

Dianne Looker



I decided to go with something fairly simple for my submission. I had started a mallet a while back, but stopped working on it when I inherited a not very fancy one from an in-law who passed away a few years back. When this challenge came along, I dug out what I'd started.

It's a mallet not a gavel, and therefore it's designed to hit things. So, a large, fairly solid head piece, a shaped handle with "bumps" for ease of holding. The turning of it was fairly straightforward. But I wanted to embellish it a bit, to make it special.

Like many of you, I'm sure, I was quite shaken by the shooting tragedy in Nova Scotia mid-April. I was shocked and saddened, and struggled to take it in. The various signs of support, the vigils, the special songs people wrote – all that helped. As did the idea of "Nova Scotia Strong" – focusing on our strength and our ability to get through these hard times, while acknowledging how hard they are.

So, I wanted to do something to symbolize "Nova Scotia Strong".

I found various images of Nova Scotia and played with several of them. I practiced on some spare wood – heavy outlines, lighter outlines, more detail, less detail. Once I settled on the detailed outline, I experimented with filling it in with colour or with solid black. But I liked the simple outline best.

The black rims around the mallet head and handle bottom can be symbols of our grief. But I wanted a bit more than that. I thought maybe a chain to symbolize strength. But I didn't want anything else on the head itself, and putting something bold on the rim under the head of the mallet would, I feared, detract from the simple outline on the main part of the head. So, I made a shaded rim to symbolize the dark clouds that have swirled around us ( if you can see it in the photo, that rim is not a solid black, but shaded). I wanted something that symbolized the hard dark times, but also that they haven't overpowered us.

A bit heavy on the symbolism for some people, I suspect. But we were to do something that reflected us, and this was my way of trying to work through some of those feelings.

After sanding, I put spray lacquer on the outline to seal it. The rest of the mallet got a wax coating. Something easily replaced and repaired – it is, after all, designed for hitting things....

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