directors – we will all be thrilled to have your input. Hopefully in the year ahead we will be able to get a newsletter out to you on a more regular basis and don’t be surprised if you get an email or phone call to get information from you to share … this is your gourd society and you are the reason we are here!

 **!!! HAPPY NEW YEAR !!!**