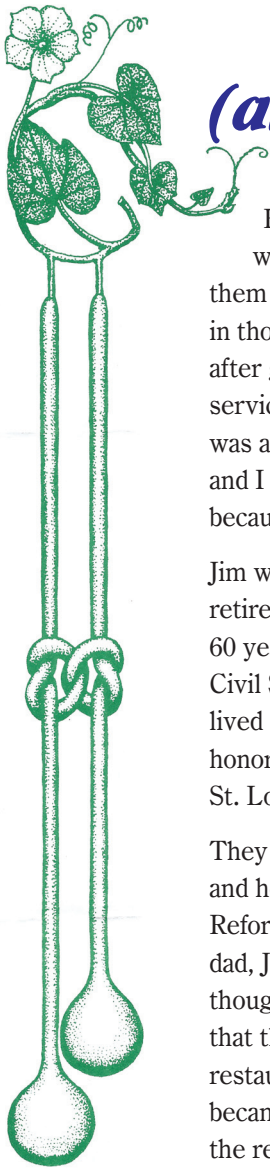


By Any Other Name

(another small chapter of the Story story)



The late great Jim Story was born in Cedar Bluff, Alabama in 1922, and proud of it. Jane was born in Anderson, Indiana in 1923. Both of them graduated from their respective high schools in those small towns in 1941 never having met. Soon after graduation, they both enlisted in the Navy, in the service of our country. Jane and Jim met in 1945. She was a Navy Wave when they met and he was her boss, and I guess she waved at him and he fell overboard because they were married in February 1946.

Jim was in the service for 20 years and after retirement in 1962, he was in the reserves for nearly 60 years as Chief Petty Officer. Jane was in the Naval Civil Service and they traveled to work together and lived in several locations and states. Jim was made an honorary Marine at the Marine Recruiting Station in St. Louis.

They bought their Pendleton, IN home in the '60's and he worked as a pharmacist at the Pendleton Reformatory. One day when they were visiting Jane's dad, Jim noticed a gourd bird house and a dipper and thought them to be rather interesting. Shortly after that they saw a floral arrangement in a gourd at a restaurant and he could resist no longer and simply became gourd crazed, then was determined to make the rest of us gourd crazed too. I must say it worked. There certainly are many gourd society members that the Gourd Guru convinced to "give it a try" and I was one of them.

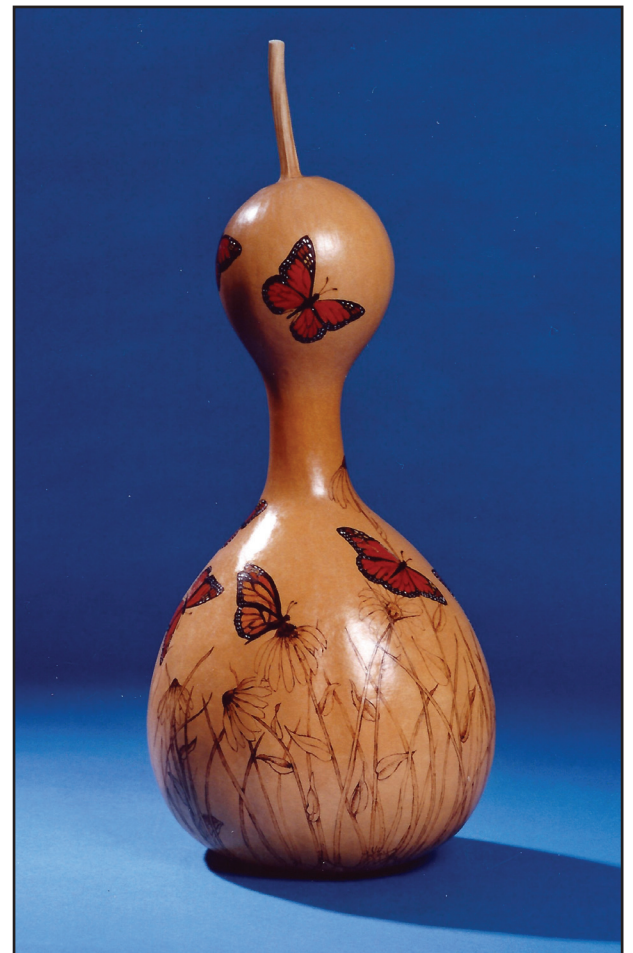
I had been searching for something unusual or a bit different to use for Christmas gifts and, similarly, I saw a decorated gourd in a gift shop at one of the Indiana State Parks. My background of constantly borrowing my 3 brothers' wood burners began to form a vision in my wee mind that I could do something like that bird house. I didn't know the Story's at that time because I had left the area after graduating from Pendleton High in '57 and getting married. My parents continued to live on the family farm in Pendleton for many years.

Eventually, my parents had to leave the farm life behind and move to town. It turns out that their new home was a couple of houses east of Jim and Jane. After my dad died, mother was alone so we made regular visits to Pendleton.

When I was visiting mother one afternoon I decided to call the Story's for gourd information. I had seen their garden and had heard of the Gourd Guy so I was pretty sure he could answer some questions for me. After a short conversation Jim said, "Just come on down here." I did and that visit was a lot longer than intended. Upon my departure I was given a couple of small gourds and a bag of shards on which to practice. Now I want to tell you that Jim Story could convince a clock to striking 13, so needless to relate, that within that first visit I became a dues paying member of the Indiana Gourd Society (receipt in hand), and was practically registered to exhibit in the 2nd ever IN State Gourd Show. That show was held in the Minitrista Center in the early '90's. (Jim should have been selling AFLAC with my husband and daughter.)

by Carolyn Rushton

The gourds shown here are all Carolyn Rushton's work.





As the years rolled on, we collaborated on quite a number of projects. He would usually provide the gourd or shards and I would do the art work. We made several rings which were cut from gourd necks, badges and name tags, lots of things he wanted for small gifts. He handed me a very beautiful Indonesian bottle one day which I designed with about a dozen Monarch butterflies and cone flowers and he gave it to the National President of the Garden Club. He also asked me to do a gourd with several birds to be given to the President of the National Gourd Society of Japan. This man called Jim the Gourd Father. I've also burned and painted several gourds that went to Africa with a friend. A maranka gourd Jim gave me ended up with all the state birds of the USA in all of the different indented sections.

Jim & Jane were both active in various organizations and their credits are numerous and far reaching. Some included Lion and Lioness Clubs, VFW, State and National Garden Clubs, and Indiana and American Gourd Societies. Jim was the first ever Pendleton Park Board President (a brass plaque with his likeness engraved on it is on a large rock at the Park) and started the Pendleton Fall Jamboree and the Sidewalk sale. They've been members of gourd societies in Ohio, Kentucky and Tennessee in addition to the Indiana Gourd Society.

Jim has been called the "Will Rogers of Pendleton" and even "Mayor of Pendleton." He was quite patriotic, honest, and loyal and had a heart bigger than the biggest gourd. Jim wrote a column for the Pendleton Times for years and was known far and wide for his good deeds and gardening talents. Jane recalls that there was a Russian man who came to Pendleton specifically to visit Jim, look over the gourd garden, and see the several types of trellises in the Story garden. Jim's gardening and gourd passions also included the collection of pure seeds (seeds from plants grown in isolation.) He was a member of the Seed Savers Org. and was the guardian of pure banana gourd seeds.



There was a bit of a draught one summer a few years back and Jim asked if I would muster up my Native American feathers and do a rain dance. After a little thought, I said I would but he couldn't watch, nor could anyone else for that matter. I shook my gourd rattles, played my gourd drums, and danced, but alas not a sprinkle till the next day, so I'm not taking credit. And true to form, my friend Jim put that in the Pendleton Times.

