



Walter Arnold...Sculptor



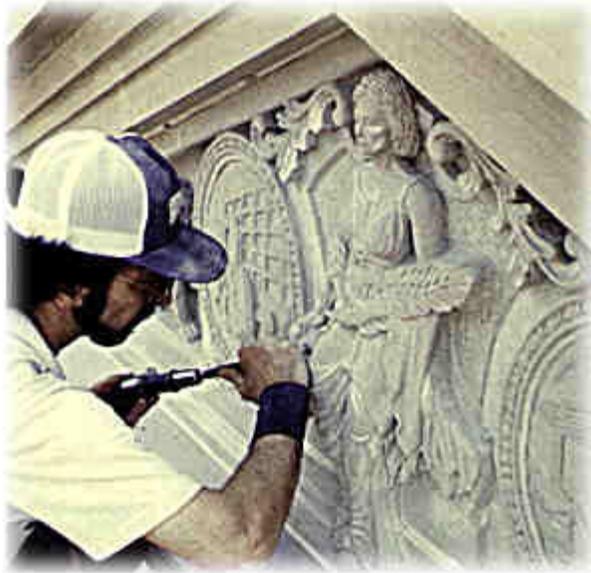
This month our Shop Profile takes us to Chicago, Illinois, home of Walter Arnold, his wife Fely, daughter Stephanie and son Gilbert. I met Walter about 3 months ago on one of my frequent late night net safaris. Since then we have exchanged e-mail on a regular basis and I have found him always willing to share his knowledge with others. Walter is a true Letterhead who prefers to create his signage with air-powered tools and old chisels. The medium he chooses to work in is stone. His work is going to "blow your mind", as we used to say in the late 60's

& 70's. We'll begin our peek into Walter's world below as he introduces himself and his work. When you are finished, take some time to follow the links to Walter's Home Page for a more detailed look at his various works and some insight into how he creates them. Feel free to e-mail Walter and let him know we appreciate him taking the time to share his craft with all of us. Enjoy!

Hi Fellow Letterheads...

I carve limestone, marble and pixels. To carve stone I use hammers and 80-year-old chisels, and to carve pixels a Gateway P5-133 running Windows NT 4.0.

I began sculpting in stone at the age of 12. My family lived near the University of Chicago, and I would ride my bike around the campus looking at the gargoyles. I wondered if it was still possible to create such work today, and I felt driven to try. Through my teenage years I carved portrait busts of family members and friends, using stone salvaged from torn down buildings. At 20, I knew I'd hit a dead end as far as self-teaching went, and I learned that there were still some master carvers in Italy. I packed my bags, moved there, and spent several years as an apprentice in the marble studios located in the town of Pietrasanta. My days were spent carving portrait busts, Madonnas, and other sculptures.



On my return to the US, I spent the next five years working on the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. In 1985 I returned to Chicago and setup shop. We've been here ever since.

In a typical year I'll carve a number of sculptures as well as four or five custom fireplaces, one or two public sculptures, and an assortment of architectural ornament and signage for public and private buildings. My wife Fely and I added an addition to our house a couple years ago, with carved elephants, gargoyles and other carvings crawling over the exterior and interior. Whenever it rains the water flows from the elephants trunks.



Gargoyles allow the freedom of playing around with the discipline and technique used in my other work. In a way they are like doodling. I can experiment, take chances, and have fun. Signage and letter cutting is the opposite, and it keeps me honest, since it requires accuracy and control. The lines have to be accurate to a paper's thickness, and the depths and angles consistent. I recall one time when I was cutting lettering on a building, about 80 "V"-cut Roman letters about eight inches tall. Someone watched me for a while, and then asked if I used some special gauge to keep the depth of the letters so consistent. I replied that I did, and it was an old one that I was given by an 80 year old retired carver. I then showed it to him, a small scrap of hard wood with a nail driven through the center. Another time a calligrapher watched me for a while, and then asked if I

also did other typefaces, or just Roman.

There are certain "standard" gargoyle images, typical designs that are very effective and have been used for many centuries. In the past few years, what with comic books, Spielberg movies and Steven King movies, those images have gotten over exposed. I don't feel they have the same punch now that people have seen them so often, so I try to push the imagination past that point to create more unusual creatures.



While I work with marble and other stones, I'm partial to Indiana Limestone. It is consistent, relatively soft and easy to carve, forgiving, takes a lot of detail and shape, and it holds up well. I find stone to be a fluid, sensual material. While I can work well with clay, I find it to be a hard and resistant material. When I do use clay I tend to build it up and then carve it down instead of modeling it, so as to get some of the control and feeling that I have with stone.

I'd like to invite all you Letterheads to visit my [Home Page](#). Here you can learn more about the tools I use as well as tour a virtual gallery of completed projects and work in progress. Thanks to all of you for your interest in my work. You can e-mail me at walter@stonecarver.com

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