Finally, Ed Sowulewski Gets National Recognition

By Doug Evans

Ed Sowulewski from Saginaw Township has been kicking around the Michigan woodcarving scene for years and years. Quietly he takes blue ribbon after blue ribbon with little fanfare. This past year, 2010, Ed walked away with the **Best of Show** award at the *Caricature Carvers of America (CCA) National Caricature Carving Competition*.

I’m not sure how many times Ed has entered the CCA competition but I know he has been ready to face the competition for years!

I’ll tell you a little about Ed but I’ll focus on his carving techniques and advice and let his carvings do a lot of the talking.

I know Ed got started carving fish decoys and then went onto antique duck decoys and received many National awards. Goofing around a bit, he did a caricature or two some years later for his friends or fellow General Motors co-workers who had retired or battled tough illnesses. In the early 90’s he met Al Case; Al was the guru for many, many caricature carvers here in Michigan. Ed was so impressed with Al and his advice he became a caricature junkie almost immediately.

With Ed’s love for fishing & hunting many of his caricatures embraced these two subjects.

The rest of Ed’s story is almost history but I sat down with Ed and he passed on some excellent tips that I will now share with you

Here we go—Remember Ed says;

* Spend as much time researching your subject as you do carving it
* Study anatomy and adopt it properly when designing your carving
* Use study aids. Ed has head and face study aids, carved bodies aids to be sure he starts a carving the way he wants to, a skeleton hanging in his workshop so he knows bone position
* Make a workable model to follow when carving. Make the model in clay, cardboard, pie crust pans—anything that works for you !
* Use and wear safety items when carving
* Learn how to keep your tools razor sharp
* Tell a story with your carving
* Make carvings as YOUR originals

Ed also says that he just wants to get better as he carves every day and continue to provide surprises hidden in his carvings. Surprises within his carvings—maybe you’ll find them—maybe not. Should I -should you - be surprised that Ed walked away with the Big CCA prize? Not me, not EVER!