

When he was an itinerant craftsman, Carder offered knives for sale and knife-sharpening from the back of his van. Submitted photo



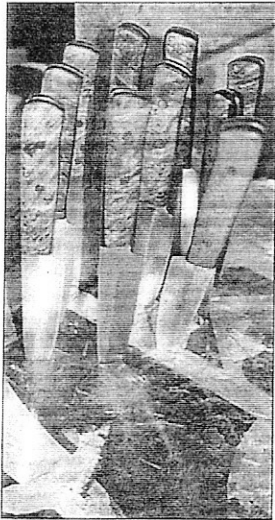
Carder's business is called Stone Soup after a folk tale in which hungry travelers fool greedy villagers into sharing food they are hoarding. For Carder, the name Stone Soup fits with his ideal of working toward a world based on love and sharing, not greed. Photos by Martha Worthley

# Carder

• Continued from Page 8 •

Soup fits with his ideal of working toward a world based on love and sharing, not greed.

In 1984 Carder moved to Port Townsend and decided to stay because he had a son, Daniel, and felt that the stability of being in a community was good for raising children. He also had a desire to have a shop with a bigger work space and more tools. Finally, Carder decided he wanted to stay in order to work at knife-making more consistently. He has worked in Port Townsend ever since, selling his knives at craft fairs throughout the Pacific Northwest.



Carder also makes smaller items such as these steak or paring knives.

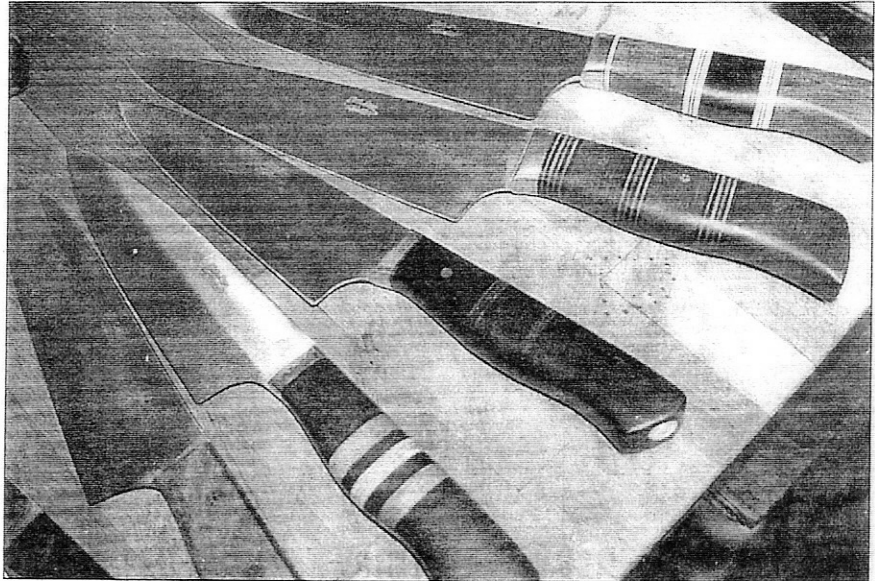
Carder's knives combine wooden handles with both stainless steel and high-carbon blades to produce tools for the kitchen or table, or working knives for boaters, fishermen and hunters. He explains that steel can have a combination of three qualities: hardness, toughness and wear-resistance. "But you can't have all three; you have to choose. There is an American steel that comes pretty close to being just the right mix. It's called 440C, or surgical steel, and it is high carbon and stain-resistant." Acids in food will discolor the blade, but it holds a sharp edge.

Starting with a manufactured steel blank that is both knife-blade and tang (the part of the blade that fits into the handle), Carder shapes each blade to a specific purpose. He uses a variety of tropical hardwoods to create handles for his knives that balance the blade and create a pleasing aesthetic.

Carder has made an effort to use wood that is harvested in a sustainable way but admits that he can't be sure that's always the case. He chooses this wood for knives because it is dense and stable. "The tropical hardwoods have a thick, oily sap, so they don't soak up water and they look beautiful," he noted. The balance and feeling of the knife are important to Carder.

"There are a lot of people with better technical skills than I have. But not many are making knives who have my background in politics, philosophy and living an examined life," said Carder. "I'm also a foodie," he said, explaining his delight in culinary arts. "We nourish our souls if we do it right."

Maikel Carder sells his knives this weekend, Sept. 7-9 at the "Crafts by the Dock" arts and crafts fair near City Hall on Madison Street.



Pictured is a selection of kitchen knives made with decorative hardwood handles that balance the weight of the blade so that a cook can do his best in the kitchen.