

The *Carousel*

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*I Was A Knight
Carving a New Carousel and
Horsin Around With Bud Ellis*

Flashin' g lights

Work Underway on Second Hand-Carved Carousel for Chattanooga Bud Ellis and Students Still Carving Carousels and Horsin Around in TN



A new carousel and figures under construction at Horsin Around Carving School.

Photos by Rodney Blum

By Rhonda Hoeckley

Special to *The Carousel News & Trader*

SODDY-DAISY, TN – Artist, teacher and wood sculptor Bud Ellis has been fascinated with carousel and carousel animals since childhood. The original Horsin Around studio and workshop was located in 1989 in an old factory building in Chattanooga's St. Elmo neighborhood.

Bud Ellis and about 60 local citizens, who learned to carve and over a period of several years, restored and built a carousel with 52 new wooden animals. Today, the carousel is the center piece of the city's newly developed river front attraction, Coolidge Park. A book by Carol Iannoni, *Carving Carousel: The Story of the Chattanooga Carousel*, tells of this fascinating adventure.

Today, the carving school is located in its new permanent location at 8361 A Dayton Pike in Soddy-Daisy, TN.

Each year dozens of people enroll in the carving school and begin work on their own dream, a carved wooden car-



ousel animal. They pay \$1,250 to \$1,600 for materials for one animal and the privilege of working in the studio for one



Bud Ellis offers a tour to visitors to the carving school.

year under Ellis's care and supervision. The studio is open every day except Sundays.

"Some people come for a week or two to get started," he explained "then take their animal home and work on it for a couple of months. Later, they'll come back for another week or more to finish up."

There is a lot of work involved, and sometimes a person underestimates the time it will take. The school has a storage space that Ellis calls the "animal graveyard," which contains the partially completed parts of student projects.

"People have busy lives and it's not always possible to get away, but eventually we anticipate most will come back to complete their animal," he said.

After finishing the carousel at Coolidge Park about three or four years ago, Bud and his wife Judy approached the Chattanooga Zoo too see if they would like a carousel before he retired .

The zoo was very excited about the prospects of having its own carousel, and that was the beginning of Bud's latest project. The theme of the new carousel will be "Endangered Species." Many of the zoos in the United States are adding endangered species carousels, and Bud thought it would be nice to do one for Chattanooga Zoo.



Sharon Finley working on the rhino.



Bonnie Grant's snow leopard for the Chattanooga Zoo.



Allan Mitchell's baby hippo.

For the first three years, Bud and his wife funded the project out of their own pockets to keep it going. Now the zoo has been able to raise money through sponsorships, which helped reimburse Bud for his previous expenses and funds the carousel as the latest addition to the zoo.

After making some inquiries with those who handle carousel animal auctions, one of the big carousel auction houses told Bud about a man in North Carolina who had a



Hank Ray carving a horse.



Elaine Ellis carving a horse.



Carol Carson painting a chariot.



Johnnie Lorren works on the grey wolf.



Larry Ridge with his manatee.

carousel frame on a tractor trailer. Bud went to North Carolina, and through trades and cash he bought the 1927 Allan Herschell Carousel originally built at the Carousel Factory in North Tonawanda, NY.

There will be a total of 33 animals and a chariot on the Endangered Species Carousel. Unlike most of the carousels that have been built for other areas, Chattanooga Zoo's carousel will be a rarity since it is not only being hand-

carved, but it's being carved by local artisans as well. Bud made the decision on which animals would be represented on the carousel.

Bud Ellis has a new crew of 40 students that are now in process of building their second carousel for Chattanooga. This carousel will be smaller than the Coolidge Park Carousel with smaller animals to accommodate the children who visit the Zoo.



AB McRee with the beginnings of the hyena.



Bonnie Grant's sea turtle



Bob McGavock's big horn sheep.

Bud has just acquired a 1908 Wurlitzer Band Organ for the carousel. The organ is being rebuilt and tuned up by a local firm, Barger & Nix Organ in McDonald, TN. The brass tubing also has been ordered. The target date for the installation of the finished carousel is in April 2008.

You can learn more about Horsin Around by visiting its website at www.horsinaround.net, or visit the school at 8361A Dayton Pike in Soddy-Daisy, TN. Call Bud Ellis at (423) 332-1111 for an appointment or directions.



The downtown Chattanooga carousel above and below.



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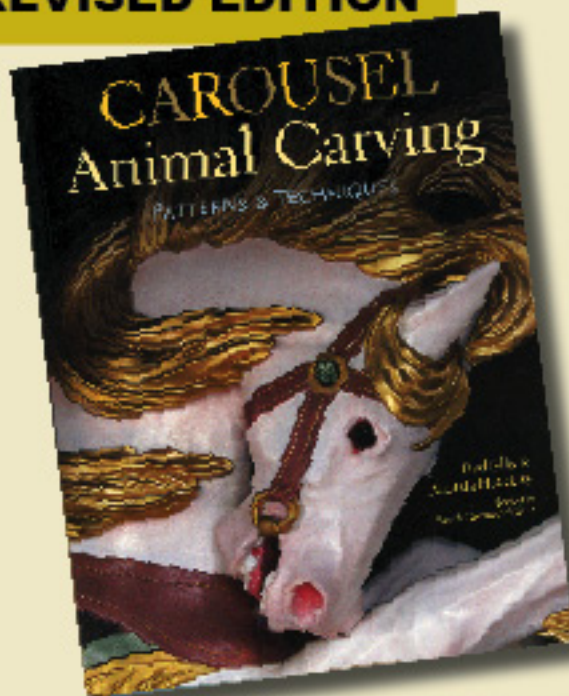
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