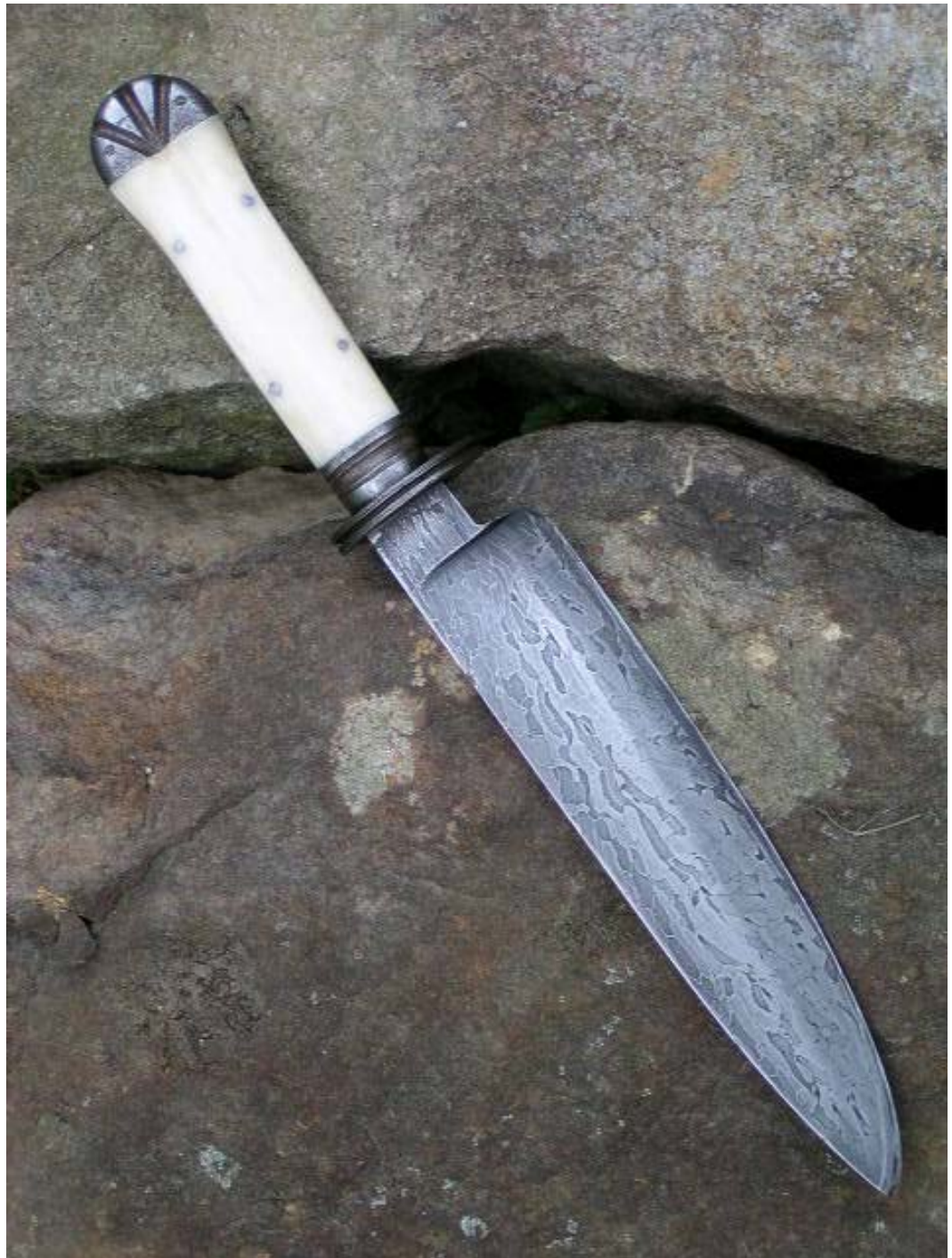


Billetts & Blades



The Official Publication of
The North Carolina Custom
Knifemakers' Guild

2007

Dedicated to the Art & Craft of Custom Knifemaking

Billets & Blades

NORTH
CAROLINA
CUSTOM
KNIFEMAKER'S
GUILD

Billets and Blades is the official publication of the North Carolina Custom Knifemaker's Guild. It is compiled and published in four issues annually with two additional special publication dates possible each year. Compiled, published, and distributed by The Knifemaker's Guild.

The North Carolina Custom Knifemaker's Guild was formed to meet the needs of a growing body of custom knifemakers in the southeastern United States. The purpose of this newsletter is to serve as a medium of exchange for the members of the NCKKG.

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Guild Officers and Directors

President: William M. Bisher
1015 Beck Road
Denton, NC 27239
336-859-5486 Home
BlackTurtleFrg@aol.com

Vice President: Phillip L. Gaddy
310 Chestnut Lane
Statesville, NC 28625
704-878-6378
plgaddy@email.edu.com

Secretary: Henry Clay Runion
5291 Plainview Hwy.
Dunn, NC 28334
910-891-7142 Home

Treasurer: Tony Kelly
348 Bell Rd.
Kinston, NC. 28501
(252) 527_2130

Director: Norman A. Gervais
51 Island Road
Hardy, VA 24101
540-721-3275
mbgnag@aol.com

Editor: Mrs. John (Joan) Poythress
625 Freedom Street
Swainsboro, GA. 30401
(478) 237-9478

Webmaster: Calvin Nichols
3548 S. Shiloh Road
Garner, NC 27529
919-553-936
cnichols@nc.rr.com

Please address correspondence about this newsletter to the President or the Editor at the above addresses. Please direct requests for information about the North Carolina Custom Knifemakers' Guild to the President, Bill Bisher, at the above address.

From the President:

The April meeting went off without a hitch as the saying goes. Attendance was good with about 30 people including members and non-members. **THANK YOU** to everyone that was there and especially those that helped with the demo's and set up.

For those that were not able to attend, I will give a recap. The meeting started off with the first demo on building a ribbon burner for a gas forge. This burner was published in the Hot Iron Sparkle some time ago. After the burner was completed we fired off the one I had built a few weeks earlier to see if it would work. Thanks to Tommy McNabb and his knowledge of tweaking gas forges, the burner was running great. In fact it was doing so well that Tommy and Tim Scholl forged up a Damascus billet.

Lunch came next, with Lexington style barbeque and home made desserts. Iron in the Hat tickets were sold during this time also.

During the business meeting the following items were discussed, voted on, and passed.

- Membership dues are to be paid in October, as always. If not paid by the January meeting you will be dropped from the list. A notice will be in the October newsletter that it is time to pay the dues.
- Scholarships were discussed and starting this year we will have two. A new one in honor of George Heron. It will be open to members and non-members. The other one is the original scholarship through the Guild. It will also be open to anyone.

Applications must be received by June 30. If you have already taken a course this year, and are selected for the scholarship, send a copy of your certificate and we will reimburse you for the class. This year we will award only the George Herron Scholarship. For classes next year, your name will need to be in by December 31 so the selection can be announced at the January meeting.

In the past scholarship money was paid to the college. Beginning this year, the student will pay for

the tuition up front, take the class, and then send a copy of the completion certificate to the Guild treasurer and your tuition money will be refunded. The scholarship covers tuition only. The scholarships are a **GREAT** deal for anyone who has interest in knifemaking or for someone wanting to improve their skills.

After the business meeting Tommy, filling in for Phillip Jones, with assistance of Tim Scholl and a few others, did a demo on making mokume. Then came Iron In The Hat with the help of junior member, Avery Parker. Then to finish the afternoon we had a round table discussion and Bring Your Jig, which was very informative.

Information on the July meeting at the shops of Travis Daniel and Wayne Whitley in Chocowinity are in this issue. I know it is a long drive for the western members but we need the unity and support of everyone to keep the Guild active and strong. See you there.

Bill Bisher, President

At the July 21-22 meeting elections will be held to fill 2 positions on the Board of Directors. One will be the office of Vice-President. The other will be a Officer-at-Large position. Below are the stated duties from the Guild's By Laws. Please be thinking about who you would like to fill these leadership positions. Actively ask those you think would be interested if they would like to serve.

The Vice-President shall, in the absence or disability of the President, or at the direction of the President, perform the duties and exercise the powers of the President. The Vice-President shall serve as Program Director responsible for determining what programs, dinner meetings and seminars, are to be presented to the membership. The Vice-President shall perform other duties and have whatever powers the Board may from time to time assign.

The Officer-At-Large shall, in the absence of the Secretary or Treasurer, respectively, perform the duties and exercise the powers of those offices, and shall, in general, perform such other duties as shall

be assigned by the Board. Specifically, the Officer-At-Large may affix the corporate seal to all necessary documents and attest the signature of any officer of the North Carolina Custom Knifemakers Guild.

We are working on changes on the Guild's website. The best is one that has been a while in the coming but is finally happening. With paid membership, each member can have his/her own page on the Guild's website with photos of their work and your biography. This will give you "free web presence" as a paid member. We will be able to show this to you at the July meeting. Then it will be up to you to get your pictures to us for posting. Good things are happening in **YOUR** Guild.

Motel Listing for the Chocowinity Area

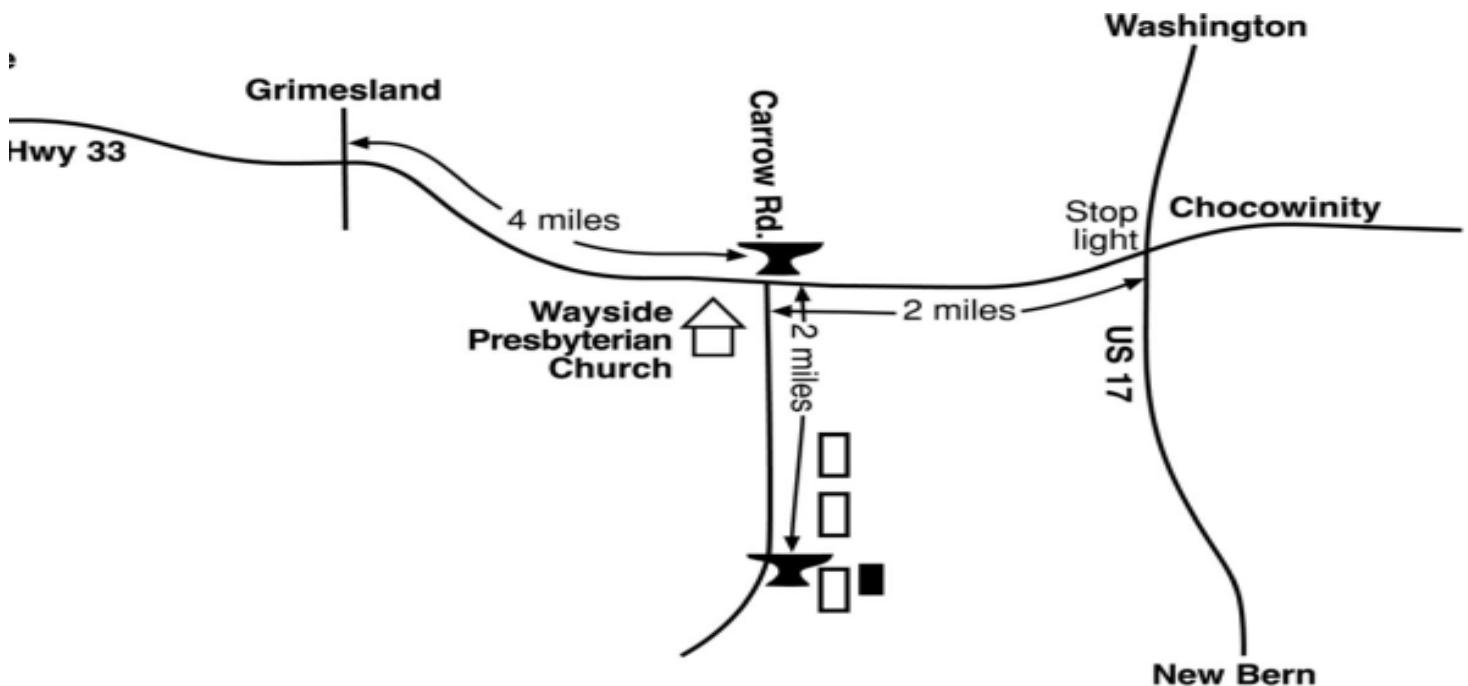
All motels are right on Hwy. 17 within 6 blocks of each other. Washington, NC is about 5 miles further north on Hwy. 17

Comfort Inn Washington Hwy. 17 Washington, NC 252-946-4444	Holiday Inn Express Hwy. 17 at Carolina Washington, NC 252-946-5500
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Econo Lodge North
1220 W. 15th Street
Washington, NC

NCKKG Meeting
July 21-22, 2007
Wayne Whitley and Travis Daniel, Hosts
Chocowinity NC

- Saturday:
- 9:00 a.m.Board of Directors Meeting
Travis' home
 - 10:00 a.m.Forging A Hawk
John Hege
 - 12:00 nPouring Pewter Bolsters
Tony Kelly
 - 1:00 p.m.Lunch
 - 2:00 p.m.Iron In The Hat
 - 2:30 p.m.Finishing Tomahawk Handles
Wayne Whitley
 - 3:30 p.m.Tapering Tangs and Grinding Blades
Travis Daniel
- Sunday:
- 9:30 a.m. Silver Sheath
Tommy McNabb
 - 11:00 a.m. Dying and Finishing a Bone Handle
Travis Daniel
 - 12:30 pm. Round Table



On The Cover

Pictured on the cover is a Bowie with the blade constructed from cable Damascus and a bowie box handle construction with bone slabs. The guard, and pommel is wrought iron with file work to dress it off. The blade is 9” long with the overall length being 14”. The knife is the creation of NCCKG president, Bill Bisher.

Profile In Steel

Our member profile is no novice to knifemaking or our Guild. He has been a member for about 6 years and he also is active in ABS, ABANA, and NC ABANA. He is a part time maker with his main interest in forged period pieces. Using modern lines and ATS/34 stock removal, from design to heat-treating, he strives to have total authorship of his work. We all know him well as our president, Bill Bisher.

Bill served in the Navy from 1964 to 1968 but always had knives and black powder on his mind. His first forged blade was made in Wyoming while attending Farrier School at the University of Wyoming in Riverton.

After living in Wyoming 6 1/2 years, he came back east in the fall of 1982. Bill says it took him a while to get settled back to the area, but once settled he set up a forge and tried making knives to support his black powder interest.

He has attended a couple of the classes at John C. Campbell but has always come back to his love of knives and knifemaking. He has attended quite a few of the classes the Guild sponsors at Montgomery Community College and has found the all very helpful.

Starting off making blades out of old cross cut saw blades, Bill says that history has most influenced his style.

Knives, though his main interest, are not his only interest. He holds a 5th degree black belt in Tae Kwon Do and had a school in Asheboro for over 20 years. He also participates in French & Indian and Revolutionary War reenactments as time permits.



The Davies Knife Show, an appreciation day for the store’s customer also is a time to introduce and educate

the general public about the craft of custom knifemaking. The event is supported by the NCCKG. Table space is limited so there is always a scramble to make sure you are one of the



folks who end up with a table.



And as with any show there are those spare moments when the knifemakers can take time to inspect the

work of others and get tips on just “how they did that”.



Where ever you find the twins, you will find time for a little “knife humor”—not funny Barry!



Bill always has the business of the Guild on his mind and takes a spare moment to get with Wayne to “shore up” details on the July meeting which will be held at the shops of Wayne Whitley and Travis Daniel in Chocowinty.

A Tribute To George Herron

Dear Editor:

I wanted to thank you for keeping me on the rolls as a recipient of the NCKG newsletter. It has always been nice to know what my friends in North Carolina are doing. Sadly, this month's edition was not as welcome as others have been. I'm speaking, of course, about the death in February of George Herron.

Compared to many back east, I knew George Herron only for a relatively short period of time but I quickly developed a great deal of respect and admiration for him, and no less for his lovely wife, Miss Barbara. Together they epitomized the character and gentleness that marks true, common southerners, as very special people. Such folks are spread mighty thin these days.

A few years ago, George let me know that he and Barbara would be traveling out west to Montana for a varmint shoot, and they responded positively when I asked if they would stop at our place just east of Albuquerque on the return leg of their journey. My wife, Kirsten, and I invited a few locals, among them folder maker Bob Jones and his wife, Jimi, plus Jim and Denise Thrash. That day the weather had been real nice, and we wanted to share our views of the surrounding Sandia Mountains and the Cibola National Forest with our guests. But it abruptly turned bitter cold, so with the help of our guests we moved the tables and chairs inside where we broke up into two smaller groups. Despite the change, everyone dug into our brand of barbecue, creating a healthy buzz of conversation during the process of filling empty bellies.

Afterwards, we men wandered downstairs into my shop where we spent a half-hour or so avoiding dust and grit (the hallmark of any knifemaker's shop), and traded a few secrets, a couple of lies, and a joke or two that the ladies upstairs probably wouldn't have appreciated. After more pleasantries, and anxious to get back on the trail, George and Miss Barbara headed east despite our pleas that they spend the night.

Next February I drove up to their place in the

South Carolina countryside following the Southeastern Wildlife Exposition, a 3-day juried wildlife art show in Charleston at which George was a regular. Tommy McNabb, Wayne Hendrix, Daniel Winkler and Karen Shook, Warren "Bubba" Glover, Russ Sutton, and Dan Canaday and I, among others, exhibited knives and related art at the Gaillard Auditorium, a great venue where we always had ample time to visit amongst each other and in particular with George.

As some may not know, George had exhibited at "Expo", as we call it, since it opened 25 years ago, making the Annual EXPO Knife, usually scrimshaw'd by none other than Sandra Brady (another regular whose table on the back row is flanked by knifemakers). This knife was the object of fierce bidding at a pre-show gala the evening before EXPO officially opened, and I'm told that one gent won them all, outbidding all others each year. George and Sandra formed a great team and the knives they co-authored are priceless. Over time, the Expo Knife Group grew into a close-knit family of knifemakers that doesn't seem to change much, except to get better or when a hole appears. In 2007, we all were glad to see Tommy McNabb again on the back row. But even this was overshadowed by George and Barbara's absence.

In recent years declining health discouraged participation at Expo and other events by George, and his and Barbara's absence was strongly felt by everyone including those who traveled to Charleston just to see them. I, like many of my peers, was no exception. At the mere mention of "How's George?", those who knew and loved him descended into a dark place we all eventually will come to know intimately, fumbling for words to describe his illness and the effect his absence at Expo had among us.

Chief among those who knew him best is Wayne Hendrix, who for some years worked side-by-side with George in the latter's shop. Although Wayne's style and knife-making philosophy is unique, George Herron's image appears in every blade Hendrix makes, and I'm positive that Wayne wouldn't have it any other way. I've got knives from both men, and I see more in them than perhaps most do. It's an emotional thing that I'm not

ashamed to admit.

When every public place seemed to outlaw smoking, George's signature pipe appeared to be dripping off his bottom lip, yet despite the ordinance no one seemed to mind. It was as much a part of his persona as were his plaid shirts and baggy Levi's. If he was peering over his glasses at you, it was proof positive that you had his attention. And when he spoke, you had to listen carefully because he wasn't loud. His thick South Carolina drawl demanded attention if for no other reason than to hear the melodic way he phrased what he had to say. His language wasn't flavored too much with cuss words, but those he did use emphasized his point in a gentlemanly sort of way. Few can lay claim to cussing appropriately, and few, if any, preachers would dare to frown openly on his choice of words.

The consummate knife builder, George's methodology was rooted in production techniques that all master machinists eventually learn. Steel was as much kin to his mind and to his hands as blood is to our hearts. The thread that ran between his mind and his hands was like a piece of twisted barbed wire, always sharp, always strong and tight, and always seen as a highway down which ideas flowed in a manner consistent with getting from point A to point B with the least amount of effort, and as fast as the process can be forced. I might add. Anyone who has seen a George Herron knife doesn't need any more explanation. To say that his knives were good is to diminish the man and to make light of his work and the relationship with the craft that he forged.

George and Miss Barbara took me to lunch the day I visited them, to a modest place that they both were proud of and enjoyed often, they said. My money was worthless but what I had to say over fried chicken seem priceless to them, or so they made me feel. We didn't chat about knives much. Instead, the conversation flowed gently from one subject to another with emphasis on their roots, where and why they lived as they did, highlighted by their delight in traveling across the wide expanses that separates one part

of our country from another, and a little about their family. Like a couple of kids describing sight of their first midway at the county fair, they talked easily about the great west and how much they enjoyed everyone they met along the trail. But like all people with a strong sense of belonging, they were not anxious to tarry too long far from home. This explains why, for example, they chose the open road eastbound when they could have wiled away a bit more time with me and Kirsten.

George's final journey began three or four years ago when his eyesight abandoned him. Although he made progress and was even able to return to a limited amount of work, the years and perhaps some tough times conspired against him, robbing him of his ability to function without a struggle. No doubt Miss Barbara did everything in her power to ease his burden. After all, they were a married couple that worked together as a team. I remember how easily she divulged her role: In her kitchen, Miss Barbara proudly showed how she marked all of George's blades, and how she often decided who got what, with no interference from George. Such teamwork is truly inspirational and speaks directly to great confidence in each other that both sides partnered successfully.

At the time, orders dated back about a decade or more. When knives were ready for delivery, she told me, Miss Barbara opened up a card file containing letters and orders, etc., and pulled out the last one in the back of the drawer. She notified the sender of the order that a knife was available and that X amount was due. As knives became available, she repeated the process. If she didn't hear from a customer in a month or so, the order was tossed out and she moved to the next customer in line, notifying that person that a knife was available! Not a bad way of doing things, according to both George and Miss Barbara. I don't recall her telling me that specific knives ordered were awaiting delivery; A knife became available and that was that.

On the drive back to my brother's place in Charleston at the end of my visit, I had a million thoughts coursing through my mind; How to do this, how to

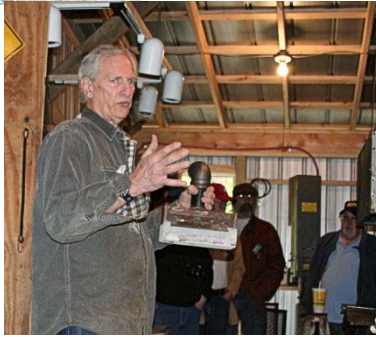
(Continued on page 10)



The April meeting of the NCKKG was held at Bill Bisher's home and shop. There was a

good group of folks that arrived early to catch up with each other and look over each other's work.

Mr. Bill started the day with a demo on making



Was it the full stomach from lunch, the excitement of the day or the senior years that gave way to an afternoon nap for these guys?



The mokume demo began shortly after lunch.



a ribbon forge. Then Tommy and Tim put the "ribbon project" to work by forging out a billet.

And looking at the jigs was a highlight for everyone.



Avery took charge of selling Iron-In-The-Hat tickets. This way he figures he can determine how many he needs to buy to get most of the

treasures.

Tommy and Travis took a moment to catch up. John considered these two guys to be his "brothers".



Tim, Wayne, and Mr. Barber decided to see what they could come up with to solve the world's ills.

Bill's place was great for boys to find plenty to occupy their time. If the demos were a little long just find a rock to climb.



It is good that you guys understand that the young ones are the future of the guild. Even when they are too young to pay attention for very long. Thanks for allowing it to be a family event.



**Tar Heel
Cutlery
Club**
Winston Salem, NC

"The Oldest Continuously Operating Knife Club"

Annual Knife Show

**2007 Annual Knife Show
August 24th and 25th
(Fri. & Sat.)**

Dixie Classic Fair Grounds Home and Garden Building.

PARKING IS FREE

The top dealers from around the South have tables at this show and are able to answer any and all your knife questions. There are 65 tables at each show consisting of dealers that specialize in pocket knives, fixed blade knives, custom knives and custom blades. Our show also features various rare and unique collections on display. We are very proud of the fact that our show has been held the last 31 years in succession. Each day we have hourly door prize drawings.

Please make it a point to attend this annual event. This is our biggest event of the year!

For further information please call 336-924-6876 or 336-924-4774

(Continued from page 7)

do that, and why do southerners know so damned much about fried chicken, okra, and biscuits and gravy? And what, exactly, is it about southerners like George and Miss Barbara that makes them so easy to befriend, so easy to know, so easy to talk to.....?

More importantly, I would ask myself, are we saddened when such a man passes into the next world, when we should instead celebrate his existence and his legacy? Why, for example, do we mourn an ending and what we believe is a loss when, rather, we might better rejoice at what we inherited during time spent in his company? Sure, I'm sad that he's gone because I won't see him or hear his voice anymore, and I won't get to see what his genius created last week or the month before. Seen from this perspective, it would seem that I'm a selfish man, and don't really understand the purpose pre-ordained for each of us. I don't truly understand this concept, but I want to.

I do know this: George Herron and his life partner were joined for a purpose, and that among other things it was to instill in others the fact that our hearts, minds, and hands are inexorably linked by a thread that is more intimately understood by some than it is by others, and that with practice we can and should develop our God-given abilities to enhance the human race, regardless the result. Michelangelo left us with the Sistine Chapel ceiling, Jonas Sauk with a vaccine that ended polio, Einstein a theory, and so on. And then along came George Herron.

Herron's purpose was obviously crystal clear to him and Barbara, as intended by Higher Powers. That George was instrumental in making me better understand this process is a gift unlike any other, and I am and will forever be enormously grateful for the very small and all-too-short time that I knew him, and for his gift of helping me better understand who I am.

Sincerely,
Bob Cumming
Cedar Crest, New Mexico

THE
FLORIDA KNIFEMAKERS' ASSOCIATION

10th Annual

CUSTOM KNIFE SHOW

2007

Saturday October 6th

9am till 5pm

**At the Comfort Inn
820 East Busch Blvd.
Tampa Florida**

Located at I-275 and Busch Blvd. (exit 50)

FREE PARKING

**WIN A CUSTOM
KNIFE!!!**

**Attend The Show and buy a raffle ticket
and you could win a custom knife by
one of these makers**

**HOOT GIBSON
STAN WILSON
MIKE TISON**

The Florida Knifemakers' Association would like to extend a hearty invitation to anyone that has an interest in knives to attend our 9th annual show in Tampa. You will meet some of the finest artisans in the Southeast and we would like to meet you. Please mark your calendar to attend this once a year show.

Calendar of Events

June 2007

The Blade Show: June 13–15, The Cobb Galleria, Atlanta, GA

Grinding Knife Blades: June 22-24, Ed Halligan, instructor, Montgomery Community College, Troy, NC

July 2007

NCKKG Meeting: July 20-21 at the shop of Wayne Whitley, Chocowinity, NC

August 2007

Introduction to Bladesmithing: August 3-5, James Batson, instructor, Montgomery Community College, Troy, NC

Metal Engraving Scroll & Scroll Design: August 6-17, Jesse Houser, instructor, Montgomery Community College, Troy, NC

Basic Knife Making: August 23-26, Tommy McNabb, instructor, at the Montgomery Community College, Troy, NC

September 2007

Automatic Folding Knives: September 13-16, Ed VanHoy, instructor, Montgomery Community College, Troy, NC

October 2007

NCKKG Meeting: October 20 at the shop of Alan Folts, Greenville, NC

Forged Tomahawks: October 5-7, Wayne Whitley, instructor, Montgomery Community College, Troy, NC

****Tentative Dates and Details.**

Complete details on classes at the guild website at www.ncknifeguild.org

(Directions and meeting details will be sent in the Newsletter preceding each meeting)

(Register for classes at Montgomery Community College; located in Troy, NC. Lodging is available close by.)

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Date:		
Name:		
Address:		
City:	State:	Zip
Phone:		
Email:		
Website:		
Choose One:	New Member:	Renewal:
Choose One Membership Category:	Collector:	Student

Membership / Renewal fees are: \$50.00 per year

Collector membership fees are \$25.00 per year

Student memberships are \$10.00 per year

Please send this form with a check or money order to:

NC Custom Knifemakers' Guild

Attn: Tony Kelly

348 Bell Road

Kinston, NC 28504

<http://www.ncknifeguild.org>