

Judiciary committee members;

My name is Ken Holmes, I was born and live in Albany, Have worked in cold storage at National Frozen Foods for forty years, am an elected officer of Teamsters Local 670 and am an ivory engraver/scrimshaw artist.

I was introduced to ivory and the art of scrimshaw in 1977 while going to OSU. This was an art form that could combine my love for Oregon maritime history and belief in conservation of elephants. I found a company in Illinois run by a missionary from South Africa that only bought ivory from the National park system of South Africa and Botswana and Zimbabwe. I used this ivory until the mid eighties when he told me he was quitting his business because of the U.S ivory ban in 1989. I bought a couple hundred pieces of polished blanks, about four pounds ,to provide me some "canvases" in the future. At this time I started to use Mammoth ivory as a legal replacement and accumulated many pieces.

My art went on hold to take care of my parents for the next many years, heart attacks, macular degeneration and alzheimers robbed me of time for my engraving. Art had to be put off till I retired, now with that goal in sight you are considering a symbolic bill that would make my forty years of skill in this art form mute and my work ,past ,present and future illegal and valueless. I cannot tell you how devastating this is to me.

I have worked hard to recreate portraits of Oregon's maritime past, ships built in Coos Bay, North Bend , Astoria, and Portland. My work has sold Nationally through Norm Thompson through which we donated 20% of sales to the International Wildlife Foundation, executive gifts for Willamette Industries ; I made 82 portraits of Oregon built lumber ships. I have sold through the Columbia Maritime Museum once the curator checked my detailed work against the shipbuilders models. Over the last several years I have created work but have not actively sought to sell, waiting till my retirement in eighteen months. I am now placed in the position of losing any income from my work , even work on prehistoric ivory completed years ago.as well as no longer being able to complete any of the projects I dream of .

Never would I have believed I could be branded a "trafficker" and criminal for pursuing my art and never in Oregon when I have always made sure my Ivory was compatible with my ethics on conservation obeyed the law and stopped buying elephant ivory nearly thirty years ago in favor of an extinct plentiful replacement. Elephants are an amazing and precious animal that should be protected but in meaningful ways, not making Americans who have obeyed the laws and support the goals, criminals and taking the value of their possessions for symbolic gestures. Woolly mammoths are estimated to be exposed in the artic permafrost of Alaska and Siberia in the tens of millions in the next 20 years. Ivory will always have a value to people because of it's very nature. Habitat, corruption, national stability and poverty will determine the fate of all the animals in our world not this measure. If I thought It would actually save these creatures from all their peril I would certainly do what I had to do toward that goal .

Thank you for taking these issues under consideration.

stop being fun.

"For me, work has always been something that provides the money so I can do the things that I like," he says. "I do scrimshaw and drawing for myself. It's not the same as work. I'm not nearly as interested in the market and how much I can make from art as I was.

"I want to keep what I do on a scale that I can enjoy. I want to do bigger pieces and get back to doing some drawing. I want to do a few pieces that are better, but it's not important that the art support me."

The scrimshander began young. At the age of 5 he contracted a hip disease that cost him the use of his left leg for four years. He filled the time with drawing and sketching, working his way through a ream of paper every month.

As a high school student, he was channeled into drafting and mechanical drawing. And later, at Oregon State University and Lam-Benton Community College in the mid-1970s, he found that art courses were more geared toward abstract work than toward the realistic line drawings that he favored.

Then he discovered a historical treatise on the turn-of-the-century era when America's largest newspapers were illustrated with elaborate pen-and-ink drawings by the nation's leading artists.

"They would hire the finest, best-known artists to do that work, and they could get them because they paid good money," he says. "They'd do big pictures of a disaster or a battle. And because it had to be done in a hurry, several artists would work on the same illustration.

"Some of the work was very fine. It seemed almost impossible to me that they were able to create some of those sketches. I spent a lot of time learning to copy those fine details. It wasn't until much later that I learned that a lot of them were done in the engraving process with acids and washes. They weren't done by hand at all."

Slowly, Holmes found buyers for some of his own drawings. One of his biggest breakthroughs came when a drafter — ironically, one that had been refused by a customer — was damaged in an automobile accident. The insurance company appreciated the piece for much more than what Holmes had priced it.

His scrimshaw work began when a California dealer saw some of Holmes' finely detailed drawings at the Oregon State Fair and asked him to try working on ivory. For several months the dealer furnished ivory and took everything Holmes could produce. Then California, reacting to environmental concerns that ivory artwork might hasten the extinction of elephants, outlawed the pieces.

ry. All of this work is done on legally exported fresh ivory or on fossil ivory, which still exists in vast quantities in areas that were covered by glaciers more than 10,000 years ago.

"A lot of people think that any ivory they see is poached ivory, that it's contributing to the decline of the elephant," Holmes says. "But sometimes just the opposite is true. The new ivory I work on comes from the national parks in Botswana and Zimbabwe and South Africa. They're preserving the elephant with managed herds, and they have so many that they do culling of the herds.

"They sell the ivory and it helps support the whole park system that preserves the elephants. It's locally different than the illegal ivory that comes out of Kenya and Tanzania. That ivory goes to China and Japan. People there are just warehousing it. They're banking on the animal becoming extinct."

Scrimshaw, with its maritime history, also has dovetailed neatly with Holmes' lifelong interest in sailing ships. That interest is more focused now, and many of his pieces depict specific vessels that were built in the shipyards of Oregon and Washington.

A typical Holmes scrimshaw piece, about two inches in its longest dimension, sells for \$150 to \$200. Many of the pieces are sold individually through galleries. But he's done large commissions, too — a series of 82 executive gifts for Willamette Industries and a run of 150 big pieces for the Norm Thompson Inc. gift catalog.

In the scrimshaw process, the design is etched onto a polished surface. The surface then is covered with an indelible ink and polished again. The ink, usually black, remains in the etched grooves, revealing the design.

Many scrimshanders work with an array of tools to produce different textures and shadings. But Holmes uses only one, a modern mechanical pencil which holds a sharpened needle from an 1800s Victoria.

And all of his work, including details such as tiny sailors' hats in the rigging of ships, is done without magnification. Using a lap easel and a strong light, he turns out his minuscule while sitting in an easy chair in the room he designed so many years ago.

"The market for this work isn't incredible," he says. "You still have to explain what it is to most of the people. You have to tell them that it's done by hand, that it's not plastic.

"But there are enough people appreciate it to keep me as busy as I want to be. And there's a whole lifetime of pieces I want to do."

Two interests, scrimshaw and ships, go together

Artist wants fun from art, not money

'Scrimshander' chooses slower pace, less profit

By MIKE THEILE

The Register-Guard

ALBANY — The room is like something from a movie set, like the den of some old safari hunter.

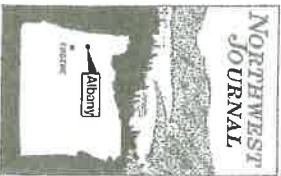
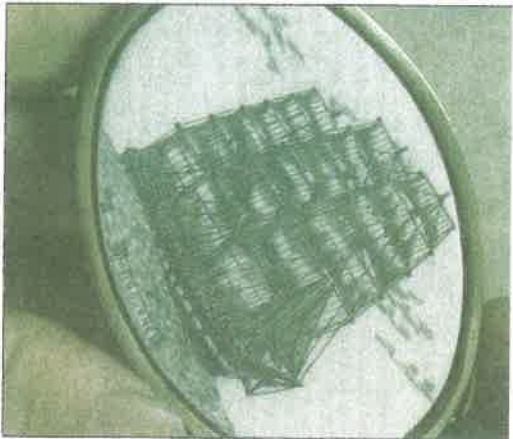
Paneled mahogany walls encircle an eclectic collection that ranges from primitive carvings and swords and Egyptian artifacts to an elephant tusk, a set of Cape buffalo horns, a print of the Battle of Jutland.

—Fiservetore, the 148-year-old house on Albany's east side is a shambles, a restoration in progress. But this lone finished room, with its aura of other times and other places, is where Kenn Holmes, 33, pursues one of the world's oldest arts.

"This room has been redesigned since I was in high school," he says. "I never knew where it would be or what house it would be in. But I always knew what it would look like."

Holmes, 33, is a scrimshander, an artist whose product is scrimshaw, the traditional seaman's craft of etchings on ivory. He is among the handful of Oregon artists most active in the field, which has seen a revival over the past 20 years.

But in his approach to his work, Holmes is an even rarer commodity. He's an artist who has developed that kind of

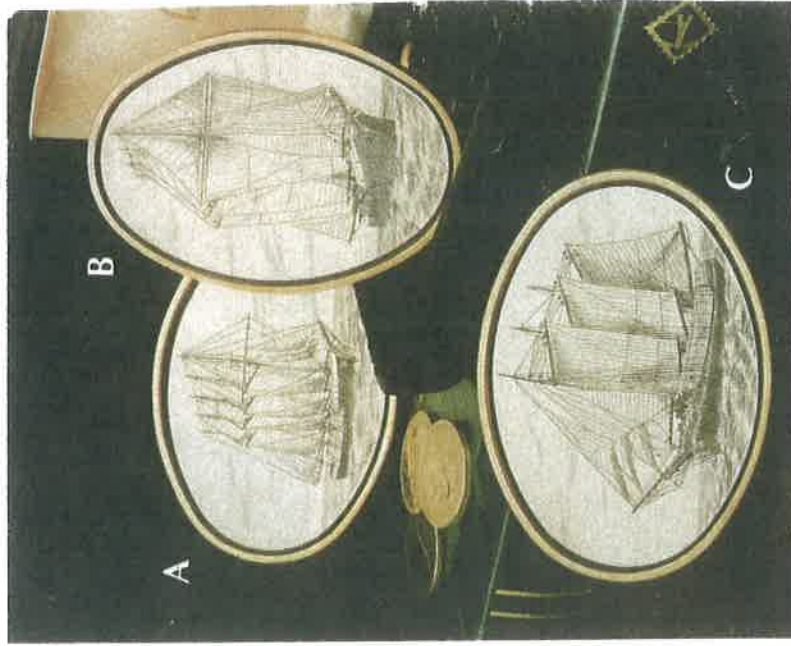


Northwest maritime history protects the future of Africa's National Parks.

No material, natural or man-made possesses the soft luster of genuine ivory. And that's why Kenn Homes chose it as the medium on which to scrimshaw the images of three great sailing vessels built on the western coast of the U.S. Kenn uses ivory supplied by the National Parks of Africa and imported under the strict supervision of the Dept. of the Interior. The money from the sale of this ivory is extremely important to the continuation of the work being done in protection and preservation. In addition to those revenues, Norm Thompson will donate 50% of the profits generated by the sale of these pieces to the National Parks of Africa.

Each scrimshawed one at a time...signed, dated, and numbered.

Kenn married his artistic talents with his love of history when he developed this limited edition series. The three scenes depict an era in shipbuilding which saw the western coast of the United States influence trade around the world. Each scrimshawed ivory disc is encased in a solid brass frame measuring approx. 3" x 2" and comes with a short history of each vessel. (A) (The Vigilant)...one of the last 5-masted schooners ever built. (B) (The North Bend)...built in Oregon, this 4-masted schooner was designed to carry lumber from the Northwest to Australia. (C) (The Wawona)...a 165' three-masted schooner currently moored next to the Seattle maritime museum. Capture a piece of American nautical history and help preserve wildlife for the future. **No. 9784** (specify A, B, or C) \$300 for the series of 3, or **\$125.00 each.**



A beautiful way to share in American nautical history while helping to preserve wildlife for future generations.