

Once upon a time a young boy would roam the woods near his farm home searching for adventures. His adventures would frequently lead him to the covering of a shade tree where he would spend hours whittling with his pocketknife creating figurines out of wood. Many fingers were bandaged from pieces cut from his shirttails as he studied and learned his carving techniques.

### Brad Elfrink, Carver-Studio Button Artist

By Tami Hacker



Brad Elfrink is the young boy mentioned above. He was born and raised near St. Louis, Missouri. Brad did grow up as a farm boy raising cattle, chickens, rabbits, an occasional pig, and even a horse. In his childhood, he enjoyed fishing and hunting; and Yes, he truly did enjoy those adventures of the wooded hills near his farm home.

Brad feels he is blessed as he puts it "*with some meager artistic talents.*" His talents are far from just meager; they are extraordinary. Brad has enjoyed numerous artistic mediums, including sketching, sculpting and carving. He has earned a degree in Commercial Art.

In January 2004, Brad carved his first button, a Viking head, which sold for \$35.75. In the following 9 months, Brad carved 400 or more buttons (probably more by the time this article is printed). Wow, that's an average of 7 buttons per week! He enjoys creating a variety of buttons, but his personal favorites are those that incorporate something whimsical and have movable parts. He uses many materials, for example, abalone, antler, elephant ivory (pre-ban), gemstones, glass, marble, metal, shell, Siberian jet and wood. His techniques include carving, inlays, and Shibayama-style. All of his buttons are signed and dated. His buttons generally range in price from \$40.00 and up, depending on the details, materials used and subject matter. He is involved in learning what is and is not acceptable on a button tray and what is most desirable in button collecting. If you are interested in his buttons, grab them while you can because they are selling like hotcakes!

Please visit Brad and his incredible buttons at

<http://members.ebay.com/ws2/eBayISAPI.dll?ViewUserPage&userid=bael31>

Or you may reach him at Brad Elfrink, 217 South Sprigg, Cape Girardeau, MO, 63703.



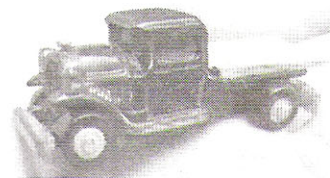
Carved & mechanical: Jet, abalone shell, cows horn and metal screws



Carved, mechanical & painted: Red Catlinite (pipestone), and ivory



Carved & mechanical: Ivory, black cow horn and jet



Carved & mechanical: Jet, oak, ivory, black cow horn, abalone and metal screws



Carved: Asian buffalo horn, fossil mammoth ivory horn, and black cow horn



Carved: Elephant ivory (pre-ban), gold-filled metal bell & coat buttons, turquoise and jet



Carved & mechanical: Elephant ivory (pre-ban), horn, red coral, black cow horn, jet and metal screws



Carved: Elephant ivory (pre-ban), rosewood, colored glass, and plastic



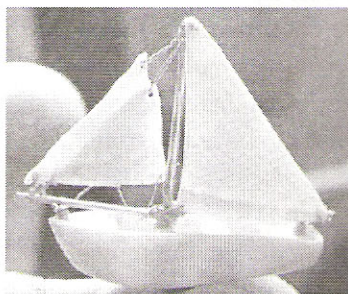
Shibayama inlay: Elephant ivory (pre-ban), green marble, varasite, lapis, rhodonite, jet, and black cow horn



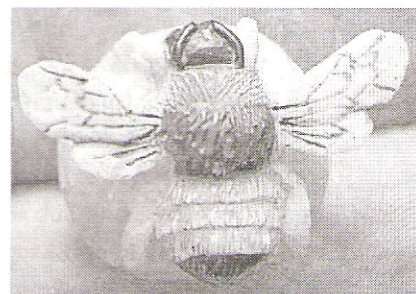
Shibayama inlay: Mammoth ivory, turquoise, cedar wood, fossil mammoth ivory, black cow horn, red coral and rhinestone



Carved: Polished elk antler, turquoise, green marble, elephant ivory (pre-ban), catlinite, wood, black Siberian jet, gold and copper wire



Carved & mechanical: Polished elephant ivory (pre-ban), steel, copper wires, metal screws and Siberian jet



Carved & dyed: Fossil walrus tusk ivory and inlaid Siberian jet



Carved & painted: Mammoth ivory, inlaid turquoise and catlinite



Carved: Vegetable Ivory, inserted disc of Whale Baleen, elephant ivory (pre-ban) and blue rhinestones



Carved, Dyed & Painted: Elephant ivory (pre-ban) and brown fossil mammoth ivory